Organizational Family Culture: Theoretical Concept Definition, Dimensions and Implication to Business Organizations

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Abstract
Every organization strives to achieve competitive advantage in the game of business. To achieve this, organizations are adopting new strategies aimed at motivating employees to be more committed to organizational goals and objectives. One of such strategies is to make employees see and relate to their organization as a family. This paper examined the concept of organizational family culture, its dimensions and benefits to organizations and their employees. It pointed out that organizational positive outcomes such as commitment, productivity, innovativeness and adaptability results from the presence of cultures that promotes employee's sense of family in their organizations. The paper concludes that organizational family culture is vital in creating and sustaining competitive advantage by organizations, and also the willingness to assist organization's members when need arise. It recommends that, organizations should encourage team structures that make her employees develop sense of family in the organization. In addition, organizations should strategize themselves as both economic and social institutions that seek to promote economic outputs as well as employee's welfares and well-being, among others.

1. Introduction

Every business organization is culture bound and have some values, norms, regulations, belief systems and code conduct to guide and direct their operations and behaviour of members. No organization can operate successfully without guided human input and interaction, especially in the relationship which exist among workers, and between workers and management. Organizations therefore are trying to utilize these relationships to make the employees see the need to commit themselves to their organizations and seeing her and other employees as a family.

In today's rapidly changing and modernizing world, businesses across the globe are facing severe competitive pressures, rapidly changing markets and life choking threats, uncertainties are increasingly becoming a regular way of life for organizations from all sectors. Organizations are also facing capital flight, need for competent skilled employees, customers demand for high quality products and services at a very much reduced price, as well as breath taking competitions from both local and foreign rivals. Organizations are therefore seeking for more efficient and reliable strategies to gain competition advantage in their games of business in order to survive and attain the going concern craving and objective of their business as well as other stated and emergent business objectives and goals.

One strategy which organizations have found helpful and vital in pursuit of their business objectives is the adoption of a family-like based approach which ensure that employees see and relate to the organization and it members as a family and therefore commit serious effort into the organizational processes and actions to enable the family (organization) succeed and achieve competitive edge over their competitors. Organizations shifts in the pursuance of making employees to see and accept the organizations as the would do for their biological family stem from the believes that everyone seeks and pursue interests that benefits his/here immediate family, employees today, are seen as the building block for organization's successes. They are also recognized as the instruments that take an organization from where they are at present to the place they want to be (Nwaeke and Obiekwe, 2017);

In fact, without the employees, organizational processes and outputs, as well as their growth and survival will remain a mirage. Apostolou (2000) note that successful companies believe that the only way to compete is through employees who perform the tasks that produce a product or service. In this line, Amah (2014) posits that employees who are skillful, knowledgeable, competent and highly committed are in high demand by organizations. This is because, employees of such class acts as catalysts capable of forging and building highly effective and successfully organizations.

However, no matter how skillful, knowledge and competent an employee is, the employee will not be totally committed in seeking out for the organizations progress and well-being if he/she does not see the employing organization as a family. And when commitment is lacking from employees, organizational success, progress and effectiveness will be highly retarded. As a result, the concept of organizational family culture has been advocated to serve as a strong organizational strategy to gain the total loyalty, support, and commitment of all employees in order to generate competitive advantage and enables organizations to achieve its goals and objectives. Companies where employees do not see themselves as real members or belonging to, or where its culture, structures or policies in their workplaces is employee friendly are indirectly setting up themselves for failures and extinction.

When there are no culture, structures or policies to make employees feel at home in the organization, and or where employees does not see their organization as a family, employees tend to exhibit lack of commitment, 'sabotagic' behaviours, and put in only minimal efforts that will let them stay by at their jobs. The adoption of a family-based approach to business that entails trust, openness, interdependence and commitment therefore becomes essential if organizations must survive and succeed in our present face of current global financial meltdown and capital flight, and high-powered business competitions
This aim of this paper is to theoretically explore the concept of organizational family culture. It will examine its definitions and dimensions, as well as its benefits to business organizations in the global workplace.

