

SESSION 10 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

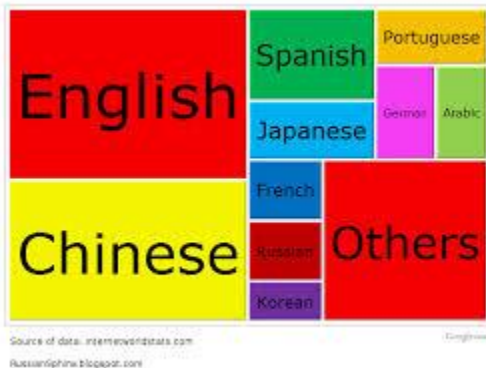
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The values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization.

Organizational culture includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have

been developed over time and are considered valid. Also called corporate culture, it's shown in

- (1) the ways the organization conducts its business, treats its employees, customers, and the wider community,
- (2) the extent to which freedom is allowed in decision making, developing new ideas, and personal expression,
- (3) how power and information flow through its hierarchy, and
- (4) how committed employees are towards collective objectives.

It affects the organization's productivity and performance, and provides guidelines on customer care and service, product quality and safety, attendance and punctuality, and concern for the environment. It also extends to production-methods, marketing and advertising practices, and to new product creation. Organizational culture is unique for every organization and one of the hardest things to change.

Culture adaptation is the evolutionary process by which an individual modifies his personal habits and customs to fit in to a particular culture. It can also refer to gradual changes within a culture or society that occur as people from different backgrounds participate in the culture and share their perspectives and practices.

Significance

Adaptation refers to accommodation, change and evolution.

Culture embraces the areas of language, [history](#), dress, food, holidays, traditions, religion, music and other forms of art. Culture is the way we do life. By adapting our culture we change our way of life in subtle or more drastic ways.

Types

Languages can undergo cultural adaptation. The phenomenon of Spanglish combines words from one language with another to create new words that do not officially belong to either language.

Religions can undergo cultural adaptation by blending traditional beliefs with values of the surrounding society. [Foods](#) can undergo cultural adaptation clearly seen in the "Mexican pizza" with chorizo, guacamole and chile pepper toppings.

Effects

Cultural adaptation can enrich a culture by [adding](#) to its traditions and practices from outside sources. Some cultural purists and separatists fear that cultural adaptation leads to the loss of cultural identity.

Employers

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces Federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. These laws protect employees and job applicants against employment discrimination when it involves:

Unfair treatment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

Harassment by managers, co-workers, or others in the workplace, because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

Denial of a reasonable workplace accommodation that the employee needs because of religious beliefs or disability.

Retaliation because the employee complained about job discrimination, or assisted with a job discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Not all employers are covered by the laws we enforce, and not all employees are protected. This can vary depending on the type of

employer, the number of employees it has, and the type of discrimination alleged.

An employee or job applicant who believes that he or she has been discriminated against at work can file a "Charge of Discrimination." All of the laws enforced by EEOC, except for the Equal Pay Act, require employees and applicants to file a Charge of Discrimination with us before they can file a job discrimination lawsuit against their employer. Also, there are strict time limits for filing a charge.

The fact that the EEOC has taken a charge does not mean that the government is accusing anyone of discrimination. The charging party has alleged that an employer has discriminated against him or her and it is the EEOC's job to investigate the matter to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred.

Other Requirements

The laws enforced by EEOC require employers to keep certain records, regardless of whether a charge has been filed against them. When a charge has been filed, employers have additional recordkeeping obligations. The EEOC also collects workforce data from some employers, regardless of whether a charge has been filed against the company.

Employers are required to post notices describing the Federal laws prohibiting job discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex

(including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

Small Businesses

While the information in this section of our website applies to all employers, it has been specifically designed for small businesses which may not have a human resources department or a specialized EEO staff. We realize that the information provided here may not answer all of the sophisticated legal issues that can arise in employment discrimination cases. Employers who have questions about the laws enforced by EEOC or about compliance with those laws in specific workplace situations may contact one of our small business liaisons for assistance.

