

# CULTURAL CHANGE IN HOTELS: A RESEARCH TOWARDS THE HUMAN FEAR FOR CHANGE AND WAYS TO OVERCOME IT

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## ABSTRACT

Hotel service is based upon the human factor of the organisation thus in order for the organisational change to be successful, the change must be focused on the organisational culture. The change of the organisational culture is a traumatic and complex experience since culture has developed through time and is based upon the tradition of the organisation. In order to overcome the human fear for change the main objective of any cultural change process is to teach the new culture to the employees of the organisation using intrinsic and extrinsic, as well as, direct and indirect rewards.

**Key Words:** Culture, Change, Hotels, Fear, Motivation, Reward.

## THE CHANGING ENVIROMENT- INTRODUCTION

During the last couple of year's Greek finance is controlled by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, resulting the impose of tight economic measures. Those measures are characterized by their supporters as fair, necessary and the only way out of the crisis, while their critics have characterized them as unfair, unpopular and the way to deeper depression. Despite their major differences the above opposing groups share the belief that the tight economic measures have a tremendous effect on the everyday life of the Greek people, changing every aspect of the Greek society from values and beliefs to the way that Greece is governed.

The above, changed the environment that the Greek hotel companies have to operate forcing them to adapt in order to survive. Gaplin (1996) suggested that organisations frequently try to adapt to the previous changes through the change of tangible elements, including operations, systems and procedures, since those aspects of change are the easiest to identify and implement. However, Gaplin (1996) suggested that in order for the organisational change to be successful, the change must be focused on the intangible side of the change, including the organisational culture. Changes in the organisational culture will bring over changes in the attitudes of the employees, which represent one of the most important elements for the provision of the hotel service (Mullins, 1998 and Schmit and Allscheid, 1995).

The previous interest in the change of the organisational culture in hotels initiated a preliminary research for certain models of change, which could be used as frameworks for the change of the organisational culture. Throughout the preliminary research, it was found that the change of the organisational culture is a traumatic and complex experience since culture has developed through time and is based upon the tradition of the organisation. Thus any attempt to change the organisational culture is being confronted with fear. Furthermore, the objective of the cultural change process is to make the organisation move towards the new culture by teaching the new organisational culture to the employees. The previous findings led to the investigation of the way that humans learn, revealing that the learning of human behaviour and culture is connected with the expectations that certain behaviour will bring positive results (Bolles, 1967). The above led to the creation of the following core research question.

*“Cultural change in hotels: A research towards the human fear for change and ways to overcome it”*

The aim of this paper will be to achieve a deep understanding upon issues concerning the core research question. Specifically, it will be focused on four main areas. Firstly, will be examined what organisational culture represents and how it is developed. Furthermore having established an understanding upon the concept of organisational culture, the fear for change will be analysed, as well as, certain barriers that can cause the failure of cultural change processes in organisations. Thirdly, a critical review upon the Lewin's force field theory and cultural

change model will be made. Finally, the main reward systems will be analyzed focusing on the way that they motivate employees in order to adopt changes in their organisations' culture.

### WHAT IS ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND HOW IT IS DEVELOPED

Anyone who has spent a short period of his/her life in a foreign country will probably have realised that the visited country is dominated by a culture, which is different from the one in his/her country. This culture can be reflected upon the beliefs and the values of people as well as on the art, the architecture and the religion. Even on the needs of the everyday life like this of food. Furthermore, the culture of every country is the result of history and the gathered experiences of the ancestors developed through time. Handy (1993) believes that the same feeling can be felt by anyone who has spent different periods of his/her life in different organisations since every organisation has develop certain values and beliefs as a result of his history. Cameron and Quin (1999) supported that the organisational culture is reflected by what is valued, the dominant leadership styles, the language and symbols, the procedures and routines and finally the definition of success that makes an organisation unique.

