

How the Culture of Educational Institutes Impact them: Can Coaching Practices Help in Overcoming the Flaws?

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Abstract – The culture of any organisation is an important factor on which the overall growth and progress of that organisation depends. This is true for the educational institutes as well. This paper tries to find out how the culture of educational institutes impact them? The Heads of the educational institutes of UAE were interviewed for the purpose. The solution of the flaws which came out, during the process, was found in the coaching practices.

Keywords – Culture, Educational Institutes, Coaching Practices, Autocracy

I. INTRODUCTION

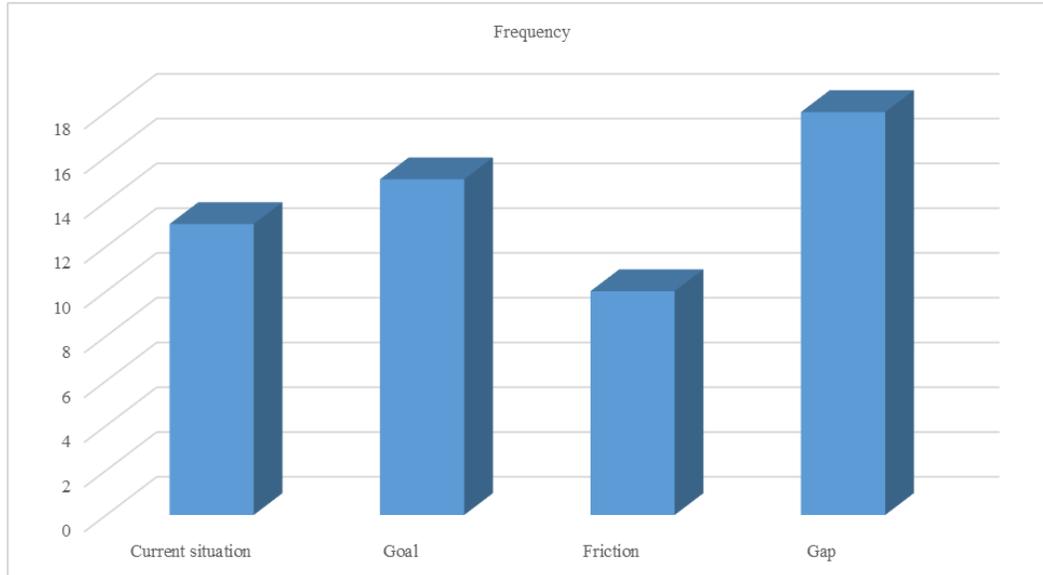
Organizational culture is the organization's social and spiritual field, which is shaped by conscious and unconscious, visible and disguised, processes and phenomena that determine the philosophy, values, ideology, problem-solving approaches, and behaviour patterns of the personnel of the organization and are capable of taking it towards success (Solomanidina, cited in Vasyakin, 2016). The comprehension of the actions of the overall culture of the organisation is necessary for the improvement of an institution (Ibid.). Discovering strategies, tools, attitudes and values capable of building organizational culture open to creativity and innovation is the key to success (Coman and Bonciu, 2016). This paper throws some light on the culture of the educational institutes of United Arab Emirates (UAE). To know this, the Heads of the educational institutes of UAE were interviewed to know their views about the mission, vision, bureaucracy, success and support dimensions of the culture of their organisations. Through the research on UAE educational institutes, this paper aims to know how the culture of educational institutes impact them and tries to find out the solutions of the shortcomings in coaching practices. The idea of the coaching practices comes from its success in changing and improving the culture of the organisations of the corporate world. The interdependent and high-performance culture that coaching can produce provides the best chance of flourishing in the waves of change that businesses are facing (Whitmore, 2017). Vodafone's effort of changing the culture from command and control to coaching and collaboration has helped the company to top the league table of mobile – telephone network quality (Anonymous, 2003).

II. METHOD

Two people were interviewed. One was the Head of Quality Assurance (Interviewee A) of a medium sized well established professional college, located in Dubai, UAE and the other was the Principal (Interviewee B) of a school in Sharjah, UAE. The interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996, cited in Cohen, 2011). Gillham (2005, quoted in Coleman, 2012, p. 251) said that Interview is one human being interacting with another and using their resources of interpersonal sensitivity to do so. According to Kvale (1996, cited in Alshenqeeti, 2014), as events are not directly observable, talking to people is the most effective method for exploring the matters. Walford (2007, cited in Alshenqeeti, 2014) argues that interviews alone are insufficient data to study social life. This is because both interviewer and interviewee could have incomplete knowledge or faulty memory. According to Brown (2001), interviews have a potential of subconscious bias and inconsistencies. For this research, interview was a helpful method as talking to only one person (Head of the institute) revealed many things about the culture of the organisation. The interview questions are attached in Appendix 1. Both the interviews were recorded to analyse.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

The recorded interviews were converted into the transcripts and were analysed. The data was analysed with the help of thematic analysis using codes. After the analyses of the data, the themes came out were Current Situation, Goal, Friction, and Gap (Appendix 2).



