INSTITUTIONALISING A VALUE ENACTED DOMINANT ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: AN IMPETUS FOR WHISTLEBLOWING

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Abstract

Whistle blowing on organisational wrongdoing is becoming increasingly prevalent. However, a renewal of existing literature reveals that every potential whistle blower is not always inclined to blow the whistle, despite protection being accorded to whistleblowers through legislation. The cost of blowing the whistle can be a deterrent to potential whistle blowers. It is quite plausible that an organisational culture which institutionalizes a dominant value based system can decrease whistle blowers expectations of retaliation. The purpose of this article is to provide a conceptual framework for a dominant value enacted organisational culture which can serve as an impetus for whistle blowing in the public sector. It is important that organisations make their value systems "lived" practices to motivate potential whistleblowers to report on wrongdoing. It can be argued that the institutionalisation of enacted values can lead to low perceptions of retaliation, which is often a deterrent in blowing the whistle.

Keywords: Whistle blowing, retaliation, values, organisational culture

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Introduction

Unethical behaviour has become part of everyday life in the South African public sector. There is heightened focus on the impact of organisational wrongdoing and how to eliminate it in an effective manner. Whistle blowing is commonly considered as an effective approach to eliminate unethical conduct.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of a value enacted organisational culture in promoting whistleblowing. Despite the protection of whistleblowers through legislation, potential whistleblowers are dissuaded from blowing the whistle because of numerous cases of retaliation within organisations. The article ascertains the impact of retaliation on organisational culture and its influence on potential whistleblowers.

An organisational culture that condemns retaliation through its actions is more likely to encourage disclosure of perceived unethical conduct. Without a dominant organisational culture, driven by humanizing values, whistleblowing may not be an effective approach to disclose unethical conduct in the public sector. The efficacy of whistleblowing is dependent on various conditions. It is suggested that organisational culture is an important condition to consider for effective whistleblowing.

Locus of whistleblowing within the public sector

Whistleblowing can be considered as the disclosure by organisational members of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices within an organisation to persons or agencies that may be able to take action (Near and Miceli, 1985:4). Such perceived wrongdoing can directly or indirectly affect the whistleblower. Whistleblowers, as ethical agents of responsibility and accountability, are often protected by legislation when they behave responsibly toward society. They attempt to protect people from the organisations they are employed in, when these organisations behave against the common good of society. The acknowledgement of such a need for protection implies that ethics is problematic in many organisations. Even though whistleblowing via internal channels is less threatening to an organisation compared to external reporting, generally whistleblowing within an organisation is not favoured. Often, whistleblower reports of wrongdoing is ignored or buried, thereby unsuccessfully stopping wrongdoing and possibly

subjecting the whistleblower to retaliation (Miceli and Near, 1992:260.)

Within the public sector, corruption can be considered as any conduct in relation to individuals entrusted with responsibilities in public office, which violates their duties as public sector employees and which is aimed at obtaining undue gratification of any kind for themselves or for others (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006:3). Government has to fight corruption, if it is to ensure public faith in the public service, maintain trust and sustain an ethos of democratic values and principles.

Whistleblowing, as a mechanism to combat corruption, can provide public sector employees with a tool to disclose wrongdoing in a protected environment. Whistleblowing enforces the principles of accountability, professional ethics, good governance and transparency which constitutes the foundation of sound public administration. The Protected Disclosures Act (PDA) of 2000 was passed to encourage employee to disclose information about unlawful or irregular behaviour in the workplace.

Whistleblowing protection was originally part of the Open Democracy Bill. Based on the comparative experiences of Australia and the United Kingdom, it became a freestanding law in an endeavour to give it greater recognition and promotion (Chêne, 2009:9). Any disclosure in good faith, offers protection to the whistleblower from retaliation, as long as they meet the requirements and follow the procedure set out in the Act.