Martin (1985) highlighted the components of culture by defining culture as a set of commonly held attitudes, values and beliefs that guide the behaviour of an organisation's members. Till this point the concept and the components of culture have been successfully outlined, although the objective of organisational culture has not yet clearly defined. Furthermore, Hickman and Silva in 1989 highlighted the missing element by defining organisational culture as the unique way that people unify behind a common purpose, in order to deliver superior performance, and pass skill along others. Summarising from the previous definitions organisational culture consists of attitudes, values and beliefs, which are taught to every member of a group or organisation, in order to serve the purpose of unifying humans behind a common goal or objective. Finally, Schein in 1985 introduced a definition over organisational culture, which successfully links the previous elements of culture, while it highlights the impact of the internal and the external environment upon the formulation of organisational culture. Furthermore, Schein (2010) defined organisational culture as "*the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration and that 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 relations to those problems*". (Schein, 2010:18)

### DEFINING THE HUMAN FEAR FOR CHANGE

Buchanan *et al* (1997) defined the resistance to change as the inability, or unwillingness to discuss or to accept organisational changes that are perceived in some way damaging or threatening to the individual. Buchanan *et al* (1997) explains that although the positive attributes that change can have, it is resisted because it represents confrontation with the unknown and loss of the familiar. Moreover the study of a series of writers (Bedeian, 1980, Mosskanter, 1983, Anderso and Barker, 1996 and Kirkpatric, 1985) four common reasons were located that might lead cultural change processes to failure. Firstly, people tend to protect a status quo, which is perceived to be advantageous to them in some way, since change can mean loss of power, prestige, respect, approval, status and security. Secondly, the existence of misunderstanding and the lack of trust will represent another major barrier since people are likely to resist change when they do not understand the reasoning behind it, or its nature and possible consequences. Thirdly, every individual has a unique view of how the organisation works and his roles within it. Thus, plans for change, which seems threatening, misleading or unfair are likely to be met with resistance. Finally, the creation of habits which allow people to deal quickly and easily with routine situations will represent the forth barrier to change, since habits tend to provide a degree of comfort and security. Carnall (1999) on the other hand suggested that perceptual, emotional, cultural and environmental blocks exist against change. Analytically, perceptual block includes stereotypes and difficulties in isolating problems, the inability to examine problems from various viewpoints and the failure to collect all the available data. Emotional blocks include the fear of taking risks since a mistake can be seen as failure; and the incapacity to tolerate ambiguity since the solution of a complex problem requires the use of data which can be incomplete and misleading. Cultural blocks include organisational taboos and tradition. Analytically, taboos are defined as issues, which cannot be discussed and therefore cannot be faced, while tradition is hard to overcome since the organisational commitment and motivation is based upon. Environmental blocks include the lack of support to new ideas and changes since changes are usually perceived as threatening; and the inability of managers to listen and understand their subordinates.

## CHANGING THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Hickman and Silva (1989) proposed that the aim of a cultural change processes is to assess the current organisational culture and the points that need to be changed while at the same time will have to make the organisation to move towards the new culture. Moreover the process of change was defined by Vandermerwe and Vandermerwe (1991) as the process of diagnosing, planning, implementing, controlling and learning from change. Furthermore, the aim of this part of the research will be to examine the force field concept and the Lewin's change process.

Lewin, Lippitt and White in 1960 introduced the concept of the force field. Moreover Lewin *et al* (1960) argued that the force field analysis is of major importance for the success of any cultural change process in organisations. Analysing the components of the force field Lewin *et al* (1960) (Cited in Hersey *et al*, 1996) assumed that in any situation there are both driving and restraining forces that influence any change that may occur. Analytically, driving forces are those forces affecting a situation by pushing towards a particular direction, while they tend to initiate change and keep it going. Furthermore, terms like improved productivity, incentive earnings and competition, can be used as examples of driving forces. On the other hand restraining forces are forces, which act against the driving forces and tend to reduce them. Examples of restraining forces are apathy and poor maintenance of equipment. Furthermore Hersey *et al* (1996) proposed that the management of any organisation in order to implement a successful cultural change process will have to make a force field analysis in order to assess which forces are in favour of the change effort and which are against.

