

The Path of Enhancing Employees' Organizational Identification through Corporate Culture Construction

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Abstract: Research on how the construction of corporate culture affects employees' sense of organisation can be traced back to this paper. The three levels of the theoretical framework are the reasons for influence, different modes of operation and continuous strengthening. At the level of the mechanism of influence, corporate culture can offer a cognitive basis by symbolically coding and constructing meanings; it can integrate the organisational identity with people's sense of self through value assimilation and anchor their identity; finally, it can complete the process from cognition to emotion by providing emotional support and fostering a sense of belonging. Many cultural orientations and dimensions of identification have already been aligned at the level of differentiated pathways; the relationship between cultural strength and depth of identification is not linear, and cultural inclusiveness can integrate multiple identifications through mechanisms of identity overlap and enhancement. Means of reinforcement include frequent cultural identifications in rituals, a reference point for meaning provided by organisational stories, and the reproduction of identification promoted by cultural governance. The above framework shows how to build corporate culture and thus strengthen the sense of organisation.

Keywords: Corporate Culture, Organisational Identification, Influencing Mechanisms, Pathways of Action, Reinforcement Mechanisms

Introduction

The construction of corporate culture and employees' organisational identification are problems that need to be addressed in organisational behaviour. Organisational identification is the employees' acceptance of the organisation's identity and how much this identity is incorporated into their sense of self; it is one of the reasons for changes in employee attitudes and behaviour. Given that there are many organisational cultures and different values among employees in contemporary society, how can an organisation enhance its sense of organisational identity by building a good culture? Most of the previous studies have only examined the direct effect of a single cultural feature on the level of identification and have not systematically studied the internal process, differentiated path and continuous reinforcement mechanism. According to the theory of symbolic interaction and social identity and emotional energy, this paper studies the process of symbolic coding, value internalisation and emotional cultivation; it finds the logic for the fit between cultural orientation and identification dimensions, the non-linear relationship between cultural strength and the depth of identification, the function of cultural inclusiveness in integrating multiple identifications, and finally explains the reinforcing effect of cultural rituals, organisational narratives and cultural governance, thus providing rich theoretical support for understanding the complex relationship among corporate culture construction and organisational identification.

1. The Impact Mechanism of Corporate Culture on Organisational Identification

1.1 Symbolic Coding and Meaning Construction of Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is a system of shared meanings in an organisation, and it also has a symbolic function of providing a cognitive basis for the formation of employees' organisational identification. Many symbols of the corporate culture have been used in the area of organisation, such as rituals, language, material symbols and behavioural norms, to make abstract organisational values and goals

concrete and transferable cognitive schemas. Symbolic coding is used to present the information, but it also has some attributes of organisational identity in its symbolic system; through repeated exposure to this symbolic system, employees can gradually form an initial cognitive structure of organisational identity. Through many performances and all kinds of situations, cultural symbols have become strongly associated with the organisation's identity, and employees have thus created a clear division between "us" and "them".

The Goal of Meaning Construction in the Symbol System is to Build and Understand the World of Organisations. Corporate culture is the system of meanings in a company's history, events and people, and it is a narrative-based symbolic system that helps employees understand their place in the organisation. The creation of this sense of meaning gives the organisation an identity and helps people feel that they belong; by participating in the interpretation and reproduction of cultural symbols, employees can also develop an organisational identity. Anchoring in meaning can help to promote the stability and continuity of an organisation's identity in people's minds, provide a cognitive basis for a higher level of organisational identification, and so on^[1].

1.2 The Internalisation Mechanism of Value Concepts and Identity Anchoring

Internalisation at the individual level is to adopt the basic values and ideas of corporate culture as one's own standards for self-assessment. The mode of this internalisation is cognitive restructuring; that is to say, through repeated exposure to the values of the company, employees will gradually compare and adjust their own value systems in line with those of the company. When the organisational values are in line with or consistent with the employees' own sense of self, they are more likely to be fully accepted, and thus the characteristics of organisational identity begin to be integrated into the employees' sense of self. The degree of value internalisation is directly related to how much the sense of organisational identity for employees has been established; the higher this level is, the more indistinct the division is between organisational identity and personal identity.

