
Adopting a grounded theory approach for managing corporate culture change

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Abstract: Since cultural change can be easily conceptualised as a social process, it is intuitively logical to use the grounded theory (GT) methodology to study organisational culture change. Providing a model of organisational culture change management in the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) was the purpose of the present study. This company is a large corporation which was split into smaller separate corporations. It is managed under new vision, mission, and leadership. The concepts and categories, in open coding, were obtained by breaking up the data collected from five employees. Then, in axial coding, they shaped the paradigm model in which the phenomenon is managing corporate cultural change. The components of the desired culture as the result of the model were innovation, humanism, goal orientation, and social responsibility. Finally, five theories of the core category that aggregates all categories were presented in selective coding.

Keywords: grounded theory methodology; organisational culture; culture change; paradigm model; change management.

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1 Introduction

Change practitioners attempt mainly to enhance the adaptive mechanisms within organisations. Change interventions deal more with cultural subsystem to pave the way to challenge the values and norms under which people operate. In this context, the culture is more receptive to change, and the realignment of the total organisational system into a more viable and satisfying configuration is facilitated. However, the focus of research efforts that are not explicitly concerned with planned change projects has been on the normative and symbolic aspects of organisations (Smircich, 1983). Since the initiatives

and changes without considering organisational culture often have unforeseen consequences and usually negative effects, organisational culture is important (Lakos, 2004). Researchers, consultants and managers have been interested in the concept of culture through which they can better grasp why and how organisations originate, evolve and operate. What can make a culture right or wrong is the goal of the organisation (Lakos, 2004).

There have been always disputes among organisational scholars on what the appropriate research methods, qualitative vs. quantitative, is in the study of organisational culture. The limitations of qualitative and quantitative research are known to all (Denison and Spreitzer, 1991). The methodology of grounded theory (GT) is characterised by the iterative process, in which planning, data collection, data analysis, and theory development are interrelated (Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019). The objective of this study is to explore elements of the cultural change management in the shape of the paradigm model by using the GT. This paper explains organisational culture, cultural change, the use of GT in organisational culture literature, and finally applies GT in the culture change of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

The NPC, a subsidiary to the Iranian Petroleum Ministry, is owned by the government of Iran. It is responsible for the development of the country's petrochemical sector. Its new vision after privatisation is being the most efficient petrochemical development organisation in the West Asia. The mission of the NPC is as follows: 'NPC as a developmental organisation, relying on more than half a century of efficient experience and the benefit of its human and intellectual capital through a crude sales reduction approach and completion of the value chain does macro planning, policy making, regulation, and provides sustainable development supports to the petrochemical industry. The NPC plays a key role in social responsibility to protect the environment and national resources, value creation, accountability and stakeholder rights.

2 Literature review

Social established structures of meaning is the definition of culture. In this sense, not just individuals but a specific social context affect the construction of meaning (Lienert, 2015). It is said that the organisation is its culture; it implies the distinct nature of the organisation as a complex system with encapsulated values, principles, attitudes and a unique mode of perception that serve to distinguish it from other organisations (Kpakol and Amah, 2014). Culture is also defined as something an organisation has as opposed to what an organisation is. Organisational culture encompasses all aspects of an organisation, including informal aspects. The fundamental norms, customs, and morals as well as particular traditions direct organisations to achieve their intended objectives (Mzangwa and Serpa, 2019).

Any organisation has a tacit social order as culture that shapes attitudes and behaviours in wide-ranging and durable ways. What is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected within a group are determined and defined by cultural norms. The culture that is properly aligned with personal values, drives, and needs can unleash tremendous amounts of energy toward a shared purpose, fostering an organisation's capacity to thrive (Groysbrg et al., 2018). According to Schein (2009), organisation culture is defined as collective behaviour of people in an organisation. It includes the leadership styles and the dominant conscious and unconscious values and beliefs, dress

codes, job titles among others in an organisation. It is also defined as a system of common values that serve to describe people in different levels within an organisation (Onyango, 2014).

The members of an organisation have common perceptions, i.e., organisational culture. It is in fact a system of common meaning. It refers to informal design of values and norms that control the interaction of people and groups within the organisation as well as parties outside the organisation. The organisation can use the organisational culture as a strategic asset to adapt the organisation and its environment (Aktas et al., 2011). Organisational culture may or not match employees' expectations, and hence, it is of great importance to understand the significant difference between the desired organisational culture and the existing one (Suwaryo et al., 2015).

The communications and interactions among people inside and outside the organisation can develop and refine the perceptions and beliefs of people that make up an organisation's culture. These perceptions and beliefs can affect and can be affected by people's behaviours on suggesting solutions to problems, how to carry out a job and how to communicate, among others. It is no need to say that all these, in turn, affect an individual's job performance and satisfaction, and an organisation's performance and competitive advantage (Ibidunni and Agboola, 2013). The adopted patterns of thinking stemming from past experiences and futuristic expectations are considered as the results of values that shape individual and shared behaviour through perception and interaction. Values as a core and reference point for actions taken and yet to be taken influence choices and decision making (Kpakol and Amah, 2014).