The PDA Act of 2000 upholds the expectation of a "democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law " as specified in the Constitution, 1996. The Act reassures employees, both in the public and private sectors, with sincere concerns about malpractice that there is a safe alternative to silence, by providing protection against victimization. The Act also encourages organisations to establish workplace structures to enable whistleblowing and in seeking to protect whistleblowers organisational detriment, prescribes the route to follow in the event of disclosure (Dimba, Stober and Thomson, 2004:148). It further entrenches the obligation of employers to protect whistleblowers.

It is envisaged that whistleblowing will ensure that wrong doing is properly raised and addressed in the workplace and with the individual responsible. In view of growing demands for an ethos of good governance in the public sector, the implementation of whistleblower protection can be considered as an exponent of the call for greater accountability of government to society.

Despite government initiatives like whistleblowing to combat corruption, Dimba, et al. (2004:143) contends that research has shown that employees are reluctant to blow the whistle against corrupt activities. Incidents of retaliation by employees have been cited as a contributory factor to such reluctance. Dimba et al. (2004:4) make mention of the engineered system of repression through a spynetwork during the apartheid era which has generated a culture of mistrust. Apartheid era spies, referred to as "impimpis" faced gruesome public death if they were suspected of being informants.

Further, whistleblowers suffered great loss in terms of finances, emotional stress, strained relationships and career upliftment. Uys (2011:65) cited cases where a whistleblower lost his job five months later after being reinstated, while another was faced with a major legal debt. Such evidence does not empower people to participate in their governance, neither does it make government accountable for its decisions.

Since the introduction of the PDA 2000, only five cases were brought to the Labour Court, while numerous other cases did not reach the Labour Court. The numerous cases of whistleblowing being inappropriately handled demonstrate that the protection given to whistleblowers is poor, thereby, discouraging potential whistleblowing. This is supported by attendees at a workshop held by the Public Service Commission to enhance excellence in governance in the public sector. Public sector employees at the workshop indicated awareness of cases of fraud, but they were too afraid to blow the whistle because of becoming victims of what the Act referred to as " occupational detriment" (Dimba et al., 2004:149). The fear of reporting extended beyond the workplace, to the protection of property, families and their own lives. The Act can be criticized for not requiring employers to do anything other than not victimize whistleblowers. This lack of imperative does not place any urgency to implement whistleblower policies and systems as stipulated by law.

Uys (2008: 905) argues that the employer is in a more advantageous whistleblowing position than the whistleblower, despite the protection offered by the PDA, 2000. Some of the advantages enjoyed by the employer include the following (Uys, 2008:905):

- Employers victimizing whistleblowers do not face criminal sanctions as it is not constituted as a criminal offence.
- Whistleblowers who suffer occupational reprisals after disclosure have to provide conclusive evidence, which is often difficult to prove.
- Internal disciplinary procedures, which seldom allow external legal representation, places whistleblowers in a vulnerable position, making it difficult to successfully represent their cases.
- The non-requirement for an independent investigation and the failure to place responsibility on prescribed bodies to investigate the disclosure, offers no guarantee that the disclosure will be investigated.

De Maria (2006:3) argues that retaliation frequently takes place faster than the protection, which places the employer at a strategic advantage, while traumatizing the whistleblower in the interim. Given the intense history of mistrust between the employee and the employer in the South African public sector, one of the major challenges in implementing effective whistleblowing is how to promote a culture of whistle blowing in organisations that equate whistleblowing with the "impimpi" culture.

The body of empirical literature regarding whistleblowing is in its infancy in developing democratic

states like South Africa. In view of escalating cases of corruption in the public sector, the examination of a dominant value enacted organisational culture as an impetus for encouraging whistleblowing can be considered of great value. Since whistleblowing to the media is frowned upon and disclosure only to recognised agencies is given protection, whistleblowers need to feel confident and safe that blowing the whistle in good faith would lead to a focus on the message and not the messenger. This necessitates a culture of values that is shared and enacted throughout the organisation. While the law is essential, it should not be seen as a panacea in and of itself.

