HOW ORGANIZATION CULTURE IMPACTS ORGANIZATION PROFITABILITY; A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Organizations now-a-days are not just about survival. Competition has increased tremendously and hence every aspect of organization dynamic needs to be tackled smartly for desired results. The research proposes a generalized model illustrating how organization culture can lead to profitability. The main findings of the study are that organization culture affects the psychology of employees either positively or negatively and profitability is a consequence of positive organization psychology. In case of its absence, employees experience a number of negative emotions leading to a situation of less or no profitability. Initially, a theoretical model of the same is proposed and then it is tested using qualitative data from interviews of 25 managerial level personnel from UAE market. The revised model is proposed after interpretation from collected data.

Key Words: Organization culture, profitability, positive organization psychology, negative organization psychology.

Introduction:

Organization culture has shown a strong impact on the financial performance of that particular organization [1]. A detailed study conducted by [2], of 200 companies including Hewlet Packard, Nissan and Xerox infers the same conclusion. Being a critical component, Organization culture is the way to achieving the end results of an organization [3].

Research suggests this is because organization culture effects psychology of employees working in that organization, which can be both negative or positive. [4], [5]. Positive Organization psychology is the application of such human resource practices by the management that induces positivity in employees. This results in unique contribution in the organization output [6]. According to [7], a study by Gallup suggests that employees who lack an environment of positive organization psychology can cost businesses around $300 billion every year.

Similarly, an organization psychology that is negative can be detrimental for organizational output [8]. An important note here is that negative organization psychology does not refer to

mental illness of the employees; rather it deals with the lack of mental wellness of the employees in the organization [9].

The components of Organization culture that effect Organization Psychology are Organization Strategy [10], The the right fit of people for the job, The System of Recognition and Rewards, The Work Process [10], The Leadership and the Communication [11].

The gap in the literature is observed as existing research does not concisely relate particular factors of organization culture to organization profitability and how these particular factors lead to organization profitability.

This research puts forth a model, through evidence gathered from the literature, illustrating that organization culture leads to profitability or non-profitability by affecting the psychology of employees of that organization, either positively or negatively, respectively.

Theoretical and Empirical Review:

Factual evidence signifying the impact of Organization Culture (OC) on creating a positive organization psychology (POP) were found in the reserarch of [12]. Their extensive survey using the Imemdiate Manager's Index (IMI) and Overall satisfaction Index (OSI) proved that job satisfaction, which is a result of Positive Organization Psychology [13], is derived by organization culture. Their findings were that employees who are satisfied from their jobs have received rewards of their work and because of the management system. This, as stated earlier, form part of the organization culture. So, Organization culture creates a positive organization psychology.

Now, the main components identified of positive organization psychology, which are effected by organization culture, include Job Satisfaction, Optimism, Positivity and Confidence as supported by the research of [14].

To prove this relationship of Organization culture on Positive organization psychology, the following evidences were collected from the literature.

Firstly, [15] assessed the main factors causing job satisfaction, which is a component of POP. They collected data of pharmaceutical companies from online sources and close-ended-interviews from Incepta, Beximco and Apex Pharma. Results showed Leadership, Work Process and Reward Systems effected job satisfaction by a mean of more than 60% for all the factors individually. As these 3 are the components of OC, they form a positive irganization psychology by increasing job satisfaction among employees.

To prove how Optimism, Positivity and Confidence, the other components of postive organization psychology, are effected by organizational culture components, the study of [16] is referred. According to this study, the past reserarches have evidence that optimism and academic performcace were positively linked with each other. For the sake of management studies, academic performance was generalized to work environment in their paper. Hence optimism and

work environement are positively linked with reach other. So, optimism is induced through organization startegy, which makes the work environemnt [17]. The same paper talks about employee confidence which is caused by the following two factors: first, the past performance of the employee and how that was rewarded, and second, the verbal persuasion for the employee which stands for communication within organization. As organization startegy, communication and the reward system forms part of an OC, it indeed leads to optimism, positivity and confidence which are indicatiors a POP.

