CREATION AND ADAPTATION OF NORMS IN A TIRE-MOLD MANUFACTURING
ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

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This case study examined the ways in which organizational members created norms that sustained the organizational culture in a tire-mold manufacturing organization, the effects of those norms, and members' motivation to comply with them. Within the organization, co-cultures maintain identical values but employ different norms due to the nature of their work. Despite the standardized processes for designing and manufacturing tire-molds, norms that sustain the values of autonomy and creativity enable innovation that competition demands. This kind of study adds to organizational communication research about norms and can benefit organizational leaders, researchers, and consultants when assessing cultural values to determine strategies for change. The tire industry is competitive and requires change in products, procedures, and communication. Because the values and norms are imbedded in the culture, any such changes must address these strongholds. This case study can be used as a comparison to other organizations in a competitive environment. To conduct an assessment of the culture and its norms, the researcher audio taped face-to-face interviews with 30 members of a tire-mold manufacturing organization in a small Midwest town and observed organizational members over a period of three days. The tapes were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Themes that emerged revealed the cultural values and the norms that sustain them. The strength of this case study lies in its ability to identify cultural elements attributed to the norms. However, the restricted time spent in the organization limited the amount of contact with organizational members who were administrators; thus, findings would be richer and more conclusive with additional time.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my soul-mate and rock, Gene, whose love and support sustained me through this journey and who celebrated each milestone as a significant event of personal, relational, and professional growth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table

CHAPTER I: RATIONALE

The purpose of this paper is to examine communication processes that create and reproduce norms in an organization that designs and manufactures tire molds and to explain ways in which the kinds of norms in this organization facilitate change. This type of analysis may be beneficial to organizational members, leaders, consultants, and researchers who seek to better understand communication practices that create and reproduce norms that enable or constrain change processes. In chapter one, I provide a rationale for the study, define ways in which terms will be used here, identify the research questions that guided my inquiry, and preview chapters that follow.

This study emerged from a mission to make sense of the practices, processes, and motivations I observed in volunteers within a nonprofit organization and to understand how other organizations could use these processes to increase motivation and cultivate change. Faced with the challenge of asking already overworked members of an organization to volunteer their time to produce a Christmas event, I gained the co-operation of an Air Force General who agreed to play a leading role and attend every rehearsal despite his duties to be on call 24 hours per day, seven days a week, and to fulfill the social obligations expected during the Christmas season of one with his rank. A woman whose livelihood was derived from making wedding attire volunteered her time to make most of the costumes, and a construction worker willingly spent two weekends and every night after work constructing a set and was on call to help with the stage crew during performances. These people received no compensation for their labor, yet, this was the way things normally got done in this organization. One of the roles that I played was to recruit volunteers who could contribute in their area of expertise. It was our hope, as organizational leaders, that the members would gain a sense of belonging to the organization

through their volunteer efforts and would want to remain committed to the organization after the completion of this project and would volunteer for other projects in the future. The organization depended on volunteers to accomplish most of its work. As a non-profit organization, service was provided, not to make a profit, but to serve people. The organization also depended on voluntary gifts to cover overhead expenses that were necessary for basic operating expenses. Through the process of volunteering, these members demonstrated their commitment to the organization and its mission. Those volunteers working on the same projects formed lasting relationships that strengthened their affiliation with the organization. In this particular context and culture, people volunteered, without expecting anything in return for their services. The paid staff members of the organization also accepted less compensation than their skills and time would render in another industry. I often wondered what motivated these members to conform to norms that offered little or nothing in exchange for their commitment and service when other industries battle truancy and high turnover, yet offered much more monetarily in exchange for service and skills.

My curiosity about what motivates organizational members to conform to ways of doing things led me to embark on this journey of inquiry. I wondered about the motivation for organizational members to conform to the norms of their organization and reflected on my own participation in creating and reinforcing norms, questioning my motivation for conforming. Homan's (1974) classic social exchange theory applied more recently by Kane-Urrabazo (2006) and Riggs & Rantz (2001) suggested that people conform to norms to gain some intangible benefit or reward from their social group. If members are motivated to conform to gain acceptance in their group, then what would motivate them to deviate from those norms and what would the outcome be? Because the social group creates the norms, the motivation for

compliance to the norms is inherent in the interests of the individuals who create them and the degree to which they identify with the values of the organization.

Definition of Norms

Many organizational members are unaware of the norms that guide their behavior and practices. Although many refer to what is *normal* in the organization, they commonly refer to norms as rules, practices, policies, or guidelines. In this chapter, I offer a brief definition of *norm* to provide a foundation for understanding the concept and to limit its scope. In chapter three, I will discuss in greater detail how norms have come to be defined, identify fruitful studies about norms in organizations, and identify scholarly works that explain ways in which norms are constructed.

Norms define behavior that is accepted by a social group and function to reduce uncertainty and predict behavior in social settings (Azar, 2004; Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Gibbs, 1981; Goffman, 1963, 1971; Workman, 2001). The social group that creates and sustains the norm includes members who identify with the cultural values and beliefs, and they sustain the culture through participation in its rituals and practices (Keyton, 2005). Norms are a product of the culture and act as social rules that prevent individuals from having to constantly make decisions about appropriate responses (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976). Compliance with the accepted practices helps reduce the uncertainty of what responses or behaviors are appropriate within the culture by enabling members to predict how others may react (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Feldman, 1984, 1993). The predictability that norms afford provides a sense of acceptance and inclusion (Heuser, 2005; Workman, 1999). This social benefit of inclusion further motivates members to reproduce the norm (Azar, 2004; Workman, 2001). Feldman (1993) examined the process of how norms form and why group members

follow them and found that one of the motivators to rely on norms was to enhance personal success in interactions and reduce the potential for failure. When members adopt the norms, they are better able, through socialization, to gain helpful information about how the organization works (Comer, 1991; Kane-Urrabazo, 2006). They build trust between members and gain the cooperation of other members (Heuser, 2005; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Pillutla & Chen, 1999). The predictability norms provide facilitates social interaction that enables and supports the work in an organization. Those who follow the norms and are included in the social group are labeled *normal* (Goffman, 1971).