Retaliation: potential impediment to whistleblowing

Retaliation is often considered as undesirable action taken against a whistleblower, in direct response to the act of whistleblowing. Rehg (1998:17) defines retaliation as action taken by members of an organisation against an employee in response to the employee reporting wrongdoing. Actions of retaliation include involuntary transfer, poor performance appraisal, demotion, ostracism, coercion to withdraw accusation, steps taken to undermine the process, imposition of hardship, denial of training and dismissal.

Literature indicates that wrongdoers use retaliation to deter whistleblowing or when wrongdoers suspect that whistleblowers will use external channels to report wrongdoing (Near and Miceli, 1985:12). In addition, retaliatory actions may be used by the organisation to silence the whistleblower totally or discredit the whistleblower (Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2005:287). Such retaliatory actions are incongruent with organisations that have institutionalized values into their culture.

Given the potential for positive outcomes to result from whistleblowing, it can be argued that organisations that use retaliation in response to whistleblowing do not value honesty, justice, loyalty and general public interest.

Despite legislation protecting whistleblowers, cases of retaliation have been reported. A survey of whistleblowers revealed that 95 percent had suffered retaliation of various forms (Miceli, Near and Dworkin, 2008: 381). Effects of retaliation include family problems, financial problems, depression, declining physical health and high legal costs (Bouville 2008:980). These are some of the serious consequences that befall whistleblowers, where suffering is seen as an essential part of whistleblowing (Bouville, 2008:580).

A study by Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005:292-293) revealed the following correlates of retaliation against whistleblowers:

- Reporting of frequent and severe wrongdoing which threatens the organizations' future performance.
- Reporting to external channels which risk public scrutiny and legal intervention.
- Violation of a cultural norm that actively operates to continue and support transgressions.
- A whistleblower of high status in the organisation who is considered to have betrayed the organisation.

Research also suggests that low paid employees are most susceptible to retaliation since they may be powerless compared to wrongdoers on whom the organisation is dependent.

Without guarantees against retaliation, employees may well have little confidence in internal disclosures. In this regard, several studies indicate that retaliation increases the chance that employees will blow the whistle to parties outside the organisation (Near and Miceli 1985:8). Employees, therefore by perceiving adverse employment consequences of whistleblowing, become fearful and suspicious of organisational commitment to whistleblowing. It is generally assumed that a whistleblowers' experiences (perceived or actual, reward or retaliation) following the act of whistleblowing, will have strong effects on the willingness of others and likelihood to blow the whistle in the future (Miceli and Near, 1992:101).

The cost-benefit analysis can influence employees' whistleblowing decisions. Although retaliation against whistleblowers can encourage whistleblowing behaviour (Miceli and Near, 1992:101), the serious consequences of retaliation can also discourage whistleblowing behaviour. In this case a process of weighing the costs and benefits of whistleblowing may reveal that costs like retaliation may outweigh potential benefits like cessation of corrupt practices. Retaliation can also be used by wrongdoers to influence potential whistleblowers cost-benefit analysis by emphasizing the perceived costs and minimizing the perceived benefits of whistleblowing, thereby inducing fear. It is also quite plausible that anger towards the wrongdoer can overpower the fear brought about by wrongdoer retaliation. Further, potential whistleblowers may be prepared to risk personal and financial losses because of perceptions of responsibility for addressing wrongdoing.

Irrespective of the severity of retaliation, retaliation in any form affects value based relationships within the organisation and harms the organisation. Rehg et al. (2008:228) contend that if whistleblowers suffer retaliation they are likely to review the procedures for organisational response as unjust. Procedural injustice can lead to withdrawal of trust and loyalty. In a study by Rehg et al. (2008:235), they found that in the long term retaliation may deter would-be whistleblowers, because of its chilling effect on other would-be whistleblowers. However, any form of retaliation is an ineffective strategy to discourage whistleblowing. Most often, retaliation backfires since it can lead to external channels of reporting which can affect the reputation of the organisation and negatively impact on organisational performance. Further, retaliation can lead to the work environment degenerating into an atmosphere of mistrust, thereby affecting the ethical culture in the organisation.