Since the members of an organisation assign meanings to occurrences, people, and events within and outside of the organisation in a similar way and treat them similarly, organisational culture is considered as a form of collective interpretative scheme. In this sense, the culture of an organisation implies that all the members of the organisation have similar understanding of the organisation, its functioning, managing, and changing. What forms the character of different components of management and organisation, such as strategy, structure, leadership style, organisational learning, system of rewards, and motivation is the understanding of employees and management of organisational reality and the way they behave in it (Janićijević, 2012).

The structure, process, and culture are in association with each other. Common values are basically used to reduce uncertainty in critical areas of the group's functioning. In addition, the transformation process gradually results in the formation of normative behaviour assumptions. This serves as a guide to members of a group to think, talk and behave in a certain manner, especially in critical situations, as well as in confronting new members to the group. For an outsider, managing an organisation to fulfil its duties and reach its goals can seem very difficult. It can be said that a strong organisational culture and functions can be the solution to make the task of managing easy and desirable since it comprises a motivating factor even in unpleasant or difficult circumstances (Rajala et al., 2012).

Success or failure in making innovation, progress or goal achievement depends on organisational culture. It is considered as an important ingredient in the management of change. The attitudes of the organisations' members determine receptivity. A good understanding of change in an organisation lies on encouraging flexibility, innovation and change expectation in that organisation. Clear communication, employee participation, a revised reward and recognition approach, and the promotion of skills and development should be incorporated in a change of culture (Kpakol and Amah, 2014).

A variety of environmental changes are taking place in organisations. A cultural crisis organisations are faced with is characterised by low morale and difficulty in recruitment of skilled professional. Making cultural changes for institutionalising a desired culture can be regarded as the main solution and response to the complex external forces. What must be changed to make any real change possible is people's ideas and values. Changing a culture is hard and making enduring culture change can be even harder (Euchner, 2017). Top-down mandate is not helping for culture change. Rather, it can be achieved through collective efforts, habits of people and their shared perception of the present status. Consistency of message, goal, direction, and leadership is required to make culture change to succeed (Ibidunni and Agboola, 2013). Different strategies, organisational structure models, compensation systems, leadership styles, etc. are results of different types of culture in organisations (Janićijević, 2012).

The evolution of a culture takes place naturally. A new organisation does not always imply a new venture as sometimes large corporations are split into smaller separate business units or corporations under new leadership or structure, with a different culture. Re-organisation refers to restructuring an existing organisation, which may be due to new leadership, new business vision, competitive landscape, growth or downsizing, leading to demands to change an organisation's culture. A common phenomenon as the result of merging two very different organisations due to business reason is cultural clash (Alvesson, 2002).

The management of organisation may have the aim to make a change in culture but such a change can be indirectly a result of strategic, tactical or operational changes (Smollan and Sayers, 2009). An organisation can address ever-changing problems of adaptation to the external environment as well as the internal integration of organisation resources, personnel and policies to support external adaptation through organisational culture, challenging to managers to decide how to implement changes in their organisation (Abdul Rashid et al., 2004). Organisations can make changes as a driving force; however, these changes are possible only through personal changes, changing the way of thinking and perceiving new opportunities since motivated human resources (HRs) that work and collaborate towards a common vision determine the organisation's success (Žukauskas et al., 2018).

Not only cause environmental changes cultural change but also management action affects it since new strategic directions and courses of business from paradigms are defined by individuals the discrepancy between the environmental changes and the social and cultural patterns of political organisation can result in difficulties (Anacleto et al., 2014). Transformational and paradigmatic changes can be mentioned as such changes. An organisation needs to move to some desired state to do cultural change. This movement implies perception of the underlying beliefs and values, an image of a desired future state, and then a transition plan to move from the current state to the desired future state (Gibson and Barsade, 2003). To make evolution, organisations need to take some steps:

- 1 enhancing cultural elements critical to maintaining identity and effectiveness
- 2 starting the process of unlearning increasingly dysfunctional cultural elements
- 3 starting the process of learning new cultural elements needed for optimal adaptation to a changing environment (Schein, 1988).

Pearse and Kanyangale (2009) made emphasis on the influence of the phenomenon's characteristics on the formulation and design of a GT study. Awareness of the contextual and historical features that shape the existing culture is essential in studying organisational culture. Moreover, this assumption must be considered that culture is only temporary in a continuous chain of changes that are constantly evolving in the formation of culture. Employing a constructivist GT design, Grant (2017) focused on the effects of organisational culture on the implementation of information security awareness and training programs in the defence industry situated in the Tennessee valley region.