Graph1. The frequency of the codes in the transcripts

Graph 1 shows the frequency of codes found in the transcripts of both the interviews. The maximum number of codes were found for the theme Gap, which is eighteen in number. After that comes the theme Goal which is fifteen in number. The themes Current Situation and Friction take the back seat with the frequency thirteen and ten respectively.

The current situation gives us the idea, where the organisation is standing at present. To know the culture of any organisation, it's necessary to understand the current situation of that organisation. The next theme Goal gives the impression, where the organisation wants to be, and what are its aims for the next few years. With the theme Friction, the areas of resistances can be known, and the theme Gap can help in knowing the voids of the organisation.

IV.RESULTS

The interviews showed up some flaws inside the culture of the institutes. The first is, the autocracy of the top management under the theme Friction is acting as a hurdle in works which are in line with the mission and vision of the institutes. This is by the idea that the traditional bound managers don't want to explore new ways of management and are institutionalised into an authoritarian style of management (White, 1984). The same thing is happening in the two institutes as the interviewees have mentioned that the behaviour of top managers is hindering the smoothness of work. The first institute is in the process of the university for which there is resistance from Deans' side due to the autocratic behaviour of them. They are not able to accept that there are shortcomings and they need to come together to step forward. In the second institute, the top management doesn't consider lower management while giving orders.

Another shortcoming, which both the interviewees have mentioned is the lack of job satisfaction felt by the employees in the organisation, under the theme Gap. Interviewee A considers any institute successful if its every employee can fulfil his or her personal, professional and emotional dreams. This supports Sinoway's (2012) idea that an employee should feel secure psychologically and professionally in the culture he or she is working.

Another concern, again under the theme Gap, which both the interviewees have shown is the gender-based disparity happening in their organisations. The interviewee A feels that a woman climbing the ladder is not tolerated in her organisation in spite of it being a hundred per cent female students institute. According to interviewee B, with mostly men at the managerial level, the manager-employee gap seems like a gender gap.

Interviewee B, under the theme Goal has suggested to include some soft skills like emotional intelligence, team collaboration and work life balance in the school curriculum which his school is lacking in.

The implications of the results show that the shortcomings of the culture of educational institutes impact them in negative way and act as a hindrance in the overall progress of the institutes. Therefore, the culture of the educational institutes should be taken care of with a constant effort for removing the flaws of the culture from the institute's side. This will prevent the institute from becoming a stagnant body of the society.

V. HOW COACHING PRACTICES CAN HELP?

According to Whitmore, Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximise their own performance (Whitmore, 2017, p. 12). Started to promote excellence in sports, it has been adapted and applied to business contexts and personal lives (Adams, 2016). Instead of focusing on problems, it uses the positive side to achieve goals, pursue development and explore dilemma (Ibid.). Another definition of Coaching given by Bressor and Wilson (2010, cited in Nieuwerburgh, 2012, p. 6) is Empowering people by facilitating self-directed learning, personal growth and improved performance. Coaching in education is a relatively distinct area of work that has been growing over recent years, starting in the early 2000s (Nieuwerburgh, 2012). Educational coaching can be defined as a one-to-one conversation focused on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate (Nieuwerburgh, 2012, p.17). Coaching has impacted education in many different ways which include, increased goal attainment, reduced stress, enhanced resilience, improved performance, implementation of new practices and overall growth (Nieuwerburgh, 2012, cited in Adam, 2016). It is taking hold in education in the UK, USA, Australia, and elsewhere.

To understand the role of coaching in education, first the purpose of education should be understood. Traditionally, schools and colleges were simply seen as the places for the transfer of knowledge but today's knowledge society demands more. In a knowledge society, education is the capacity to be creative in an environment of particular uncertainty, the capacity to properly manage the cognitive dissonance that gives rise to our failure to comprehend reality (Innerarity, 2010, quoted in Jesus, 2012, p.1). Keeping in mind the need of the society, UNESCO has added another pillar to the Pillars of Education, which is, learning to transform oneself and society (UNESCO, 2008). With the earlier Pillars of Education given by UNESCO, learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together, the purpose of education gets limited to making a perfect citizenry or a well-trained citizen (Delors, 1996). Changing organisational culture can help in attaining the changed aims of organisations which needs an emotionally intelligent approach which can balance all the elements (harder and softer) of the living system of the organisation (Whitmore, 2017). Harder elements include processes, systems and structure and more elastic elements are people, behaviour etc. Educational organisations interested in pursuing coaching approaches need to consider their preferred ways of developing the skills of active listening, asking powerful questions, emotional intelligence, giving and receiving feedback, and providing helpful challenge (Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