Retaliation and organisational cultnre

Organisations that employ a bureaucratic ethic that values conformity with organisational ideologies can employ values like trust, loyalty and justice to merely perpetuate a regimented organisational culture. Shahinpoor and Matt (2007:37) found that such organisations are like feudal kingdoms, where questioning is perceived as disloyal and dealt with punitively.

Shahinpoor and Matt (2007:38) identified the following features of an organisational culture that will likely condone retaliation and condemn whistleblowing:

- Maintaining self serving interests.
- Excessive drive for order, unity and loyalty.
- Obsession with internal political order.
- High ranking employees meticulously conform to organisational ideologies and not by their independence of thought.
- Managers and leaders surrender themselves into yes-men/women, who are isolated from discussions of actions.

By perpetuating an organisations' own values without criticism, conformity can be enforced through bureaucratic processes. A school of thought argues that since bureaucratic organisations are less responsive to change than other organisations, whistleblowing will be negatively responded to because it represents a challenge to the authority structure which is critical for the success of the bureaucracy (Near and Miceli, 1995:701). Such organisations cannot be transformed if individual conscience and criticisms are not tolerated. Shahinpoor and Matt (2007:38) argue that "principled dissent promotes basic human values like loyalty, integrity, courage and individual conscience. "Principled dissent" can be considered as efforts by the individuals in the organisation to protest because of current practice. Whistleblowing can be considered as a form of "principle dissent" since it is a critical and non-conformist point of view. Organisations that retaliate against whistleblowers can be considered as those that place high value on "organisational fit", which is conformity to organisational values and which may not be congruent with the personal values of the whistleblowers. In such organisations, those who challenge the status quo often face greater personal challenges and resistance (Shahinpoor and Matt, 2007:39).

An organisational culture which does not appreciate and value employees, who show commitment to the organisation, will regard whistleblowing as an act of non-conformity to organisational policy. Even though whistleblowing can be considered as an act of "principled" organisational dissent based in integrity, honesty and loyalty; an organisational culture that values conformity can place the whistleblower in a very vulnerable position. Standing apart from the organisation can be reflective of a challenge to such organisational conformity and in opposition to acceptable current practices. The organisation can retaliate because of the need for conformity, which invariably makes it's ethical convictions questionable.

An organisation which retaliates against whistleblowers can be criticised for violating the fundamental human dignity of employees (Alford, 2001:125). Retaliation can be considered as an act which punishes whistleblowers for not "fitting in" with th organisational culture. Alford (2001:35) argues tha whistleblowers are not only expected to conform t organisational values or to comply with the culture of th organisation, but also to become enemies of their ow personal values. Such organisations can be deemed a corrupt since they are restricting disclosure in good faitl Shahinpoor and Matt (2007:43) argue that organisatior that retaliate against whistleblowers discourage an thwart the flow of constructive critique, thereby forcin the employee to assume the organisational persona. Sinc there is no consistency between the employee's person values and the organisational values speaking wit honesty, loyalty and integrity is not acceptable. Instea employees are rewarded for supporting the organisation culture and punished for being whistleblowers. In th regard, the very values that are important to th whistleblower is considered a liability by th organisation.

Alford (2001:60) argues that organisations th respond to whistleblowing with retaliation have a cultu that includes a moral world of its own and which does n require justification on any grounds outside itself. Suc organisations are not likely to be motivated by promotir and protecting ethical values of employees, but are rath mainly motivated by instrumental values. Seen in th way, such an organisational culture perpetuates "dehumanized organisation" which extinguishes digni and disobedience to authority. In such a climate whe whistleblowing is not supported, employees are le: likely to report wrongdoing and may not be considered more credible in doing so. It may also reflect th unwillingness of the organisation to change (Shahinpo and Matt, 2007:41).

