

Chapter 21

Influence of the Organizational Culture into IT Department Structure, User Relationships and Motivators: Brazilian Cases

Ângela F. Brodbeck

Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil

Henrique J. Brodbeck

Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil

ABSTRACT

This chapter presents two organizational case studies of Brazilian companies: a cutlery multinational with both domestic and international plants, including in the USA, and a public university. The chapter describes their organizational culture and the Information Technology (IT) structure resulting from that culture, how IT responds to business requests, and the main drivers, indicators, and motivators of the IT area. At the end, some questions are raised about organizational and individual culture, how these elements can influence IT personnel, and their attitude towards the problems of users, as well as how they can sometimes change patterns of behavior in the organization.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational or individual culture can affect the structure of a department, how IT staff meets

the demands of users as well as to determine the motivators of IT professionals. In the reports presented below were contextualized elements of organizational and individual culture that may affect the relationship of IT staff with the users as

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-60960-535-3.ch021

well as in determining individual and collective patterns of behavior. The cases show that regional and cultural patterns of a particular social group can change the behavior and actions of internal members of an organization. Thus, the individual interests of the IT staff can override the interests of groups and of the whole organization and vice versa. Often IT jargon may be reflected in the way of developing systems and training users, and can affect acceptance of the systems by users and the efficiency of its use. This can be explained through the lens of some organizational theories.

Functionalist theories like the contingency theory or the institutional theory observe organizational actions through the lens of the reactive, adapted, and social behavior, involving social aspects and cultural acceptance. Other theories like the ones that deal with the human behavior displays these actions as individual relations to their environment and to other individuals. For this to happen, societies create symbols, systems, or tools that can change and develop the human behavior. These actions can be noted by attitudes of the individuals in a group, as well as their participation and influence inside an organization (Bruner, 1997; Weber, 1974).

The interests of these individuals (actors of the organization) can be different or can be coexistent among them, for the reason that the social relations between them exalt a social space inside an organizational field. Social practices that are going to be applied inside an objectively structured field are defined through these relations. These social practices can emerge from the interaction, from the perception of mental schemes (collective meanings) and from the interest of the organizational actors. The interaction between the actors of the organizations and the action produced through their mental schemes can lead to a convergence of interests. An actor predicts that the other actor can offer benefits and each one of them has a similar idea about the way this action can be achieved. Such interactions are creating the or-

ganizational culture (Srouf, 2005; Weick, 1998; Nizet; Pichault, 1995).

Culture can be defined as a system of beliefs that is essentially comprised of interpretations of the world and of the activities and artifacts that reflect them. The organizational culture can define the form of a department structure or a system or a work team, determined by several elements like (Bourguignon et al., 2004; Mintzberg et al, 2000):

- a. **Management type:** there are several possible styles of managers to lead individuals or team members, such as a person-oriented combination of benefits combination as opposed to productivity-oriented benefits. To reward individuals through performance awards, fringe benefits, stock options, and financial compensation may be an important factor in the conduct of individuals or work teams. However, in most cases, this is a decision that depends on the organizational culture and that will also determine the managerial posture towards their teams.
- b. **Delegation of power or authority:** individual or team members elect their leader, who is not always the one who holds the authority and power. IT departments work on projects and it is common for individuals or teams receive incentive bonuses for meeting deadlines and project costs. The IT manager should keep in mind what makes a good project leader and should be able to manage people by distributing responsibilities for the activities and tasks to be accomplished to fulfill the project. This leader should have authority enough to keep the members of project teams in line by focusing on the contribution that timely completion of projects will bring to the organization.
- c. **Tendency to work in teams:** since IT departments work on projects related to the demands of their business partners, they need to employ work teams. Team work is based on negotiations to solve problems

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/influence-organizational-culture-into-department/53121

Related Content

E-HRM in Competence Recognition and Management

Marko Kesti, Antti Syväjärvi and Jari Stenvall (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 293-300).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/hrm-competence-recognition-management/13244

HRD Programs to Support the Impact of New Technology on Work in Australian Local Government

Kehinde Aluko, John Burgess and Belinda Moloney (2026). *Contemporary Human Resource Development Issues and Challenges* (pp. 141-168).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/hrd-programs-to-support-the-impact-of-new-technology-on-work-in-australian-local-government/403604

An E-HRM Perspective on Motivation

Chen H. Chung (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 301-306).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/hrm-perspective-motivation/13245

Behavioral Initiatives

(2012). *Valuing People and Technology in the Workplace: A Competitive Advantage Framework* (pp. 60-73).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/behavioral-initiatives/65653

Conceptualization and Evolution of Learning Organizations

Baiyin Yang (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 172-177).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/conceptualization-evolution-learning-organizations/13226