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Driskill, G.W.C. **Organizational Culture in Action: A Cultural Analysis Workbook**. New York: Routledge, 2019. 270 pp., paperback $79.95, hardback $240.00

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I rather enjoyed reading this text, which attempts to portray a subject that is challenging to define and even more difficult to analyze. The core concept under scrutiny is one of the most important and misunderstood aspects organizational life. Unlike many other more tangible and readily definable facets of operational existence, such as structure, strategy, financial planning, marketing operations, etc., culture is a phenomenon that we can try and shape but has a tendency to have a mind of its own and can be infuriatingly obstinate. And yet, it acts as a vital communication tool for both internal and external stakeholders. As Deal and Kennedy defined organizational culture back in the 1980s 'it is the way we do things around here' – if only it were that simple!

Clearly identified from the outset as a workbook, the text offers a unique opportunity to appeal to a range of audiences, including scholars who are actively researching the field of organizational culture or perhaps undertaking cross-disciplinary work where the primary field is non-business. To develop a text about a subject that is often found to be intangible and difficult to relate and yet make this accessible to a heterogeneous readership is a challenging task. For this, the author should be applauded. The preface sets out the many practical offerings of the text along with the different audiences it will try to reach, which, I believe, successfully includes both the academic and practitioner.

The key target audience is identified clearly on page 4 when the author relates to core threads of text as, "it has implications for your role as a leader within organizations" and "designed to help you do better what you do almost every day". The central pitch appears to be aimed at front-line managers and other corporate leaders. It may be particularly insightful for those organizations that are indulging in a spot of organizational

learning (e.g., staff training programs and senior or middle managers who have a reason to develop their own awareness about the impact of culture in the workplace) and, in particular, change-leadership programs where corporate culture either has been or is likely to be interrupted. Yet, unlike many other corporate training guides, this text is developed from a mix of both author insight into the subject area and considerable academic content. This helps to tempt an audience with more of an academic interest and could be used as a supplementary text to support learning in a higher-education program; perhaps Level 2/3 undergraduate OB students. The practical elements could be helpful to bring the text to life for those with little experience in the workplace. Some of the terminology and also expected understanding at a practical level renders this text out of reach for most students who are new to each context. This would exclude most new undergraduates coming in from high school. I expect that some experience of a working environment will assist the reader in coming to terms with the practical applications. For example, I can readily see MBA students finding it particularly engaging.

The text will also prove insightful for those developing research skills, in that it takes the reader through the process of planning and the data collection, interpretation, and application of analysis stages of a research project. This could be for a variety of reasons and it is not for me to indulge here, but the key point to emphasize is that the book's appeal will be far and wide. In itself, this is not a simple task. As an author, it is far easier to write a book with a specific audience in mind and develop the core aims and tailor the writing style and content to a particular group of individuals. However, it is much easier to achieve this if you are writing a book contingent on the reader having no prior knowledge of the subject matter. For example, chapter 3 is dedicated to discussing the different approaches taken to understanding the concept of culture. This is written in an accessible format for scholars new to the subject of culture and will be equally informative for practitioners aiming to understand their organization through a different lens.

The author makes valiant efforts to incorporate explanatory content that brings the concepts and theory to life and make the text more dynamic and tangible to the uninitiated or novice organizational scholar. In many examples, the author draws on his own extensive knowledge and experience in this field and the

interaction between concept and practical application is effective. Amongst the content are set exercises, which ensure the reader or case analyst has to reflect and engage on the purpose and intentions of what they are trying to achieve. This interaction with the reader also serves to promote commitment to learning and understanding and serves the purpose of improving engagement. In a similar vein, the 'Connections' section of each chapter emphasize the relationships between concept/theory and practice and provides explanatory content for the uninitiated reader from either side of the divide. The 'Rehearsal' features are also helpful in providing insight for those readers who benefit from a more practical application of the theory being discussed.

The organization of the book is clear and logical, taking the reader through the end-to-end process of a research program. Each chapter provides an outline introduction that acts as a guide to help the reader understand the author's objectives. The early chapters form a discussion and analysis to help explain organizational culture and how it can be identified in different forms and elements within organizations. Again, good for the scholar, but also essential for anyone either using the book as a training exercise or to conduct their own study on an organization's culture.

Some of the questions that the text tries to address go beyond the basics of 'how can I understand the corporate culture'. It also attempts to support the reader who has an ambition to develop their own action plan by cultivating answers to the next question: 'how can I use this information (i.e., actively apply it) once I understand it?' By trying to offer frameworks for analyzing culture, this format goes beyond the many accessible articles and texts already on the market that are primarily focused on contribution to knowledge through discussion of the theoretical concept of culture.

Even though my overall verdict is essentially favorable, there are a few small criticisms that should be noted.

Although the text is well-informed throughout and draws on relevant sources from the field, one small criticism is that there are parts where the book would benefit from more up-to-date literature in this area. I would suggest any future revisions need to consider existing literature that is better aligned with more recent developments in the subject of organizational culture. In parts, the source material used is over-reliant on a period pre-2010 with a notable proportion originating from research that pre-dates the new millennium. I refer particularly to chapters 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, & 11.

Although this may be more related to my misunderstanding, I find the use of theatre/drama as a metaphor for reflecting on organizational life is unusual and I am left with some uncertainty why the author feels this helps to articulate the messages being communicated throughout the text. I am not totally convinced about the analogies drawn between organization members being on a stage as actors, co-directors, and producers of communication practices that shape the organization's culture. This is a central theme of the text and I am unsure how it helps to develop our understanding of the processes involved. Perhaps for the unconvinced (like me) more clarity could be provided at the outset to secure my conversion.

Pointers for future consideration – does anyone in the game of training and development or pedagogic learning write a text that is not supported with more interactive content such as video demonstrations, interviews with experienced individuals, supporting case-study material, and content of a more blended nature? There is no reference to these materials and so, in a rapidly changing digital world, it may be worth considering for a 4th edition. The use of technology as a learning tool is now an expected norm in some format at least.

However, this shouldn't detract from the painstaking detail that has been provided by the author to help develop our understanding of organizational culture and how to conduct an analytical study on the subject. The author's understanding and experience is vast and this permeates every page of the book. Along with the value of providing the reader with a practical workbook format to support an analysis of an organization's culture, it is really the book's unique selling point.