2.   Literature Review
Baseline Theoretical Framework of Organizational Family Culture (OFC)
There is no single theory that can wholly explain how managers strive to make employees see and relate to other organizational members as a family. Every organization is structured to grow and develop in line with changing dynamics of the operating environments as organizations want to achieve competitive advantage. It therefore becomes necessary to put in place a strategy and system of values and norms which it can use as guidelines to help it achieve its objectives. One of such strategy is to make employees see and relate to the organization as a family which is important if an employee must devout his competencies and

abilities to pursue an organization's objectives and goals. This paper thus, adopted a theoretical framework based on the social exchange theory and expectancy theory.

The social exchange theory state that the exhibition of positive or negative behavior by employees is a function of treatment they received from the employers (Greenberg & Scott, 1996). They also state that "a social exchange relationship between an employer and his workers will bring about a harmonious working relationship and lead to a strong positive attitude in employees, working beyond normal call of duty, attending meetings and giving relevant information about the external business environment to management which will help in achieving organizational excellence". An employee will maintain a positive attitude toward an organization if he believes that the organization and its employees see and relate to him as a member of a family and also work for his well-being. Elstad, Christophersen, & Turmo (2011) stated that social exchange theory is a theoretical explanation for organizational citizenship behavior. According to Lavelle, Rupp & Brockner (2007) social exchange encompass the idea of a share obligations and responsibilities which exist between parties in a relationship

According to Cole (2017) "social exchange theory aims at interpreting social relationship between people based on the rewards and punishments they estimates to get". In this view, people's interactions with others are chiefly based on the expected rewards or punishments they will get from others, which can be evaluate using a cost-benefit analysis model. Thus, interpersonal relationships are a major area of application of the social exchange theory. Homan (1961) who is one of the earliest proponents of the theory, "Social behavior deals with favours, material and non-material goods such as approval or prestige. Those that offer much to others try to get much in response from those who receive favour from them, while those that receive favour from others felt obliged to reciprocate much to them".

Expectancy theory is one of the contemporary motivational theories. The theory was founded by the work of Victor Vroom (1964). Vroom believed that what determines how a person act is the expected outcome which is desirable to the person. In practical term, the theory states that employees will be more likely to be motivated to put in a high level of efforts when they believe that their efforts will be adequately rewarded. Expectancy theory portrays the reasons why countless employees are not motivated by their conditions of work; as a result commit minimum effort just to get by in the work (Robbins, Judge & Sanghi, 2009). According to Baridam and Nwibere (2008) the expectancy theory's main focus which is of both managerial and theoretical importance is to find out the factors that make an employee to exert personal effort willingly to work at tasks that help a work unit or an organization to contribute to their production purpose. When employees believe that the organization values them, care for them, and take them as "members" of the organization, it motivate them to develop organizational family attitude toward the organization, and then exert effort to contribute towards organizations benefits.

Concepts of Organizational Family Culture
Organizations are always inclined to create and adopt certain acceptable mode of behaviour that is largely self-evident. Organizations tend to share some specific values, ideas, attitude and assumptions which will help it stay apart; and to be able to achieve its goals. At a period like this when organizations are searching for reliable ways to build high performance teams that can be able to compete with rivals at all front, embracing and adopting a family-like approach to business that emphasis support, trust, inter-dependence, openness and commitment in order to build competitive advantages is essential.

Organizational family culture (OFC) is a sociological-management concept that was drawn from the sociological epistemology of family and culture, as well as strategy and organizational culture which are relevant concepts in contemporary management writings. Obiekwe (2017) defined organizational family culture (OFC) as the values, norms, mindset, shared beliefs, and attitude involving a group of people in an organization seeing and relating to one another as a family. This is possible in an organization as members of an organization have shared values, norms, attitudes, ideas and mindset that make them behave differently from other organizations. Organizational family culture is based on the recognition that an employee, seeing him or herself as a member of an organization, will pursue and promote the interest and well-being of the organization and other members if he sees the organization and its members as a family. Organizational family culture thus aims at promoting the spirit of community which makes members believe that they are connected to each other, which creates a deeper sense of connection among the employees by way of support, genuine caring, expression of one's mind, which is what employees seek to achieve in exchange to their efforts and commitment to an organization. This culture is characterized by the fact that "people accept and like each other all over the organization (Goofee and Jones, 1998).

Organizational family cultures often promote high levels of socialization between its members, which in turn translate into a high degree of loyalty, and commitment to the organization and its goals. The ideal of "We care and look after each other" attitude is present as significant value is placed on reciprocity ideal in human interaction. Firms with this culture emphasis ease of communication and acceptance of individual opinions, ideas and expression. Interconnection and interdependency is highly valued among members of the organization as individual differences are downplayed as unimportant. There is also employee's willingness to step in to assist others when need arise, or even volunteering to "help before they are asked" even in the most selfless manner. (Goofee and Jones, 1998).