To understand how OC effects profitability, the effect of POP on profitability is studied, as it has already been estanlished that POP is positively effected by OC. Now, for the factual prove of POP effecting low employee turn over, which eventually effects organization profits [18] comes from the study of [19]. The analytical data suggests that in times of high unemployment in the economy, low turnover is negatively related to job satisfaction. Where as, during the times of lower unemployment ratio in the economy, turnover is positively related to Job Satisfaction. Put simply, it means chances of employees leaving a job is more if they are not satisfied with their jobs given there are other opportunities available in the market. The contrary case is that employees do not leave their jobs even in dissatisfaction if the job market is weak. This means organiation culture can increase profits by making the employee turn over low and increase job satisfaction, which is a factor of POP.

Another mathemetical paper by [20] explores productivity, which also effects organization profits [21] and drives a mathemetical model to explain that if the organizational leadership inspires Optimism and Confidence among the employees, they turn out productive and increase organization profits.

This discussion sums up the finding that OC components lead to Job Satisfaction which decreases employee turnover, eventually increasing profitability of the organization. OC compnents also effect employee positivity and confidence, optimism, which are the indicators of positive organization psychology. This particular situation leads to productive employees, and they increase organization profotability too [22].

Literature also shows evidence of organization culture on Negative Organization Psychology (NOP). According to [23] study, organization culture is an indicator of integrated emotions of the employees. Their data analysis of hospital employees prove that 50% of the negative mindset of employees can be explained through organization culture, though the study is silent on the factors of culture considered in the study. The effecting components of OC that effect NOP are the right fit of people for the job, the organization staretgy, the work process, the compensation and reward system, the leadership [10] and communication [11].

The components of NOP that are effected by organization culture are Negative Stress, which is a state of mind that hinders work process of the employee [24], Lack of motivation among employees [25] and Lower work enagaement[26].

To prove the relationship of OC on NOP, the following evidences were collected from the literature.

A detailed study was carried out by [27] to identify the main causes of negative stress in the organization. They adopted the focus group approach and a total of 47 participants from different Taiwanese companese were selected for the focus group sessions. Their findings report that employees experience negative stress because of the following main reasons evaluated: first, the interpersonal, secondly, their job characteristcs and work process, and lastly their career growth in the organization. An inefficient work process that reduces efficiency and consumes unwanted time causes stress. In essence, all these 3 factors, that is the misfir of people, the process and the reward system, are the components of the organization culture, and hence evidence based proof is established that organization culture is related to the negative organization psychology.

Secondly, Lack of motivation is another factor identified for NOP. [28] in their paper series write that the main reason for employees' lower motivation can be accounted to faults in leadership. When leaders assume that the employees know their jobs, and do not communicate or train them appropriately, it results in employees not understanding their work tasks and such a continuous trend of confusion of work, if gone unnoticed by managers, causes a negativity and lack of motivation. Again, leadership and comminication were identified as the components of organization culture earlier, and hence, it is evident that organization culture effects employees in sense of making them less motivated, which is part of NOP.

Finally, lower work enagagement causes negative organization psychology and has its roots in the factors of organization culture too. [29], conducted a survey of 104 employees belonging from different and variety of organizations. The results found out that job characteristcs and justice in job had a direct relationship with employee's engagement level. Job characteristics can be generalized to work process, which again is a component of organization culture.

Past heads suggested that NOP results from negative stress, lack of motivation and other factors[30][31][29].

[32]note in their study that unhappy employees lead to unproductivity and decreased customer satisfaction. This is a reinstament of the idea that negative psychology creates an unwholesome mindset of the employees which, in turn, makes them unhappy. Unhappy employees are not able to deliver the output expected of them. Hence, the construct that NOP leads to decreased profots in the organization.

As noted earlier, organization culture plays a big role in determining the organization psychology. Negative psychology impediments the optimum performance.

Suggested Theoretical Model:

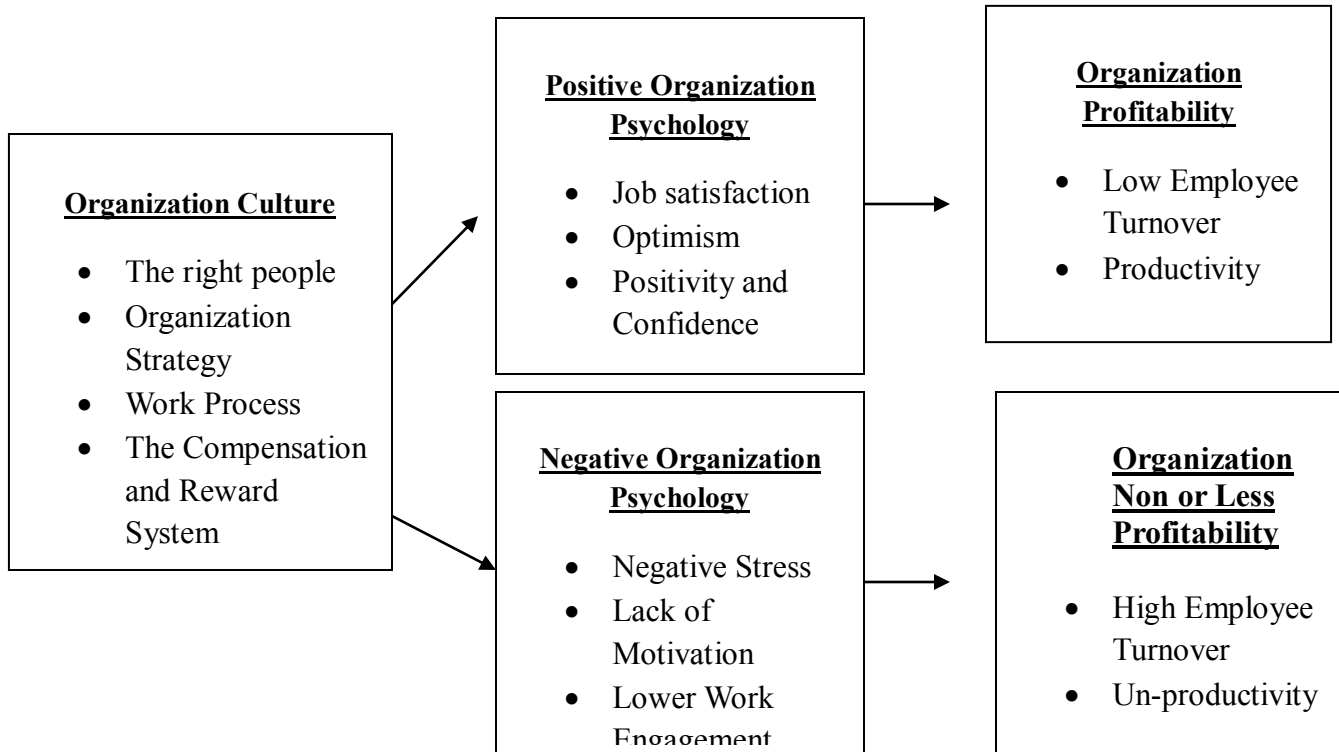The proposed theoretical model for OC effecting profitability in an organization is as follows:

Organization Culture

- The right people
- Organization Strategy
- Work Process
- The Compensation and Reward System

Positive Organization Psychology

- Job satisfaction
- Optimism
- Positivity and Confidence

Organization Profitability

- Low Employee Turnover
- Productivity

Negative Organization Psychology

- Negative Stress
- Lack of Motivation
- Lower Work Engagement

Organization Non or Less Profitability

- High Employee Turnover
- Un-productivity

Figure 1 Suggested Model of Organization Culture Leading to Organization Profitability and Non Profitability

Methodology:

A Qualitative Approach:

In order to test the aforementioned theoretical model, a pilot study in the form of a qualitative research was conducted. This is because most of the existing literature relies on quantitative assessments of the impact of few factors of organization culture on the other relevant factors. Though this is an accurate approach where data is easier to interpret and tabulate, but it limits the scope of findings in the present case. In order to achieve a holistic perspective on organization profitability being affected by organization culture, the qualitative approach was undertaken. A series of interviews were conducted with semi structured and open ended questions. These interviews were open narrative based and provided in depth detail and context. Like survey data can be encoded, the results from these interviews were later encoded to formulate an empirical model of organization culture leading to organization profitability or non profitability.

Sample:

For this research, a total of 25 interviews were conducted over a period of 14 months. For the interviews, 40 managerial level personnel were approached through emails. Out of them 25 responded. All respondents were from various public and private companies in the UAE. All of the 25 respondents were on a managerial level post in their respective organizations. They had also spent tenure of 15 years or more in that particular organization. No 2 employees from the same organization were interviewed. The interviews were conducted on phone or in person by the researcher. These 25 respondents were in 2 groups. The 15 respondents belonged to organizations who had reported financial profits last year. The rest 14 respondents belonged to organizations that had reported financial loss last year.