Defined by the culture that creates the norms. To sustain the social culture, members develop norms that reflect and reinforce cultural values (Keyton, 2005; Schein, 1985). Cultures distinguish themselves from other groups through their values, beliefs, assumptions, rituals, and artifacts (Bantz, 1993; Keyton; Morgan, 1986; Smircich, 1983; Trethewey, 1997). Norms strengthen membership in the culture, and thus, the practices become normalized. As group members comply with the norms and monitor other members' adherence, they create the expectation and establish the norms (Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Critto, 1999; Feldman, 1993). As members accept and adopt the norm, their act reinforces the norm and rewards the individual performing it. Sociologists have argued that cultural groups adopt norms for given situations and time (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Aarts, Dijksterhuis & Custers, 2003; Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Pillutla & Chen, 1999; Workman, 2001). This definition implies that norms have a fluid nature and change with context and time. Because norms are socially constructed, they often change when members of the social group change. Different situations and environments call for different norms; therefore, when members encounter new situations, they employ a norm that fits that situation (Aarts & Dijksterhuis; Pillutla & Chen). One group of people in an organization

may enact a particular norm due to the nature of their work and the environment. Another group in the same organization working in a different environment may enact a different norm. Consequently, a norm that exists for new members of the organization may not apply to those who have been there for many years.

   Defined by reactions to them. When members perform behavior accepted and expected by their social group, their compliance is rewarded. Conversely, nonperformance of an expected and accepted behavior is considered deviant or abnormal behavior, and the nonperformance is punished by the social group (Baker, 2006; Feldman, 1984; Goffman,1963). Normative sociologists who study cultural groups' enactment of norms have argued that norms create social order because members of the group share the same beliefs regarding what behavior is acceptable (Gibbs, 1981; Keyton, 2005). Compliance with norms preserves the social order; therefore, members define deviance based on the tension it creates (Gibbs). The degree to which an individual deviates from accepted behavior determines whether the person will be labeled as deviant or abnormal (Goffman). The threat of having the label of deviant often deters a person from acting in a manner considered deviant or abnormal manner (Goffman, 1959). Deviant behavior and responses to deviance are often learned from past experiences. Parsons (1951) claimed that deviant behavior is motivated by social processes previously encountered in a social system. As individuals interact within social systems, they are influenced by what they observe. Members may be rewarded in tangible ways, such as receiving a bonus, or public praise, or building a reputation that may lead to a promotion. As a result of the reward, the behavior is reinforced and reproduced, thereby further empowering those who produced the norm. Because the norm is accepted, an additional reward is that those conforming to the norm gain acceptance and approval from other group members (Workman, 2001). When the norm is not followed and

an individual is seen as deviant, the person is more likely to face negative reactions (Baker, 2006; Pillutla & Chen, 1999). As mentioned earlier, a member who does not conform may receive the label of deviant or abnormal and thus may not gain the acceptance of peers (Goffman, 1961).

To gain a better understanding of why organizational members are motivated to conform to norms, one should consider the reasons norms emerge, who benefits from them, and how they are manifested. Members of the social group gain an identity from the cultural group and reproduce norms to demonstrate their support for the group or to gain inclusion. When a member deviates, the act signals disagreement with the values that the norm sustains, and a desire to change. Compliance or deviance is often motivated by a group member's desire for, or perspective of, inclusion in the social group.

Rationale for this Study

Understanding motivation for enacting norms and identifying the effects they produce can help organizational leaders cultivate an environment in which members share a social identity and one that produces norms that support the organizational values and goals. By examining the kinds of norms that exist in a tire-mold manufacturing organization, this study will add to knowledge about communication processes that affect motivation and change in similar kinds of organizations. Former studies have examined the kinds of norms that emerge in organizations (Ballard & Seibold, 2003; Feldman, 1984; Gunnarson, 2000; Shneiderman, 2000; Zelizer, 2001), and identified the processes, situations, or time variables that influenced creation and reproduction of the norm (Aarts, Dijksterhuis, Custers, 2003; Azar, 2004; Ballard & Seidbold, 2003; Feldman, 1984; Morgan & Krone, 2001; Pillutla & Chen, 1999; Russell & Russell, 1992; Schein, 1996), the effects of norms (Russell & Russell, 1992), or the role of

culture in producing them (Azar, 2004; Gunnarson, 2000; Workman, 2001). Situated in a

manufacturing industry, this study differs from others because it focuses on social processes that

reflect cultural values and sustain the organizational culture. The study will support others that

examine communication processes that sustain organizations and those that examine ways in

which norms cultivate environments for change and growth.

Benefits of Norms

Norms and compliance to them provide both personal and organizational benefits.

Individuals who adapt to norms benefit by gaining a sense of belonging. When organizational

members are included socially, they are better able to gain helpful information about how the

organization works (Baker, 2006; Comer, 1991), to build trust between members (Langbein &

Jorstad, 2004; Sagie & Weisberg, 1996; Schneiderman, 2000), and to gain the cooperation of

other members (Ballard & Seibold, 2003;Workman, 2001). Organizations benefit when members

adapt to organizational norms, because social norms enable work norms (Ballard & Seibold,

2003; Russell & Russell, 1992; Zelizer, 2001). For example, by building social capital, members

become familiar with others in the organization and the roles they play (Heuser, 2005).

Organizational members who have been with the company and understand its processes mentor

newcomers. During this socialization process, members identify norms for newcomer. The

relationships formed during this process enable newcomers to adjust more quickly to the

environment because they have a better understanding of the social processes that enhance

effective work patterns (Comer, 1991).

