

CHAPTER 2 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Chapter 1 explored the background to and the motivation for this study, with specific reference to organisational culture and organisational commitment as the main constructs. In this chapter the concept “organisational culture” is explored in more detail.

This chapter’s main focus areas include the following theoretical aspects of the concept organisational culture: background, definition, model, dimensions, development, change and management of culture.

2.1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE CONCEPT ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Social scientists have explored the notion of organisational culture as a perspective in organisational theory over the past decades. Brown (1998, p 2) states that “current interests in organisational culture stems from at least four different sources: climate research, national cultures, human resource management and from conviction approaches which emphasise the rational and structural nature of the organisation to be unable to offer a full explanation of organisational behaviour”.

Research findings by means of organisational climate surveys that were conducted in the 1970s suggest that organisational culture seems to be a sophisticated approach to understand the beliefs and attitudes of individual members about their respective organisations (Brown, 1998).

The origin of organisational culture from a national culture point of view is based, among others, on the work of Deal and Kennedy (1982). According to this view organisational culture is seen as being central to organisational success rather than factors such as structure, strategy or politics. As a result the attention shifted away from national cultures and focused more on organisational culture.

Interests in organisational culture from the human resource management and performance point of views stems from the fact that organisational culture was perceived to be offering a non-mechanistic, flexible and imaginative approach to understanding how organisations work (Brown, 1998). Consequently, organisational culture is considered to be the great “cure-all” for most organisational problems (Wilson, 1992).

Other theoretical development of the concept organisational culture includes studies conducted within the field of organisational theory.

These studies focused on the description and understanding of the concept organisation culture by using typologies or classifications, which include the following:

- ❖ Deal and Kennedy (1982) identified four generic types of cultures to describe organisational culture, namely the tough-guy/macho culture, the work-hard/play-hard culture, the bet-your company culture and the process culture.
- ❖ Handy (1985) described organisational culture by using four types of classification, namely power, role, task and person cultures.
- ❖ Schein (1985) used three levels to explain organisational culture, namely artefacts, values and basic underlying assumptions.
- ❖ Scholtz (1987) identified five primary culture typologies, namely stable, reactive, anticipating, exploring and creative.
- ❖ Hampden-Turner (1990) used four types of culture to describe organisational culture, namely role, power, task and atomistic cultures.
- ❖ Hofstede (1991) highlighted that cultures differ based on five dimensions, namely power distance, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity and confusion dynamism.
- ❖ O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) presented seven primary characteristics to describe organisational culture, namely innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation aggressiveness and stability.

The above-mentioned typologies of organisational culture provide broad overviews of the variations that exist between theorists in their description of this concept. The variations and differences have mainly evolved over time.

2.2 DEFINITION OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

A basic definition of organisational culture is necessary to provide a point of departure in the quest for an understanding of the phenomenon. Martins and Martins (2003, p 380) state the general definition of organisational culture as “a system of shared meaning held by members, distinguishing the organisation from other organisations”.

In relation to the above definition, Arnold (2005, p 625) indicates that “organisational culture is the distinctive norms, beliefs, principles and ways of behaving that combine to give each organisation its distinct character”. These two definitions suggest that organisational culture distinguishes one organisation from another organisation. Therefore, organisational culture is to an organisation what personality is to an individual (Johnson, 1990).

Linking up with the above definitions, Schein (1985, p 9) also defines organisational culture as “a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has 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 those problems”. This description highlights that organisational culture is created assumptions, which are accepted as a way of doing things and are passed on to new members of an organisation.

For new employees this would mean adaptive behaviour within the organisation that leads to new belief systems. This new and adaptive behaviour instilled through organisational values and beliefs are associated

with rituals, myths and symbols to reinforce the core assumptions of organisational culture (Hofstede, 1991).

In relation to the above definition, Brown (1998, p 9) defines organisational culture as “the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation’s history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members”. This suggests that organisational culture is articulated in the organisation, in order to shape the way in which organisational members should behave.

However, this pattern of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, principles and assumptions may be unwritten or non-verbalised behaviour that describe the way in which things get done; to give the organisation its unique character (Brown, 1998).

Given the various definitions of organisational culture which were discussed in this section, the adopted and relevant definition for this study is stated by Harrison (1993, p 11) as the “distinctive constellation of beliefs, values, work styles, and relationships that distinguish one organisation from another”.

