ORGANIZATION’S QUALITOTOLOGY AND CULTURAL CHANGES

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INTRODUCTION
Pakistan has seen disastrous earthquake in 2005. When I was reading the details of the earth quake and some geological terminologies, a thought came in my mind that why not see these geological terminologies in quality and organizational context. The earthquake has brought many changes in the earth structures and to the human lives. Likewise, there are various factors / forces that effect the organizations almost in the same manner, however the difference is that earthquake is a natural act whereas for organizations external and internal factors may or may not be natural factors but are all-important perhaps the internal ones are more. These forces have an effect on organizations, their culture and environment. My focus would be more on explaining internal factors effecting culture as I believe that more strength of internal factors can defend adverse effects of external forces. So will try to highlight some of those internal factors in the next few pages under the new terminology named as “Organization’s Qualityology”.

ORGANIZATION’S QUALITYOLOGY AND STAKEHOLDERS
As we are aware that our earth has undergone various changes since came into being and certainly will continue to do so until end. Natural acts have changed the topography and geology of the earth and one recent example is disastrous earthquake of Pakistan. The author realizes that this geological phenomenon has very much similarity with organizational changes if one sees in the context of organizations. We know that organizations around the globe have seen many changes and ups & downs as time passes. Organizations also get affected due to various external and internal forces. The external forces may include natural acts, economic changes and political scenarios. The internal forces may include internal stakeholders and departmental tectonic activity. The crust, mantle and core of the organization have significant impact on each other and so along with departmental tectonic activity affect positively or negatively on the organization’s culture. Due to such activities, one needs to understand topography, resistivity and gravity of the organization to encourage and reinforce quality improvement programs. The author reveals this complete phenomenon and terms it as “Organization’s Qualityology”. Therefore, we can define it as “It is a quality study of the organization performs to realize current state of culture and before embarking on company-wide quality programs”.

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What is being tried to explain here through above definition is that, the cultural changes in the organization can be understood and improved only if one perform the quality study of the organization starting with knowledge of business stakeholders such as owner, management, employees, customers, shareholders and society (refer to figure-1) and understand the issues happening within the organization. This emphasizes avoiding quick fixes and adhoc decisions before complete understanding of related concerns and embarking on any quality improvement programs. There are many external and internal forces / factors effecting the qualityology and culture of the organization. Some of them are mentioned below.

Various external forces are effecting organizations such as political scenarios, competition, global standards, legal issues, trade unions, market pressures, government policies / rules and natural acts (refer to figure-2). Although most of these forces are not in hands of the organizations, but even then visualization of such forces are necessary to sustain and improve the culture of the organization. Strong culture and effective quality improvement program can defend the organization from any adverse effect of these or atleast can minimize it. External forces normally disturb the equilibrium among the departments and ultimately whole organization start shaking. Many organizations perform various measures such as competitor analysis, market trend analysis, customer and society perception surveys to realize these forces and their effect.
Managing the internal forces / factors is extremely critical for successful running of the organization. We all know that effect of internal forces often becomes more adverse if not handled sensibly by the management. Figure-3 below highlights some critical internal forces /factors, which normally have an impact on the organizational culture.

**Figure-3: Internal Factors Effecting Culture**

The most critical among those are “management decisions”. These are management decisions, which set the tone and direction of whole organization and everyone within it. Business results, growth, development, and stakeholders’ perception very much depend on the management decisions. I must say that its management decisions that makes or breaks the organization. Mostly quick fixes, adhoc decisions, complacency and management biasness generate and raise “internal politics”. This is the factor, which pulls everyone apart from the unity of purpose, creates an environment of mistrust and promotes blame culture. Other factor is “resources”, their provision and utilization. Unfair distribution and allocation of resources also effect on the culture and thus productivity of the organization. Departments start pushing and pulling each other instead of focusing on tasks.
All these factors as mentioned above disturb the “topography” of the organization. In geological definition “Topography is the position of various structures such as rivers, mountains, roads, buildings, etc. in the place”. When we see it in the context of organizational qualityology, we can define it as “position of various internal factors such as management decisions, internal politics, resource allocations, resistivity, etc, that can affect culture in the organization”. We realize that due to management decisions, internal politics and resources distribution, turbulence happen among departments. The rate of turbulence is crucial which sometimes can cause structural changes such as restructuring, dissolving or departmental mergers, etc. and so effect on overall environment and culture and hence develops topographical changes. Exercising different management styles also fall in this terminology of topography.