Moreover Lewin based on the force field concept, introduced in 1958 a three step model for the change of organisational change, which is adopted by writers like Clarke, (1994), Carnall (1999) and Burnes (1996) as the basic model for change. (Table 1.0)

TABLE 1.0  
LEWIN'S CHANGE PROCESS

UNFREEZING → MOVING → REFREEZING

Source: Lewin K. (1958) "Group decisions and Social Change", In Swanson G. E. and Newcomp T. M. and Hartley E. L. (eds): *Reading in Social Psychology*. Rhinehart and Winston: USA [Cited in Burnes B. (1996) *Managing Change: A strategic approach*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pitman Publishing: UK.]

Analytically, Lewin (1958) suggested that major changes including cultural change is hard to achieve since they tend to be short lived. Analytically Lewin believed that an unexpected difficulty might reverse the new culture back to its previous pattern. Moreover Lewin proposed that a change project should involve three steps: Unfreezing, Moving and Refreezing. (Cited in Burnes, 1996) Unfreezing usually involves a shock that will reduce the forces that maintain the organisation's culture at its present level and will encourage the growth of the perception that the current culture is no longer working. The moving stage requires the development of new behaviours, values and attitudes through changes in organisational structures and processes. Refreezing is the final step, which seek to stabilise the organisations at the new state using the infrastructure of systems, procedures and job responsibilities. (Burnes, 1996) Schein (1992) supports that during the last phase of the change process if the new culture does not stabilise, then the two previous phases continue until confirming data in terms of organisational success, generated by environmental sources and stake holders stabilise the new culture.

## OVERCOMING THE HUMAN FEAR FOR CHANGE

Summarising changes upon the organizational culture are very difficult and traumatic to implement, since culture is built upon the tradition and the history of an organisation. Thus the main objective of any cultural change process is to relearn to the employees the culture of their organisation by overcoming and minimizing the human fear for change. Moreover Wilson (1994) proposed that in order for someone to fully understand how to overcome the human fear for change the examination of how the behaviour of humans is learned and motivated is essential. Taylor in 1964 defined the process of learning as the "*capacity of the organism to adapt its behaviour to a new environment as a result of its experience to this environment*" (Taylor, 1964: 115). Based on the previous definition Bolles (1967) proposed that learning occur as the result of the repeated responses of an organism to a stimulus.

Analytically a strong stimulation can act as a drive, which will impel an organism, for example the feeling of hunger, or as an incentive, which will attract an organism, for example the sight of food, to respond. Bandura (1977) explains that the consequences from the external environment serve as an unarticulated way of informing the performers what they have to do in order to get beneficial outcomes and avoid painful ones. Bandura (1977) concludes that humans by observing the effects of their own actions perceive which responses are appropriate in certain settings and behave accordingly. Finally based on the expectancy theory formulated by Vroom in 1967, motivation towards certain behaviour is likely to exist only when performance and outcomes are closely linked, while the outcomes must be perceived as means of satisfying needs. Having in mind the previous literature about human learning and behaviour, Mabey and Salaman (1995) proposed that the reinforcement of a cultural change process is based upon the public use of the organisation's reward systems. Resulting that the major challenge for the reward management is to develop reward systems that will motivate the employees and make them learn to work towards the kind of culture, climate and behaviour that is perceived as necessary for the success of the organisation. (Armstrong, 1996, Logger *et al*, 1999, and Lawler, 1990)

Concluding, in order for a cultural change process to be successful the reward systems must motivate effectively the behaviour of the employees towards the new and desired organisational culture. Although, as Thornely and Lees (1993) proposed the motivation of employees is a very complex process, since everything in the organisational environment motivates towards certain behaviour. Furthermore, the objective of the next part of this paper will be to examine through certain motivation theories, those components of the reward system that can effectively motivate employees towards desired behaviours.