In other words, organisational culture includes those qualities of the organisation that give it a particular climate or feel. As a result the distinct qualities of an organisation may manifest through four dimensions, namely power, role, achievement and support (Harrison, 1993).

2.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE MODEL

There are different descriptive models that attempt to diagnose organisational culture in the field of organisational development. Harrison (1993) presents a theoretical model for the purpose of diagnosing organisational culture which is adopted in this study.

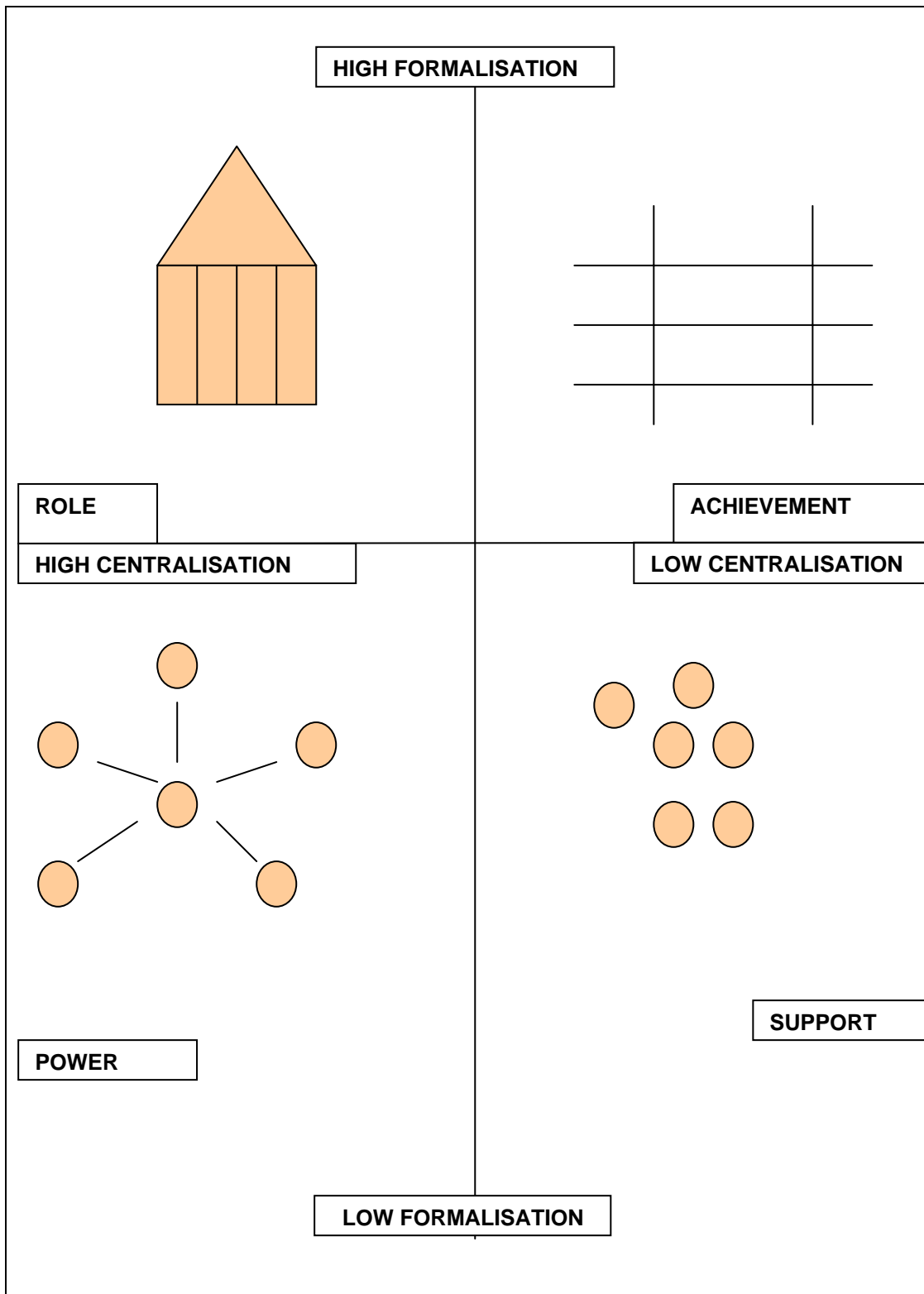


Figure 2.1: Organisational Culture Model by Harrison (1993)

Harrison (1993, p 8) states that “though the model is intended to be descriptive rather than evaluative, there is a tendency to perceive it in evaluative terms”. This descriptive model creates an awareness of the culture gap between the existing and preferred cultures in an organisation (Harrison, 1993). Furthermore, this model maintains that organisational culture can be diagnosed in four cultural dimensions, namely power-oriented culture; role-oriented culture; achievement-oriented culture; and support-oriented culture (Harrison, 1993).

