Understanding Organizational Culture: A Perspective on Roles for Leaders

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Organizational culture is one of the latest concepts in the fields of management and organization theory. One reflection of the popularity of the culture concept is the increasing number of theoretical perspectives (Martin, 1992) and organizational disciplines which utilize the concept (Harris and Ogbonna, 1999). The concept of culture has been borrowed from anthropology, where there is no consensus on its meaning (Smircich, 1983:339). Consequently, there is also variety in its applications to organization studies. Culture, which is popularly conceived as 'shared values and beliefs,' fulfils important functions:

- It conveys a sense of identity for organizational members (Deals and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982).
- It facilitates the generation of commitment to something larger than self (Peters and Waterman, 1982).
- It enhances social system stability (Louis, 1980).
- It serves as sense-making device that can guide and shape behaviour (Louis, 1980; Meyer, 1981; Pfeffer, 1981).

Academicians as well as practitioners are interested to know how a leader could influence organizational culture. Their concern is with the ability of leaders to shape and maintain the culture of an organization. Schein (1992) observes that organizational culture and leadership are intertwined. The relationship between the two concepts, namely, organizational culture and leadership, represents an ongoing interplay in which the leader shapes the culture and is in turn shaped by the resulting culture.

Culture and leadership, when one examines them closely, are two sides of the same coin, and neither can really be understood by itself. In fact, there is a possibility - underemphasized in leadership research - that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture (Schein, 1985:2).

Schein (1985:2) further elaborates, 'there is a possibility.... that only thing of real importance that
leaders do is to create and manage culture and that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to work with culture' (emphasis in original).

way of uncovering the relationship between culture and leadership is to examine how culture has been conceptualized in organization theory. Smircich (1983) identifies two ways how the culture has been conceptualized: culture as an 'organizational variable,' and as 'root metaphor.' Before discussing this in greater detail, we briefly discuss how various metaphors have been used to conceptualize organizational phenomena.

Metaphors and Organizational Theory
Organization theorists have used a variety of metaphors or images to bound, frame, and differentiate that category of experiences referred to as (an) 'organization' (Smircich, 1983: 340). Metaphors of machine and organism have been most frequently used to facilitate understanding and communication about complex phenomena of organization (Pondy and Mitroff, 1979; Morgan, 1980).

Organization as Machine
Mechanical imagery undergirds the view of organization as 'instruments' for task accomplishment, consisting of multiple parts to be designed and meshed into fine-tuned efficiency. Organization is seen as a 'social instrument for task accomplishment' Morgan (1986) found that McDonald's hamburger chain has significantly benefited from the adoption of scientific management principles. It works well in organizations where there is a straightforward task to perform, environment is stable, where it is necessary to produce same product, when precision is at a premium, and the people in the business are compliant (Georgiades and Macdonell, 1998).

Organization as Organism
The conception of organization as an organism entails systems theory as applied to organization (Trist and Barnforth, 1951; Burns and Stalker, 1961; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967), where organization is conceived as struggling for survival within a changing environment. Organizations are studied in terms of the way they manage interdependences and exchange across system boundaries. Organization is an 'adaptive organism existing by process of exchange with the environment.' It if conceived as existing in a largely determinant relationship with its environment.

Organization as a Social Phenomenon
Though; metaphors from physical world - organism and machine - have been historically dominant, other metaphors that are social have also been used to elaborate various aspects of organization (Morgan, 1980): organizations are 'theatres' (Goffman, 1959; Mangham and Overington, 1983), 'political arenas' (Crozier, 1964; Pfeffer, 1981), etc. Organizations are conceptualized as a 'system of knowledge,' 'pattern of symbolic discourse,' or 'manifestations of unconscious human processes.'

Organizational Culture: A Variable
In the first two conceptualizations, organizational culture is viewed as a variable which can be manipulated. Organizations are also seen as culture producing phenomena (Louis, 1980; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Tichy, 1982; Martin and Powers, 1983). Culture functions as an adaptive regulatory mechanism that unites organizational members into the social system within the organization. It acts as a critical lever or key by which strategic managers can influence and direct the course of their organizations (Schwartz and Davis, 1981, Tichy, 1982). Gordon and DiTimaso (1992) and Denison (1990), on the basis of their study, noted that culture will remain linked with superior performance if the culture is able to adapt to changes in environmental conditions.

Many academics and practitioners argue that the performance of an organization is dependent on the degree to which the values of the culture are widely shared, that is, are strong (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Denison, 1990; Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Ouchi, 1981; Pascale and Athos, 1981; Peters and Waterman, 1982). The belief is that firms that have internal cultures supportive of their strategies are more likely to be successful. Symbolic devices such as stories, legends, and others can be used to meet the organizational goal (Peters, 1978). From Schein's conception of organizational culture, these are symbolic artifacts.

Till early 1980s, interaction of organizational variables such as structure, size, technology, and leadership patterns are focused (Woodward, 1965; Fiedler, 1967; Pugh and Hickson, 1976). The major concern here has been articulating 'patterns of contingent relationships' among various organizational aspects that matter in organizational survival. In early 1980s, some researchers (Pfeffer, 1981; Meyer, 1981) studied the interaction patterns and influence of subjective variable such as culture with other organizational variables within this framework. This perspective closely resembles the functionalist paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), system-structural view (Van de ven and Astley, 1981) or social factist paradigm (Ritzer, 1975).
It is usually defined as social and normative glue that holds an organization together (Tichy, 1982). It is viewed as the result of 'human enactment.' It expresses the values or social ideals and the beliefs that organization members come to share (Louis, 1980). These values or patterns of beliefs are manifested by symbolic devices such as myths (Boje, Fedor and Rowland, 1982), rituals (Deal and Kennedy, 1982), stories (Mitroff and Kilmann, 1976), legends (Wilkins and Martin, 1980 as referred in Smircich, 1983) and specialized language (Andrews and Hirsch, 1983).

Schein (1985:4) defined 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 relation to these problems.

This view of organizational culture seems to be the manifestation of traditional rational perspective of organizational studies that value certainty, linearity (one best solution to an organizational problem), and objectivity.

From this perspective, organizational processes are instrumental in achieving organizational goals. All the work processes are designed in such a manner that it should facilitate the achievement of desired goals.

