



## Conceptual Review of Octapace Culture

**DR. HARISH D. N.**

Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies,  
Visvesvaraya Technological University, Postgraduate Centre, Mysuru-570029

**ABSTRACT**

The concept of organisational culture and organisational climate has been an area of interest for practitioners and academicians alike. An active perusal of the literature available through diverse sources reveals different views about the same. This paper endeavours to bring to the fore various aspects pertaining to OCTAPACE culture. It has been common in the contemporary world that the workforce of almost every country is continuously increasing along with the rising education level. At the same time, due to economic development the demand for workforce is increasing and due to technological changes, the demand for higher skill. All the same, there is no assurance that increased supply will match the increased demand and also that the workers will have the education, training, and skill demanded by rapidly advancing technology not by the correspondingly rapid strides in industrial and occupational requirements. Any imbalance between these will result in unemployment on one hand and unfilled vacancies on the other. This is precisely the case with India and other developing nations of the world. To overcome this kind of an imbalance situation, the best solution is, and has always been, scientific human resource development (HRD).

**KEYWORDS**

Culture, OCTAPACE Culture, Organisational Culture, HRD

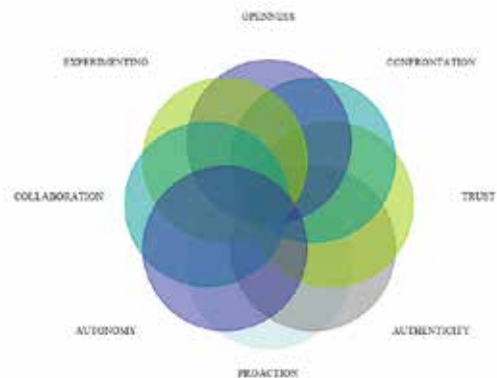
**Meaning of Culture:**

The term ‘culture’ has different meanings and connotations for different researchers. For instance, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) compiled a list of 164 definitions of “culture” from literature. While its presence in sociology and anthropology is ubiquitous and almost as old as the disciplines themselves, the introduction of ‘organisational culture’ to the field of organisational studies is generally credited to Pettigrew in 1979 (Detert et al, 2000). Since then, researchers have grappled with questions from what is culture, who shares it, how did it come to be, what is it composed of, how are its parts structured, how it works, conditions for culture to exist, conditions for culture to affect organisational efficiency as well as other organisational variables; to why and how do we change culture, in what way can culture contribute to controlling an organisation, how can we measure culture, in what terms can we describe culture, the cultural change and the cultural difference in various contexts like national, occupational, positional, industry, firm, and its subunits, cross-cultural management in multinationals, mergers and alliances and cultural conflicts.

**OCTAPACE Culture – The Concept:**

The supremacy of human element and urgency of creating a learning organisation through development of organisational capabilities all the times, make out a strong case for the evaluation of HRD climate in organisations. Various studies reveal that the HRD climate contributes to the organisation’s overall health and self-reviewing capabilities which, in turn, increase the capabilities of individual, dyads, team, and the entire organisation (Mufeed and Rafai, 2006). The HRD culture is essential for facilitating HRD climate. Every organisation has some characteristics which are common with any other organisation. At the same time, each organisation has its unique set of characteristics and properties. This psychological structure of organisation and their subunits is usually referred to as organisational culture. Robbins, (1986) stated that organisational culture is a relatively uniform perception held of the organisation, it has common characteristics, it is descriptive, it can distinguish one organisation from another and it integrates individual, group and organisation system variables.

**The OCTAPACE culture deals with the following items:**



**Figure-1: Components of OCTAPACE Culture**

**Openness:** It is a spontaneous expression of feelings and thoughts, and the sharing of these without defensiveness. Openness is in both directions, receiving and giving. Both these may relate to ideas (including suggestions), feedback (including criticism), and feelings. To illustrate, openness means receiving without reservation, and taking steps to encourage more feedback and suggestions from customers, colleagues, and others. Similarly, it means giving, without hesitation, ideas, information, feedback, feelings, etc. It may also mean spatial openness, in terms of accessibility. Installing internal e-mailing may be a step in this direction: everyone with a computer terminal has access to information which s/he may retrieve at any time. Offices without walls are another symbolic arrangement promoting openness. In some organisations, even the CEO does not have a separate exclusive cabin; floor space is shared by other colleagues at different levels in the organisation.