Some of the features of an organisational cultu that engages in retaliation against whistleblowers ca include the following (Shahinpoor and Matt, 2007:42):

- Impairment of employees' physical, intellectu and emotional qualities.
- Retardation of opportunities for learning ar growth.
- Lack of employee right to have a voice, to a freely and autonomously and to be take seriously as an individual of conscience.
- Lower morale, less productivity and decreas inclination to be loyal to an organisation that intolerant of constructive criticism.
- Non-recognition of personal dignity.
- Dehumanization of individuals.
- Integrity is not promoted by forcing employe to go along with organisational wrongdoing.
- Low value placed on being loyal and workin towards the common good as reflected in th organisation's mission statement.
- Development of a non-learning organisatio which places low emphasis on hard workin highly motivated, respected and compete employees.

The above features of an organisational cultu which supports retaliation is unlikely to enjoy ethical a practical benefits that flow to individuals and th organisation. By suppressing opportunities for se

examination and self improvement. such organisations diffuse any attempt at challenging and revealing unethical conduct. It can be argued that a dominant culture where strong core values are emphasized and stressed through action is not deemed important. As a result, there is no basis for conveying a strong sense of identity to members. facilitating commitment and enhancing social stability. Such organisations can be considered as inefficient. irrational and unethical in retaliating against whistleblowers.

Concept of a dominant organisational culture

Over the years, different definitions of organisational culture have been developed. Most of the definitions agree that organisational culture refers to a system of shared assumptions held by members within the organisation. which include morals. norms, attitudes and principles that help to create standards for people to co-exist (Werner. 2008:26). The organisational culture serves as the foundation for the organisation's management system and as a set of practices and behaviours that exemplify and reinforce the elements.

Culture theorists perceive the organisation as a social entity which motivates and influences employee behaviour. Organisational leaders are expected to identify the factors that constitute the organisational culture. The organisational culture reflects organisational values, appropriate behaviour to shape such a culture and systems that instil these behaviours in the organisation (Werner. 2008:25).

The organisational culture serves to give employees an identity. establish greater commitment to organisational goals. provide guidance in terms of acceptable behaviour, create social system security with associated emotional security and act as a yardstick to evaluate and correct deviant behaviour (Werner, 2008:28). It is important that a deeply entrenched culture is established. Werner (2008:27) refers to such a culture as a dominant organisational culture where enacted values are reflected in the everyday behaviour of employees. Enacted values represent the values that are actually exhibited or converted into employee behaviour. Conversely, espoused values are explicitly stated as what is preferred by an organisation. Such preference does not automatically produce the desired behaviour, since not everyone "walks the talk" (Kinicki and Kratner, 2003:44). Therefore, a dominant culture emerges when enacted values are reflected in employees' behaviour. In such a culture there is greater commitment to core values and higher organisational commitment. Harquail and Fox (1993:162) are of the view that strong cultures provide more clues on how to behave. more reinforcing information about what is right to do and may have higher penalties for non-conformity. When organisational culture is weak. employees tend to develop their own possible identities for ways of behaving, resulting in essential values not being shared by employees. With less direction and approbation of unacceptable conduct, ethics can be compromised.

Bowditch and Bouno (2001:291) are of the opinion that three basic factors make a significant difference on how a dominant culture can be influential in shaping the behaviour of the employees in an organisation. Firstly, the greater the degree of shared beliefs and values. the greater the culture's influence. since there are basic assumptions that guide behaviour. and influence organisational life. Secondly. widely shared beliefs and values across the organisation has a powerful effect because more people are guided by them. Finally, in cultures where the relative significance of different assumptions is widely known. the effect on employee behaviour will be more pervasive since there is less ambiguity about which beliefs and values should prevail in problem situations.