Witkin (1990: 191-192) observed that,

....the work gets done by living actors who address each other in certain ways, observe certain niceties and rules of office etiquette and shape their encounters, relations, and actions in ways designed to reinforce and revivify the 'organizational process' so that it is capable of delivering the action demanded in particular situations.

So, recurring patterns of action may be instrumental, but they are also symbolic and can be viewed as "styles" of action, or "sensuously patterned, to realize and express values intrinsic to the organizational process itself (Prasad, 1993, as referred in Jones, 1996:8).

Organizational Culture as Root Metaphor

Both researchers and practitioners are recognizing this aspect of organizational phenomena in recent past. By implication the focus has shifted to symbolic aspects of organization. It has been acknowledged that subjective interpretive processes may influence adaptability of an organization (Meyer, 1981; Pfeffer, 1981). These studies have viewed cultural artifacts such as 'corporate saga,' 'folklore,' or 'management' as powerful 'symbols' with meanings that help or reinforce the communication. They can be used to build organizational commitment, convey a philosophy of management, rationalize and legitimate activity, motivate employees, and facilitate socialization. Culture, from this perspective, is viewed as a "root metaphor." It promotes a view of organization as "expressive forms," or "manifestations of human consciousness." Organizational phenomena can be better understood in terms of their expressive, ideational, and symbolic aspects. The focus is to explore the phenomenon as subjective experience and the patterns that make organized actions possible.

Symbolic Frame

"Symbolic frame," as conceived by Bolman and Deal (1991), is centred on symbols and their interpretation within an organizational context. The symbolic frame proposes a set of concepts that emphasize the complexity and ambiguity of organizational phenomena, as well as the ways in which symbols mediate the meaning of organizational events and activities. Non-rational or emotion-driven thinking process takes over the rational thinking process. It seeks to interpret and focus on what makes symbols powerful and how they affect every aspect of human experience, including life in organizations.

It is based on the following unconventional assumptions about the nature of organizations and human behaviour:

- What is important about any event is not what happened, but what meaning it conveys.
- Events and meanings are loosely coupled: the same events can have very different meanings for different people because of differences in the schema that they use to interpret their experience.
- Many of the most significant events and processes in organizations are ambiguous or uncertain. It is often difficult or impossible to know what happened, why it happened, or what will happen next.
- The greater the ambiguity and uncertainty, the harder it is to use rational approaches to analysis, problem solving, and decision making.
- Faced with uncertainty and ambiguity, human beings create symbols to resolve confusion, increase predictability, and provide direction. (Events themselves may remain illogical, random, fluid, and-meaningless, but human symbols make them seem otherwise.)
• Many organizational events and processes are important more for what they express than for what they produce: they are secular myths, rituals, ceremonies, and sagas that help people find meaning and order in their experience (Bolman and Deal, 1991: 243-271).

Symbolic frame mirrors human experience. Veteran managers find that the symbolic frame articulates the wisdom and experiences that they have accumulated over the years. Newcomers, whether they know it or not, encounter powerful symbolic issues from the moment they enter an organization. In essence, from the symbolic-interpretive perspective, organizational culture is a subjective perception of objective organizational characteristics that affects employees' performance and satisfaction. Symbols and symbolic behaviour are critical in symbolic-interpretive perspective.

Storytelling, for example, is a symbolic behaviour. It shapes the organization and members' understanding of it. In addition to narrating stories, organization members participate in many other traditional expressive activities. As Jones (1996:2) mentions, "They adopt the argot of their trade or jargon of their institution, use metaphors, joke with others, and celebrate someone's birthday or recent achievement. They personalize their workspace by displaying postcards, snapshots, mementos, awards or plaques. They develop customary ways of carrying out tasks that become the 'right' way to do things. These behaviours are considered 'the way we do things here.' Like the company logos and slogans, they are symbolic."

Exhibit 1 summarizes the basic differences between both the perspectives: culture as a variable and as root metaphor.

**Leadership Role and Challenges from Rational Perspective**

As has been pointed earlier, the role and challenges of leaders are contingent upon the way culture is conceived by the leader. One way in which organizations which are guided by rationality and objectivity have sought to cope with the increasing volatility and turbulence of the external environment is by training and equipping them with the skills to cope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bases</th>
<th>Culture as a &quot;Variable&quot; (Rational World)</th>
<th>Culture as &quot;Root Metaphor&quot; (Symbolic World)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How an Individual is Viewed</td>
<td>A rational being</td>
<td>An emotional being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor Used to Explain</td>
<td>Machine or organism</td>
<td>Social phenomena such as theatre, political arena, and so on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Phenomena</td>
<td>More objective and certain. (Reality to be understood is external to individual)</td>
<td>Subjective, ambiguous, complex, and fluid (Reality to be understood is a product of human consciousness, subjective interpretation and meaning are important)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Organizational Reality is Seen</td>
<td>Primarily on economic and material terms; Goal-driven; Achieving organizational goal becomes important</td>
<td>Primarily on expressive, ideational, and symbolic aspects; Process-driven; How the organizational goals are achieved becomes important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Organizational Phenomena are Evaluated</td>
<td>Culture is something an organization has</td>
<td>Culture is something an organization is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemological</td>
<td>Positivist; Pattern of relationships can be conveyed as causal law</td>
<td>Non-positivist; Expressive, affective, and sensuous aspects of lived experience are important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way to Guide Human Behaviour</td>
<td>Through formal or informal control mechanism (checks and balances)</td>
<td>By guiding their meaning making process; Meanings sensed from organizational events become crucial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding Paradigm</td>
<td>Instrumental and functional paradigm</td>
<td>Subjective-interpretive paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Symbols are Viewed</td>
<td>An artifact</td>
<td>Symbols carry meaning that triggers feelings and emotions which guide human behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If culture is treated as a variable that can be manipulated and controlled for organizational effectiveness and efficiency or as a subsystem within the organizational system where a stable pattern of inter-relationships is to be established, then the leader is viewed as a “gatekeeper” that helps organization take note of and adapt to the environmental changes.

The leaders are concerned with enhancing the adaptive mechanisms within the organization. OD interventions are often directed at the cultural subsystem to allQw for the questioning of values and norms under which people operate (French and Bell, 1978). These activities serve to make the culture more receptive to change facilitating the realignment of the total organizational system into a more viable and satisfying configuration.