In fact, the extent to which an organization values it employees and considers their family members as important to directly or indirectly contributes to the organization family is vital for organizational effectiveness. This is supported by Thompson et al (1999). Accordingly, (Andreassi and Thompson, 2004) notes that family culture exist in organizations whose general philosophy tend to tailor toward employees sensitive to family and its needs and also grants them support in the harmonious combination between paid work and family roles". Casey (1999: 156) notes that today "many firms are positioning and presenting themselves as caring, employee friendly and family organizations. Accordingly, Alakavuklar (2009) posit that "family metaphor in businesses is used by organizations to create a positive, motivating and morale boosting organizational climate, where employees would emotionally attach themselves to the organizations and in creating a strong sense of belongingness which help in reduction of conflicts and disagreements within the organization. Where colleagues are not seen as colleagues any more, but as brothers or sisters, while superiors are seen as fathers (or mothers), and employees become more committed when they see the organization as a family (Casey, 1999).
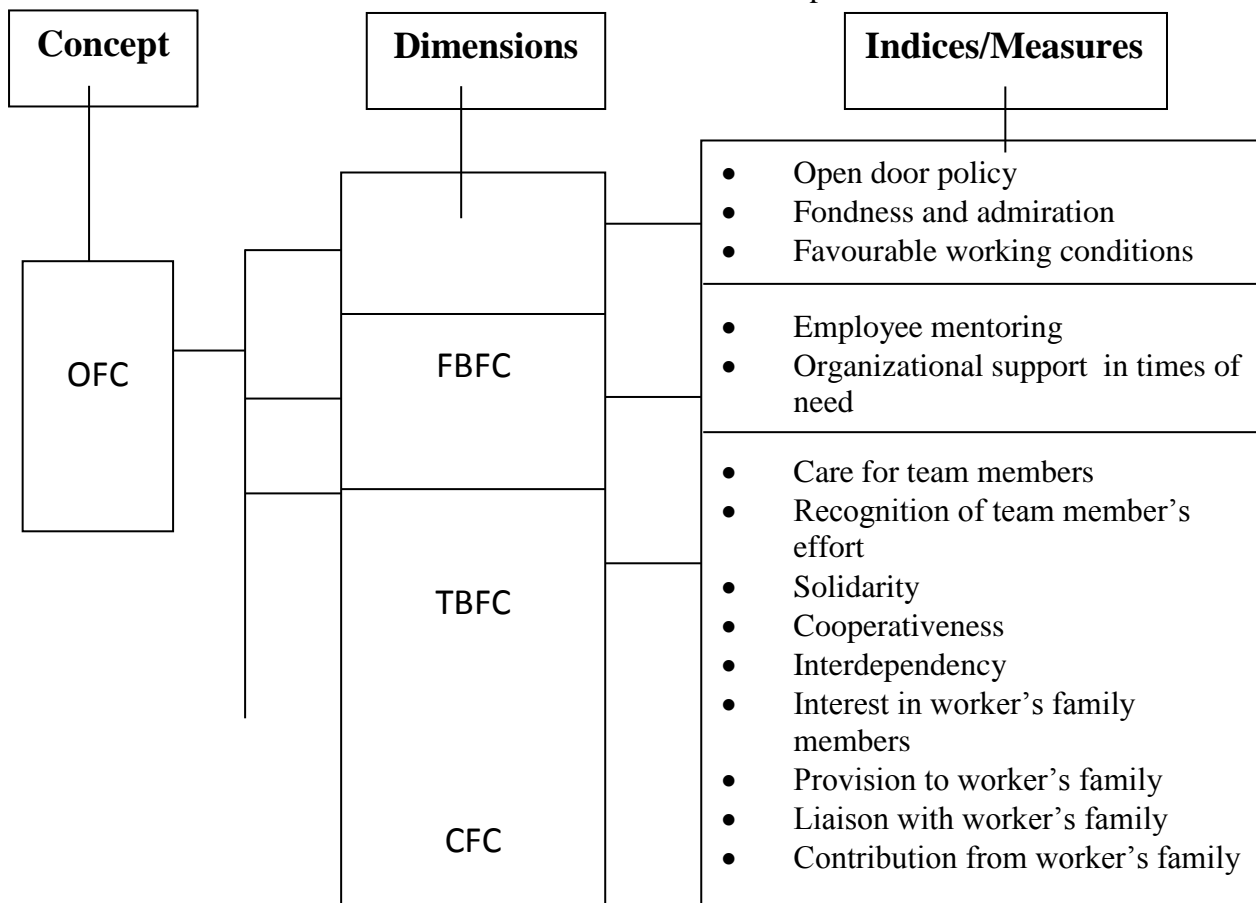
As a family represents a relationship of people who share benefits and obligations, in this sense, organizational family culture look at the relationship of a shared obligation between an employee and his organization that make him have a sense of family with the organization and other of its members. Organizational family culture pursues what Aktas, Cicek and kayak (2011) identified as clan culture which seek an atmosphere of teamwork and support among employees and an emphasis on their empowerment. In other words, an organization where a sense of "family strongly exists". Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett and Condemi (1991) as well as Bolino and Tunley (2003) note that Southwest Airlines has this type of culture that