Since it is difficult on the surface to predict a dominant culture. insight into the historical and current activities is imperative. Given the difficulty. it can be suggested that observation. interviews comparing information and joint assessments from internal and external sources can contribute to a more objective deciphering of organisational culture.

A dominant organisational culture affects all aspects of organisational life such as the ways in which employees perform, types of decisions made, organisational policies, procedures and organisational effectiveness. Academic researchers concede that the organisational culture can be a driver of employees' attitude and organisational effectiveness. Results from several studies indicate that the congruence between an employee's values and the organisation's values was significantly associated with organisational commitment, loyalty, honesty and ethical behaviour (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2003:50).

Perpetuating a dominant organisational culture

Every organisation should establish a culture that encourages good performance that is ethical. Encouraging behaviour that supports values like honesty, trust, integrity and loyalty should be part of this culture.

Weaver (2006:351) noted that an ethical identity leads to consistent ethical behaviour. Behaviour can be considered to be ethical when it is not merely based on what is good for oneself, but also considering what is good for others (Van Vuuren, 2008:63). Ethical behaviour can be developed and institutionalised through actions. This necessitates the establishment of an organisational culture where values are enacted rather than merely espoused. Organisations that foster ethical behaviour provide greater opportunity for the development of moral identity. likely leading to greater ethical behaviour among employees (Weaver. 2006:352). Vadera, Aguilera and Caza (2009:560) used the studies of Aquino and Reed (2002) and Skitka and Mullen (2002) to show that moral identity associated with social justice influenced individuals to behave according to their moral mandates when such moral values are threatened. Studies by Selfert (2002 in Vadera et al., 2009:563) uncovered that the highest likelihood of whistleblowing occurred when all whistleblowing circumstances relating

to justice within the organisation were fair. This stream of research therefore indicates that when organisations are perceived to have a dominant value based culture, then employees are more likely to blow the whistle.

Sustaining a dominant organisational culture can be supported by a number of approaches to an enacting value system. It can be argued that an enacted value system within the organisation can encourage valid whistleblowing that can be used to improve operations within an organisation.

Strategies and processes in organisations play a major role in developing and strengthening such values. This implies that it cannot be assumed that employees will be naturally ethical or prone to behave ethically. Van Vuuren (2008:63) argues that while this may be true, there are many genuinely ethical employees who often unknowingly commit wrongdoing and there can also be employees who wilfully behave unethically. In reality, it has to be accepted that legislation alone cannot prevent corrupt practices in organisations. Therefore, any organisation needs to focus on the practice of values that can set standards that employees should adhere to. Establishing such an ethical culture, reflecting legitimate organisationally sanctioned behaviour enhances the expected efficacy of the whistleblowing intention of would be whistleblowers. A study by Zhang, Chiu and Wei (2009:35) on internal whistleblowing in China showed that an ethical climate was positively associated with whistleblowing. Based on a six year research study on 18 visionary companies, Collins and Porras (1998:205) identified the following mechanisms that can be used to enforce an organisational culture based on the identified core values:

- Commitment of senior leadership to a specific organisational culture.
- Orientation programmes with ideological and practical content.
- Promotion of employees who demonstrate behaviours congruent with the desired organisational culture.
- Advancement criteria explicitly linked to corporate ideology.
- Continuous articulation of the organisational values in communication and documentation.
- Investments to "buy-in" support for enacted values and appropriate behaviour.
- Public recognition for those who support organisational ideology and visible penalties for those who do not.

Identifying mechanisms that can be used for establishing the desired organisational culture is imperative for successful organisational performance and the integration of values into the core business of the organisation and behaviour of employees.

Van Vuuren (2008:63-66) suggested that enacted values can be perpetuated through a system of codifying ethics standards and institutionalising ethics. Van Vuuren (2008:64) argues that a code of ethics should explain organisational values, aimed at promoting ethical behaviour. Without a code of ethics, it is difficult to guide ethical behaviour. Ethics awareness and code ownership by employees has to be underpinned by a democratic and participative process. It is true to say that a collective process can reduce variations in employee's perceptions of what is the right thing to do. Further, having a code of ethics that is seldom used, discussed or revised is of little value. The significance of such a document is largely dependent on the extent to which it is a living document.