Leadership challenges are focused on how to mould and shape internal culture in a particular way and how to change culture consistent with managerial purposes though the nature, direction, and impact of his interventions are dependent on the skills and abilities of the leader. The majority of the literature, which extols the virtues of transformational leadership, demonstrates widespread support for this view (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000).

Parsons (1937, 1951, 1960) argued that, to survive any goal-directed or 'action' system, an organization must deal with the four functions of adapting, attaining goals, coordinating activities ('integrating'), and maintaining these pattern of actions. Shared beliefs that make up the culture determine how the organization adapts to change, what sort of changes is acceptable, and what adaptive actions are simply not allowable, no matter how useful they might be.

Schein (1985) proposes five mechanisms in which leaders can create and maintain organizational culture:

- They should identify and pay attention to organizational aspects that they believe are critical to organizational culture by measuring and controlling these.
- They should react to critical incidents and organizational crises in a way that organizational culture does not get diluted because of these.
- They should deliberately position themselves as role models for the organizational members and get involved in coaching and guiding.
- They should choose criteria, appropriate for the desired culture, for rewarding organizational members.
- They should also choose appropriate criteria for recruiting, selecting, promoting, retiring or even excommunicating an organizational member.

Schein points out that the role of founding fathers in establishing an organization's initial culture is as crucial as continuing role of leaders in monitoring and maintaining the culture in the mechanisms suggested above.

He also lists five 'secondary' articulation and reinforcement mechanisms. These are mechanisms that will enhance the impacts of leader's actions if they are consistent with what the leader does. The secondary mechanisms focus on various organizational aspects such as: (a) design and structure, (b) systems and procedures, (c) design of physical space, facades, and buildings, (d) stories, myths, legends, and parables about important events and people and (e) formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charter.

Schein's view of leadership is consistent with a contingency theory viewpoint, which indicates that the task of leadership is to start with an intimate knowledge of the existing culture and to explore ways in which that culture might change toward one which is compatible with the organization's current circumstances. Organizational leadership thus entails not so much the creation of change but the anticipation of crises and the construction of cultures which are best adapted to handling them.

Georgiades and Macdonell (1998: 19-21) view the leadership challenges as scrutinizing external environment, conceiving vision, articulating strategic implications of vision, and developing appropriate management practices that would facilitate the evolution of desired organizational culture to meet the needs of vision and strategy.

Charismatic leader is suitable for the above-mentioned challenges, because of 'his intolerance of the existing context or status-quo, ability to quickly identify and exaggerate deficiencies in the environment and articulate them for the subordinates' (Conger and Kanungo, 1988: 331).

Patterns of Behaviour

Georgiades and Macdonell (1998: 146) observed that "both within organizations and individuals, past experiences and behaviours give rise to beliefs, values, and norms which are expressed in 'patterns of behaviour.' The ways in which these interactive categories are patterned constitute the culture of the system."
Leaders always attempt to establish a desired pattern of behaviour, which, they believe, would help the organization achieve the desired end (Wilhelm, 1992). The bottom line is pattern of behaviour. This pattern of behaviour is the manifestation of a set of shared values, beliefs, and norms, constituting the essence of the organization’s culture.

The leader must be guided by a realistic vision of what kinds of cultures enhance performance. Leadership must view organizational culture that are responsive, risk-sharing, trusting, and proactive (Kilmann et al. used the term "adaptive culture" for this, as referred in Georgiades and Macdonell, 1998) as a requirement of medium- to long- term survival. If there are gaps between the desired and prevailing patterns of behaviour, various organizational invention mechanisms are introduced to close the gaps.

**Organization as a Symbolic World**

Schein's conception of organizational culture, which is popular and widely discussed, has been challenged on several grounds, from its reification of symbolic behaviour as objects or entities (artifacts) to its being a static rather than a dynamic model of relationships between elements of culture (Hatch, 1993). Some argue that although symbols may embody assumptions and values, symbolic behaviour such as storytelling and ritualized interactions can just as readily create beliefs and construct realities for organizational participants as managerial actions and behaviour of the leaders. Others contend that the culture construct itself is a 'symbol' (Spradley, 1979), even a 'root metaphor' to organizational analysis (Smircich, 1983).

Proponents of this school of thought have been focusing on the symbolic aspects of organization. They acknowledge that subjective-interpretive processes may influence adaptability of the organization in a context. It seeks to describe and predict the ways they are related to other outcomes such as turnover, absenteeism, and commitment. Ffeffer (1981) sees organization as a system of wholly or partly shared meanings. His view is that leadership in organizations may be largely 'symbolic' actions, whose purpose is the management of meanings placed upon organizational events by organizational members. Visible behaviours of organizations such as investment decisions, hiring or firing can be predictable on the basis of 'external' objective qualities such as technology, size, market forces and so on, whereas, symbolic behaviours are subtle, ambiguous, and subjective.

Smircich (1985:65) views organizations as 'symbolically constituted worlds' and 'symbolic forms.' Anthropologists such as Hallowell (1955) and Geertz (1973) treat societies, or cultures, as a system of shared symbols and meanings.

Geertz (1973) defines culture as 'a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols.... (which) communicate, perpetuate and develop knowledge about and attitudes toward life.' He identifies two functions of symbols. First, cultural symbols are models of the social life, its thoughts, ideas, philosophy, and its world view. Secondly, cultural symbols become models for the future development of society.

Management of meanings communicated through various organizational events and symbols becomes more critical than having a desired pattern of behaviour. Organizations with very powerful vision might fail if it is not communicated in a right way. Having a powerful and realistic vision is: not enough, if it is not communicated. In other words, the leadership challenges are:

- Organizations depend on shared meanings. Leaders can articulate things that may have been unspoken and they focus people on key issues.
- The style of communication is important in effectively managing how meaning is shared and used to drive an organization.
- The meaning must be framed in such a way that people pay attention to it at entry level.

**Social Architecture**

The ultimate, objective of a leader is to get employees rally around the organizational purpose, derived from the vision. "Social architecture," as conceived by Bennis and Nanus (1985), is the process by which employees align themselves to a vision. It provides context or meaning, communicates to its members and stakeholders, and presents a shared interpretation of organizational events, so that members know how they are expected to behave. It also generates a commitment to the primary organizational values and philosophy — that is the vision that employees feel they are working for and can believe in. Finally, it serves as a control mechanism, sanctioning or prescribing particular kind of behaviour.