### EXAMINING THE REWARD SYSTEMS

Armstrong (2003) defined reward systems as “*arrangements in the form of processes, practices, structures, subsystems and procedures which will be concerned with providing and maintaining appropriate types and levels of pay, benefits and other forms of reward*” (Armstrong, 2003: 507). Moreover, the reward systems, is designed, implemented, maintained, communicated and evaluated by the reward management. (Armstrong and Murlis, 1994) Furthermore Armstrong in 2002 proposed that “*employee reward is about how people are rewarded in accordance to their value to an organisation. It is concerned with both financial and non-financial rewards and embraces the philosophies, strategies, policies, plans and processes used by organisations to develop and maintain reward systems*”. (Armstrong, 2002: 3)

Furthermore, having in mind the previous definition, the reward systems contain a variety of rewards, which according to Logger *et al* (1999) can be distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic. Analytically, based on Logger *et al* (1999) intrinsic rewards are related directly to the nature of the work. For example interesting work and good career prospects can be offered against relatively low pay. The intrinsic rewards according to Ford (1969) are based upon intrinsic motivators, which can be defined as self-generated factors, which influence humans in a particular way or make them move in a certain direction. Moreover, those factors include responsibility, freedom to act, and the opportunity to use and develop skills and abilities, as well as the desire for advancement and growth. On the other hand Logger *et al* (1999) proposed that extrinsic rewards are those that are not linked directly with the nature of work, have a financial nature and their value can be expressed in terms of financial remuneration. Although Armstrong (2002) argues, proposing that extrinsic reward besides pay includes other elements like company policy and administration, personal relations, as well as status and security.

Moreover, another basic component of the reward system as expressed by Bratton and Gold (1994) is the element of direct and indirect reward. Specifically Bratton and Gold (1994) support that the direct type of rewards are concentrated upon financial payments, for example minimum rate of pay, incentive payments and more. On the other hand indirect reward according to Stredwick (2000) include the feeling of job satisfaction through the provision of intrinsic reward, as well as, the feeling of cultural satisfaction which arises from the relationships with other employees and the pride of working in an ethical environment. Additionally, the feeling of job security generated by the provision of long-term employment contracts, and the opportunity for growth and career development in terms of training opportunities and work enlargement programs are other forms of indirect rewards. (Cooper, 1974 and Robertson and Smith, 1994) While Bratton and Gold (1994) support that other forms of indirect rewards include pensions, private health insurance and paid time-off from work.

Moreover, the importance of the intrinsic and extrinsic reward in the formulation of a successful reward system will be examined through Herzberg's and Maslow's motivation theories. Analytically, Herzberg's *et al* (1959) theory draws attention to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivator proposing that employees could only be motivated through the job itself. Herzberg specifically believed that if the element of motivator is absent the employees are neutral towards their work, while if the motivator is present the employees are motivated and experience a feeling of job satisfaction. On the other hand, the second factor in Herzberg's theory is extrinsic to work and includes working conditions, pay and organisational policy. It was named by Herzberg the Hygiene factor which by itself can not cause motivation and job satisfaction, although its absence tend to create low job satisfaction and low motivation.

Furthermore, Maslow (1970) in his book *Motivation and Personality* introduced the idea of the hierarchy of needs. Maslow based his theory on the idea that man is a wanting animal. (Maslow, 1970) Specifically, Maslow (1970) argued that for many people meaningful life means, thinking of something essential and striving for it. Furthermore Maslow located five broad types of needs: A) Physiological needs B) Safety needs C) Social and love needs D) Reputation and prestige needs E) Self-actualisation needs which can be defined as the needs of the individual to do what is fitted for. The previous needs are settled in a hierarchical order and a higher need can emerge only if a lower one has completely been satisfied.