The organisational culture model presented in figure 2.1 indicates that the four dimensions of culture orientation are measured within two modes of operation, which are formalisation and centralisation (Harrison, 1993). Both modes of operation can be measured on a scale of low or high levels.

According to Martins and Martins (2003, p 382) “high formalisation in an organisation creates predictability, orderliness and consistency”. In other words, a strong culture can serve as a substitute for formalisation. This suggests that the organisation’s formal rules and regulations which act to regulate its members’ behaviour can be internalised by organisational members when they accept the organisation’s culture; this takes place without the need for written documentation (Martins & Martins, 2003). Therefore, low formalisation of rules and regulations could reflect a weak organisational culture.

2.3.1 Power culture dimension

Power-oriented culture is a dimension of the organisational culture model. In any given organisation there is a need to use power in order to exercise control and influence behaviour. Harrison and Stokes (1992, p 14) define power-oriented culture as “organisational culture that is based on inequality of access to resources”. Figure 2.1 of the organisational culture model indicates that a power-oriented culture organisation is characterised by high

centralisation and low formalisation modes of operation. Brown (1998, p 66) states that “a power culture has a single source of power from which rays of influence spread throughout the organisation”. This means that power is centralised and organisational members are connected to the centre by functional and specialist strings (Harrison, 1993).

This type of organisational culture can also be regarded as being rule oriented in the sense that it focuses on respect of authority, rationality in procedures, division of work and normalisation (Hampden-Turner, 1990). The centre is formal authority and holds the power to control and influence activities within the organisation.

In this type of organisational culture a dominant head sits in the centre surrounded by intimates and subordinates who are the dependants (Harrison, 1993). In this regard a personal, informal and power management style becomes valued. Normally the organisational structure is a web structure that is hierarchical in nature (Brown, 1998). The web structure implies that the whole structural system connects to the central power while being hierarchical in nature means power is shared from top to bottom.

Power-oriented culture is found in both small and larger organisations. In small organisations run by power-oriented leaders, leadership resides in a few and rests on their ability (Brown, 1998). Those exercising power strive to maintain absolute control over subordinates. In such systems, the size of the organisation is a problem because if the web links to too many activities it can break.

Harrison and Stokes (1992, p 14) indicate that in larger organisation “at its worst power-oriented organisational cultures tends towards a rule by fear, with abuse of power for personal advantage on the part of the leaders, their friends and their protégés”. This would imply that in a larger organisation there is the tendency to instil fear in the employees and to abuse power. This can lead to nepotism and favouritism.

In general, a power-oriented culture organisation often has a top down communication approach (Harrison, 1993). Such an organisation may be politically oriented in the sense that decisions are taken largely on the bases of influence rather than on procedural or purely logical grounds. The management may be threatened by new changes imposed by internal and external environments (Hampden-Turner, 1990).

Organisations try to rule their environment by exercising absolute power to dominate and control. As a result, some managers may experience the new managerial role of sharing power as losing power because their authority used to come from hierarchical positions (Kanter, 1997).

TABLE 2.1 DISADVANTAGES AND ADVANTAGES OF POWER
DIMENSION (Harrison, 1993 p 32 -33)

Disadvantages	Advantages
<p>People give the boss's wishes the highest priority, even when it interferes with important work.</p> <p>People are afraid to give bad news to the boss.</p> <p>People do not question the leaders even when they are seen to be wrong.</p> <p>People with power break rules with impunity and take special privileges.</p> <p>Information is a source of personal power and is restricted to friends and allies.</p> <p>People are promoted by being loyal to those in power even when they are not especially competent.</p>	<p>Unifies individual effort behind the vision of the leader.</p> <p>Can move quickly in the market and make rapid internal changes.</p> <p>Leverages the knowledge, wisdom and talent of the leader.</p> <p>Can provide direction and certainty; reduce conflict and confusion in times of emergency.</p>

Table 2.1 presents the disadvantages and advantages of the power-oriented culture dimension, which reflect the positive and negative effects of this type of culture in an organisation.