emphasize a family spirit which make employees feel that they are one body, and make them care for one another as well as their customers, while the company considers employees' families as an important part of the firm. These make employees so willing to help each other when the need arises. Patel (2015) pointed out Chevron as being one organization where employees and team members looking out for each other.

When there is inter-dependency, cooperation, trust, support and openness in an organization, employees see themselves as truly belonging to the organization. They perceive more options to solve problems, are more creative and insightful, collaborate better with others to create innovation and have higher overall individual performance that always translate to higher level organizational performances. However, where the feeling of belongingness is lacking in an employee, he feel disconnected, and act out of his or her anxiety and fear of been abandoned, which may result to low morale, distrust, lack of commitment, and always on the lookout for alternative opportunities outside the organization, in ways that are detrimental to the organization. There is also the tendency for increase management-labour crises, distrust, and lack of serious commitment and organizational sabotage. Organizations with a strong organizational family culture do not only emphasize organizational effectiveness and benefit, but employee's growth and wellbeing as well.

Dimensions of Organizational Family Culture
The dimensions of organizational family culture identified by Obiekwe (2017) are firm-based family culture (firm level family culture), team-based family culture and consultative family culture. Below are the OFC measures and their research implications:

Concept	Dimensions	Indices/Measures
OFC	FBFC	• Open door policy • Fondness and admiration • Favourable working conditions
		• Employee mentoring • Organizational support in times of need
	TBFC	• Care for team members • Recognition of team member's effort • Solidarity • Cooperativeness • Interdependency
	CFC	• Interest in worker's family members • Provision to worker's family • Liaison with worker's family • Contribution from worker's family

Source: Researcher's desk, 2017
Fig 2.1 OFC Measures and Research Implications

Where:
OFC = Organizational family culture
FBFC = Firm-based family culture
TBFC = Team-based family culture
CFC = Consultative family culture
When an organization values, accommodate and share the indices noted for each of the measures as a desired necessity for the organizations' members at the different levels of the organization, they becomes cultures which are shared by, and transmitted within the organization by its members.

Firm-based family culture: This refers to values shared at the organizational level that give actual organizations' member a sense of family (Obiekwe 2017). This type of culture operates at the general firm level, and represents the human orientation characteristic described by Robbins, Sanghi and Judge (2009) as one of the characteristic approach in measuring organizational culture. According to Hakim (2015) human orientation represent the degree of extent to which management put into consideration the effect of the result of its decisions on her employees. Firm-based family culture is usually initiated by management and intends to cover every aspect of operations, inter-relationship and activities within the organization.
The indices of firm-based culture include; open door policy, fondness and admiration (Wallace, 2016), employee's recognition, favourable working condition, favourable firm climate, employees mentoring, employee welfare and organization/management support.