Procedure:

The 25 respondents who agreed for the interview were initially approached using convenient sampling method. The interviews lasted 20 minutes on average. The interview was initiated using semi structured questions and the respondents were asked to outline their experience in detail. The questions were picked from their narrative and relevant information was asked. In case of respondents belonging from organization who showed financial profitability, the focus of the interview was primarily on what organizational culture aspects made their organizations perform so. In the otherwise case, respondents were interviewed primarily on what aspect of the culture of their organization might have lead to financial losses. Because of their vast years in the organization, their responses were based on experience and expertise.

Coding:

Coding was done to categorize the similar responses in the interviews. To code the gathered data in the present research, the similar responses from the respondents about the organization culture components, POP and NOP were categorized or grouped together. The effect of these categories on the factors of positive organization psychology and negative organization psychology was represented using a number. This number signified how many respondents had related a category of organization culture to that factor of POP or NOP. Higher the number meant that more number of respondents agreed on the causal effect of OC on that component of POP and NOP. Similarly, the effect of the components of POP and NOP on the components of profitability was represented by a number. Again, higher the number meant that more respondents agreed on that components' effect on profitability of the organization.

Limitations of the study:

Only one respondent was approached from an organization and so the data collected might have been biased. Also, the number of respondents was small. This was because of time and resource constraints of this research.

Calculations:

Factors of Organization Culture effecting POP and NOP						
Category Contributors of OC	POP N=15			Factors	NOP N=14		Factors
	Job Satisfaction	Optimism	Positivity and Confidence	Motivation	Negative Stress	Lack of Motivation	Lower Work Engagement
Right fit of Employees The people The Workforce	9	8	-	9	13	8	8
Strategy Goals Vision	13	11	11	12	8	11	11
Work Process Functionality Operations	8	-	5	8	14	9	7
Management Leadership Supervision	12	9	9	11	11	13	11
Feedback Mentoring Coaching	10	8	8	7	7	6	8
Team work Groups Cohesiveness	13	9	8	14	12	9	8
Empathy Mutual	11	6	7	9	12	10	9

respect							
Career path Promotion Raise Certifications	13	8	8	12	6	8	10
Group activities Training and Development	12	11	11	13	6	5	6
Rewards Appreciation	12	7	7	12	9	9	8

Table 1 Categories of OC factors grouped together and impacting POP and NOP factors. The value represents the number of respondents relating the OC factor to that respective POP or NOP factor. The (-)b indicates no response of the respondents for that grid.

Factors of POP and NOP effecting profitability					
Category contributors of POP	Effect on Profitability N=15		Category contributors of NOP	Negative Effect on Profitability N=14	
	Low Employee Turnover	Productivity of Employees		High Employee Turnover	Unproductivity of Employees
Job Satisfaction	15	15	Negative Stress	10	14
Optimism	13	13	Lack of Motivation	11	14
Positivity and Confidence	12	12	Lower Work Engagement	13	14
Motivation	15	15			

Table 2 Factors of POP effecting profitability and Factors of NOP effecting profitability of an organization.

Results:

In Table 1, a total of 10 categories emerged for Organization Culture after coding the interview responses. 6 of these categories matched the 7 factors identified earlier in the theoretical model (figure 1) these were: The People, Organization Strategy, Work Process, the Compensation and Reward System, The Leadership, The Communication. 4 new categories emerged from the interview data which were: Group Activities, Career path, feelings of Empathy between employees and Feedback and Coaching for employees. The effect of these OC categories on POP and NOP factors was represented by a numerical value. This numerical value represented the number of respondents is relating that particular OC factor was related to the respective POP or NOP factor.

For POP, a total of 4 categories emerged, 3 of them were the same as the factors identified in the theoretical framework (figure 1). These were: Job satisfaction, Optimism, Positivity and Confidence. A new category that emerged for POP was Motivation. Similarly, 3 categories emerged for NOP, which were the same as the factors identified earlier in the theoretical framework. These are: Negative stress, Lack of Motivation and Lower Work Engagement.