On the other hand, power-oriented organisations also have a positive side. According to Brown (1998, p 67) "the greatest strength of power cultures is their ability to react quickly, but their success largely depends on the abilities of the person or people at the centre". In other words, power-oriented organisations are able to exploit opportunities and react quickly to threats or danger.

2.3.2 Role culture dimension

In the previous discussion on power-oriented culture, it was demonstrated how power is associated with people in high authority. On the other hand, Harrison and Stokes (1992, p 15) define role-oriented culture as "substituting a system of structures and procedures for the naked power of the leader". This type of culture focuses mainly on job description and specialisation. In other words, work is controlled by procedures and rules that spell out the job description, which is more important than the person who fills the position (Harrison, 1993).

Figure 2.1 displays the role-oriented culture as being high in both formalisation and centralisation on modes of operation. The figure further depicts this type of culture like a Greek temple with pillars (Harrison, 1993).

Brown (1998, p 67) states that "the strength of a role culture lies in its functions or specialities (finance, purchasing, production and so forth) which can be thought of as a series of pillars which are co-ordinated and controlled by a small group of senior executives (the pediment)". This implies that the foundation and pillars of such an organisation are the formalised and

centralised functions; which are controlled by role and communication procedures (Hampden-Turner, 1990). Such an organisation is often stereotyped as bureaucratic because of its mechanistic procedures.

Organisations with this type of culture is characterised by a set of roles or job boxes joined together in a logical fashion (Harrison, 1993). These roles or job descriptions are coordinated at the top by a narrow band of senior management. The common link between the power-oriented and the role-oriented organisational cultures is that they depend on the use of external rewards and punishments to motivate organisational members (Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

TABLE 2.2 DISADVANTAGES AND ADVANTAGES OF ROLE DIMENSION (Harrison, 1993 p 34 -35)

Disadvantages	Advantages
<p>People follow the rules even when these rules get in the way of doing the work.</p> <p>It is considered a sin to exceed one's authority or deviate from accepted procedures.</p> <p>It is more important to avoid deviating from the norm than it is to do the right thing.</p> <p>Jobs are so tightly defined that there is little room to contribute one's unique talents and abilities.</p> <p>People are treated as interchangeable parts of a machine rather than as individual human beings.</p> <p>It is difficult to get approval for changes that people give up on making needed improvements.</p>	<p>Well-designed structures and systems make room for efficient operations and reduce the time for learning jobs.</p> <p>Clear lines of authority and responsibility reduce conflict, turf battles, confusion and indecision.</p> <p>Clear, fair rules and guidelines protect individuals from exploitation and abusive use of power.</p> <p>Having good systems, procedures and organisational memory prevents having to "reinvent the wheel".</p> <p>Structure, routine and predictability provide security and reduce stress.</p>

Table 2.2 describes the disadvantages and advantages of the role-oriented culture dimension reflect the positive and negative effects of this type of culture in an organisation.

According to Harrison and Stokes (1992, p15) role-oriented organisations "operate on the assumption that people are not to be trusted, so they do not give individual autonomy or discretion to members at lower levels". This culture results in a hierarchical chain of command which creates stability and predictability. It can offer security for organisational members by offering a predictable rate of climbing up a pillar and a chance to acquire specialist skill without risk (Brown, 1998). In essence, this role culture exists to ensure that organisational members do not make mistakes, while emphasising legality, legitimacy and responsibility.

Role clarification is crucial in an organisation with a role culture. The emphasis of role clarification is based on technical expertise and specialisation more than product innovation or product cost (Harrison, 1993). This presents a limitation to an organisation with a role-oriented culture. Brown (1998, p 67) states that "role cultures are likely to be most successful in stable and predictable environments over which the organisation is able to exert some control or where product life spans are long". Therefore, an organisation with this type of culture can find it difficult to survive in an environment that requires the ability to be adaptive and responsive to dynamic changes.

2.3.3 Achievement culture dimension

Harrison and Stokes (1992, p 17) define achievement-oriented culture as "the aligned culture which lines people up behind a common vision or purpose". Achievement culture is often referred to as task culture, which entails that organisational members focus on realising the set purpose and goals of the organisation. Brown (1998, p 67) states that "a task culture is one in which

power is somewhat diffuse, being based on expertise rather than position or charisma". Figure 2.1 illustrates that achievement-oriented culture's mode of operation is high in formalisation and low in centralisation. This implies that there is a natural balance between formality and centrality of power, which is shared within the organisations.