Identity anchoring is how an organisation's identity helps people organise themselves differently after internalising the organisation's values. Once the employees are convinced that these are the basic values of the company and feel a sense of belonging, they will be more motivated to do well in their work and participate in social comparison. When facing a conflict of interest, one may choose a different career path or leave the company according to one's own values, hoping to have behaviour and emotions in line with the company's culture. Anchoring will strengthen employees' sense of belonging to the company and motivate them to protect the good name and positive image of the organisation in the eyes of others. To help the organisation better reflect its values, we need to strengthen the sense of identity among employees.

1.3 The Breeding Field of Emotional Energy and the Generation of Belonging

Cognitive construction is the foundation of how corporate culture is perceived, and thus it also affects the generation and spread of emotions. There are cultural activities at the company every day, such as ritual gatherings, informal communication and emotional inspiration from role models; these create small spaces for the continuous generation and spread of emotional energy. Thus, when the employees are together in person, they can feel emotional stimulation, sense synchronous resonance in their expressions of emotion, and accumulate the effect of interaction ritual chains. Give people a good way to express their emotions and values in emotional investment; thus, culture can have them put emotional energy into the organisation's identity and add an emotional layer to what would otherwise be a formal relationship with the organisation^[2].

The generation of a sense of belonging is based on the accumulation and sharing of emotional energy at the organisational level. When the emotional experience employees have had as a result of their contact with the organisational culture is repeated many times and becomes a stable emotional memory, their sense of psychological attachment to the organisation moves from a cognitive level of "recognition" to an emotional level of "affection". As a source of emotional energy, one of the main purposes of corporate culture is to change people's individual emotions into a group mood among the staff and help them develop a strong sense of belonging to the company through shared emotions. After a sense of belonging is formed, it will have the attribute of self-reinforcement; that is to say, employees will voluntarily participate in cultural activities because they feel they belong, and as a result, they will continuously gain emotional energy from participating in the culture, thus creating a virtuous cycle of emotional immersion and deep belonging.

2. Differentiated Paths for the Construction of Corporate Culture

2.1 The Logic of Fit Between Cultural Orientation and Identification Dimensions

All kinds of corporate cultures have different degrees of appeal for different parts of employees' sense of organisational identity. A supportive culture that fosters a sense of care, cooperation and employee development can strengthen the emotional part of organisational identification, give employees psychological safety and a sense of belonging at the company, and thus create an identification pattern based on emotional attachment. An innovation-oriented culture motivates employees to take risks, be independent and flexible, so it is very suitable for the evaluative type of identification; through autonomy and a sense of achievement in innovation, employees link the organisation's identity with the realisation of their own values and thus form achievement-oriented identification. Rule-oriented culture has procedural norms and clear division of labour, so it is naturally in the cognitive domain. Learning about the organisation's structure and division of labour can help employees find a stable place in the company and build an identification system based on cognitive consistency.

The fitting path for the mechanism of culture-orientation and identification is associated with all kinds of psychological-need-satisfaction paths created by different types of culture. A supportive culture can meet the employees' need for belonging and is mainly in the form of affective identification. A culture of innovation will make the staff feel more responsible and give them a sense of achievement. A rule-oriented culture will make the employees feel more organised and secure, and therefore cognitive identification will be high. According to the logic of fit, the construction of corporate culture should not aim to maximise a single dimension of identification; rather, it should identify the dimension of identification that is in line with the core needs given the strategic goals of the organisation, industry characteristics and human resources, and then select a suitable type of cultural orientation. If the cultural construction does not meet the above conditions for fit, there will be a structural mismatch between cultural investment and identification, and therefore it will be less effective in promoting organisational identification.