The leaders usually communicate through words (verbal) or visuals. Symbols are important if the leader prefers the non-verbal means of communication. They are the most apparent and observable aspects of organizational life. Businesses, universities, and other organizations proclaim their identity in logos on stationery, newsletters, and even clothing.
(Dandridge, Mitroff and Joyce, 1980). Many create slogans to inspire members (Peters and Waterman, 1982), devise rites of passage that mark promotion or retirement (Pondy et al., 1983), hold ceremonies to publicly reward employee service (Peters, 1978) and make heroes of those who epitomize organizational values (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). All these objects and activities are consciously, even self-consciously, symbolic.

**Experiencing Culture in an Organization**

New employees often learn about organizational culture from the substance of public functions or events staged by a group such as rites or rituals. The ways that the members of a group or organization typically communicate or express themselves are through stories (myths), rituals, or symbols. These three indicators are the crux of an organization, as far as symbolic-interpretative perspective is concerned.


**Two Approaches to Study Organizational Symbolism**

Two major approaches to studying organizational symbolism are socio-cultural functionalism and symbolic interpretivism. Redcliffe-Brown (1935, as referred in Jones, 1996:12) pointed out that the concept of function in social science is based on an analogy between social life and organizational life. In human society, individuals are connected by social relations into an integrated whole like a living organism. The function of any recurrent social activity is its contribution to maintaining structural continuity, just as the parts (life processes) of an organism function together to maintain the life of the organism.

Bascom (1954, as referred in Jones, 1996:12), on the basis of some folklore researches, concluded that traditional symbolic forms validate culture, educate members of a group about values and behavioural norms, and ensure conformity by applying social pressure and exerting social control. Everything is directed toward preserving the stability of culture.

Scholars advocating for symbolic interpretivism focus on "the sensuous aspects of lived experience," "the affective and aesthetic," (Turner, 1990). "They view organizational world as a 'sensual and emotional realm,' replete with its own ceremonies, rites, and dramas. They contend that they are less concerned with instrumentality than with understanding, with meaning, with interpretation" (Jones, 1996:13).

**Semiotic Analysis**

Semiotics consider the world of organizations to be a "system of signs" (Rafaeli and Worline, 2000:82). The methods of semiotic analysis are useful for understanding how symbols provide an integration of interpretative frame (Manning, 1987).

It is the study of 'signs or systems of signs that concerns the principles by which events, words, behaviours, and objects carry meaning for the members of a given community, and to the content they convey. It is ultimately the study of how communication is possible, since all communication presumes shared code' (Barley, 1983: 394).

**Signs**

A sign is defined as 'the relationship between a symbol and the content conveyed by a symbol' (Rafaeli and Worline, 2000: 82). Signs contribute to systems of signification or codes. The assumption in semiotics is that the link between expression (symbol) and content is determined by the conventions of the individuals involved. A code consists of a set of symbols, a set of contents conveyed by the symbols, and rules for combining them (Barley, 1983). Conventions are specific to a society. Codes thus specify meanings of a set of symbols within a culture.

A code analytically decomposes into four ingredients: (a) a set of expressions, (b) a set of contents, (c) a set of rules for coupling expressions to content, and (d) a set of alternative responses contingent on the combination (Eco, 1976: 36-47). The last element is crucial for the study of culture, societal or organizational, since its inclusion transforms the definition of code from that of a set of signs into a general model for social action. Behaviour becomes a function of interpretation of a situation.

**Understanding Organizational Culture through Semiotic Analysis**

From the symbolic perspective, organizational culture refers to a system of shared meaning and assumptions (often unstated) held by members of an organization that distinguishes their organization from other organizations. When symbolic perspective is applied to organizational analysis, an organization, like a culture, is conceived as a pattern of symbolic discourse. It thus needs to be "interpreted" (Manning, 1979), "read" (Turner, 1983) or "deciphered" (Van Mannen, 1973), in order to be understood.
Semiotic analysis suggests that in order to understand organizational culture fully, one must uncover the relevant symbols (expressions), the contents conveyed by the symbols, and the rules that bind them.

The understanding of organizational cultures involves the examination of complete system of signification and meaning located in historical fields. The organization as a cultural system is created through the integration of socially shared interpretation of symbols. Its study precludes a simple focus on a specific symbol or a timeless individual (Rafaeli and Worline, 2000: 83).

Barley (1983) shows how semiotics provides one avenue for conceptualizing and analyzing occupational and organizational cultures. In using semiotic methods for studying organizational culture, the coders are the members of the organization and the codes are the system of meanings that are shared within the organization. Symbols are at the core of this meaning making process.

Symbols

Rafaeli and Worline (2000: 73) consider symbol to be "visible, physical manifestations of organizational life. Symbols take on important meanings in organizations, meanings that are defined by cultural and social conventions and interactions. Symbols are things that can be experienced with the senses and used by organizational members to make meaning." Symbols can be simple or complex. But symbols should be meaningful and they should arouse the passion. Symbols are objects, acts, relationships or linguistic formations that can lead ambiguously for a multiplicity of meanings.

Ways symbols are interpreted not only affect how people perceive events but also influence actions. Corporate architecture symbolically conditions organization members' behaviour. "Churches elicit religious behaviour even in people who are not religious. Likewise, clean rest rooms have been claimed to elicit tidier behaviour among users. Moving from conference table to easy chairs in the executive suite often produces less formal interaction" (Bjttf and Crenier, 1990: 46, quoted in Jones, 1996:4).

Functions of Symbols

Symbols serve four functions in organizations (Rafaeli and Worline, 2000):

• They reflect underlying aspects of culture, generating emotional responses from organizational members, and representing organizational values and assumptions. Symbols act as a bridge between members' emotional and cognitive reactions.
• They elicit internalized norms of behaviour, linking members' emotional responses and interpretations to organizational action. In organizational contexts, a symbol that prompts internalized feelings provides a way to understand and act upon those feelings.
• They frame experience, allowing organizational members to communicate about vague, controversial or uncomfortable organizational issues. The frame works of a particular social group constitute a central element of its culture and require a mode of communication.
• They integrate the entire organization in one system of significance.