Adaptive culture structuration was presented by Whiteley et al. (2017) for theorising and analysing culture change as well as creating an adaptive cultural structured learning environment using GT principles. Harrower (2011) used an interpretive GT methodology to investigate the importance of corporate culture in a marketing context. The study of Taplay (2014) aimed at creating a mid-range explanatory theory. Such a theory describes the way that the organisational cultures of undergraduate nursing programs shape the adoption and incorporation of mid-to high-level simulation as a teaching and learning strategy by using GT.

Using GT method, Rowshan and Shahriari (2019) presented an entrepreneurial culture model for the gas company of Sistan and Bluchestan as a service organisation. Lewis (2018) planned to generate a theory about the implications of leadership development and organisational culture on employee engagement through applying qualitative GT. Connolly et al. (2015) used the GT method to investigate the impact of the combination of security countermeasures and cultural factors on employee security behaviour in organisations. By applying GT and using organisational culture perspective, it was demonstrated in the study of Ovaska (2008) the influence of the organisational cultural beliefs and values on systems development practices in four custom IS software organisations.

Goodwin-Sak et al. (2019) also used GT research method and identified the primary factors influencing an individual's willingness to adopt automation in the workplace. Al Shehri et al. (2017), through using a GT, investigated the organisational culture enabling and inhibiting factors of employee engagement in Saudi Arabia Banks. Almainan and McLaughlin (2018) studied social setting in Saudi non-profit organisations and investigated the facilitating aspects of organisational culture that affect continuous improvement by employing the approach of GT. Sebastian (2012) applied the GT approach to investigate the contribution of culture in global business transformation projects.

Using the GT approach, Magee (2011) presented a definition for organisation's culture. Based on this definition, an organisation's culture supports that organisation's brand promise. Magee also identified internal branding practices that can basically develop employees' trust, brand commitment, and create behaviours employees are expected to exhibit in order to deliver on the company's brand promise. Zainalipour et al. (2019) used a GT method and identified the elements of corporate culture in Farzanegan schools (schools for gifted and talented students) of Bandar Abbas in Iran. MacTavish and Kolb (2008) utilised GT methodology to investigate the development of values-based leaders, particularly from minority populations in large privately-owned manufacturing firms in North-eastern USA. Employing GT, Javid-Mehr et al. (2017) provided a model of organisational culture in educational organisation of Khorasan Razavi.

GT-based studies in the area of culture generally focuses on the following points:

- Presenting an organisational culture model is based on knowing the features and components that shape culture.
- Culture is constantly changing.
- Culture leads to the formation of learning and training and other organisational activities in different companies.

3 Methodology

The quantitative methods are believed to be superficial, simple-minded, and cheap. The opponents, on the other hand, suggest that the study of culture must move beyond an anthropological, exploratory focus. Since quantitative approaches examine the characteristics of the social system in which the researcher is gravitated rather than those concepts that the actors in the system use to describe themselves and their organisations, these approaches are criticised. Despite of exceptional cases in this regard, quantitative approaches are often criticised for superficiality. A number of inherent problems make the qualitative approach difficult to apply to cultural change issues (Denison and Spreitzer, 1991). The present study used the GT methodology. Most researchers use GT methods as a procedural framework to study for studying organisational behaviour and to provide a way to implement planned organisational change initiatives (Shepstone and Currie, 2008).

Changing the organisation's vision and strategic direction provides the need for an organisational culture that is aligned with it. Therefore, the main question in this research is:

- What is the model of organisational culture change management in the NPC?

Sub-questions also include:

- What are causal conditions affecting the organisational culture change management of the NPC?
- What are desired consequences of organisational culture change management in the NPC?
- What are action strategies of organisational culture change management in the NPC which lead to the desired consequences?
- Which contextual elements affect action strategies of organisational culture change management in the NPC for having the desired consequences?
- Which intervening elements influence action strategies of organisational culture change management in the NPC for having the desired consequences?

Table 1 Open coding

Participant	The records of interviews		Open coding	
			Coding	Conceptualisation
P1	<p>SWOT analysis and new strategies are essential to the corporation. We have specified vision and mission, but we would not succeed without strategies which are formulated based on the internal and external factors of the organisation. According to this change, we must train human resources.</p> <p>We must create required beliefs within the organisation. In addition, senior management's commitment for the behavioural change is necessary. We have to be pragmatic.</p> <p>The organisation and the society are interdependent and the family and societal culture influence on the organisational culture. We have lack of collective determination and team working to work in a systematic way.</p>	<p>SWOT analysis and new strategies are essential based on the new vision and mission. We must train human resources. We must create required beliefs. Senior management's commitment for the behavioural change is necessary. Family and societal culture influence on the organisational culture. Pragmatism is essential. There is lack of team working.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT analysis and new strategies • New vision and mission • Training HR • Shared beliefs • Senior management's commitment • Family and societal influence • Pragmatism • Team working • Individualism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision and mission • Strategy formulation • Redesigning HR management system • Effective managers • National culture • Goal orientation • Humanism • Innovation • Current beliefs
P2	<p>Each organisation must have strategies. To move along this path, people must have the same beliefs and values. Managers need to believe, direct HR and act based on the values. HR must be hired and promoted according to the values. The corporation must consider the public interest. At what price do you want to produce? Production should be in the shadow of social responsibility, and the public interests as well. Employees are aware of their role in the company position, but do not try to participate and organise their actions based on the individualism.</p>	<p>New strategies are essential. HR must have the same beliefs. Managers' commitment for the change is necessary. Employees' recruitment and promotion must be aligned with values. We must work based on the principles of corporate social responsibility. Participation must be replaced with individualism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New strategies • Shared beliefs • Managers' commitment • Redesigning employees' recruitment and promotion • Social responsibility • Participation • Individualism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy formulation • Effective managers • Redesigning HR management system • Goal orientation • Social responsibility • Humanism • Current beliefs