Team-Based Family Culture: This refers to values shared at team level that give organizations' actual member a sense of family in the team. This type of culture operates at the team or departmental level in an organization, and aim toward creating a harmonious working relationship among team members in order to achieve organizational effectiveness and improved performance (Obiekwe 2017).
Indicators of team-based culture include caring about fellow worker, recognition and reward of team members (Eigen 2017). Other indices are members support, interdependency, team solidarity and co-operativeness. Bolino and Tunley (2003) observed Southwest Airlines Company as a company with a team-based type of culture. They note that the company operates a team-based culture as it cross-trains its employees so that they can be are able to help other members when the need arises. Heathfield (2016) states that "in an effective team culture, there is collaboration which makes team members understand where the work of their team fits in the total framework of the organizations' operational and strategic plan goals.
A team-based family culture enhances employees family attitude in their teams and lead to openness, support, trust, information sharing, and cohesiveness that allow organizations develop needed ideas, new thought patterns, and becomes innovative. Organizational family culture at this level is developed to make members of teams have sense of family so that they can contribute to achieve the team's objectives. To ensure a team-oriented culture, Gleeson (2013) has recommended focus on communication, instilling of loyalty and encouraging collaboration.

Consultative Family Culture: This refers to values shared by actual member within the organization that elicit family member's contributions to the organization seen as extended family. This type of culture operates at the individual member's level in the organization, and makes the employee develop organizational family attitude – the attitude that make one see himself as a member of a family (Obiekwe 2017).

In this setting, the family members serve as a consultant to the actual organization member as the offer some pieces of advice and suggestions on how they feel the focal organization member can improve on his work or services to the employing organization. This occurs when employees take work home and receives contributions, ideas or inputs from their spouse or family member on how their work outcome can be improved. Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett and Condemi (1991) note that Southwest Airlines has this type of culture that emphasize a family spirit and community which make employees feel that they are one body, and part of the organization, thereby make them care for one another as well as their customers, while the company considers employees' families as an important part of the firm. Patel (2015) also noted that Chevron Oil Company has this type of culture.

Indicators of this type of culture in an organization include: Interest in worker's family, provision to worker's immediate family, liaison with worker's family and contributions from worker's family. Organizations do exhibit these indicators through: (i) establishment of staff children's school (ii) paid medical expenses for employees and their immediate family members (iii) giving of scholarships to employee's children (iv) annual staff's family get-together/party (v) Provision of housing (staff quarters) for workers, among others.

Pillars of Organizational Family Culture
Every organization has some foundations upon which it intend to lays or build the behavior which it expect from every member of the organization. These foundations according to Mckay and Mckay (2013) are the pillars of family culture which we also noted as the pillars of organizational family culture. These pillars which are central to any culture, whether in organization, groups or family are values, norms and rituals/traditions.

Values are seen as "abstract ideas of what society believes to be good, right, and desirable" (Goodman, 1992). According to Williams (1970) "values are collective ideas about what is right or wrong, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable". In an organization, value give an organization an overarching purpose and guide as to know how every member of the organization should act, or and behave in any situation just as is the case in families, and help organizational members to choose what is thought to be good, moral and acceptable. Organization's values are therefore the moral and ethical principles initiated and upheld, and transmitted within an organization as loyalty, honesty, hard work, and commitment. It is the management that teaches the employees what is important and valued in the organization.

Values may be positive or negative. A positive value in an organization is such ideas that encourage mutual support, respect, hard work, service, sacrifice, and commitment among members of an organization. While a negative value in an organization is such ideas that that encourages irrelevant competition, resentment, laziness, and conflicts. Schueat (1992) see values as positive stipulation which people crave for. It serve as guiding principles in people's live, and a lasting conviction that a particular mode of behaviour or end state of existence is personally or socially preferred to an opposite or converse mode of behavior (MA, 2009). Value therefore influences attitude and behavior of people at every level of the organization, provides the basis on which an organization members judge actions, and help to shape the choices members make to align with social and organizational expectations.

Norms are established rules of behavior or standards of conducts. Mckay and Mckay (2013) posit that norms are values in actions. They are the spoken and unspoken rules of how a society operates that guide society and family members on how they interact with one another and with outsiders. Thus norms represent established pattern of behavior put in place to guide behavior of members. In an organization, norms therefore represent the dos and don'ts put in place to guide individual and group member's behaviours, and therefore define appropriate

behavior towards members and outsiders. Norms therefore symbolize the laid down policies which are central and significant to the proper functioning of an organization.

Rituals/Tradition: these are set of behaviours and routines that provide a family, society and organizations senses of identity and purpose. They are activities which communicate and emphasize major family or societal values as they occur in repetitive cycle (Mckay & Mckay, 2013). It may involve singing some chants or anthem or reciting pledges or creed which the members believe in. It seeks to find out the most important goals for the family and which people depend most on. In organizations, ritual provides cohesion and represents formal procedures which every member of the organization should adhere to. Tradition on its own represents the beliefs and customs which an organization held so closely to it, and which help to shape the behavior of the members and guide the ethical standard which governs habits of organization's members.