The organisational structure is like a net, with some of the strands of the net thicker and stronger than others (Harrison, 1993). Power is allocated based on short-term horizon, such as projects classifications. The completion of a task is important as team work rather than the promotion of individual positions or work (Hampden-Turner, 1990). Unlike role-oriented culture, where positional or personal power plays an important role, skills, competencies and expert power form the core of achievement-oriented culture. Therefore, authority is based on appropriate knowledge and competence.

The main strategic objective of this culture is to bring the right people together, in order to achieve the organisational goals (Brown, 1998). This suggests that the achievement-oriented culture is similar to team orientation as a characteristic of organisational culture. Martins and Martins (2003, p 381) describe team orientation as "the degree to which work activities are organised around teams rather than the individuals". By bringing together a spectrum of people who are specialists in their fields; the organisation is able to meet its market demand.

According to Brown (1998, p 69) the strength of achievement culture is that "in those environments where the market is competitive, product life spans are short and constant innovation is a necessity; this culture can be highly successful". This is due to functions and activities that are team structured and evaluated in terms of their contribution to organisational goals.

Teams of talented people and resources are brought together to focus only on specific projects or tasks. Stander (2003, p 199) states that the advantage of team, rather than individual, jobs is “creating the high-performance, high-flexibility, and high-commitment organisation”. This is due to the fact that teams generate positive synergy through coordinated efforts. While using teams is an advantage, the main weakness of the achievement culture in this regard is that it overshadows individual performance (Harrison, 1993).

TABLE 2.3 DISADVANTAGES AND ADVANTAGES OF ACHIEVEMENT DIMENSION (Harrison, 1993 p 36 - 37)

Disadvantages	Advantages
<p>People believe so much in what they are doing that the end comes to justify the means.</p> <p>People become intolerant of personal needs, and they sacrifice family, social life and health for work.</p> <p>The group members talk only to themselves and become isolated from others and from reality.</p> <p>The group only cooperates internally, which others see as arrogant and competitive.</p> <p>Because dissent and criticism are stifled, the group has difficulty correcting its own errors.</p> <p>The commitment to excellence at any cost leads to waste and inefficiency.</p>	<p>Unity of effort toward mutually valued goals.</p> <p>Reduced need for controls on individuals.</p> <p>High internal motivation.</p> <p>Maximum utilization of members' talents.</p> <p>High self-esteem for organisational members.</p> <p>Rapid learning and problem solving.</p> <p>Rapid adaptation to change.</p>

The above-mentioned disadvantages and advantages of the achievement-oriented culture dimension reflect the positive and negative effect of this type of culture in an organisation.

2.3.4 Support culture dimension

Support-oriented culture dimension differ from the achievement-oriented culture which emphasises teams, because promotes individuals as the central point in the organisation. Harrison and Stokes (1992, p 20) define support-oriented culture as an “organisational climate that is based on mutual trust between the individual and the organisation”. Thus, support-oriented organisational culture is often referred to as a person-oriented culture.

Brown (1998, p 69) states that a support-oriented organisation “exists solely for the individuals who compromise it, and may be represented diagrammatically as a cluster in which no individual dominates”. Figure 2.1 depicts the mode of operation of this culture as being low in formalisation and centralisation.

The organisational structure is a benevolent cluster structure with minimal hierarchy, which implies less power control of employees (Harrison, 1993). Authority is assigned on the basis of task competence; this is similar to the role-oriented culture organisation. Power sharing and the influence of power can only be exercised where there is a need for expert or task competence (Brown, 1998). As a result individuals influence each other through example and helpfulness.

The support-oriented culture resembles the people orientation characteristic of organisational culture. Martins and Martins (2003, p 381) describe people orientation culture as “the degree which management decisions take into consideration the effect of outcomes on people”. This implies that the well being of employees is important to managers in this type of organisation.

These organisations are normally small in size and people have worked together for a long time and have managed to build up personal relationships (Harrison, 1993). The relationships are characterised by mutuality and trust

which binds people to one another. Therefore, the relationship exists to serve the needs of the members. In this type of culture there is minimum formal and central power that replaces management control with consensus decision making (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). Communication is often verbal or informal, and usually flows in all directions. Subsequently, decision-making occurs through informal communication networks.