Symbols usually connote something concrete, either an object or behaviour that is reified and treated as a discreet entity. Symbolism refers to both the practice of investing things with meaning and a 'system' of symbols.

Symbolic behaviour directs attention toward people's interaction and communication in the course of which they generate, convey, and infer meaning and significance. Symbolic behaviour is important in a symbolic-interpretive approach to organizational research because it identifies and helps researchers look for and at kinds of behaviour that are known to carry meanings.

An organization's culture, moreover, is revealed and communicated most clearly through its symbols. The many McDonald's franchises are united as much by golden arches, core values, and the legend of Ray Kroc as by sophisticated control systems.

Symbols and symbolic behaviour take many forms. Jones (1996:5-6) has collated frequently mentioned categories of symbols and symbolic behaviour, which are given in Box 1. Many organizational culture scholars call them artifacts.

The symbols may also act upon opinions and beliefs. Martin and Powers (1983: 101-102) report on experiments in which subjects were informed of a company's policy asking employees to take a temporary 10 per cent cut in pay during economic downturns in order for the organization to avoid mass layoffs. Some subjects were given a story regarding the policy but others received numerical data supporting or discontinuing it. The subjects presented with the story proved far more likely to believe the policy statement, to predict that mass layoffs would be avoided, and to identify with and be committed to the organization.
Box 1: Artifacts

**Verbal Expressions**
- Jargon, argot, memos (their style and language)
- Proverbs, traditional sayings, slogans, pet phrases, metaphors
- Nicknames for people and equipment
- Legends, cautionary tales, personal experience narratives
- Jokes, humorous anecdotes, jests, numskull stories
- Beliefs, superstitions, rumours
- Rhymes, poetry, songs

**Activities**
- Play, recreation, games
- Practical jokes, initiation pranks
- Celebrations, festive events, parties
- Gestures
- Food sharing
- Rituals, rites of passage
- Staff meetings, retreats, ceremonies
- Customs, social routines
- Conventionalized techniques for doing a job

**Objects**
- Architecture, design of workplace, office furnishing
- The quality and allocation of equipment
- Organization charts, manuals, newsletters
- Bulletin boards (location, contents, aesthetics)
- Posters, photographs, memorabilia on display
- Costume, company uniforms, standard attire
- Decoration of one's workplace or equipment
- Graffiti

Further, myths and stories give drama, cohesiveness, clarity, and direction to events that would otherwise be confusing and mysterious. Rituals and ceremonies provide ways of taking meaningful action in the face of ambiguity, unpredictability, and threat. Metaphors, humour, and play allow individuals and organizations to escape from the tyranny of facts and logic, to view organizations and their own participation in them as if they were something new and different from their appearance, and to find creative alternatives to existing choices.

Every organization develops distinctive beliefs and patterns over time. Many of these patterns and assumptions are unconscious or taken for granted. They are reflected in myths, fairy tales, stories, rituals, ceremonies, and other symbolic forms. Leaders who understand the power of symbols have a better chance of influencing their organizations than do those who focus only on other frames. Rituals are common in organizations with such leaders who make organizational practices as ritualistic as practicable.

**Rituals**

Rituals are those patterns of behaviour by which a social group acts out its values and reinforces its world view. Rituals are models of and model for a culture. The two elements of rituals are ritual action and ritual myth (story).

Ritual action is any pattern of action which is repeated. Ritual action uses two things as symbols: (a) symbolic objects (such as the flag or the cup) and (b) symbolic actions ( genuflecting, making the sign of the cross, placing hand over heart). Moreover, ritual actions point to and are drawn from basic elements of human life: water, food, fire, marriage, birth, death, killing, offering, sacrifices, etc.

Ritual myth has a deep meaning which gives identity to a group of people or a culture. It does not mean that the story is not true, as in the phrase, 'it's just a myth.' The purpose of the term is to describe the stories that form the identity of a particular people or group. The myth tells the story behind the action. The story contains the values, commitments, and the beliefs of the group.

Rituals, like other symbols, play a powerful, vital, and complex role in the life of any group or organization. They encode an enormous variety of meanings and messages into economical and emotionally powerful forms. They reflect and express an organization's culture - the pattern of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for its members who they are and how they do things. Culture is both product and process. As product, it embodies the accumulated wisdom of those who were members before we came. As process, it is continually recreated, renewed, and modified as new members are taught the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves.

Ritual and celebration give one's life passion and purpose. It allows that which is human to co-mingle with that which is spiritual. When ritual and celebration are shared with others, we become part of the larger community and in that process we are given the opportunity to share the values, stories, and myths that make our culture and us unique.

Celebration also acts as the adhesive that holds a culture together. If planned and implemented properly, celebrations can create the kind of spirit that pays great dividends to a community. Communities that lack ritual and celebration are easy to spot. They have no discernible spirit.

People reveal their true self when they are free to express themselves in an environment free of
judgment and the fear of reprisal. There is a joy in letting go, in expressing our true feelings, in releasing long-held inhibitions. Celebration can provide people with a safety valve for the relief of tension and the expression of our emotions. Besides rituals, organizational leaders should create and maintain organizational stories that reinforce organizational values.

**Organizational Stories**

Cultural manifestations such as stories and rituals serve as die bases for cultural uniqueness of an organization. Selzenick (1957: 151) observed that organizational stories ‘...are efforts to state, in the language of uplift and idealism, what is distinctive about the aims and methods of the enterprise.’ An organizational story focuses on a single, unified sequence of events, apparently drawn from the institution's history. The heroes and heroines of such stories are organizational members (Clark, 1970; Martin, 1982). Martin et al (1983) have identified seven types of common organizational stories: (a) Rule breaking story, (b) Is the big boss human? (c) Can the little person rise to the top? (d) Will I get fired? (e) Will the organization help me when I have to move? (f) How will the boss react to mistakes? (g) How will the organization deal with obstacles?

In general, common organizational stories deal with concerns that people in the organizations have. In general, there are two categories of organizational settings. In the positive versions of the stories, the top people in the organization are admirable and approachable. Superiors are competent and deserve their status. The organization cares about its people and their personal well being. Disruptions, such as firing and moving, are kept to the minimum. Mistakes are forgiven and obstacles clearly overcome. In the organizations portrayed in the negative versions, the top management is not admirable and approachable. Status and competence are not matched. The organizations show few signs of caring about its people and their personal well being. Disruptions are neither minimized nor particularly justifiable. Mistakes are not forgiven. Obstacles are problematic and difficult for the organization to overcome.