On POP side of the table, data showed that Organization Culture had a very similar impact on Job satisfaction and Motivation. More respondents agreed that the presence of categorized organization culture factors lead to an increase in Job satisfaction and Motivation levels. The categories of Optimism and Positivity and Confidence showed a similar trend, meaning respondents had similar views for the impact of OC on them. Job satisfaction was a recurring factor of profitability as narrated by the respondents. Employees with higher job satisfaction levels tend to remain associated with the company and add value to it.

A category of OC frequenting the responses emerged to be Group Activities. They bonded employees well. It was an aspect that added refreshment to their jobs and improved employee morale for future. The category of Organization strategy and Career path was the highest contributor of Job satisfaction and Motivation. Also, the number of responses in favor of Job Satisfaction and Motivation being effected by OC were comparatively higher than the effect of OC categories on either NOP or the other 2 categories of POP. Respondents had various views about the advantages of Group activities.

The effect of OC on NOP explored the absence of the OC factors impacting the NOP factors. Higher the value in this part of the table meant, that more respondents agreed that a lack of OC leads to these factors, ultimately creating a negative organization psychology. The trend for the categories of Lower work Engagement and Lack of motivation was similar.

An interesting trend was observed wherein the category of Lack of Group activities caused lower level of effect on NOP factors than its effect on POP. The presence of group activities increased positive psychology by double the amount compared to the effect due to its absence on NOP. The most significant cause of Negative Stress in the NOP category turned out to be because of lack of the right people for the job. It was gathered from the interviews that lack of fit between employees and their job cause discrepancies on group and team level. It slowed down the work and caused negative stress.

Whereas the lowest factor contributing towards negative stress was the lack of Group Activities and lack of a Career path or promotion. Regarding career path, the respondents informed that it was a concern for employees but as long as other factors of organization culture were contributing more towards positive organization psychology, lack of a career path caused relatively lesser stress among the employees. This response was not according to the study of [30] stated earlier. The leading factor foe lack of motivation and lower work engagement was because of lack of proper leadership in OC.

Feedback and Mentoring was also a relatively higher contributor of POP in organization. The respondents agreed that feedback of boss allowed employees to feel important and they took interest and initiatives in their job profile.

Table 2 shows the effect of category contributors of POP on profitability. There was a 100% consensus of respondents that job satisfaction and motivation leads to profitability factors; productivity and low employee turnover. According to the responses, a motivated and satisfied employee is in better position to work, takes interest and initiatives in their work. They do the extra work too if required. Optimism, Positivity and Confidence showed a similar trend on its effect on profitability. Confident employees feel that their work is good and appreciated hence their productivity levels to produce more output increases.

On the Other hand, category contributors had also a high impact on components of NOP. The ratio of responses about Negative Stress, lack of motivation and lower work engagement decreasing productivity and in turn profitability was high. It was found from the interviews that productivity is an aspect fostered by only positive psychology, and pressure or the factors of NOP just hinders the way towards productivity.

Empirical Framework:

The Empirical model for OC effecting profitability in an organization through qualitative data is as follows:
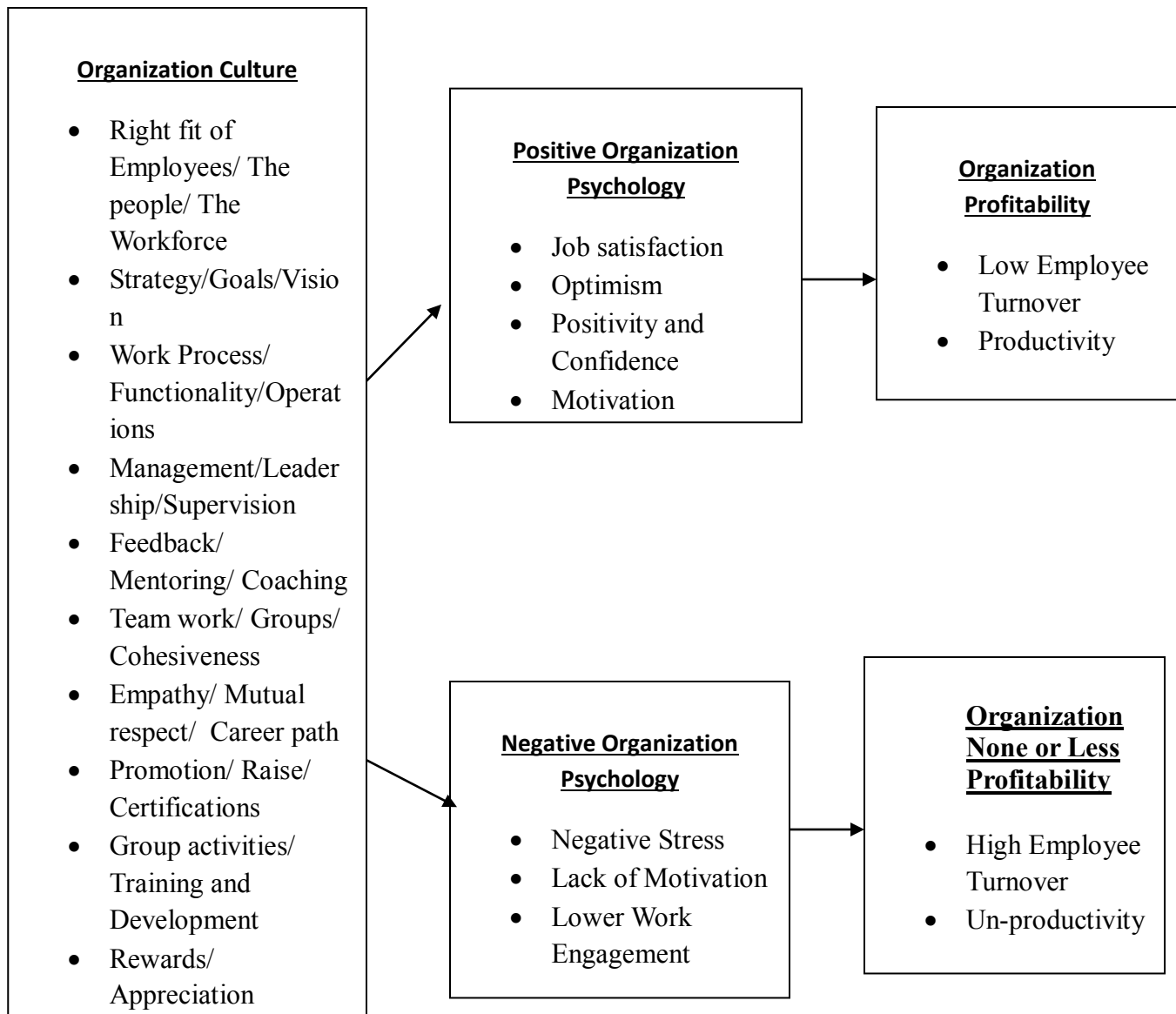

Figure 2 The Empirical Model of OC leading to Organization profitability or Non-Profitability through Qualitative Research

Discussion:

Positive organization psychology is an amalgam of various OC factors. When employee are the right fit for the job, when the strategy laid out by the organization is clear and the leadership acts as a gel between the two to achieve the output, a positive organization psychology is fostered in the organization [33].

An organization culture investing in the employees by adding value to their career through trainings and experience is a way to enhancing positivity in the organization [34]. According to a study, the 30 largest companies from 1995 to 2005 reaped a profit of 83% per employee in 2003 compared to just 35% in 1995, by investing in an organization culture that fosters a positive psychology for employees [34].

The main focus of this study was to analyze OC's impact on profitability, and the OC factors work on the psychology of employees in such a way that organization profitability increases. It does because employees become productive, they adopt a problem solving attitude and they take initiatives to fill the gaps.

Negative psychology is an energy eater. NOP causes a psychological clutter and employees waste their energy navigating this clutter rather than channelizing it towards the output. This is why they feel less motivated, decreasing their productivity. These dynamics can make a stark difference in the economic profitability of the organization.

Conclusion:

The study is a comprehensive prove that organization culture effects the economic profitability of an organization by way of fostering the psychology of employees. A positive mindset can lead towards added productivity and a negative mindset can set the organization profit back. Factual evidence discussed in this study proves that for an organization to become profitable, managers must consider the organization culture. This will foster a mental environment for the employees. Hence, in order to improve profits, it is empirical that managers induce a culture which is conductive of positivity to achieve the desired results.

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