TABLE 2.4 DISADVANTAGES AND ADVANTAGES OF SUPPORT
DIMENSION (Harrison, 1993 p 38 - 39)

Disadvantages	Advantages
<p>People may focus on relationships and neglect the work.</p> <p>Out of kindness difficult personnel decisions may be avoided.</p> <p>When consensus cannot be reached the group may become indecisive and lose direction.</p> <p>Disagreement may be avoided, there is surface harmony and covert conflict</p> <p>Changes may take a long time because of the need to get everyone on board</p> <p>People are rewarded in the same way although they might not have contributed in the same way. This could create frustrations.</p>	<p>Good internal communication and integration.</p> <p>High levels of commitment to decision.</p> <p>Sophisticated process skills manage people issues well.</p> <p>High levels of cooperative, effective group work.</p> <p>Good at sensing environment.</p> <p>Providing caring, responsive service.</p> <p>High trust between individuals and the organisation.</p> <p>Nurturing members for good health.</p> <p>Good balance for achievement culture.</p>

The above-mentioned disadvantages and advantages of support-oriented culture dimension reflect the positive and negative effects of this type of culture in an organisation.

According to Brown (1998, p 69) “in the person culture the individuals themselves decide on their own work allocation, with rules and co-ordinative mechanisms of minimal significance”. In other words, work roles are assigned on the basis of personal preference normally based on the need for learning and development. Support-oriented culture creates a conducive workplace environment that encourages proactive, experimentation and openness to change (Harrison, 1993). This suggests that the organisation values the talents of individual employees who also value their own work. Thus the organisation sees its role as resourcing talented individuals and the latter are allowed to make decisions.

2.4 FUNCTIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The main function of organisational culture is to define the way of doing things in order to give meaning to organisational life (Arnold, 2005). Making meaning is an issue of organisational culture, because organisational members need to benefit from the lessons of previous members. As a result, organisational members are able to profit from whatever trials and errors regarding knowledge others have been able to accumulate (Johnson, 1990).

Organisational culture also determines organisational behaviour, by identifying principal goals; work methods; how members should interact and address each other; and how to conduct personal relationships (Harrison, 1993).

Brown (1998, p 89- 91) states the following functions of organisational culture:

- ❖ *Conflict reduction.* A common culture promotes consistency of perception, problem definition, evaluation of issues and opinions, and preferences for action.
- ❖ *Coordination and control.* Largely because culture promotes consistency of outlook it also facilitates organisational processes of co-ordination and control.

- ❖ *Reduction of uncertainty.* Adopting of the cultural mind frame is an anxiety reducing device which simplifies the world of work, makes choices easier and rational action seem possible.
- ❖ *Motivation.* An appropriate and cohesive culture can offer employees a focus of identification and loyalty, foster beliefs and values that encourage employees to perform.
- ❖ *Competitive advantage.* Strong culture improves the organisation's chances of being successful in the marketplace.

In addition to the above functions, Martins and Martins (2003, p 382) also mention the following as functions of organisational culture:

- ❖ It has a boundary-defining role, that is, it creates distinctions between one organisation and the other organisations.
- ❖ It conveys a sense of identity to organisational members.
- ❖ It facilitates commitment to something larger than individual self-interests.
- ❖ It enhances social system stability as the social glue that helps to bind the organisation by providing appropriate standards for what employees should say and do.
- ❖ It serves as a meaningful control mechanism that guides or shapes the attitudes and behaviours of employees.

These functions of organisational culture suggest that an organisation cannot operate without a culture, because it assists the organisation to achieve its goals. In general terms, organisational culture gives organisational members direction towards achieving organisational goals (Hampden-Turner, 1990).

2.5 STRONG AND WEAK ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES

Organisational culture can be either weak or strong. Martins and Martins (2003, p 382) highlight that “in a strong culture, the organisation's core values are held strongly and shared widely”. This suggests that when organisational members accept the shared values, they become more committed to them. A

strong organisational culture therefore refers to organisations in which beliefs and values are shared relatively consistently throughout an organisation (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Strong organisational cultures have a great influence on the behaviour of organisational members (Martins & Martins, 2003). In other words, a strong culture is a powerful lever for guiding behaviour (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Brown (1998, p 226) also believes that strong organisational culture can enable an organisation to achieve high performance based on the following reasons:

- ❖ A strong organisational culture facilitates goal alignment.
- ❖ A strong organisational culture leads to high levels of employee motivation.
- ❖ A strong organisational culture is better able to learn from its past.