**Leadership Role and Challenges in the Symbolic World**

Symbolic organization theorists have much in common with organizational leaders. Theorists and practitioners alike are concerned with such practical matters as how to create and maintain a sense of organization and how to achieve common interpretations of situations so that co-ordinated action is possible. Some research work derived from this perspective, in fact, offers the view that leadership can best be understood as the management of meaning and shaping of interpretations (Peters, 1978; Smircich and Morgan, 1982). Martin (1982), Pettigrew (1979), and Dandridge, Mitroff and Joyce (1980) all suggest that culture is embodied in and transmitted by 'stories,' 'myths,' and 'symbols' and urge researchers to scrutinize such vehicles more closely.

Pfeffer (1981) views the role of leaders in organizations to be in influencing the meanings and values placed on the particular ways of approaching goal. In a similar vein, Pondy (1978: 94-95) asserts that:

The effectiveness of a leader lies in his ability to make activity meaningful for those in his role set - not to change behaviour but to give others a sense of understanding what they are doing and especially to articulate it so they can communicate about the meaning of their behaviour. If in addition the leader can put it into words then the meaning of what the group is doing becomes a social fact. This dual capacity... to make sense of things and to put them into language meaningful to large numbers of people gives the person who has it enormous leverage.

In the world of 'symbols' and 'symbolism,' where subjective sense making process and meanings of organizational events are valued, stories and rituals are too powerful symbols to be ignored or marginalized by organizational leaders, who desire to develop and maintain a strong culture. Three roles of organizational leaders are proposed:

- Leader as a symbol.
- Leader as a 'hero' in organizational stories.
- Leader as a manager of symbols and rituals.

**Leader as a Symbol**

In an organization that values organizational culture, corporate leaders act as symbolic managers (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). If values are the souls of the culture, then heroes personify those values and epitomize the strength of the organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). A leader should always personify the organizational values and creed. The leader walks and talks the organization. If the business is undergoing change, the leader should be the agent of change. The leader should galvanize the organization as Steve Jobs did with Apple. Steve Jobs became a 'symbol' for Apple.

Leaders are actual or potential power-holders, but not all power-holders are leaders. Power-holders
are those who for whatever reasons have the capacity to influence others (Smith and Peterson, 1989: 115).

A leader is said to have symbolic power if:

* He personifies and upholds certain values, which are positively valued by the society.
* His words and deeds reinforce the values he is upholding.

Though symbolic power closely resembles referrent power, there are subtle differences between the two power bases. Referrent power (one of the five power bases identified by French and Raven, 1951, referred in Yukl, 1981:38) depends on a feeling of personal affection, loyalty, and admiration by a subordinate. The way a leader treats his subordinates is usually the most important determinant of referrent power. A leader is more likely to have loyal, devoted subordinates if he shows consideration for their needs and feelings and treats each person fairly. Referrent power, in essence, depends upon the quality of superior-subordinate relationships, which again depend on social exchange processes between them. In contrast, symbolic power is gained through personifying certain values that are valued by subordinates even at a hierarchic distance. It is determined by the degree of "value alignment" between the value preferences of leader and followers. If the values a leader is upholding are valued by his followers, they begin to see him as a role model and identify themselves with him. Attributing symbolic power to a leader is more cognitive than expressive, unlike referrent power. It is not based on actual social exchange processes between the leader and all his or her followers.

Expert knowledge about the business may sometimes bestow the leader with symbolic power. Because of his depth of knowledge about the business the organization is in, he symbolizes the "business." For example JRD Tata used to symbolize airlines industry when he launched Tata Airlines in 1930s.

He was passionate about flying. He was a trained pilot. He flew the first flight that Tata Airlines had flown in 1930. One of the old Air India in-flight magazines mentioned that the chairman (then JRD Tata) knew every nut and bolt of the airline trade - from the interior decor to the length of an airhostess's hair (Martyris, 2001).

JRD Tata set up Air India from an absurdly small beginning. There was no radio, no airport, but the standards he set were high. Air India was a pioneer of air travel in the true sense of the term. Air India set the standards of international travel. American airlines like Pan Am and TWA looked up to it. Needless to say, JRD, at that point of time, was the symbol of airlines business.

Symbolic power provides additional leverage to a leader, more specifically to a charismatic leader, along with positional power, to influence subordinates. We would conjecture that symbolic power associates more with behavioral change rather than behavioral compliance - something that is valued highly in rational conception of organization. Social influence through symbolic power is a potential area for leadership research.

Further, successful leaders mould the character of organizations they are leading and personify the organizational realities as well. Organizational practices and processes are the manifestations of the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the leader. For example, when we talk of Infosys, the personality that automatically comes into one's mind is Narayana Murthy. It is because Narayana Murthy personifies Infosys. The leader becomes the most powerful symbol for the organization and the world beyond it. Similarly, Richard Branson symbolizes Virgin Atlantic; Bill Gates symbolizes Microsoft; and so on. These organizational leaders have been successful in becoming the symbols for the organizations they are leading.

Family lineage is one of the important elements that contribute to the symbolic power of a leader. Sometimes, leaders' influence in the organization is so powerful that they become legends. Some of the examples are JRD Tata of Tata group, Hewlett and Packard of HP, Larsen and Toubro of L&T and so on. These leaders externally help organizations in projecting desired corporate image. Internally, they become the role models for many of the organizational members.

**Leader as the Central Character in Organizational Stories**

Organizational stories are powerful. Gardner (1995) observes, "Leaders achieve their effectiveness chiefly through the stories they relate...Leaders in the arts characteristically inspire others by the way they use the chosen media of artistic expression, be they the phrases in a sonata or the gestures of a dance; scientists lead through the manipulation of symbol systems favoured in their domains, be they the mathematical equations of theoretical physicists or the anatomical models of neurophysiologists. In addition to communicating stories, leaders embody those stories" (Gardner, 1995:9).