Table 1 Open coding (continued)

<i>Participant</i>	<i>The records of interviews</i>		
	<i>Coding</i>	<i>Open coding</i>	<i>Categorisation</i>
P3	<p>Control systems are too restrict. This control system represents the death of the system. The corporation has been changed in nature, so it requires new strategies, structure, and skills. We need trained personnel to adapt to the new responsibilities. Now we must create works, encourage entrepreneurship, solve problems and produce new projects. Employees are reluctant to challenge processes, procedures, and issues, and prefer to do things in the former way or at least without conflict.</p>	<p>Control systems are too restrict. Corporation has been changed in nature. New strategies, structure, and skills are required. Entrepreneurship to create new projects is necessary. Employees avoid conflict.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigning HR management system • New vision and mission • Strategy formulation • Intentionally align structure, and processes with the new culture • Goal orientation • Humanism • Innovation • Current beliefs
P4	<p>Before changing or reforming the structure, strategies of the company must be clear and the structure should be agile to facilitate decision making. We need more developed HR. We must protect the corporate image in the industry. We have individualism in practice which leads to one-dimensional solutions, largely from a task perspective.</p>	<p>Control systems are too restrict. Agility to facilitate decision making is necessary. We need more developed HR. The protection of corporate image is required. There is individualism in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigning HR control system • Change in the organisational nature • New strategies • New structure • Training HR • The need of skilful HR • Entrepreneurship • Conflict avoidance • New strategies • New structure • Agility to facilitate decision making • The need of developed HR • The protection of corporate image • Individualism • Redesigning HR management system • Corporate image • Goal orientation • Humanism • Current beliefs

Table 1 Open coding (continued)

<i>Participant</i>	<i>The records of interviews</i>	<i>Open coding</i>		
		<i>Coding</i>	<i>Conceptualisation</i>	<i>Categorisation</i>
P5	<p>It needs to establish and manage a coalition to change the organisational culture especially regarding instructions communicated to the corporation from the government. We should define changes in business processes based on the values. We can execute recognition plans to select periodically the best employees based on values. Organisational codes of conduct need to be institutionalised in the organisation. The emphasis must be on managers as coaches rather than just functional managers. We have to be more responsible towards our customers' expectations. Usually, if there is a conflict, people are silent.</p>	<p>A cultural change coalition is required to be managed. Business processes based on the values must be changed. Recognition plans must be executed. Organisational codes of conduct must be institutionalised. Managers should be coaches. We must be responsible towards customers. We are silent against conflicts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing culture change coalition • Instructions communicated to the corporation from the government • Redesigning business processes • Recognition plans • Institutionalising codes of conduct • Coaching • Responsibility towards customers • Conflict avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public policy • Intentionally align structure, and processes with the new culture • Redesigning HR management system • Effective managers • Humanism • Social responsibility • Current beliefs

To answer these questions, the GT methodology is performed after interviewing. Interviews are a common method of generating data and in this study, semi-structured questionnaire are used in interviews with five employees from different hierarchical levels of the organisation. These questions are asked during the interviews:

- What might be the desired culture aligned with the new mission and vision?
- Which current values do hinder the organisation to progress?
- What must be done to change the culture from the current status to the desired culture?

Using GT guarantee that theories are adaptable to the organisational realities. It directs researchers to develop new insights and theories (Ebrahimi, 2020a). Coding as an analytical process and the pivotal link between collecting data and developing a theory is used to identify concepts, similarities and conceptual reoccurrences in data (Tie et al., 2019).

The GT methodology includes three steps of data analysis:

3.1 Open coding

In open coding, the data is analysed word by word through continuous comparison of different events and concepts, aiming to form the reality-reflecting category. Sources such as literature and interviews can reveal the reality. Many codes are generated from early data in open coding. The task is identifying and labelling the important words or groups of words (Tie et al., 2019). A deep analysis is performed on the data that have been broken up into smaller parts in the first step of open coding. Such an analysis aims to contribute to finding out the core idea of each part and to develop a code to describe it. In a second step, a comparison of similarities and differences of these smaller analytical parts is performed. Those with similar concepts can be labelled with the same code. A phenomenon is characterised by using the terms concept and category; this phenomenon is categorised and conceptualised by assigning it to one code (concept) or concepts of higher order (category). In this context, the developed concepts are interrelated, which cause the emergence of categories of a higher order and thus, different dimensions of the category can be described. It can be said open coding is successfully achieved if the researcher develops a wealth of codes to describe the data (Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019).