2.2 The Non-linear Relationship Between Cultural Strength and Identification Depth

The strength of corporate culture refers to the degree of consistency, depth of integration and visibility level of the culture in an organisation, and it is not directly related to how much employees identify with their organisation. When the cultural strength of an organisation is relatively low, the cultural signals are weak; therefore, it is difficult for employees to form a strong sense of organisational identity and the level of identification is generally low. As the cultural strength of the organisation grows, so too does the consciousness and agreement among employees regarding the attributes of organisational identity; cognitive identification has been formed, and affective and evaluative identifications are gradually emerging, with the depth of identification also increasing. At this time, the increase in the depth of identification due to a strong culture is relatively large, and investment in cultural construction will have a noticeable effect on identification^[3].

If the cultural strength is too high, then the connection with the sense of identity will be uneven and complicated. Generally speaking, a strong sense of cultural confidence is related to an increase in cultural homogeneity and high salience of cultural expression; thus, it may result in psychological defence among employees against excessive uniformity and reduce the space for multiple identities in their sense of self. In the area of culture for high-strength employees, some staff may be outwardly compliant to a certain extent but are deeply alienated; organisational identification has reached only the cognitive level and has not yet moved to the affective and evaluative stages. More importantly, with the development of culture, cultural norms and values have also been established; thus, people's sense of identity may be lost entirely or even turn negative, leading to feelings of psychological isolation or an identity crisis among employees under the pressure to maintain self-integrity. Given the above nonlinear relationship, the goal of cultural construction should be a moderate level of cultural strength; it needs to be clear and consistent, avoid ambiguity, and at the same time allow for various expressions of employees' individual identities.

2.3 Cultural Inclusiveness and the Integration Approach for Multiple Identities

As the makeup of the staff at the organisation has become more diverse, cultural inclusivity has gradually started to affect employees' sense of organisational identification. Cultural inclusion is a

person's wish to accept and respect the various cultures and lifestyles of different groups of people. A highly inclusive corporate culture does not need to have employees give up their subgroup identities in order to gain recognition from the organisation; instead, by acknowledging the legitimacy of all these identities, a value system that embraces all kinds of identities can be built. An inclusive culture can reduce the psychological pressure on employees to choose between their organisational identity and other identities, help them integrate the organisational identity with all aspects of their lives, and thus increase the degree of organisational identification.

With the spread of cultural inclusivity, the two ways to achieve the integration of multiple identities are identity overlap and identity enhancement. The overlap mechanism of identity refers to the convergence of value connotations in organisational identity and subgroup identity; that is, employees feel that the organisational culture is in line with the culture of their own group, and thus gain emotional and motivational support for their work from a sense of organisation. To strengthen organisational identity, it is necessary to place it high in the hierarchy of employees' identities; when the organisational culture shows respect for and inclusion of the values of all groups, employees will be more likely to view the organisational identity as a category of identity with high social value and self-worth. The two mechanisms work together to help people resolve conflicts among various identities and achieve a harmonious state; thus, organisational identification can be achieved without diminishing other types of identification but rather by integrating them in the process of all kinds of identifications. Cultural inclusion can integrate all kinds of identities of different people, make employees from all walks of life feel that they belong to the company, and thus strengthen their sense of organisation.

3. Continuous Reinforcement Mechanisms of Organizational Identification

3.1 Cultural Rituals and the Periodic Activation of Identity

Over time, cultural activities have become more regular expressions of corporate culture and periodically evoke a sense of organisational identity among staff. Very fashionable symbolic performances are used to promote a sense of organised identity in daily life through physical co-presence and emotional resonance, and this has not been done before. At the start of the ceremony, the organisational symbols (logos, slogans, etc.) will be displayed in the middle, and all the employees will come together to show their sense of organisation. Regular stimulation is not the slow result of daily cultural assimilation; rather, it is the selection of certain times and an organised ritual that create nodes for organisational identity in the psychological timeline of employees and provide continuous energy for organisational identification^[4].

Occasionally, there will be an increase in emotional energy and a regular strengthening of the sense of self in the person. The emotions that arise from the circumstances of the ceremony result in the formation of an emotional residue among the employees after the ceremony; this residue gradually fades during their daily work and is then stimulated and revitalised by the next ceremony. Occasionally, to relieve the dullness of organisational identification caused by routine, one can add some emotion. Organizational history, collective achievements and symbols of identity that are often mentioned in ritual activities are continuously recorded in the individual memory system of employees and form an identity memory chain over time. When employees can connect ritual experiences from different periods and create a continuous story of their own lives in chronological order, they will be more resilient to the loss of organisation identification caused by changes in the organisation or shifts in their roles.