Because organizational members rely on communication to build relationships and

manage tasks, it is valuable to analyze the communication processes that produce systems

conducive to a productive work environment. How organizations manage crises like national

disasters, corporate scandals, and product tampering influence how the public perceives the organization and its members. Organizational images marred by ineffective crisis management exemplify outcomes attributable in part to ineffective communication. Not only does communication affect the public's perception of an organization, but it also affects the satisfaction and performance of its members. Norms emerge through communication processes to satisfy both social and performance needs and rely on communication to produce and reinforce both formal (those established by organizational leaders) and informal (those that emerge and are followed) norms. When organizational members communicate effectively, whether by establishing rapport to build trust or disclosing critical information during problem solving, they attend to both social and task needs and further organizational goals. Because organizational members rely on and must manage both internal and external communication, a study about communication processes is worthwhile. Through discourse, organizational members learn what is expected and accepted. As members interact in the process of organizing, the discursive practices dictate how things get done and establish expectations for members. As members comply with expectations, they produce and reinforce patterns of communication and behavior. As members repeat these patterns, the norms become the accepted and expected ways of doing things. (Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Skerlavaj, Stemberger, Skrinjar, & Dimovski, 2007; Workman, 2001).

The discourse among organizational members produces the norms; therefore, examination of the discourse would indicate the kinds of discursive processes that create the norms. In Comer (1991), newcomers in the organization learned more about organizational processes by seeking information or being advised by peers than through the formal training provided during orientation. Communication produces the norms that influence how

organizational members relate to one another and the ways in which they set and achieve goals (Feldman, 1993; Stamper, Hafkamp, & Ades, 2000). Norms are influenced by and reflect the ideology of the organizational leaders. As members adopt this ideology, the beliefs become imbedded in the culture. Norms influence perception of self when new members enter the organization and begin to identify with its values and members. In Schepers and van de Berg (2007) newcomers formed an identity with the organization when they were engaged in knowledge sharing. The knowledge sharing enhanced creativity and employee satisfaction. When newcomers adopt the norms and identify with the culture, they demonstrate their loyalty to the organization by making personal sacrifices to support the organization.

Social Process

Because of its rhetorical nature, communication has the potential to change perspectives, practices, structure, culture, and norms. Therefore, having a better understanding of communication processes in an organization can lead to identification of processes for change, methods for aligning strategies with goals, and a better understanding of paths to goal achievement. Members create normal processes for gaining information and resources and for achieving and setting goals. Examining the communication processes on which members rely can indicate the strengths and weaknesses of communication networks and the degree to which personal and departmental goals align with the strategies of the organization.

Systems

Organizational systems are comprised of many processes created and enabled by norms. Norms are both outcomes of system processes and part of the process that brings about change. The complexity of organizational communication processes is best explained using Katz and Kahn's (1967) application of systems theory to social processes. This theory explains that parts

of the system are interdependent and work together to function as a whole unit. Each part of the

system affects the whole system. As the system interacts with its environment, it changes.

Changes are evidenced as outcomes of the system and occur in the process phase when raw

materials are modified to form and produce the end product. Because each part of the system is

interdependent on other parts of the system, isolating one component to determine which part of

the system most influences its development or stymied its growth may be difficult to determine.

However, a study that examines the processes that yield the end product and one that identifies

components that enable and constrain the system is worthwhile. Understanding what occurs

during the communication process can yield a better understanding of variables that produced

outcomes and processes that led to goal achievement. Moreover, using a systems theory

perspective accounts for the interdependence among organizational members and will be useful

when examining the degree to which members rely on cooperation from other members to get

things done. It is helpful to examine this process to understand what motivates members to

perform a behavior. This knowledge can be used to create strategies that utilize these motivators

for desired performances. Studies suggest that social norms that produce cooperation,

commitment, cohesiveness, and trust are positively related to productivity (Comer, 1991;

Heusser, 2005; Langbein & Jorstad, 2004; Russell & Russell, 1992; Sagie & Weisberg, 1996;

Shneiderman, 2000). Therefore, understanding how norms are created can be helpful in

understanding the processes that encourage quality performance. As organizational members

observe behavior and discourse that is rewarded, they are motivated to adopt that behavior

because they are conscious of the behavior and the responses to it. When actions are rewarded

and self esteem enhanced, members have higher levels of satisfaction (Quinn & Spreitzer, 2001).

Behavior that exceeds an expected norm is rewarded (Quinn & Spreitzer; Papa, Auwal, &

Singhal, 1997). Departure from expected behavior is met with disapproval and punishment in many organizational cultures (Baker, 2006; Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1997). The accepted norm guides future interactions and practices. However, the departure from the expected and that which shocks the system can benefit the organization and its members and lead to change (Skerlavaj, Stemberger, Skrinjar, & Dimovski, 2007).

Change

The process of creating and adapting to norms also influences the organization's ability to adapt to change. The inception of a new norm implies change. Circumstances that led to the creation of a norm are the impetus for change. By examining the communication processes for producing norms, an organization can identify change agents, its readiness for change, and the processes that exist for implementing that change.

Identifying the processes for the creation and reproduction of norms can lead to a better understanding of conditions that precipitate the norm, which may help us learn what hampers individual or organizational goal achievement. We can also further understand the environment in which the change occurs and conditions that may cultivate the change. Organizations that create an environment for change empower members by including them in decision making processes (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997) and creating collaborative norms (Russell & Russell, 1992). Organizational leaders can identify communication systems that enable change by examining processes for creating collaborative norms. This study is also beneficial because it examines how norms control what members in the organization do and how they do it. Members sacrifice some degree of agency in the process of adapting to a norm. By understanding which norms control processes, how they control, and who initiates this, organizational leaders can determine which normative control processes influence goal achievement. The amount of time a norm endures and

the degree to which organizational members adhere to it suggest a great deal about the strength

of that norm (Azar, 2004) and can indicate areas where the organization might encounter a great

deal of resistance to change.

A better understanding of the process of creating and reproducing norms can produce

better measurements for effective communication process**s** in the organization. Examining the

process can lead to ways of addressing potential problems. For example, if, due to lack of

communication from management, informal norms emerge that create alternative means of

acquiring information, organizational leaders can capitalize on these informal systems to enhance

communication. Understanding the process and outcomes of informal systems can enable

organizational members to identify opportunities for improvement.