Strategic management begins with vision as a picture of the desired future position of the organisation. An organisation's mission is its purpose in the long run. In SWOT Analysis, external analysis helps an organisation identify its environmental threats and opportunities, internal analysis focuses on organisational strengths and weaknesses (Gürel and Tat, 2017). Management and development of HR include varieties of training for preparing all employees for future challenges. Training content includes both general and specific cultural orientation (Osibanjo and Adeniji, 2012). Culture serves as a mechanism in order to bring individuals together with many shared traits. A substantial set of shared beliefs help to make networks effective (Gill, 2013). High levels of commitment are expected from managers, and they work for the cultural change and believe in its good intent (Lamsa and Savolainen, 2000). Societal culture refers to the norms, roles, and values in general accepted by societal members which influences organisational values (Wong-Rieger and Rieger, 1989). The development of teamwork culture is difficult and a team as a whole can have most of the desirable traits (Castka

et al., 2003). Pragmatism refers to our attention to organisational practice and therefore, it is worthy to grapple explicitly with problems (Whitford and Zirpoli, 2014).

Table 2 Concepts and subcategories of open coding

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT analysis and new strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy formulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New strategies 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in the organisational nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision and mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision and mission 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally align structure, and processes with the new culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigning business processes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agility to facilitate decision making 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigning HR control system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigning HR management system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training HR 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need of developed HR/the need of skilful HR 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigning employees' recruitment and promotion 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition plans 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalising codes of conduct 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers' commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective managers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management's commitment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing culture change coalition 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared beliefs 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and societal influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protection of corporate image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate image
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions communicated to the corporation from the government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT analysis and new strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New strategies 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need of skilful HR 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need of developed HR 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team working 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pragmatism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility towards customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social responsibility 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current beliefs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualism 	

Recruitment and promotion in some organisations are usually influenced by organisation's culture (Anthony, 2015). A culture of participation refers to the values that underpin participatory practice and the reasons for involving people (Kirby et al., 2003). Entrepreneurial culture is defined as attitudes, values, skills, and power of a group or an individual working in an organisation which is characterised by risk (Danish et al., 2019). One of the most common factor that affect organisational agility is organisational culture (Felipe et al., 2017).

Cultural change coalition is described as a system directed by top managers which provides the opportunity to have knowledge, and plans of corporate cultural change compatibles with the new mission and culture (Ebrahimi, 2020b). The reward system including recognition plans is recognised as powerful means to influence an organisation's culture (Kerr and Slocum, 2005). It is shown that codes of conduct have a positive impact on employee behaviour and perceptions. For having this positive impact, an organisation should adjust its codes of conduct to meet its special requirements and to align with its overall business strategy and the goals of its ethics and compliance program (LRN, 2006). For the cultural change, functional managers should turn to coaches for the employee empowerment in an organisation (Ebrahimi, 2020b).

3.2 *Axial coding*

In axial coding, the association between different categories resulted from the open coding should be found and formed in the shape of the paradigm model. Axial coding is mainly dealt with a category (the phenomenon) in relation to the following aspects. First, the specification of the phenomenon by causal conditions, regarding incidents or occurrences that result in appearance or development of the phenomenon. Second, the context that is the specific set of characteristics in which includes the phenomenon. Simultaneously, the context also refers to the special set of conditions in which action/interaction strategies take place to overcome, handle or react to a certain phenomenon. Third, the broad and general conditions that play an important role to influence action/interaction strategies are called intervening strategies that comprise, for instance, time, space, culture, socioeconomic status, technological status, career, history, and individual biography. Fourth, action or interaction strategies concentrate on the phenomenon. There is always action or interaction that is directed towards the phenomenon, to handle or to overcome it, to perform it, or to react to it, whether the research is about individuals, groups or collectives (Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019).

The association between different categories resulted from the open coding in the shape of the paradigm model is shown in Figure 1.

Effective managers: changing organisational culture is necessary, and there are essential factors to successfully manage change: managers' commitment, managers as coaches, and managing culture change coalition. Culture change originates in concrete and noticeable changes in leadership attitude and behaviour. In this sense, there is a need to a leadership team that is committed to change. Coaching has an important role in the dynamic process of cultural change. It requires a shift in consciousness, a shift in the instructions a leader needs to be a leader and how the leader should inspire leadership in others (Stout-Rostron, 2011), as well as leading the change by making a coalition. Sharing desired values and beliefs within the organisation can be facilitated by effective managers and hence, there will be less resistance to hearing and change. A two-way

direction for communication about change seems essential. Managers are expected to actively listen to the feedback being provided (Gibson and Barsade, 2003).