Age Discrimination

Age **discrimination** involves treating someone (an applicant or employee) less favorably because of his age.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) only forbids age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older. It does not protect workers under the age of 40, although some states do have laws that protect younger workers from age discrimination.

It is not illegal for an [employer or other covered entity](#) to favor an older worker over a younger one, even if both workers are age 40 or older.

Discrimination can occur when the victim and the person who inflicted the discrimination are both over 40.

Age Discrimination & Work Situations

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including **hiring**, firing, pay, job assignments,

promotions, layoff, training, **fringe benefits**, and any other term or condition of employment.

Age Discrimination & Harassment

It is unlawful to harass a person because of his or her age.

Harassment can include, for example, offensive remarks about a person's age. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that aren't very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

Age Discrimination & Employment Policies/Practices

An employment policy or practice that applies to everyone, regardless of age, can be illegal if it

Disability Discrimination

Disability discrimination occurs when an employer or other entity covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, or the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, treats a qualified individual with a disability who is an employee or applicant unfavorably because she has a disability.

Disability discrimination also occurs when a [covered employer or other entity](#) treats an applicant or employee less favorably because she has a history of a disability (such as cancer that is controlled or in remission) or because she is believed to have a physical or mental impairment that is not transitory (lasting or expected to last six months or less) and minor (even if she does not have such an impairment).

The law requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to an employee or **job** applicant with a

disability, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense for the employer ("undue hardship").

The law also protects people from discrimination based on their relationship with a person with a disability (even if they do not themselves have a disability). For example, it is illegal to discriminate against an employee because her husband has a disability.

Religious Discrimination

Religious **discrimination** involves treating a person (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of his or her religious beliefs. The law protects not only people who belong to traditional, organized religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, but also others who have sincerely held religious, ethical or moral beliefs.

Religious discrimination can also involve treating someone differently because that person is married to (or associated with) an individual of a particular religion or because of his or her connection with a religious organization or group.

Religious Discrimination & Work Situations

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including **hiring**, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, **fringe benefits**, and any other term or condition of employment.

Religious Discrimination & Harassment

It is illegal to harass a person because of his or her religion.

Harassment can include, for example, offensive remarks about a person's religious beliefs or practices. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that aren't very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

Religious Discrimination and Segregation

Title VII also prohibits workplace or **job** segregation based on religion (including religious garb and grooming practices), such as assigning an employee to a non-customer contact position because of actual or feared customer preference.

Religious Discrimination & Reasonable Accommodation

The law requires an [employer or other covered entity](#) to reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause more than a minimal burden on the operations of the employer's business. This means an employer may be required to make reasonable adjustments to the work environment that will allow an employee to practice his or her religion.

Race/Color Discrimination

Race **discrimination** involves treating someone (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because he/she is of a certain race or because of personal characteristics associated with race (such as hair texture, skin color, or certain facial features). Color discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably because of skin color complexion.

Race/color discrimination also can involve treating someone unfavorably because the person is married to (or associated with) a person of a certain race or color or because of a person's connection with a race-based organization or group, or an organization or group that is generally associated with people of a certain color.

Discrimination can occur when the victim and the person who inflicted the discrimination are the same race or color.

Race/Color Discrimination & Work Situations

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including **hiring**, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, **fringe benefits**, and any other term or condition of employment.

Race/Color Discrimination & Harassment

It is unlawful to harass a person because of that person's race or color.

Harassment can include, for example, racial slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's race or color, or the display of racially-offensive symbols. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

Pregnancy Discrimination

Pregnancy discrimination involves treating a woman (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth.

Pregnancy Discrimination & Work Situations

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) forbids discrimination based on pregnancy when it comes to any aspect of employment, including **hiring**, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, **fringe benefits**, such as leave and **health insurance**, and any other term or condition of employment.

Pregnancy Discrimination & Temporary Disability

If a woman is temporarily unable to perform her **job** due to a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, the employer or other covered entity must treat her in the same way as it treats any other temporarily disabled employee. For

example, the employer may have to provide light duty, alternative assignments, **disability** leave, or unpaid leave to pregnant employees if it does so for other temporarily disabled employees.