In relation to the above benefits of a strong organisational culture, Martins and Martins (2003, p 382) states that “one specific result of a strong culture should be a lower employee turnover”. This is due to the fact that when organisational members agree about what the organisation stands for, the end results are cohesiveness, loyalty and organisational commitment (Martins & Martins, 2003).

A weak culture, on the other hand, means the opposite of a strong culture, in other words, organisational members do not subscribe to the shared beliefs, values and norms (O'Reilly et al, 1991). Organisational members in a weak culture find it difficult to identify with the organisation's core values and goals (Wilson, 1992). As a result components or different departments within such an organisation uphold different beliefs that do not necessarily address the core goals of the organisation.

Weak cultures have a negative impact on employees because they are directly linked to increased turnover (Harrison, 1993). In essence, the fundamental strength of the organisation's culture is determined by how weak or strong it is.

2.6 CREATING AND SUSTAINING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The following discussion focus on how an organisation is able to create and sustain its culture.

2.6.1 Creating organisational culture

The main source of organisational culture is the organisation's leadership. Leadership in this context refers to the influential individuals, often the founders who have a major impact on the creation of the organisation's early culture (Schein, 1985). According to Brown (1998, p 48) "in building their organisations founders tend to impose their beliefs and values about the nature of the world, organisations and human nature on other organisational participants". This suggests that the founders of the organisation, created the organisational culture.

Martins and Martins (2003, p 385) indicate that the founders of an organisation follow the following ways in their process of culture-creation:

- ❖ Firstly, founders only appoint and keep employees who think and feel the way they do.
- ❖ Secondly, they indoctrinate and socialise these individuals to their way of thinking.
- ❖ Finally, the founders' own behaviour act as role model that encourages employees to identify with them, thereby internalising their beliefs, values and assumptions.

Organisational culture is therefore, not created accidentally or spontaneously but through founders who have specific values and beliefs in their endeavour to realise their vision and goals.

2.6.2 Sustaining organisational culture

In order to keep the organisational culture alive, the organisation has to ensure that its culture is transmitted to organisational members (Martins & Martins, 2003).

Brown (1998, p 55 – 59) presents the following three basic stages in which organisational culture can be sustained in the organisation:

2.6.2.1 Pre-selection

The first stage of sustaining organisational culture is the pre-selection stage. The pre-selection stage is characterised by potential recruits who aspire to become members of an organisation, who may make great efforts to learn about its history and culture (Brown, 1998). The selection process is also used by the organisation to appoint individuals who will fit into the organisation's culture; the values of such individuals should be consistent with those of the organisation (Martins & Martins, 2003).

2.6.2.2 Socialisation

The socialisation stage follows the pre-selection stage of sustaining organisational culture. According to Brown (1998, p 57) this stage can be described as the "enculturation process by which participants learn the culturally accepted beliefs, values and behaviours, so that they are able to act as effective members of the group". This suggests that during the socialisation stage, the organisation helps new organisational members to adapt to its culture (Martins & Martins, 2003).

Martins and Martins (2003, p 388) conceptualise the socialisation process as consisting of the following three stages:

- ❖ The pre-arrival stage encompasses all the learning that occurs before a new employee joins the organisation.
- ❖ The encounter stage is when the new member sees what the organisation is really like and confronts the possibility that expectations and reality may diverge.
- ❖ The metamorphosis stage is when long-term changes take place and the new members must work out any problems discovered during the encounter stage.

2.6.2.3 Incorporation/Rejection

The incorporation or rejection stage is the final stage of sustaining organisational culture. It is through the socialisation process that organisational members may be incorporated or rejected (Brown, 1998). Indicators that the individual member has reached full incorporation includes acceptance by the work group, understanding and acceptance of the organisation's culture (Martins & Martins, 2003). On the other hand rejection may lead to loss of key goals, values and assumptions; which ultimately create a crisis of identity for organisational members (Schein, 1985).

2.7 METHODS OF LEARNING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational members in a number of ways and methods can learn organisational culture. According to Brown (1998, p 10 – 30) the following ways have been identified to be methods of learning the organisation's culture:

- ❖ *Artefacts*. They refer to the total physical and socially constructed environment of an organisation. Examples of artefacts include office space, equipments, rules, systems and procedures.