3.2 Organizational Narratives and the Meaning Anchoring of Identification

As the text of corporate culture, organisational stories provide a basis for meaning and strengthen employees' sense of organisation. In short, a story form is a way to convey the organisation's identity in an easy-to-understand and memorable way through plots, characters, conflicts, etc. Learning the history of the company can give employees some knowledge about what the company does; more importantly, they will also learn why the company is organised this way and what values drive it. Plot-based interpretation of narratives provides an organised system for understanding the events and current decisions in an organisation; it helps employees connect their own experiences at the company with this large system of meaning and thus affirm their own position and values in the historical development of the company.

The Realisation of Meaning Anchoring is dependent on the Stability of the Identity Reference Framework established by narratives. When the organisation is in an unstable situation due to changes, crises or other reasons, the continuous release of the main story can help employees feel a sense of identity and stability. When the outside world has changed significantly, and people feel that the organisation is different now, the fundamental attributes of organisational identity mentioned in narratives (such as founding ideas, famous incidents and good deeds) can offer a stable basis for meaning, help staff maintain a long-lasting sense of belonging to the organisation, and reduce feelings of exclusion. There are many versions of the story and different places where it can be interpreted, so different groups of employees will form various understandings of the organisation, and there is no need to stick to a single, fixed meaning. Selectivity in narration and the transmission of stories across generations can be employed to maintain the stability of the core and the adaptability of organisational identity; thus, organisational identification can remain constant in substance and be flexible in the face of changes in the environment^[5].

3.3 Cultural Governance and the Self-Reproduction of Identity

Cultural governance refers to employees' participation in cultural activities to promote the self-perpetuation of organisational identification, and it is not a top-down form of cultural dissemination and construction. Based on the concept of cultural governance, employees are no longer passive receivers of cultural diffusion but active agents who create, spread and inherit culture. Have the employees learn about the company's culture, create their own cultural works, and participate in judging the cultural activities to strengthen their sense of belonging to the organisation. The main reason for this change is that the effort and creativity employees have put into the process of cultural participation have fostered a stronger sense of belonging to the organisation; thus, identification is no longer an external demand but rather the result of their own participation in building the culture.

The way of self-reproduction for identification is a virtuous circle of cultural participation, identity affirmation and further participation. By taking part in and joining the cultural activities, employees will feel that they are part of the organisation and also part of other members, thus fostering positive emotions and emotional attachment to the organisational culture. Employees at the level of identity confirmation are more likely to take part in cultural activities, take on the roles of cultural promoters and guardians, and their actions can provide a source of identity confirmation for other members. In this cycle, the energy for organisational identification will no longer come only from cultural design and continuous investment in organisational institutions at the top, but also from the interaction of culture and mutual recognition of identity among employees. Self-reproduction under cultural governance has changed the type of organisational identification from passive external maintenance to active internal motivation; thus, the self-perpetuation of organisational identification over time has been achieved, and self-enhancement at the level of intensity has also been realised.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to systematically explore the reasons for the increase in employees' organisational identification due to the construction of corporate culture, as well as all the various paths and lasting effects. At the level of the mechanism of influence, corporate culture has created a long chain of effects that starts with the foundation of cognition and identity integration, proceeds through emotional sublimation via the construction of symbolic meanings, internalisation and assimilation of values, and finally leads to the formation of an emotional field. At the level of differentiated pathways, it is necessary to align the logic of fit between cultural orientation and identification dimensions, address the non-linear relationship between cultural strength and identification depth, and incorporate cultural inclusiveness; thus, cultural strategies should be tailored to the characteristics of the organisation. To maintain and enhance the level of organisational identification over time, the three modes of reinforcement at the level of cultural ritual organisation are the regular organisation of cultural rituals, the anchoring of organisational narratives, and the self-reproduction of cultural governance. In the future, people will learn more about the effect of the organisational environment and constraints on this theory.

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