Figure 1 Coding paradigm for managing cultural change in the NPC

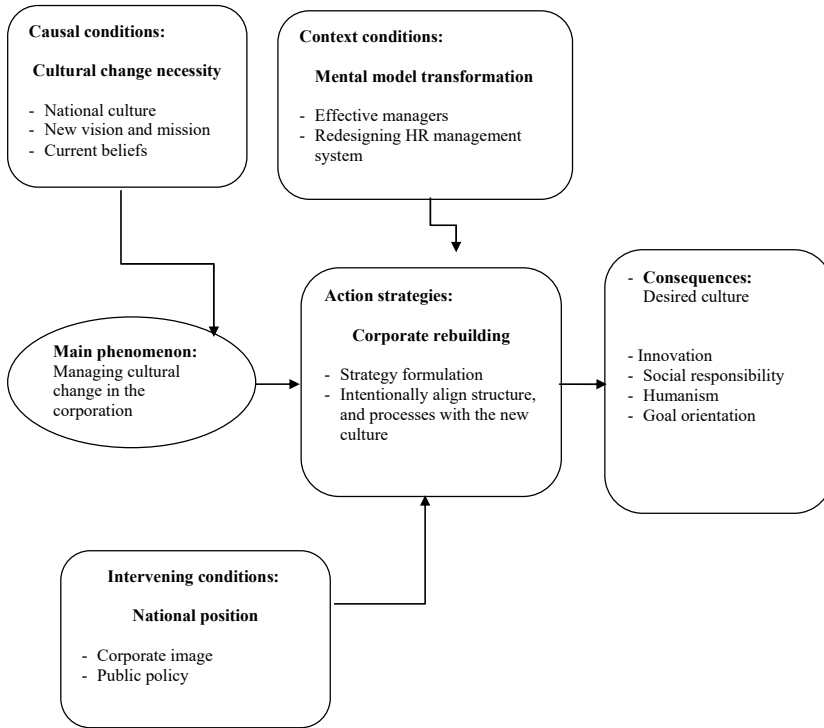


Table 3 Axial coding

<i>Paradigm model</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>	<i>Main category</i>
Action strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy formulation • Intentionally align structure, and processes with the new culture 	Corporate rebuilding
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective managers • Redesigning HR management system 	Mental model transformation
Causal conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National culture • New vision and mission • Current beliefs 	Cultural change necessity
Intervening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate image • Public policy 	National position
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal orientation • Humanism • Innovation • Social responsibility 	Desired culture

According to Schein in 2009, culture and leadership are very closely related as both are required to make a business successful (Tran, 2017). The leaders in an organisation are known as the champions of understanding and managing culture in the organisation. They are also heroes of rewarding or punishing subcultures in an organisation depending on whether they align or not with the corporate culture (O'Donnell and Boyle, 2008). The experience has showed that the best leaders are fully aware of the multiple cultures within which they are embedded, can sense when change is required, and can influence the process with their skills (Groysbrg et al., 2018). The behaviours of managers substantially influence the culture of an organisation people's response to change and innovation. Managers play an important and influential role in adapting culture through a number of processes including staff selection, socialisation, removal of deviating members, cultural communication mechanisms, and role modelling of appropriate behaviours (Kavanagh and Ashkanasy, 2006). Managers, in corporate culture literature, are distinguished from leaders. The present study focused on managers who play the role of coaches and leaders.

Considering the environment as the overwhelming factor in trying to manage the culture of the organisation, managers who are sceptical about the feasibility of managing organisational culture will be less successful in changing their cultures. Those managers who are less sceptical about the manageability of culture, on the other hand, play the primary role in managing the culture. They can shape the values and organisational philosophies and thereby help the organisation to define priorities, acceptable behaviour, and valued outcomes (Austin and Claassen, 2008).

Redesigning HRs management system: HR can fundamentally contribute to perpetuating a strong culture through recruiting and selecting applicants who will share the organisation's beliefs and thrive in that culture. HR also causes the development of orientation, training and performance management programs that outline and reinforce the organisation's core values. It ensures that the employees who truly embody the values are appropriately rewarded. Reconsideration is needed to train the staff and ensure that they have the skills necessary to meet the new changes. A requirement for organisations to remain adaptive and competitive in today's ever-changing business environment is learning. Some organisations teach culture as an aspect of general management training. In other organisations, learning the prevalent cultural norms and assumptions from managers is considered appropriate (O'Donnell and Boyle, 2008).