The next factor is Resistivity, which is actually derived from resistance. In geological terms, “it is the ability of a substance to hinder the flow of electricity”. The author is taking resistivity in view of organization’s qualityology context and defines it as “the ability of the organization to resist and manage adverse behaviors at work, resistance to change and resistance among departments / individuals”. From the definition, it is very clear that if resistivity factor is not taken care of, managed and exercised properly, it will affect on the organization culture and therefore may cause of changes that may be harmful for the organizational progress.

Finally, Gravity is defined as “the force that pulls everything towards earth”. When we see it in the organization’s context, we can define gravity as “The depth of the problem that pulls all who involve in it and cause for changes”. It actually means that organization needs to have keen eye on the intensity and depth of changes that may happen due to internal factors. There should be a mechanism within the organization to judge level and impact of problem. Only then, one can find out the solution for it and cope with the problem.

As we know that various departments work together within the organization as a chain. When no internal forces have any or minimum impact on working environment, culture, processes and people of the organization, the departments chain work well and business grows. The impact of internal forces develops turbulence within and among departments. The rate of turbulence is critical for the changes in culture and for effectiveness of quality improvement programs. If turbulence rate is higher, the impact on cultural and thus corresponding changes will be higher and quality improvement program may fail. Many organizations adopt perception measures to obtain feedback from relevant stakeholders and so to judge the turbulence level.

Normally turbulence happens at three levels as mentioned in figure-4 and described below:

**Figure-4: Department Tectonic Activity Due to Internal Factors**
Intra-Department Turbulence

When internal forces are more active within the individual department, the turbulence happens within that department and so cultural changes occur. This actually starts influencing the working environment and relations. Therefore, productivity of the department suffers. This kind of turbulence can be termed as “Intra-department Turbulence”.

Inter-Department Turbulence

The second level of turbulence is called as “Inter-department Turbulence”. This occurs when internal forces start effecting across departments and so turbulence occurs among different department instead of individual department. The scale of this kind of turbulence and its impact is higher on organizational culture.

Organization-wide Turbulence

The third level of turbulence can be termed as “Organization-wide Turbulence”. This occurs when inter-department turbulence is at extreme or satisfaction, loyalty of stakeholders reduces continuously, and no preventive measures are taken by the organization to cope with this situation.

- We can simply say that, intra-department turbulence will increase inter-department turbulence, which ultimately increases organization-wide turbulence, and thus business comes at risk and its performance suffers. This will have clear indication that quality improvement programs are not working as desired.

Department Tectonics

These turbulences raise tectonic activity within and among departments. There is push and pull forces involve in it due to which folds, faults (fractures) and joints develop. The common issues in case of intra-department tectonic occur due to lack of coordination between hierarchy, different pays & benefits of same levels, no fair recognition for high performers, and no fair dealing with poor performers.

In case of inter-department tectonic, same features of folds, faults / fractures and joints occur among the different departments as described in figure-5 below.
When there is equal push force among departments, folds develop. In this case, departments start working in silos, resist each other’s ideas, and therefore never go along with each other.

When push force is unequal, then faults / fractures develops among departments. These fractures actually develop mistrust among departments. Therefore in working scenarios instead of cordially cooperating each other they start watching and seeing and if things go positive, they are together and if negative then against each other. This further promotes blame culture.