Gardner (1995) distinguished among ordinary, innovative, and visionary leaders. The ordinary
leader simply relates the traditional story of his or her group as effectively as possible. The innovative leader takes a story that has been latent in the population, or among members of his or her chosen domain, and brings new attention or a fresh twist to the story. The visionary leader creates a new story, one not known to most individuals before, and achieves at least a measure of success in conveying this story effectively to others.

The ultimate impact of the leader depends most significantly on the particular story that he or she relates or embodies, and the reception to that story on the part of the followers. The leader should see that the organizational stories that are floating around in the organization must be in sync with organizational values. The leader must have a grip over the informal communication channels such as gossip in the canteen or any other informal gatherings so that those stories do not have negative connotations. It would mar the culture of the organization. Such stories should be countered with positive action that demonstrates otherwise.

For example, in Infosys, it is never allowed to be forgotten that Infosys was founded with a meagre $1000 scraped from Narayana Murthy's savings and his wife's jewellery. Or that the man himself owns just 7 per cent of the company, or even that he only flies economy class, stays in budget hotels, lives in a middle-class neighbourhood in Bangalore, and runs the household on a budget that could be any other man's (Basinex Today, August 19, 2001). What does this story signify? Had we been employees of Infosys, we would have accepted Narayana Murthy as one among us. Narayana Murthy would have been our "role model." Moreover, he symbolizes the aspiration of a middle class family - to achieve something.

An organizational story may degenerate into nothingness, if it is not continuously reinforced by the leader or a leader ceases to become a part of the story. This has happened in the case of Air India.

In early 1960s, when one of the 707 aircrafts was sent to Boeing for modification, the engineers at Boeing said that it was the cleanest aeroplane they had ever serviced (Martyris, 2001). How many of the current leaders use this story as a symbol? We would have accepted JRD Tata as one among us. JRD Tata would have been our "role model." Moreover, he symbolizes the aspiration of a middle class family - to achieve something.

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The leaders must realize the importance of a symbol. Sometimes, when 'rationality' fails, symbols may succeed in evoking loyalty.

Leader as a Manager of Rituals and Symbols

People celebrate successes. Recognition of personal and organizational accomplishments has been proven to elevate spirits, to rekindle faith, and to provide a boost of enthusiasm for the celebrants. Yet, ritual and ceremony are usually reserved only for joyous occasions.

Rituals and celebrations do not always have to be ones of recognition or accomplishment. There are times when rituals and celebrations are needed to deal with the more solemn aspects of life. It is because, without rituals and celebrations, the healing process may never take place. Organizations need to celebrate both successes and failures.

In companies with a strong culture, nothing is too trivial. Any event that occurs in a work context is an event to be managed. These companies take pride in the way they do things and work hard to make sure that way is right. They regard the carrying out of activities in the correct way as tangible examples of the strength of the culture.

Without expressive events, any culture will die. In the absence of ceremonies or rituals, important values will not be able to influence employee behaviour. Ceremonies help the company celebrate heroes, myths, and sacred symbols. Ceremonies place the culture on display and provide experiences that are remembered by employees. Properly done, ceremonies keep values, beliefs, and heroes uppermost in employees’ minds and hearts.

A leader's action can have symbolic importance also. For example, leaders who are sensitive to the disturbing aspects of a power differential seek to de-emphasize this differential. Status gap can be reduced by actions that have symbolic importance to subordinates as an expression of the leader's acceptance and personal regard. Whyte (1969: 312, quoted in Yukl, 1981:44) provides an example in a subordinate's description of an effective production foreman:

He spent his time out on the floor, not in the office. He used to wear work clothes, and when anything went wrong, he was not afraid to step in and get dirty.

Another example of how a leader (in this case the late JRD Tata) can decide the script of an organizational event to convey certain meanings to the organizational members.

In 1971, Air India purchased its first Boeing 747, the Emperor Ashoka. The person who broke the auspicious coconut on the Ashoka was neither JRD Tata, who was at the helm at that time, nor a minister, but a 57-year-old maintenance engineer Roland Fernandes, Air India's longest-serving employee (Martyris, 2001).
This event symbolizes one of the aspects of Air India's (then Tata Airlines) culture as well as one of the values upheld by JRD Tata - 'valuing the contribution of organizational members.'

The following section discusses how company songs, creeds, advertisements or dress codes have been used as symbols by organizational leaders for guiding employees' behaviour.

**Company Song**

Company song is very effective in building employees' solidarity and their identification with the organization. Most successful companies across the globe have company songs. The company song of Matsushita Electric, for example, is very powerful because it attempts to foster values such as "harmony" and "sincerity" to make Matsushita Electric grow and in the process bring national prosperity.

"For the building of a new Japan
Let's put our strength and minds together,
Doing our best to promote production
Sending our goods to people of the world,
Endlessly and continuously,
Like water gushing from a fountain.
Grow industry, grow, grow, grow!
Harmony and sincerity!
Matsushita Electric! « (Gould, 1972: 125-126)

Organizations such as IBM (Rodgers, 1986 ...), Hitachi (Dore, 1973: 51-52), or Mathura Refinery of India (Srinivas, 2000: 115) have company songs. Employees in these organizations sing these company songs in every possible occasion that help them identify themselves with the organization.

**Company Creed**

A company creed, as symbol, imbibes solidarity among line employees and provides a sense of direction to the organizational efforts. Many a times, company creeds are communicated in the form of slogans. Most Japanese companies explicitly communicate their creed in the form of slogans.

*Dai'ifhi Kangyo Sank* (Inohara, 1990)
'Maximum service to the nation.'
'Supply of rich and good funds to meet the demands of the time.'
'Contribution to the international company as an international bank.'

*TDK* (Inohara, 1990)
'Contribution to the world by our creative products in "culture industry."
'Dream, courage, and confidence.'

**Advertisement**

*Brand Ambassador for IBM Advertisement*

Advertisement has also symbolic value. When IBM introduced personal computers, there was computer-phobia among the organizations. At that point, the purpose of the advertisement was to project IBM products as, Rodgers mentioned, 'The computer is something to want, not fear. The products make life easier for you. We have educational applications and solutions for your business problems. Here is IBM, and we are involved in a variety of products and services, all providing some benefits to you' (Rodgers, 1986: 111).

IBM used a Charlie Chaplin character as spokesperson for the IBM PC. The 'Little Tramp' personified the qualities the company wanted to project for the new product - uncomplicated, unintimidating, and fun.