Moreover in contrast to Herzberg's motivation theory were financial (extrinsic) rewards cannot motivate, in Maslow's hierarchy of needs are able to motivate. Since they are linked directly or indirectly, with the satisfaction of the basic needs including survival and security, while are able to satisfy higher needs like those of self-esteem, since financial reward can provide the means for the purchase of goods that represent status. (Armstrong, 2002) On the other hand the intrinsic rewards including job security and growth are recognised by Maslow and Herzberg as motivators since they are sources of job satisfaction which can lead employees to the satisfaction of the need for self-actualisation. (Northcraft and Neal, 1994)

On the other hand the importance of the direct rewards in the form of payment, upon the motivation of the behaviour of the employees will be examined through the instrumental theory of motivation as expressed in 1911 by Frederic Taylor through the principles of scientific management. Specifically, Taylor in 1911 believed that: "*It is impossible, through any long period of time, to get workmen to work much harder than the average men around them unless they are assured a large and permanent increase in their pay*" (Taylor, 1911: 95). Armstrong (2002) argued that the instrumental theory of Frederic Taylor is based on a system of external controls and neglect other human needs. Moreover McGregor (1960) in contrast to the principles of scientific management expressed Theory Y which assumes that work is as natural as play, and that employees motivation occurs as a result of pride through work, the need for growth and self-actualisation. (Hersey *et al* 1996) Moreover, based on McGregor's (1960) Theory Y and Herzberg's *et al* (1959) two-factor theory the power of indirect rewards to motivate the employees' behaviour towards the culture of an organisation is manifested in the opportunities for growth through the provision of training, job security, good working conditions and the pride through work and achievement.

Concluding the objective of this part of the research was to examine the effectiveness of certain components of the reward systems to motivate the behaviour of the employees. Summarising, it was found through Maslow's (1970) and Herzberg's *et al* (1959) motivation theories that the intrinsic and extrinsic types of reward are important for the motivation of the employees. Although, each theory perceived differently the role that each type of reward had to play in the motivation of the employees. On the other hand through the examination of Taylor's (1911) and McGregor's (1960) theories it was found that a combination of both direct and indirect types of reward are essential for the motivation of employees.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to make a deep and critical evaluation of the theories concerning the core research question: "*Cultural change in hotels: A research towards the human fear for change and ways to overcome it*"

Furthermore, from the literature it was revealed that the culture of an organisation is a very complex concept, which can be manifested on every aspect of the organisation. The culture of an organisation found to be developing through time, while the internal and external environment is a major influential factor. Moreover, since

culture is strongly linked with the history and the tradition of an organisation it is very difficult to change. While, any exertion towards cultural change is perceived threatening and it is treated with fear, having negative influence upon the morale of the employees. The previous results that every effort of cultural change must be based upon carefully planned processes of change. Furthermore, the cultural change processes are based upon a shock or a crisis in organisational level. Moreover, the objective of any process for change is to relearn the culture of the organisation to the employees.

Through, the examination of the learning process, it was found that the employees of an organisation would learn the new organisational culture, only if their behaviour is reinforced through appropriate rewards. Resulting that the role and at the same time the major challenge of the reward system in the cultural change process is to motivate the behaviour of the employees, in order to make them learn the new culture and overcome the fear for change. Moreover, the research upon the reward systems revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic, as well as, direct and indirect rewards can be used in order to motivate the behaviour of the employees towards the new desired organisational culture.

### METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH EVALUATION

The research paper managed to develop a good understanding and insight into relevant previous researches and the trends that have emerged through an extensive library research regarding the exploration of the core researches question. Analytically, for the conclusion of the research the researcher used a wide range of publications, which provided a clearer and deeper understanding concerning the change of organisational culture and the power of the reward systems to motivate towards the new culture. Although, the limited publications, concerning hospitality and in extend hotel organisations forced the research to be concluded by the use of publications concerning the change of organisational culture in general and not specifically in hotels. Based on the previous evaluation the researcher believes that a primary research could eliminate the limitations of the research paper and offer a better understanding upon the core research question and the role of reward systems in the cultural change processes in hotels.

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