When pull force act among departments, the gap develops and if not taken care of, become wider. In this situation two departments seek third and neutral department to fill the gap when interact with each other. Therefore, the third party makes a joint among the two and so joint develops. This normally causes resistance in direct communication and sharing of information. It may cause delay in routine tasks.

Just imagine if department tectonic activity such as folds, faults and joints are regular features involving many departments in the organization, what may happen. (The figure-6 is highlighting this phenomenon with example of few departments). These will affect a culture organization-wide and will cause risk to whole business.
Department tectonic activity increases when strategic management and operational management have no quality relation and not work as strategic quality management (SQM) and operational quality management (OQM). Moreover if there is no alignment between SQM and OQM. One can say that this is perhaps natural and will happen always to some extent among departments and within organization, however important factor is that the management focus should be not to happen it permanent. Some related issues of it, which have direct impact on culture and so to quality improvement programs, may be as follows:

- Staff motivation, satisfaction and hence loyalty decreases
- Departments start working in silos
- Resistance to accept each other’s ideas
- Departments start hiding tasks from each other
- Development of / increase in blame culture
- No / lack of synergy to achieve common goal
- Resistance to change and quality improvement programs
- Increase in management pressure
- Impact on customers and other stake holders
- Fear of job loss
- Financial issues and affect on business

THREE QUALITYOLOGIC AL LAYERS OF THE ORGANIZATION

We know that in geology earth has three structural layers known as Crust, Mantle and Core. The crust is the top most layer, mantle is middle one and the core is last one. Crust is dense and solid; mantle is semi solid i.e. slightly fluid and core is solid and hard as said.

The author put this in organizational context and realizes that we can also divide
the organization in three layers and so termed as “three qualityological layers of the organization” (refer to figure-7 below). Let us describe these layers:

1. Crust of the organization: It consists of internal political scenarios, organization’s policies and ability to manage competition. These factors are normally in hands of the organization and if taken care of properly give direct strength to the organization.
2. Mantle of the organization: It consists of customers, shareholders and society. These factors are normally not in the direct hands of the organization and so are slightly fluid in nature for the organization.
3. Core of the organization: It consists of Management, employees, finances and resources. These factors are also mostly in hands of the organization and so have direct affect on the organization performance, culture and quality improvement programs.

If any organization wants to improve, it has to work for all three qualityological layers. Stronger core gives strength to mantle and stronger mantle gives strength to crust and so changes in culture can be tackled and effectiveness of quality improvement programs can be enhanced.

INITIATIVES UNDER ORGANIZATION QUALITYOLOGY

Under Organization Qualityology, various initiatives both of external and internal forces can be implemented that will help to improve the organization culture and pave the way for quality improvement programs. These may include but not limited to the followings:

For External Forces

- SWOT / PEST Analysis
- Competitor Analysis
- Market trend Analysis
- Customer Perception Survey
• Society Perception Survey

**For Internal Forces**

• Alignment among Strategic Quality Management and Operational Quality Management at all levels
• Implementation of excellence model criteria
• Implementation of integrated management system
• Communication Framework (both vertical and horizontal)
• Promote Agility and change management
• Implementation of fair performance appraisal system
• Implementation of process management system
• Inter-departmental Service Level Agreement (SLAs)
• Internal customer satisfaction surveys (process based)
• Best Department of the year award
• Address Service Quality issues (both in manufacturing and service organization)

**CONCLUSION**

Organization Qualityology i.e. quality study of the organization really means understanding of external and internal forces effecting organization culture, knowledge of department tectonic and its effects on the culture and quality programs, and finally level of strength among three qualityological layers i.e. crust, mantle and core of the organization. Various initiatives as mentioned above can be implemented under organization's qualityology, which will help to cope with organizational changes having adverse effect on business, promote effectiveness of quality improvement programs, and minimize adverse effect that may occur due to interaction of external and internal factors. It is essential that before embarking on quality improvement program, management and quality department should consider all these to achieve desired results.