The code of ethics should be the benchmark against which the organisation measures its ethical actions. Merely reacting to legislation is hardly likely to perpetuate a culture of practicing values, since mere compliance diminishes the ethical discretion of employees. In contrast, by adopting an integrity approach to the enactment of values, ethical values are internalised. By moving beyond mere compliance and enforcement, employees are inspired and committed to "lived" organisational values. Institutionalising ethical concerns can increase employees' awareness of the importance of ethical behaviour and thus strengthen the ethical culture of the organisation (Van Vuuren, 2008:65).

Tsahuridu and Vanderckhove (2008:116) argue that by institutionalising employees into the ethical culture of the organisation, the ethical autonomy of employees in the organisational context is enhanced. Hence, the environment for potential whistleblowing is more conducive. When values are enacted in an organisation, it can be suggested that employees are less likely to fear retaliation. A dominant organisational culture underpinned by the consistent practice of values will hardly be tolerant of retaliation towards the whistleblower. Therefore, the motivation to blow the whistle will be higher. In this regard, Near and Maceli (1985:6) use the motivation theory of Vroom and Skinner to argue that an individual's motivation to blow the whistle is based on the expectancy that managerial attention to the complaint, recognition of the whistleblowers' identity and changes in managerial practices will follow, ultimately leading to a further cessation of corrupt practices. Further, when the whistleblower has observed consistent opposition to corrupt practices and positive managerial reaction, then the corruption setting reinforces the motivation to blow the whistle. The argument of Near and Maceli (1985:6) shows that in a dominant value system, employees may less likely perceive retaliation and therefore are more inclined to blow the whistle. From the expectancy and reinforcement models of motivation, the organisational culture does play a role in influencing the whistleblower (Near and Maceli, 1985:6). Research shows that employees who receive a favourable organisational response towards people raising concerns internally are more likely to blow the whistle. Rather than being seen as "rats" or "sneaks", the organisation perceives them as being loyal to organisational goals (Tshahuridu and Vanderckhove, 2008:109). Such a response reinforces the organisation's professed values, thereby recognising the integrity of the organisation.

An organisational culture where ethical values are made "real" should have the following management systems in place (Van Vuuren, 2008:66):

- Communication systems like ethics awareness campaigns, ethics help-lines and safe reporting lines.

- Ethics training initiatives (training in ethics competence for decision making and management of subordinates).
- Induction programmes (ethics orientation for new employees / promotees).
- Human resource recruitment and selection of ethically sensitive individuals.
- Disciplinary processes.
- Establishment of ethics committees that oversee ethics management interventions.
- Appointment of ethics officers / managers to coordinate ethics management initiatives.
- Reporting mechanisms on ethics management performance.

The aforementioned elements is the acid test that anagement really means what they say about supporting hical systems. rather than merely paying lip service.

Further. whistleblowing policies can significantly ontribute to the effectiveness of codes of conduct in omoting ethical behaviour. It reflects an ultimate andard towards which every employee should strive, quiring an acknowledgement by the entire organisation f the trust placed in every employee to uphold the ghest standard of ethics. The contingency model of rrel and Gresham (1985 in Hassink, de Vries and ollen. 2007:29) suggests that by implementing a mprehensive ethical management system, the highest vel of ethical standards can be achieved. Therefore, eating an environment of enforcement can have a gnificant impact on potential whistleblowers.

In addition to enforcement in maintaining such an rganisational culture. Hellreigel, Slocum and Woodman 998:551) recommend powerful reinforcers as including ie following:

- Paying attention and commenting on processes and behaviours by management sends strong messages about what is important and expected.
- Organisational reaction to incidents and the manner in which it is dealt with can reinforce the existing culture or bring out new values to improve the culture.
- Role modelling by management communicates cultural messages which can reinforce the dominant culture.
- The reward and punishment system conveys to employees the priorities and values of the organisation.