Intentionally align structure, and processes with the new culture: organisational structure and the desired culture should be aligned. Structure contains formal reporting relationships and job descriptions. Structure that is a formal distribution of roles and administrative mechanisms facilitates control and integration to the organisational activities. In this sense, structure is considered as more than a social network, since it includes internal processes as well. The organisational culture is the result of the process, which indicates the ideas, beliefs and values of the components. Moreover, structure as a political hierarchy defines power and dependency relationships. To form part of the organisational structure, this hierarchy has to be internalised. As a conclusion, culture is generated during work through the interaction among these elements, which is considered a part of structure (Quiros, 2009).

Strategy formulation: NPC has identified mission and vision. However, strategies are not clearly specified. The goals of the company are not broadly agreed. The company can continuously monitor and measure its progress towards the set goals through strategies. Achieving success seems easier for an organisation which is targeted and goal oriented.

Reluctance to change stems partly in indecision about what to do next and how fast to move under conditions of high uncertainty; in other words, from the lack of strategies (Euchner, 2017).

Some important information about issues such as: the developmental stage of the organisation, the results of important and traumatic events, the organisation's founders and other important people, and the mythology of the organisation can be provided by a historical sketch of the organisation and its culture (Schabracq, 2007). Some of the existing beliefs of the organisation are not aligned with the new mission and vision:

- Individualism refers to a company with more self-centred members. In this type of culture, decision-making process is more based on the 'I' instead of the 'we'. Moreover, people focus on their own and of their direct families' interests.
- The conflict avoidance refers to an employee's tolerance of conflict. It reveals the way members select to deal with the conflict. As the conflict avoidance is higher, the members in the company would feel more threatened by the conflict, creating beliefs to avoid the conflict.

The components of the desired culture are:

- The culture of innovation is primarily intended to promote the development of innovations within the company. The innovation culture makes innovative thinking natural within the organisation and makes all employees encouraged to do innovative activities (Davies and Buisine, 2018). It is originated from the employees' optimistic assumption that they can influence the environment (Schein, 1988).
- The culture of social responsibility refers to an approach to doing business that focuses on social responsibility, or positively influence the societies and environment that they operate in. It is achieved by inter-related aspects, including personal values of managers, two-way communication, social requirements and ethical values, and organisational justice.
- The culture of humanism: the key challenge for those involved in management and organisation development is to help organisations develop a culture that contributes both to better individual functioning and achieving common purposes (Nixon, 1994). The main belief behind that is providing the employees with skills, resources, authority, opportunity, motivation, and holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their actions. Employees in such a work environment with the culture of humanism are encouraged to learn and grow.
- The culture of goal orientation: at the organisational level, collective goal orientation reflects a shared perception of assumptions, values, and practices that communicate the organisation's approach to achievement situations; when clear strategies and policies pave the way to act (Chadwick and Raver, 2015).

The organisation can make a coherent view of the future by vision that forms an over-arching objective for the organisation as well. The vision and mission can be inspirational factors of cultural as well as strategic change. The external forces such as privatisation can inspire the new vision. An important element in the leadership of change is defined new vision. Inability to articulate the vision in a way that has meaning to others will face the leader with great difficulty in ensuring everyone's cooperation in this way. There is no need to say that a poorly defined vision from the top could lead to numerous

variations in interpretation, which in turn could affect the implementation of the change. Vision provides a total view of what the organisation is trying to become at some point in the future. Formulating corporate strategies can be started from making vision. The vision can only be understood when it is communicated, and it can be only communicated when it is defined in a coherent way. Commitment to the vision guarantees success, particularly among the people who play a key role in turning the vision into reality. It is highly complex to implement fundamental change, in particular gaining cultural change to support a new vision (Hussey, 2000). Customers and employees enter organisations from the surrounding community with their own cultural values (Ibidunni and Agboola, 2013).

The culture can be determined by the general business environment in which an organisation operates. Opinions about work, money, status and different types of jobs are influenced by the society (Ibidunni and Agboola, 2013).

National culture: people's interpretations, understandings, and assessment of those with whom they work are strongly affected by national culture. The other areas that are influenced by the national culture include managerial decision-making, leadership styles, and HR management practices. Similarly, the domains of the managerial functions on which national cultures have effects are communication, motivation, organisational design, people's expectations of work design, and reward systems. Moreover, national cultures play key roles in leadership style, communication, motivation, organisational design, people expectations of work design, and rewards in organisations. The national cultural identity is fundamentally important for individual characteristics such as self-esteem, functional effectiveness, mental health, and quality of life and hence, it has direct effects on the managerial styles within organisations. The factors with a role of foundation stone in every aspect of human life are religion, social organisations including family systems, neighbourhood, ethnic groupings, and tribal systems, language, approach to manage time, high vs. low power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, high vs. low uncertainty avoidance (Ayub Khan and Smith Law, 2018).