Identifying norms that affect performance and flow of messages is essential and

necessary during a communication audit (Gayeski, 2000; Greenbaum, 1974; Henderson, 2005;

Rees, 2007). The communication audit would assess communication strategies, policies, and

activities which should support the organizational goals. If they do not, the strategies, policies,

and activities should be changed so that they do support those goals. Identifying norms in the

organization and ways in which they are created will also uncover strategies, policies, and

activities as norms are imbedded in each of these processes.

Pinpointing areas in which communication could be strengthened would be helpful and

could also identify individuals who are change agents, those who initiate change and gain the

compliance of other members. They are empowered by those who follow their example and can

be useful when an organization wants to implement change. If the organization meets with

resistance to change, gaining the perspective of the change agents can be helpful in identifying

reasons for resistance and ways in which the resistance could be mitigated.

Identifying those who influence the norms can be helpful when the organization wants to make changes. These people can instigate change, maintain status quo, motivate and empower members, and influence organizational culture. The caveat is that organizational members often sacrifice agency or, as Deetz (1998) suggested, they give consent, conforming to procedures and processes of the change agents (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2004; Gosset & Tompkins, 2001). They are complicit in their participation of this control for the following reasons: to fit in, to be included, to be perceived as normal, which results in cohesiveness and increased job satisfaction; to avoid negative consequences of non-conformity; to enjoy the benefits of membership; to gain promotion; and to further the goals of the organization (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003; Baker, 2006; Pillutla & Chen, 1999; Workman, 2001).

Rationale for Examining Outcomes

By identifying norms, organizational leaders can evaluate whether these norms lead to desirable outcomes. Norms enable organizational members to meet goals and satisfy needs. Informal norms further reflect the social practices that allow workers to accomplish goals. Identifying and comparing outcomes of informal to formal norms can indicate processes that require modification. If outcomes are undesirable, identifying the norms and the cultural values the norms sustain can be helpful in creating strategies to transform the culture.

Awareness of Norms and Outcomes

Many scholars have examined the processes and outcomes that norms produce and claim that norms create and sustain values like trust (Gosset & Tompkins, 2001; Langbein & Jorstad, 2004; Shneiderman, 2000), cooperation (Gosset & Tompkins, 2001; Langbein& Jorstad, 2004), cohesiveness, and commitment (Heusser, 2005). These studies highlight norm processes that influence productivity (Gosset & Tompkins; Lee, Hui, Tinsley, & Niu, 2006) and formation of

organizational culture. Using norms as benchmarks, organizational leaders measure productivity and reinforce those that enhance commitment and performance (Lee, Hui, Tinsley, & Niu; Meyer, Becker, & Vanderberghe, 2004; Russell & Russell, 1992;) but seldom consider how the norms will impact the degree to which strategies for change will be accepted. Because norms affect motivators like job satisfaction, productivity, loyalty, and trust (Meyer, Becker, & Vanderberghe; Shneiderman, 2000), examination of the norms and how they are produced are worthwhile goals.

Ideology and Empowerment

Practices of the organization affect multiple stakeholders but few participate in decision making processes (Deetz, 1998; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Quinn, Spreitzer, & Brown, 2000). Stakeholders affected by decisions organizational leaders make often have little to no input in the decision-making process. Organizational members who have no decision-making power can do little to effect change unless they deviate and challenge the ideology by producing new norms. Members who do not follow norms that produce undesirable effects for stakeholders challenge the status quo and move toward emancipation (Mumby, 1994). The kinds of norms that emerge and the ways in which they are created suggest a great deal about who has and uses power. Norms emerge from the ideology of organizational leaders (Deetz, 1990; Mumby, 1994). As these leaders produce goals, policies, procedures, and reward systems, they dictate the values of the organization. These values reflect both the personal values of the leaders as well as best practices or standards in the industry. The values permeate both internal and external messages and form the basis for the mission statement, goals, operating procedures, formal rules, and performance review processes. As members adopt the values of the organizational leaders, they

participate in reproducing the ideology. In doing so, they privilege the ideals of a few and empower the leaders.

As members identify with other organizational members and the organization itself, they become complicit in their adoption of norms and goals of the organization (Comer, 1991; Gosset & Tompkins, 2001; Lee, Hui, Tinsley, & Niu, 2006; Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1997). Papa, Auwal, and Singhal argued that when members engage in self-controlled disciplinary techniques, they lose a degree of autonomy or agency. According to McGee (1980), ideology is used strategically to influence perceptions and the outcome of decisions. He argued that ideology is a persuasive language that is repeated in the organizational discourse and controls decision making processes. McKendy's (2006) interviewees, male prisoners who had committed violent crimes, referenced themselves as victims when framing their life stories. The prisoners adopted an organizational speak based on the ideology that society more easily forgives victims who commit crimes. Assuming the ideology prevented the prisoners from taking responsibility for their crimes. The ideology is created by and serves the interests of those who rule. Weiss (1986) argued that ideology operates in organizations as an implicit control mechanism. He argued that as the size of the organization increases, responsibility is delegated to managers to reinforce the ideology of the few in power who run the organization. This ideology serves as a mechanism to gain uniformity in practices and conformity to norms. According to Weiss, organizations that implement mechanisms that affect personal values for the purpose of increasing productivity are criticized unless the value is of public interest. For example, in Weiss's study, organizations did not provide employee incentives to improve physical fitness until public concern for this issue was prominent. With the prevalence of concern for health and physical fitness, organizations could implement initiatives that encourage and reward good health habits. Perpetuating the idea

that the organization was concerned for employees' health masked the concern for productivity. While organizational leaders did not explicitly state the projected outcome of affecting change in health values, health campaigns were justified when employee absenteeism decreased due to improved health. The interests served were those profiting from employees' improved health. The ideology that permeated the thinking and affected employee behavior was created and disseminated through management and affected the structures in the organization. The ideology of the ruling few exerted social control.