The reinforcers can serve to promote responsibility y the organisation to take action against unethical onduct. This will not only increase the probability that mployees will behave ethically, but also motivate otential whistleblowers to disclose unethical practices.

While the implementation of the systems identified y Van Vuuren (2008:68). Hassink et al. (2009:29) and ellreigel et al. (1998:551) is important, the culture of hics has to be maintained in a sustainable way. Such ustainability is dependent to a large extent on how the rganisation can prove that it's actions are fair, ccountable. responsible and transparent. This requires ero tolerance to corrupt practices, thereby contributing higher levels of trust. loyalty, honesty. fairness and onfidence in the organisation. Employees in such an environment would not perceive retaliation from the organisation as a response to whistleblowing.

Rainbom and Payne (1990:887) further argue that if an organisation has accepted a basic level of conduct which is currently attainable as it's goal. then punishment for deviation from this level should be extremely harsh since this has been accepted as the lowest acceptable level of conduct. Here, this is evidence of reciprocity for enacting the value system of the organisation. This is reinforced by Hoivik's (2002:4) view that organisational systems can either impede or sustain ethical competence. Evidence by the Ethics Resource Centre (2007:165) shows tbat 61 percent of employees report misconduct they observe in organisations with comprehensive ethics programmes. However. while such programmes are important contributors for encouraging whistleblowing, it is not sufficient to encourage employees to blow the whistle (Vadera et al., 2009:566). It has to be complemented by a strong organisational ethical culture, as shown in the study by the Ethics Resource Centre (2007:169) that in organisations with a strong ethical culture and minimal organisational programmes, only 35 percent of the employees report wrongdoing, whereas in organisations with a strong ethical culture and well implemented ethics programmes, 65 percent of employees report observed misconduct. Such programmes underpinning the dominant organisational culture ensure awareness, compliance, enforceability, accountability and responsibility. Therefore, it can be suggested that the exhibition of organisational ethical values can increase employees' willingness to report wrongdoing.

It can be further argued that whistleblowing seems to be higher in organisations that value whistleblowing and in those in which the whistleblower perceives a higher congruence between personal and organisational values (Miceli and Near, 1992:180). Evidence suggests whistleblowers whose values regarding right and wrong are congruent with those of the organisation are less likely to be retaliated against (Miceli and Near, 1992:152). Similarly, potential whistleblowers may perceive high costs, like retaliation in organisations where there is incongruence between personal values and organisational values.

Embracing, nurturing and protecting whistleblowers can be influential in advancing organisational interests and creating a culture where individuals are free to exercise critical questioning. Literature commonly point to advocating organisational cultures that support whistleblowing if there is evidence that the organisation is conducting its affairs in a manner that is unethical (Shahinpoor and Matt, 2007:46). Such an approach contributes to a culture where values like honesty and loyalty are reciprocated by management and the whistle blower, since both parties are driven by the search for truth.

Conclusion

Whistleblowing is important in organisations because the rate of whistleblowing is increasing and the legal environment is less supportive of organisations that

retaliate against whistleblowers. Organisations that support human dignity, value the individual, and respect the organisational life are less likely to retaliate against whistleblowers. By enacting organisational values rather than merely paying lip service, employees perceive an organisation that values loyalty, honesty and integrity. Similarly, organisational leadership can recognise whistleblowers as ethical employees who ought to be protected.

The article contributes to the literature by explaining how a dominant value based organisational culture can motivate whistleblowers actions, since there are low perceptions of retaliation in such an organisational culture. It is demonstrated that a strong ethical culture plays in important role in diminishing potential whistleblowers fear of the cost of whistleblowing. Additionally, the article illustrates how organisations need to make their commitment to eradicate corrupt practices a "living" testimony by institutionalising ethical systems.

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