Benefits of Organizational Family Culture

Organizational family culture creates enormous benefits for organizations utilizing it as a strategy or business option to drive the organization ahead. Obiekwe (2017) identify some of these benefits as;

i. Creation of a positive productive environment in which every employee feels valued, accepted and belonged, and where their talents and knowledge are being fully utilized, and in which organizational goals are met. It does this by helping to foster strong identification which causes or generate commitment in members, boosting self-esteem and confidence of employees thereby enhancing performance. When employees see the organization as a family which they are part of, they develop special interest and feeling towards it, and ensure that they help the organization to achieve its stated goals and objectives.

ii. Generation of organizational family attitude in members. When an employee feels and sees himself as a member of an organization, he develop a positive attitude towards and pride in the organization, believe in the organization and its products/services and becomes the more willing to commit his effort in pursuing and promoting the organizations goals and objectives to help the organization succeed (Phegan, 2013; Casey, 1999). Employee organizational family attitude is that mindset or feeling that an employee has that makes him see himself as truly a member of an organization and assert effort toward it well-being and success.

iii. Promotes cooperation and harmonious management-workers relationship: organizational family culture does this as it generate good will and mutual trust among its members and towards the organization, and thus promotes cohesiveness and mutual cooperation among members of the organization (Gleeson, 2013). Therefore helping to create an atmosphere of trust, peace and unity in an organization by promoting management-workers relationship which is fundamental for industrial peace, growth and progress of any organization (Phegan, 2013). Moreover, as employees sees themselves as bound to promote the well-being of the family (organization), they easily accept its authority over them, and instead of engaging in sabotage or other anti-organizational activities, they intentionally put in strong efforts and contributions to ensure progress and peace of the organization.

iv. Creation of avenue for employee's socialization. Organizational family culture helps to generate favourable social interaction in the workplace. Since employees see others in the organization as 'people much closer than friends', they develop a feeling of security that only a family can guarantee, and this helps to improve their performance. This is because performance depends to a great extent of knowing what one should do or not to

do. The ability of an individual to do a job properly is an indication of proper socialization.

v. Maximum stimulation of innovation: Since organizational family culture encourages open communication, there is room for employees to interact and learn from those who are more skillful and knowledgeable both in formal and informal ways. This helps employees to learn and develop new thinking pattern to solving organizational problems in the most time and or cost saving methods (Heathfield, 2016).

Organizational family culture therefore provides benefits to both employees and organizations that make it a powerful key or strategy for the success of any organization. Organizations can thus build a competitive advantage over others as employees work together to solve their problems, by utilizing the power of oneness, unalloyed loyalty, cooperation and openness which is always present in family settings to create new products and services in the most efficient and cost saving manner.

Conclusion

Employees are vital building blocks for companies to develop and execute their strategies and to achieve stated goals and objectives. Organizations with a culture that encourage supportive and friendly work environment, where members see and relate to other as a family derived better business performance as they are likely to perform well in teamwork. This is because, employees' genuine and total commitment can only take place or develops when the employee consider himself as a part of the organizations' family or part of the system. Organizations family culture in organizations thus result to employee's team spirit and cohesiveness associated with employee loyalty, commitments and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as generate positive employee organizational attitudes and harmonious relationship between employees and their organizations.

Recommendations

In the light of the above, we recommend that; organizations should put up structures and values that support and encourages team spirit among members of the organization by ensuring that they always cross-trains its employees so that they can be are able to help other members when the need arises. This is to ensure commitment to organization's goals and willingness of employees to care and help one. Organizations should see and strategize themselves as both economic unit and as a social institution that seek not only the provision of economic output for profit maximization, but also seek to support and promote employee's well-being so that they can whole heartedly commit themselves in seeking and promoting organizational well-being. Organizations should create positive organizational climate in order to generate employees' high feeling of psychological attachment to the organization to make them have a high level of acceptance of the organization as 'their family'. Moreover, organizations should also provide culture that encourages timely training and development programs for their employees to gain the necessary competencies needed to properly carry out assigned tasks and take right decisions in responsibilities given to them.

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