This study about the ways in which norms are created and adopted in a tire-mold manufacturing organization supports literature that identifies the kinds of norms produced in organizations and addresses the differences in the norms produced in subcultures of the same organization. The study examines how norms are created and who initiates the norms, and describes the system used to reinforce the norms. This can be helpful to organizations that desire to understand how communication processes enable or constrain attitudes toward change. As I examine the discourse that creates the environment out of which the norms emerge, I will also convey how the norms contribute to forming the organizational culture. The study attempts to identify isolated components of a complex system, explain how these components form a process, identify the outcomes of the process, and discuss how these processes can be managed or changed to enable organizational members to thrive in the organization.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the inquiry of this study and will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

RQ1: In what ways are the cultural values created and sustained?

RQ2: In what ways do the norms sustain the cultural values of the organization?

RQ3: How does discourse that produces the norms influence agency?

RQ4: In what ways do norms differ in co-cultures of the same organization?

RQ5: In what ways do the power differences reinforce the cultural values?

Preview of Chapters

In Chapter Two, I elaborate on the context for this study and discuss the role of communication during the process of creating organizational culture. Each organization creates and maintains a culture that is unique to the organization. In large organizations, subcultures emerge that define a smaller group of people. Because norms both reflect the culture and emerge from it, I will discuss similarities and differences among organizations in the tire manufacturing industry. This analysis will serve as a benchmark for comparison of the norms and culture in the tire mold manufacturing organization I examined for this study.

In Chapter Three, I provide a review of literature that examines organizational communication and culture, norms, agency, and critical studies that discuss ideology and change.

I will identify the theory and methodology that guided this study in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, based on my observations and interactions with the organizational members, I describe how I collected data by providing a detailed description of the site, people, environment, and the culture.

In Chapter Six, I present my findings based on the analysis of the data using grounded theory. In Chapter Seven, I draw conclusions based on the findings, identify limitations of the study, and discuss potential for future studies that might draw from this one.

CHAPTER II: ORGANZATIONAL CULTURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a context for the discussion of norms and to identify distinctions between norms and organizational cultures. Because organizational members produce norms in the process of creating and reproducing the organizational culture (Keyton, 2005; Schein, 1996; Trethewey, 1997; Zeira & Avedisian, 1989), the norms they produce reinforce and perpetuate the values and assumptions of the organizational culture and by doing so, construct that culture (Keyton, Pettigrew, 1979; Schein). This summary of ways in which people produce culture will be useful to understand the context out of which norms are produced in order to better understand how and why members produce them in an organization.

Norms are produced in a social context (Critto, 1999; Gibbs, 1981; Keyton, 2005; Schein, 1985; Sherif, 1973) to guide the behavior of organizational members. They are shared and understood by the group of people who created them (Critto, Keyton). The context for their creation includes the environment, structure, and processes of the organizational culture (Critto; Feldman, 1984; Keyton,). Because norms are elements of the organizational culture that suggest the values of the cultural group, I digress briefly in this chapter to explain the significance of understanding the process for creating organizational culture and identify elements unique to it. In this chapter, I explain the theoretical lenses used to understand the processes in forming organizational culture and evaluate the merits of these lenses.

The site for this study is a specific organization influenced and constituted by both internal and external forces of the tire-mold manufacturing industry: stakeholders, members of the organization, and the system that created its culture and co-cultures. The norms that emerge sustain and reflect the cultural values, assumptions, and shared beliefs of the organizational members.

Organizational Culture Defined

Members of the organization produce organizational culture through discourse (Keyton, 2005; Phalen, 2000; Silverthonre, 2004) as they construct a reality shared among the members (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Morgan, 1986). As organizational members interact with one another, they develop their identity (Deetz, 1998; Schepers & van de Berg, 2007) based on ways in which other members interact with them. This individual sense-making process (Cooke & Szumal, 2000; Weick, 1983) becomes imbedded in the organizational discourse. For instance, in Dixon Shaver (1993) prison inmates created and adopted an organizational discourse of their own. To accomplish goals, inmates adapted to the language of the organizational members by learning how to speak with and to the staff in order to be perceived as displaying positive behavior. As inmates participated in and adapted to the organizational culture, they became dependent on the organization. With this dependency, they lacked the skills required to live productively on the outside. Many inmates recidivated due to dependency on these norms that were produced by the culture. While cultural norms produced dependency in Dixon Shaver's prison study, the norms produced thriving workers in Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, and Grant's (2005) study of an autonomous work environment. According to Russell & Russell (1992), the organizational culture that values autonomy encourages participation. In the organizations referenced above, institutional goals and practices influenced members' behaviors, but through social interaction, sense making enabled members to cultivate shared meaning and create the culture.

Organizational culture is not defined by a single unit or a single member but by the intertwining of the members' perceptions, interactions, values, assumptions, and rituals (Keyton, 2005; Schein, 1996). Borman (1983) argued that culture is a "sum total of ways of living,

organizing, and communing" (p. 100). Newcomers learn about and adopt the culture by observing and experiencing the interactions and practices of their social group. Gunnarson (2000) compared the cultures of three banks to determine the degree to which the culture of the regions influenced that culture of the banks and found that the regional culture influenced the organization a great deal. His findings suggest that organizational culture is influenced by and extends beyond the group of people who share the beliefs and assumptions that define their culture. A culture, with structures, beliefs, and assumptions situated in a larger society influences members' perspectives, and the larger culture influences all levels of the organization. Morgan's (1986) "cultivation" (p. 112) metaphor helps explain the process of developing a culture. He suggested that organizational members work together, combining skills, expertise, and values, to develop a fertile soil for human and organizational growth. It is a collective process in which members are dependent on the skills of others. Keyton (2005) emphasizes the fact that all members produce the culture when she suggests that no single element creates it. She argues that culture is created by the "interplay" (p. 28) of these elements with members at all levels of the organization. The melding of these elements with processes and discourse, therefore, defines the culture.