Rajala et al. (2012) described culture as mental programming. Thus, according to him, every person has his/her own patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting, which were acquired throughout his or her lifetime. Childhood is considered a critical period of life in which much of this learning occurs. These patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that have been established within a person's mind must be unlearned before he or she is able to learn something different. The process of unlearning something is more difficult than learning it for the first time. Making an analogy with a computer system, it is stated that mental programs in which a person's mind is not programmed as one of a computer. A person with his or her human ability can react in new ways, be creative or unrespectable. Mental programs, like each person's social background, vary. Culture is considered as a collective phenomenon that is acquired and learned while human nature is what all human beings have in common.

Public policy is more associated with government activities; what governments plan to do or not, including why and with what consequences. According to the findings by Aghion et al. (2008), policies do affect beliefs in the corporation. National policy makers who cause shaping perceptions of the role of the government or state in society, choice of key issues and what constitutes public value have a great influence on the corporate culture (Daniell, 2014).

As Hatch and Schultz (1997) declared, organisational culture as a symbolic context contributes to the formation of interpretations of organisational identity, as well as formulation of intentions to influence organisational image. Organisational culture needs

to be regarded in explanations provided for the development and maintenance of organisational identity. The symbolic material is formed from culturally embedded organisational identity. Such material constructs organisational images and brings them into communication. Organisational images are then projected outwards and absorbed back as cultural artefacts into the cultural system of meaning and are used symbolically to infer identity.

3.3 Selective coding

All categories that are in association with each other are aggregated to the core category through selective coding. A consistent overarching theory is formed by integrating the categories since they are placed under a core category that is linked to all other categories established in axial coding. At this stage, the researcher seeks to find answers to these questions what the research is all about and what seems to be going on (Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019).

According to the paradigm model and for the selective coding, we have the following theories:

- Theory 1: Cultural change necessity for the corporation including national culture, new mission and strategy, and current beliefs are causal conditions of managing cultural changes in the corporation.
- Theory 2: Corporate rebuilding including strategy formulation, and intentionally align structure, and processes with the new culture is action strategies of managing cultural changes in the corporation.
- Theory 3: Mental model transformation including effective managers, and redesigning HR management system is the specific context of the corporation for managing cultural changes in the corporation.
- Theory 4: National position of the corporation including corporate image, and public policy is the general context of the corporation for managing cultural changes in the corporation.
- Theory 5: Desired culture including innovation, social responsibility, humanism, and goal orientation is the consequence of managing cultural changes in the corporation.

4 Conclusions

This research focused on organisational cultural change in a corporation which based on the privatisation policy split from a large corporation into a smaller one with a different mission and vision. Thus, beside the change occurred in corporate leadership, it is necessary to change the culture in the company. GT methodology was applied as it provides a way to implement planned organisational change initiatives. Included in this paper are a brief review of organisational culture, cultural change, the use of GT in the relevant literature, and finally the explanation of the use of GT in the NPC in which cultural change is a necessity.

Paradigm modelling provided an insight of elements affecting cultural change management of the NPC. Additionally, it answered to the sub-questions of the study including:

- 1 the causal conditions affecting the organisational culture change management of the NPC
- 2 the desired consequences of organisational culture change management in the NPC
- 3 the action strategies of organisational culture change management in the NPC which lead to the desired consequences
- 4 the contextual elements affecting action strategies of organisational culture change management in the NPC for having the desired consequences
- 5 the intervening elements influencing action strategies of organisational culture change management in the NPC for having the desired consequences.

The data that were collected from five employees from different hierarchical levels of the organisation were broken up into concepts and categories in open coding. The resulted categories shaped the paradigm model in axial coding. The cultural change in the corporation was managed by the phenomenon in respect to the following aspects. First, national culture, new vision and mission, and current beliefs constituted causal conditions. Second, the effective managers and redesigning HRs management system to change people's minds formed the context. Third, the corporate image and public policy that influence action strategies were considered the intervening conditions. Fourth, action strategies were targeted towards the phenomenon including strategy formulation, as well as intentionally consistent structure, and processes with the new culture. And finally, five theories from the aggregation of all categories to the core category were presented at the stage of selective coding. During the analysis, current values that intensify the need to culture change including individualism and conflict avoidance are identified. Additionally, desired culture as the consequence of the paradigm model includes innovation, humanism, goal orientation, and social responsibility are presented.

As a result of the use of the GT methodology, since one of the causal conditions is current beliefs such as individualism and the conflict avoidance, they are recognised as obstacles to achieve the new mission and vision which should turn to the desired culture of innovation, social responsibility, and humanism. For this purpose, the organisation should work on their national position, mental models, and corporate rebuilding.

As the research indicated, culture can be managed. Strategy is helpful to provide clarity and focus for collective action and decision making, and senior manager play a key role in the formation of strategy. There is a strong link between culture and leadership. The exact time a change is required and managing the process in an appropriate procedure can be handled by the best leaders. The cultural change is also influenced by HR functions including training, promotion, performance appraisal, incentives/ punishments as one of the main concern for the business. Assuming organic structure, a higher level of flexibility and agility yet exists, which is considered important for innovativeness. According to the results, training managers to behave as coaches affects organisational corporate cultural change.

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