- ❖ *Language*. It refers to the fundamental way in which the organisation comprehends its world. Examples of language include jokes, metaphors, stories, myths and legends.
- ❖ *Behaviour patterns*. They refer to recurrent patterns of behaviour which are a feature of organisational life. These patterns include rites, rituals, ceremonies and celebrations.
- ❖ *Norms of Behaviour*. They refer to rules for behaviour which dictate what are considered to be appropriate and inappropriate responses from employees in certain circumstances. Such norms develop over time as individuals negotiate with each other in their attempts to reach a consensus on how to deal with organisational issues.
- ❖ *Heroes*. They make success possible, provide role models and portray the organisation to external constituencies. Heroes are the people who motivate other employees.
- ❖ *Symbols and symbolic action*. These include words, objects, conditions, acts or characteristics of the organisation, which mean something to organisational members. Typical symbols found in organisations include corporate logos, policies and products.
- ❖ *Beliefs, values and attitudes*. Values are intimately connected with moral and ethical codes; they determine what people think ought to be done. Beliefs on the other hand, refer to what people think is and is not true. Attitudes connect belief and values with feelings; they may be thought of as a learned predisposition to respond consistently in a favourable and unfavourable manner.
- ❖ *Basic assumptions*. They are taken-for-granted solution to an identifiable problem. Basic assumptions guide organisational members' perception, feelings and emotions about things in the organisation.
- ❖ *History*. Culture is understood to be a product of the historical process.

The different ways described above, can be used to transmit organisational culture during the process of sustaining it.

2.8 CHANGING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

There are different theoretical views on changing or managing organisational culture, which suggest that the process of culture change is complex. O'Reilly (1989) believes that it is possible to change or manage organisational culture by choosing the attitudes and behaviours that are required, identifying the norms that promote or impede them, and then taking action to create the desired effect.

In relation to that, Arnold (2005, p 579) states that "culture can be seen as something that can be managed or changed when the existing culture is inappropriate or even detrimental to the organisation's competitive needs". Therefore, organisations undertake conscious culture change because it is necessary to do so (Harrison, 1993).

On the other hand, Martins and Martins (2003, p 395) states that "changing an organisation's culture is extremely difficult but cultures can be changed". Thus, Harrison (1993, p 21) highlights that although it is possible to change organisational culture, changing the fundamental cultural orientation of an organisation has the following drawbacks:

- ❖ It is difficult to achieve, requiring deep changes in values and management style and in organisation systems, structures, and rewards systems.
- ❖ It takes a long time, three to five years or much more.
- ❖ It creates turmoil and stress within the organisation.
- ❖ The effort results in the organisation suffering a decrement in performance at first, which often causes the leadership to abandon the effort before it bears fruit.

Schein (1985) argues that before any attempt is made to change organisational culture, it is imperative to understand the existing culture and how it is sustained through organisational culture diagnosis.

Brown (1998, p 189 – 192) presents the following steps, which can be followed during the process of managing organisational culture change:

- ❖ Step 1: Analysing the existing culture – establishing a norm gap.
- ❖ Step 2: Experiencing the desired culture – systems, introduction and involvement.
- ❖ Step 3: Modifying the existing culture – systems installation.
- ❖ Step 4: Sustaining the desired culture – ongoing evaluation and renewal.

According to Martins and Martins (2003, p 395) organisational culture change can only take place when most or all of the following conditions exist:

- ❖ *A dramatic crisis.* This is the shock that undermines the status quo and calls into question the relevance of the current culture.
- ❖ *Turnover in leadership.* New top leadership which can provide an alternative set of key values may be perceived as more capable of responding to the crisis.
- ❖ *Young and small organisation.* The younger the organisation, the less entrenched its culture will be and it is easier for management to communicate its new values when the organisation is small.
- ❖ *Weak culture.* The more widely held a culture is and the more members agree with its values, the more difficult it will be to change; thus weak cultures are more amenable to change than strong ones.

In essence, changing the organisation's culture is possible, but attempts to initiate such a process should take into consideration the complexity of culture.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter conceptualised organisational culture as values, beliefs, attitudes and behavioural patterns shared by organisational members in pursuit of organisational goals, which gives the organisation a distinctive character. Harrison's model of organisational culture and its four dimensions, which are applicable to this study are discussed. Furthermore, the function, development and changing of organisation culture have been explored in detail and thus the first aim of the literature review is met.

Chapter 3 explores the concept organisational commitment in detail.