**Outcome:** Greater clarity of objectives and free interaction among people; more unbiased performance feedback; productive meetings and improved implementation of systems and innovations.

**Confrontation:** It is facing rather than shying away from problems while also implying deeper analysis of interpersonal problems. All this involves taking up challenges. The term confrontation is being used with some reservation and means putting up a front as contrasted with putting one's back to the problem. A better term would be confrontation and exploration.

**Outcome:** Better role clarity; improved problem solving; willingness to deal with problems and with 'difficult' employees and customers; and willingness of teams to discuss and resolve sensitive issues. The indicators can be improved by periodical discussions with clients, bold action, and not postponing sticky matters.

**Trust:** Not used in the moral sense, trust is reflected in maintaining the confidentiality of information shared by others, and in not misusing it. It is also reflected in a sense of assurance that others will help, when such help is needed and will honour mutual commitments and obligations. Trust is also reflected in accepting what another person says at face value, and not searching for ulterior motives. Trust is an extremely important ingredient in the institution-building process.

**Outcome:** Higher empathy; timely support; reduced stress; reduction and simplification of forms and procedures all of which lead to reduced paper work, effective delegation, and higher productivity.

**Authenticity:** It is the congruence of what one feels, says, and does. It is reflected in owning up one's mistakes, and in unreserved sharing of feelings. Authenticity is closer to openness.

**Outcome:** Reduced distortion in communication which can be seen in the correspondence between members in an organisation.

**Proactivity:** It means taking the initiative, preplanning, and taking preventive action, and calculating the payoffs of an alternative course, before taking the action. Proaction can be contrasted with the term react. In the latter, action is in response to an act from some source; while in the former the action is taken independent of the source. Proactivity gives initiative to the person to start a new process or set a new pattern of behaviour. In this sense proactivity means freeing oneself from, and taking action beyond immediate concerns. A person showing proactivity functions at all the three levels of feeling, thinking, and action.

**Outcome:** Taking and planning actions at immediate concerns.

**Autonomy:** It's using and giving freedom to plan and act in one's own sphere which means respecting and encouraging individual and role autonomy. It develops mutual respect and is likely to result in willingness to take on responsibility, individual initiative, and better succession planning. The main indicator of autonomy is effective delegation in organisation and reduction in references made to senior people for approval of planned actions.

**Outcome:** Develops mutual relationships and reduces reference(s) made to senior people.

**Collaboration:** Giving help to, and asking for help from, others. It means working together (individuals and groups) to solve problems with team spirit.

**Outcome:** Timely help; teamwork; sharing of experiences; improved communication and improved resource sharing. **Indication:** Productivity reports; more and higher quality of meetings; involvement of staff; more joint decisions; and better resource utilisation.

**Experimenting:** It involves using and encouraging, innovative approaches to solve problems, using feedback for improving, taking a fresh look at things and encouraging creativity. We are so caught up with our daily tasks that we often use only

traditional, tried and tested ways of dealing with problems.

**Outcome:** Development of new product(s), method(s), and procedure(s).

### **Conclusion:**

Research that can contribute practical assistance to achieving a dynamic and broad contextual perspective is sparse throughout the literature on organisational culture (Bryson, 2008). There are several aspects of creativity in an organisation. Creativity is reflected in new suggestions generated by employees, attempts at improving upon previous ways of working, trying out a new idea to which one has been exposed, innovating new methods, and thinking about a problem while ignoring the so called constraints. The last one is also called lateral thinking, i.e. thinking aimed at generating alternatives. There is enough evidence that such thinking contributes towards the development of new products, new methods, and new processes.

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