The effect of coaching practices can be discussed by finding the solution of shortcomings mentioned by the interviewees in coaching practices. The solution of the autocratic behavior of the managers given by Whitmore (2017) is by making the leader a coach. Leaders must be experienced as support by their team, not as a threat (Whitmore, 2017, p. 46) In effective cultures, a responsibility orientation is how power is exercised (Sinoway, 2012, p.1377). Managerial coaching provides a clear pathway (Kim et al. 2012, cited in Raza et al., 2017). Managerial coaching can be understood as an effort of manager for employee's achievement and development, the result of which is an extra effort towards performance enhancement from employees' side and hence more learning (Botyatzis et al., cited in Raza et al., 2017). This management action boosts employee learning, effectiveness, and participation. Coaching has become part of leadership development in organisations worldwide (Lyons and Bandura, 2017). When managers act as coach, employees feel thrived at work, accept ideas of others and enhance the learning of subordinates (Raza et al., 2017). Only a manager with skill – building approach can engage employees in the form of skilled problem solving (Lyons and Bandura, 2017). Through reflection, managers transfer their learning and make the employees feel that their contribution is valuable (Clarke, 2005 cited in Lancaster and Milia, 2015). Training in coaching skills now forms part of the professional development for school leaders in the UK and has been recognized as the new leadership skill for educators in the USA (Nieuwerburgh, 2012).

Whitmore's (2017) solution of lack of job satisfaction lies in coaching through which interdependency comes inside the team, and every member recognises the value and potential of working collaboratively and are more likely to have ambitious goals. Howard said, the difference between being in a culture that works for you and one that doesn't is the difference between just having a job and feeling that you are doing your life work (Sinoway, 2012, p.1376). Sergiovanni and Starrat (cited in Nieuwerburgh, 2017) suggest, success in introducing coaching skills and a coaching approach strengthens the self –confidence of individuals working in the organisation. According to Ahmed (1998, cited in Coman and Bonciu, 2016) for the survival of today's organisations in the midst of technological and societal change, new ways of motivating people and taking actions will be accepted as a cultural norm.

The interviewee A has suggested coaching for female employees to break the glass ceiling. This is by the suggestion of Thomas (2004) for alternative support for women's career development as little institutional support is available for the unique development needs of women.

Interviewee B has suggested having some soft skills like managing emotions, setting goals, team collaboration and work-life balance to be included in the school curriculum. This will better prepare students for challenging after-school life, and also help in removing the lack of goal and motivation from their lives. This proposal has been already mentioned by Evie (2017) that some parents are likely to see a separate box in their child's report card which will include the child's performance in such areas like Relationship Skills.

Apart from giving the solution of the shortcomings mentioned by the interviewees, coaching helps in many other aspects of education like teaching, learning, empowering parents to create positive relations with their children and implementing positive education programs in schools (Nieuwerburgh, 2017). Coaching is applicable at all primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

VI. CONCLUSION

Interviewee A compared the educational institutes with corporate during the interview, especially mentioning the examples of Harvard and General Electricals and said that educational institutes are far behind the corporate world in terms of success and the culture could be the reason of it. White (1984) has mentioned that an organisation's culture encompasses everything it does and everything it makes. The coaching culture could be the reason for the rapid success of many of the corporate organisations. According to Megginson et al. (2006), the agenda for creating a coaching culture is a way to direct attention and energy towards the organisation benefits. With having solution of the autocratic behavior of top managers, employees job dissatisfaction, gender based disparity and lack of soft skills in students, the coaching practices seem promising in improving the culture of the educational institutes of UAE.

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VIII APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Q-1. I'd like to ask you a few questions about the mission of your organization, and how it is communicated with your staff.

How much effort is made to help realize the aims of the mission for staff?

Tasks specified to the members is their first priority?

What are the gaps?

Can coaching help in promoting the staff to be more dedicated towards their mission and to realize the aims of the organization?

Q-2. At this point, what is your vision about the organization, for next ten years.
 What is your strategy?
 Would you like to include coaching practices in your strategy?

Q -3. Do you consider the organization, a successful organization?
 Members are rewarded in the organization?
 Personal knowledge and skills are appreciated in the organization?
 Can coaching help in encouraging the Managers to give more rewards and appreciation?

Q – 4. What is the nature of Bureaucracy in your organization?
 Being senior in the organization means more responsible or more privileged?
 How are the relations between the members of the organization, are there any gaps between the members from top to down?
 Can coaching help in developing the relations between the members and filling up the gaps in the organization?