Organizational members find it difficult to identify characteristics of their culture and therefore, use elements such as artifacts or assumptions to define it (Bantz, 1993; Keyton, 2005). Artifacts are elements that reflect and define the culture and influence members' perceptions (Keyton; Sackman, 1977). Keyton defines artifacts as those tangible things that observers notice when they enter the organization. She claims that even the intangible "norms, standards, and customs" (p. 23) are artifacts that observers can identify. Borman (1983) cited technology as an artifact but emphasized that artifacts alone do not create the culture and that cultivating a culture

is dependent on communication. These artifacts are shared by the members of the culture group and serve to remind members of meanings they share. Assumptions as well as artifacts reflect and define the culture. According to Schein (1996), norms manifest these assumptions. As members adopt the norms, they sustain the assumptions of the culture. Organizations that understand their culture, and the processes for creating the culture, can more easily identify processes for change. Awareness of effective systems that are reinforced through norms can lead organizational members to replicate the process in order to retain or change parts of the culture to enhance goals. Identifying the kind of culture allows for a comparison of one organization's culture with another's to determine whether differences influence performance and goal achievement (Phalen, 2000; Silverthorne, 2004; Sorensen, 2002). Additionally, by identifying elements of the culture, the researcher or consultant can examine communication processes (Phalen) that produced the culture to better understand what contributed to desirable outcomes and a positive and productive culture (Silverthorne, 2004). It is in the process of creating and adapting to these norms, not just their outcomes or effects, that members form organizational culture.

Culture Changes

Organizational culture is fluid and changes due to members' interaction with the environment, updates of organizational practices, and personnel modifications. Zimbalist (2005) argues that as organizations produce a culture that encourages leaders to utilize human potential by including members in problem solving and decision making that culture can change. It also changes as members move in and out of the culture since cultures differ based on the members at a given time and the purpose of the organization. Morgan (1986) argued that societies in which members work together, live together, and produce work to sustain their economic unit possess a

different understanding of work processes than members of a formal organization. This argument

implies that when a group of people form a culture by identifying with shared values, personal

interests, and shared norms, their motivation for working together derives from the dependency

and responsibility they assume for their social group.

As multiple elements contribute to the composition of the culture, the systems or

processes members endorse influence expectations. Framing organizational culture as a process

derives from an interpretive lens and influences perspectives about the way in which

communication creates cultural norms.

The Lens that Determines the View

Divergent approaches to understanding organizational culture yield multiple perspectives

and methodologies. Some seek to measure the effects of culture or manipulate culture as a

variable that affects productivity (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Sorensen,

2002). Others seek to compare differences in processes (Morgan & Krone, 2001) or different

cultures within the same industry (Gunnarson, 2000). This approach has philosophical

foundations that influence the way in which the examiner views the phenomena. For this study, I

examined diverse approaches and selected the one approach that emphasized analysis of

communication processes to define the culture. Regardless of the lens used to examine the

culture, the value lies in the discovery and understanding of communication that created it.

Smircich (1983) argued that a study of culture focuses on the experiences of the social group and

the interpretations derived from observers and members.

Three Approaches to Understanding Organization Culture

In her review of the history and emergence of research about organizational culture in the

communication field, Smirchich (1983) identified three approaches helpful in understanding the

process of producing norms in an organization: the functional, the interpretive, and the critical.

The functional approach examines organizational culture as a variable or an outcome of social

processes (Bassi & McMurrer, 2007; Sorensen, 2002). Smircich (1983) argues that strategic

planning often includes cultivating a corporate culture that enables leaders to predict and control

variables that will enhance performance. Functionalists seek to identify the components of the

culture and the influence of other variables that produce it (Cooke & Szumal, 2000; Sorensen;

Zimbalist, 2005). Peters and Waterman (1982) gained support when they suggested strategies for

organizations to develop strong cultures and suggested remedies for those with weak ones. The

interpretive approach suggests that organizational culture is an ongoing process that can be

interpreted (Putnam, 1983) and that reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1967).

Functionalists seek causality (Smircich, 1983), but Schein (1996) suggested that the organization

is too complex to understand by testing just a few variables. In Wilderom, Glunk, and Maslowski

(2000), the authors critique studies that link culture with performance, arguing that the

limitations of such studies do not support the belief that the culture affects performance. The

functional approach of organization culture mirrors systems theory in that variables like

"structure, size, technology, and leadership" are interrelated and affect ways in which the

organization functions (Smircich, 1983, p. 344). This approach is helpful in identifying the

variables that influence the system. This approach further argues that culture produces variables

as outcomes unique to that culture, like stories, myths, legends and languages (Bantz, 1993). The

perspective that culture produces these things suggests that organization culture can be changed

and used as a way to advance goals and strategies (Smircich, 1983). Functionalists argue that by

changing the outcome variables, the organizational culture can be changed (Smirchich, 1983).

While the functional approach may help identify variables that contribute to the process of

creating the culture, it does not allow for interpretation of the process of sense making among organizational members to determine what organizational goals are priorities or how organizational members define themselves within the context of that culture. The interpretive approach, however does allow for those interpretations. Another limitation of the functional approach is that it assumes that structure is a variable and does not account for the social process required to create the structure (Putnam, 1983). The critical approach considers the way in which those in power influence the culture that controls organizational members (Deetz, 1998; Riordon, 2001) and urges change that empowers organizational members. Deetz supports a representation model in which the needs of all stakeholders are met. This examination of organizational communication in the tire-mold manufacturing industry uses the interpretive approach because this study examines and explains processes within the organization. While the functionalist perspective can be helpful in evaluating outcomes of norms, examining ways in which those in power influence the organizational culture is helpful as well. These approaches inform the current study, but the interpretive approach dominates.