**Dress Code**

*IBM*

IBM has no written policy that tells a person how to dress. But, there is an unwritten dress code that is as effective as if it were engraved in steel. IBM requires its employees to wear a dark conservative suit, winter or summer, a white shirt and a quiet tie. Uniform helps create solidarity. It is a symbol for egalitarianism (Rodgers, 1986:81-82).

**Organizational Events/Practices as Rituals**

*Annual Account Planning Sessions in IBM*

In IBM, account-planning sessions are conducted annually. Both line and customer-support people spend from three days to a week reviewing the entire status of an account. At these meetings, the customer's business conditions are discussed and both long-term and short-term strategies are discussed. One of the best things about the account-planning sessions is the productive working relationship that develops between the customer and IBMers (Rodgers, 1986:57-58)

*Employee Suggestion Scheme in Matsushita Electric*

At Matsushita Electric, employee suggestion programme ritualizes the transfer of know-how from one employee to others. In recent years, employees have submitted 6.5 million ideas annually. The company believes that people actually doing a task are in the best position to improve the process. A screening committee reviews suggestion once in six months. The committee tries to adopt as many ideas as possible. Cash prizes are awarded based upon the value of the concept behind an idea (Yamashita, 1989:85)
Solidarity is an important tradition in Matsushita Electric. The New Year’s annual management policy meeting, for example, is held every January 10, even if the date falls on a Sunday. About 7000 Matsushita supervisory personnel gather to hear it. It has become a custom that takes precedence over other work. Each January 10, the president of Matsushita outlines that year’s goals, attempting to dramatize them in a slogan. A company-wide committee drafts several catch phrases for him to choose from (Yamashita, 1989:53-54).

1984: Build Today-Challenge Tomorrow.
1985: Create the Future.

Morning Assembly in Matsushita Electric

In morning assemblies, every employee of Matsushita recites the company creed, pledge, and sing the company song. Due to daily repetition of laudable ideas about service, honesty, and teamwork ritually, one gradually but surely takes them into heart. At these assemblies, someone in each group or section makes a short presentation on a topic of his or her choice. The objective is to train employees to express their thought through informal public speaking (Yamashita, 1989:89).

Yash Paper Mills

In Yash paper mills which is located in Ayodhya, the first shift in the morning begins with Sanskrit sloka in front of the statuettes of triumvirate of Vishwakarma (God of production), Gandhi, and Swami Vivekananda. Daily prayer includes hoisting the National Flag and singing of a company song (for details refer Srinivas, 2000).

NIIT

One of the several HR practices followed at NUT is a family picnic — senior officers and their families go to a nearby resort for 23 days just to interact and to get to know each other. This also has dividends at work in terms of a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere.

In addition, when ‘performance conventions’ are held, the relevant group of employees together with their families checks into a block of rooms at a hotel. The relevant group would include even the orderlies and other class IV employees in an effort to reduce hierarchical gaps.

Besides, NUT organizes Founders Day, Affinity Day, and Painting contest and so on annually, which are all family-centric. All these policies and practices help the management’s attempt to knit the employees together as a work-centered family. On Annual Found-

ers day, excellent performers are recognized in a unique way. Those who have received three excellence awards (called excellerator awards) have their framed portrait placed in a room or a wall near their work area. The room or the area thenceforth is named after the employee. Further, the New Year Day is designated as Granny Gratitude Day — a day to visit one’s extended family. An Affinity Day is organized annually by employees’ families in a large hired auditorium for a gathering of the region's employee families for a fun-filled day of talent-show, songs, skits, food, and fellowship (for details refer Srinivas, 2000).

Organization as a ‘Family’

NUT

When an ex-employee returns to NUT, the occasion is celebrated by his or her workgroup as 'home-coming.' The company uses the jargon 'family group' to refer to work group. When he is deputed to a temporary task team, the family group is referred to as 'home group.' All employees are referred to as NIITans (Work-centred family).

Alacrity Foundation

Alacrity foundation, a construction company based in Chennai, has shown that being ethical can also be profitable. Alacrity does not bribe anybody, and keeps financial transactions transparent. It believes in 'management by familial values.' Its pamphlets read like "Keeping the Family Together - The Alacrity Way."

The task of leadership is to understand, create, and communicate in symbolic terms that help people to understand the world and the meaning of their involvement with the organization. The most important skills of leadership are the capacity to tell stories, to create heroes, to influence shared values, and to manage symbolic rituals and events.

Conclusion

Symbolism constructs and conveys meanings, evokes emotions, affects perceptions and beliefs, and influences actions. Organizational structure, technology, leadership, power, communication and so on have a symbolic component. They are intended or inferred to convey meaning and significance beyond intrinsic content. Although some symbols are institutional (logos, company posters, slogans and so on), some others are expressive (dress code, rites, rituals, stories, ceremonies, and so on). Symbolism is often instrumental or functional, for example, creating a sense of common identity and community and contributing to the stability of organizational culture.
It implies that every good company and its managers need to know the full range of opportunities available in creating an array of ceremonies and rituals that exemplify the culture. Routines of day-to-day corporate life should not be ignored. Corporate leaders should spend time and energy not just devising rituals but taking an active part in them.

A serious examination requires both depth and breadth of attention to the multiple symbols that abound in organizations. Organizational symbols have the power to facilitate or hinder smooth organizational functioning. Inattention to the multiple aspects of organizational symbols may lead to the possibility of a lack of shared interpretive codes among organizational members. This is perhaps easiest to see when a product does not match the quality symbolized by its advertising or brand name and, therefore, loses out in the market (Aaker, 1994).

This could also be the case in relation to symbols such as dress and office layout.

Without careful monitoring, the study of symbols can become misleading and counterproductive. With careful attention to symbols and conversations, thoughts, emotions, and actions of organizational members, the study of symbols can provide a deep, rich, and worthwhile understanding of organizational culture. Mere lip service to organizational culture through manipulation of a few symbols does not suffice.

Thus, the fundamental challenges of a leader can be summarized as follows:

• He must learn to lead non-rationally.
• He must understand culture’s myths.
• He must learn to live with symbols, rituals, ceremonies, and stories and shape them for company’s success.


References


It could also be the case in relation to symbols such as dress and office layout.