Q -5. Do the employees get proper support in the organization?
 Individual emotions and thoughts are shared in the organization?
 Every opportunity is supplied for professional development?
 Managerial practices in the organization give way to freedom of work?
 Team work is encouraged and supported?
 Can coaching help in promoting team work in the organization and give more freedom of work to the members?

Appendix 2
 Coding

Step 1: Summary of interviewees

Question aspect	Mission dimension of the culture and the efficacy of coaching on it	Vision dimension of the culture and the efficacy of coaching on it	Success dimension of the culture and the efficacy of coaching on it	Bureaucracy dimension of the culture and the efficacy of coaching on it	Support dimension of the culture and the efficacy of coaching on it
Interview ee A	Mission driven quality assurance process Mission is inside the college Research is a component Marketing team Marketing team wrote mission statement Marketing purposes Top down approach Bottom up approach Adapt their style of working Flexibility Adaptability No orders Goals and objectives which they formulate	Process of university Lot of resistance from Dean's side Lot of structural changes Lot of learning How to manage two or three or more units There is a friction avoiding them to come together In their comfort zone Planning for the PhD. Program Moving in a right direction Slow paced Organizational learning is very slow Team work is	Success is a relative term Different aspects Individual person Fulfill all their dreams Personal, professional and emotional dreams are not fulfilled Disparity between faculty members and staff members Good practices from banking and corporate Educational institutes are far behind in terms of success Managers should be coached	Gender driven bureaucracy A lady climbing ladder is not tolerated Ladies are supposed to be an assistant Gender based gap Coaching for ladies	Free to share thoughts Freedom to work Autonomous way of work Take decisions

	<p>End users are the students External pressure External bodies Different task with a common aim Review meeting Empowered Motivated Part of the team Single handedly nothing is possible On team there is no eye Blame game doesn't work Business person Not as service Corporate philosophy First college established Faculty and Staff development There is a gap No coaching for deans and upward Deans feel that experience is enough They will not accept that there are shortcomings Leaders with personal coach There is a gap which can be filled Dean of the college with many badges Visited and talked with many other deans I feel was a type of coaching Ask about the problems and bring the changes Friction in our organization Working for a</p>	<p>lacking Bringing in Heads together Dialogue Face to face Learn from each other Coaching practices Innovation creativity</p>			
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	long time Autocracy No democratic principle				
Interviewee B	Typical mission of the school Realistic constraints Staff members are aware of the aims of the mission Teachers are assigned their duties Tasks are predefined Teachers are not committed and dedicated Not full freedom of work	To see our organization in one of the top ten in UAE Our student representation in the society as successful leader Coaching practices can work specially for students Students with great caliber lack goal and motivation Work life balance Coaching for after school life Subject knowledge is different Controlling emotions, team collaboration and work life balance should be taught in the school We have to give a balanced individual to the society	Each individual should get job satisfaction Unapproachability of lowest management to the highest Rigidness from top level Coaching practices can reduce the rigidness	Gap between three levels of management Highest level is not able to communicate Untimely implementation of rules Bossy attitude Coaching can reduce the bossy attitude	Male female gap converts into manager employee gap New comers are supported by senior teachers Predefined rules Not much freedom of work Coaching can improve team work

Step 2: Themes and their link with the evidence from the interview

Current situation	Goal	Friction	Gap
Interviewee A			
Different tasks with a common aim	Process of university	Lot of resistance from dean's side	No coaching for Deans and upwards
Blame game doesn't work	Lot of structural changes	Autocracy	Deans feel that experience is enough
Free to share thoughts	Lot of learning	Friction in our organization	There is a gap which can be filled
Take decisions	How to manage two or three or more units	No democratic principle	Disparity between faculty and staff members
Bottom up approach	Planning for the PhD. program	They will not accept that there are shortcomings	Gender based gap

Flexibility	Dialogue	Gender driven bureaucracy	Educational institutes are far behind in terms of success.
Adaptability	Learn from each other	There is a friction avoiding them to come together.	A lady climbing ladder is not tolerated
Moving in a right direction	Coaching practices		Personal, professional and emotional dreams are not fulfilled
Slow paced	Innovations		Single handedly nothing is possible
In their comfort zone	Creativity		Organizational learning is very slow
	Bringing in heads together		Team work is lacking
Interviewee B			
Typical mission of the school	To see our organization in one of the top ten in UAE	Rigidness from top level	Each individual should get job satisfaction
Staff members are aware of the aims of the mission	Our student's representation in the society as successful leader	Not full freedom of work	Gap between three levels of management
Tasks are predefined	We have to give a balanced individual to the society	Unapproachability of the lowest management to the highest	Male female gap converts into manager employee gap
	Controlling emotions, team collaboration and work life balance should be taught in the school		Students with great caliber lack goal and motivation
			Teachers are not committed and dedicated
			Work life balance
			Untimely implementation of rules