Interpretive Approach

According to Putnam (1983), the underlying philosophy of the interpretive approach is to identify and critique shared meaning among organizational members who create the culture. An interpretive lens examines ways in which humans create meaning through discourse that produces culture. The functionalist lens which views the organization *as* a culture or a machine (Smirchich, 1983) suggested that the organization and its components are instruments used to do work. While the functional lens views the variables and outcomes, the interpretive lens identifies ways in which meanings are created and how they are produced. Sackman (1977) argued that members of the organization create their own roles and participate in acting out those roles in the

organization. An audience of organizational members continually attributes meaning to these acts and responds. The social development that occurs as a result should be viewed as a process rather than an outcome (Morgan, 1986). According to Morgan, culture develops over time and is reflected in what the cultural members know and think and how they act. Morgan illustrates the concept of forming culture in his discussion of ways in which the Japanese overcome limitations of land mass and lack of natural resources to grow rice. Members of this culture are united by their solidarity of purpose, interdependence, and faith in each other's commitment to the group. They trust that each member will tend their portion of the field. Their culture enables them to sustain the rice fields that are integral to their economic stability.

The process and outcome of cultures differ based on the purpose of the organization. Morgan (1986) claimed that members of industrial cultures are also part of specific organizational culture with skills and practices that comprise that culture. The culture reflects that attitudes and skills of its members and influences their performance. A cultural framework invites us to question the means and ends the organization serves rather than identify ways in which the components of the organization are used to enhance effectiveness (Smircich, 1983).

Deetz (1998) argued that human development occurs in work processes; therefore, leaders should consider how members' interests fit with the work processes (Deetz; Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1997). Because organizational processes influence human development and performance (Gosset & Tompkins, 2001) organizational members with more autonomy are more satisfied and more productive (Gosset & Tompkins). Lyotard (1999) suggests that those who have access to knowledge will influence the ways in which the knowledge is transmitted. In organizations, these leaders have the greatest access to knowledge and are the decision makers regarding what knowledge is transmitted, in what way, and to whom. Therefore, organizational

leaders have the potential to influence the perceptions and actions of organizational members through transmission of information. As leaders and members create meaning through information exchange, influenced by social hierarchy, they create the culture of the organization.

Subcultures

Because each social group develops its culture, the culture differs from one society to the next. Subcultures may develop within a culture and are created and sustained through social interaction. Keyton (2005) argues that organizational members form subcultures with those who do similar kinds of work. Distinctions between groups are often made based on differences in work space, length of time as an organizational member, and occupation. Like Keyton, Morgan (1986) suggested that cultures form among organizational members who share the same skills and perform similar work. He claimed that members of industrial cultures are also part of specific organizational culture comprised of skills and practices. A functionalist perspective might consider the skill as a variable. An interpretive approach would consider the ways in which the culture was formed. Some subcultures may develop through friendships or organizational practices that provide a personal benefit to the member, while others develop when members disagree on the best practices for achieving goals. (Morgan, 1986; Phalen, 200).

Rationale for Cultural Analysis

Cultural analysis is useful for the researcher as well as the organizational members and leaders because it raises awareness of that which might be taken for granted. If research seeks only to measure variables, the meanings and the context might be overlooked (Smircich, 1983). The cultural framework questions the means and ends the organization serves rather than just identifying ways in which the components of the organization are used to enhance effectiveness (Smircich, 1983; Sorensen, 2002). Scholars who have examined organizational cultures have

made discoveries that are useful to organizational leaders who seek to understand their own culture and who seek to enhance satisfaction, and performance. The examples of cultural studies that follow identify a subculture in an organization that developed their own pattern of discourse that enabled them to negotiate (Dixon Shaver, 1993), a subculture's use of rituals to break up the monotony of factory work (Roy, 1959-1960), and the method for measuring cultural attributes related to effectiveness and satisfaction (Cooke & Szumal, 2000).

Studies that Examined Organizational Culture

In Dixon Shaver's (1993) prison study, organizational cultures influenced the perceptions and behaviors of staff and inmates. The staff members produced the organizational culture that they collectively created through practices. Ideology was derived from historical practices and influenced their current practices and discourse. The organization's mission was to rehabilitate inmates through programs offered. However, they lacked programs and structures to rehabilitate and the mission became that of retaining and controlling the inmates. To accomplish personal goals, inmates adapted to the language of the organization by learning how to speak with and to the staff to be perceived as displaying positive or compliant behavior. Deetz (1998) compared the cultures of a public and private organization by degree of accountability. He argued that cultures of public and private sectors differ because of the groups that hold them accountable. He claimed that because public institutions are accountable to the public, if a public officer makes a mistake, the mistake is publicized and openly criticized. However, if a corporation makes a mistake or a decision that adversely affects any of its stakeholders, the decision makers are not held accountable to the public because they are privately funded and accountable to those who fund them. If, for example, managers in a private institution were sent to Hawaii as a reward, this would not be criticized but applauded; however, if a public institution were to do the same, it

would be considered a misuse of taxpayers' money. The evaluation of the managers of the institution marks the distinction. Managers of corporations make more decisions for the public, but accountability to the public remains limited. Keyton (2005) outlines a format for analyzing culture and suggests that rituals enhance members' identity with the organization and the culture. An illustration of Keyton's argument is found in Roy's (1959-1960) ethnography in which he participated in the organization as a factory worker. He discovered ways organizational members engaged in rituals that helped them reduce the monotony of factory work and enabled a subculture to emerge that strengthened the larger culture. The physical space and the subculture were separated from the rest of the organization with physical barriers such as walls, a single door that was always closed, a window view of a brick building, and little interaction with other organizational members. The norm that emerged to form this culture derived from the members' attempts to alter the monotony and find some satisfaction in their work. An abrupt change in one member's behavior that altered the regular and predicted interactions revealed the degree to which members depended on these rituals that enabled them to enjoy their work and time spent in the organization.

