OBTC 2017 at Providence College
June 14th – 17th, 2017

Submission Template

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Submission Template for the
2017 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators

1) Title, Abstract & Keywords
   *In your abstract, please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words),
   and three to four keywords. If your proposal is accepted, this description will be
   printed in the conference program.*

What's the Culture of this Organization? Understanding Organizational Culture

This session is a way of understanding and demonstrating the nonlinear, multi layered
rich concept of organizational culture. Joanne Martin's (1992) work on three perspectives
of organizational culture: integration, differentiation and fragmentation will be
demonstrated through the activity and the session. This is done, specifically through the
application of Joanne Martine's dynamic discussion of organizational culture. The goal is
to unpack and discuss the layers of organization culture by looking at the core culture,
sub cultures and counter cultures and demonstrate that all these are important parts to a
holistic and in depth study of the concept of organizational culture.

Key words:

Organizational Culture
Integration
Differentiation
Fragmentation

2) Teaching Implications:
   *What is the contribution of your session to management pedagogy/andragogy?
   Specifically, please include your learning objectives, and describe what management
   and/or teaching topics are relevant to your session, and why. Also, include
   theoretical, disciplinary, or theoretical foundations that will help reviewers
   understand how your ideas fit within the broader field of management.*

Learning Objectives:
   1. To unpack the concept of organizational culture
   2. To ensure that the takeaway is the complex nature of organizational culture
   3. To understand the dynamic framework of organizational culture provided by
      Joanne Martin.

*"As individuals come into contact with organizations, they come into contact with dress
norms, stories people tell about what goes on, the organization's formal rules and
procedures, its informal codes of behavior, rituals, tasks, pay systems, jargon, and
jokes only understood by insiders, and so on. These elements are some of the
manifestations of organizational culture. When cultural members interpret the
meanings of these manifestations, their perceptions, memories, beliefs, experiences,*

and values will vary, so interpretations will differ- even of the same phenomenon. The patterns or configurations of these interpretations, and the ways they are enacted, constitute culture."   Martin, J. 1992: 3.

The study of organizations as cultural systems offers a useful metaphor for viewing organizations (Morgan, 1997). In organizational research, it was not until the late 1970s that the study of organizational culture entered into the management area. Researchers were interested in the discussion of organizational culture as a broad concept. For instance, Pettigrew (1979) outlined one concept of organizational culture, which was to highlight some of the more cultural and expressive aspects of organizational life. Pettigrew was interested in focusing on the issue of how organizational cultures are created. The approach to this question was through discussion of symbols, myths, language, ritual, etc., concepts that were commonly used in anthropology. Deal and Kennedy (1982) described the essence of organizational culture as the way we do things around here.

In 1983, a special issue of Administrative Science Quarterly was published with articles representing diverse approaches to the study of culture in organizations. The idea was to stimulate interest in the subject of organizational culture, and in that sense, the early works on organizational culture were adequate. Organizational culture thus is described as a socially constructed, unseen, and unobservable force behind activities, as a social energy that moves members to act, and as a unifying theme that provides meaning, direction and mobilization for organizational members. (Ott, 1989). In other words, this description of culture is highlighting the pervasive and omnipotent quality of culture, as well as the shared aspect of culture. Some scholars looked at the elements that make up organizational culture. Thus, Schein (1981) identified three levels of organizational culture - level 1 - artifacts, level 2 - values and beliefs, and level 3 - basic underlying assumptions. In Schein's typology, artifacts are visible but often not decipherable, values are marked by greater awareness, and underlying all these are basic assumptions that are taken for granted, invisible and preconscious. Schein (1985) defines culture as the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and have worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems. Mary Jo Hatch (1993) built upon Schein's model of organizational culture and filled in gaps regarding the appreciation of organizational culture as symbols and processes. Hatch formulated a new model called cultural dynamics and articulated the processes of manifestation, realization, symbolization and interpretation and visualized the cultural process as dynamic and circular.

However, Martin (1992, 2002) provided a unique way to capture the different strands and complexities of organizational culture. Joanne Martin (1992) held that

organizations/cultural systems can be fragmented, differentiated and integrated. Organizations operate as cultural systems and fragmented cultural systems. The notion of culture as being interpreted by the individual whether employee, manager or any member of the organization is central to Martin's approach to organizational culture(Martin, 2002).

Martin's discussion of organizational culture is useful way for students to understand how cultures in organizations can be deep and complex. They will be able to be introduced to the notions of core organizational culture but also sub cultures and counter cultures. This will provide them with a realistic understanding of culture as is in organizations, not just a theoretical abstract view of culture. It is the hope that they will transcend the classroom experiential learning and then have a more nuanced handle on the workings of an organization when they enter the "real world" and enter the workforce. Hence there are practical implications and consequences of this activity to enhance and sharpen their view of organizational culture.

3) Session Description and Plan:
What will you actually do in this session? If appropriate, please include a timeline estimating the activities will you facilitate: how long will they take, and how will participants be involved? Please remember that reviewers will be evaluating how well the time request matches the activities you'd like to do, and the extent you can reasonably accomplish the session's goals. Reviewers will also be looking for how you are engaging the participants in the session.

In this session, participants will be divided into three groups. They will get a broad and brief description about a fictitious company, which will include details about the type of company: what it produces or manufactures, sector it is in. The three groups will each be given around ten minutes to come up with a description of the culture of the organization. However each group will be asked to provide a description that is slightly different. Group 1 will first be asked to provide a description of the core culture of the organization (this will take about ten minutes) Once that is complete, this will be shared with all groups. Group 2 will be asked to provide a description of the culture of a particular unit within the organization, a department such as finance, personnel or production that is in keeping with the core values of the organization. Group 3 will at the same time as Group 2 be asked to provide a description of the culture of the culture of a particular unit within the organization, a department such as finance, personnel or production, but that may be in contradiction or conflict with the central culture of the organization (this will take about ten minutes). After this there will be a debrief and discussion of the input from the three groups, for about ten minutes. I anticipate having overall about 25 to 30 minutes for the execution of this activity.

4) Application to Conference theme:
   How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of *Navigating the Changing Currents*?

   I believe this session will fit very well with the overall theme of navigating the changing currents. This is because the model of culture that is being demonstrated is one that is not static but a dynamic one and through the different aspects of integration differentiation and fragmentation that Joanne Martine(1992) describes, it is clear that organizational culture can be an instrument for change if we recognize the nonlinear dynamic nature of culture in organizations.

5) Unique Contribution to OBTC:
   Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?

If the proposal is accepted, this will be the first time that this work would be presented. It will give me the opportunity to present my work before colleagues at a pedagogy conference of repute. I have never presented this work. I would be very appreciative should the proposal be accepted to be able to get valuable feedback and insights on this session with a view to improving the activity. The goal subsequently is to develop it for publication to a journal such as Management Teaching Review or any another appropriate outlet.

References

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