Cooke and Szumal (2000) used an instrument to measure variables that contribute to culture. Their study offers a method for measuring effectiveness of organizational norms in individuals, groups, and organizations. The instrument they used is helpful in explaining the degree to which and whether norms correlate with expectations of the culture and whether values and behavioral norms align with the mission or purpose of the organization. Cooke and Szumal defined constructive cultures as associated with behavior in which organizational members willingly interact with people. These organizational members approach tasks to meet satisfaction goals. Passive or defensive cultures have norms that encourage members to interact in such a

way as not to hamper their own viability. Members in passive or defensive cultures are more guarded and protective in their interactions. Cooke and Szumal's suggest that most organizational members identify constructive cultures as ideal.

Organizational culture is a process enabled by communication and defined by the members of the social group who create the culture and the interplay of the members with elements of that culture. Cultural elements, like artifacts, rituals, values and assumptions, reflect and define the culture. The interpretive lens allows for an examination of processes, meanings, and context of the organizational culture and is most conducive for this study. While scholars have different approaches for examining culture, a study about processes and one that examines norms should also locate phenomena examined within the organizational culture out of which it emerged. Therefore, consideration of ways in which the norms operate within a culture is essential. The norms that produce and sustain the organizational culture become an integral part of it. Communication processes enable and constitute the culture and its norms. The next chapter will identify studies about norms that help explain why organizational members are motivated to sustain the norms of the culture and identify ways to categorize them.

CHAPTER III: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature about how norms develop and why members conform to them. This review draws from studies about norms by anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, business and communication scholars who define norms (Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Feldman, 1993; Kolstad, 2007), explain processes for producing them (Azar, 2004; Baker, 2006; Comer, 1991), identify reasons for conformity (Aarts, Dijksterhuis, & Custers, 2003; Azar; Workman, 2001), compare organizational norms in different cultures (Ballard & Seibold, 2003; Gunnarson, 2000; Pool, Schwegler, Theodore, & Fuchs, 2007), and demonstrate the effects of norms on behavioral and organizational change (Baker, 2006; Kuhn & Poole, 2000; Morgan & Krone, 2001; Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1997). The interest in norms across disciplines suggests the degree to which social scientists seek to understand, explain, and predict variables and processes that influence human behavior. These diverse perspectives provide a deeper understanding of ways social groups construct and define norms.

The Social Process

The symbol for *norms* is used synonymously for *rules, guidelines, policies, ways of doing things, customs,* or *laws*. Connotations for the synonym dictate the degree of adherence to expectations by those who use it. The definition or meaning, however, lies not within the symbol but within the people who create and use it. Literature that describes social processes used to create norms provides a definition of norms for the context of this study. Meanings for symbols are shared among the people using them and reflect a person's sense of self. Individuals gain a sense of who they are through social processes and attributes and characteristics they develop are influenced greatly by members of their culture (Goffman, 1963; Morgan, 1986; Pool, Schwegler, Theodore, & Fuchs, 2007; Sherif, 1973). It is during this social process of developing self that

we also adopt and fulfill the expectations of that social group (Sherif). Bantz (1993) suggested that members observe and adopt the behavioral expectations of the group and participate in creating shared behavior (Conway & Schaller, 2007; Schein, 1996; Workman, 2001). Because the social group has an influence on how members perceive self (Workman), members of the group not only define expectations of those norms, but monitor behavior based on them (Pool, Schwegler, Theodore, & Fuchs). Membership or inclusion is granted to those who identify and accept the norms (Goffman; Workman, 2001). Because norms are produced in a social context to sustain the culture, members follow processes that become imbedded in the culture and reinforce these norms (Keyton, 2005; Kolstad, 2007). The kinds of norms that emerge from those processes reflect members' cultural values and perspectives (Conway & Schaller, 2007; Schein, 1996). As members of a social group gain a sense of self from other members and collectively construct and monitor expectations for the group, they define the norm (Critto, 1999).

Norms must be consistently enacted and receive consistent responses. When a group of people collectively decide to implement a norm and repeat it consistently, the behavior becomes a norm (Critto, 1999). As Critto argued, it is the consistency of behavior that forms the social norm when people rely on consistent application of these norms to be productive and thus contribute to their own fulfillment and that of others (Critto). The social process required to become aware of the norm and its underlying beliefs is the process that forms the social norm. The consistent pattern of a behavior enacted and received produces the expectation of normal behavior (Critto; Goffman, 1971; Kolstad, 2007). The process requires communication among members because they collectively create the norms. Kolstad suggests that the structure of the interaction influences the norms that emerge. Thus, the production of norms is a process because it is shared. While managers may disseminate directives and policies, members are more likely to

adhere to and embrace the norms of the social group (Russell & Russell, 1992; Stamper, Hafkamp, & Ades, 2000). When members enact and respond to the norms with a degree of consistency, the norms serve as guidelines and produce expectations of what is believed to be acceptable in a specific context (Aarts, Dijksterhuis, & Custers, 2003; Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Gibbs, 1981; Pillutla & Chen, 1999;). Norms then become expectations because they are performed with "uniformit[y]" and "regularit[y]" (Gibbs, p. 2).

Members' enactments. Organizational members produce norms through performances, which are enacted for an audience of peers within the culture. If the performance meets the expectations of the audience, the actor's performance receives applause (a positive response) which affirms that the performance was acceptable. Members of a social group enact behavioral patterns that become *expected* and *accepted* by the social group (Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Feldman, 1993; Gibbs, 1981; Workman, 2001). Therefore, social expectations and social acceptance of behavior define the norms. In Workman, fraternity brothers expected members to engage in drinking rituals. The brothers rewarded members who met the expectations and reinforced the norm through social acceptance. The social group reinforced the expected and accepted norms by enacting them consistently (Kolstad, 2007). Pool, Schwegler, Theodore, and Fuchs (2007) suggest that pain tolerance is a social expectation for males and most males comply with this norm. Males would not express pain in order to gain social acceptance. Although members may not agree with or accept a norm, like that of tipping (Azar, 2004), individuals may comply to gain the benefits of inclusion, acceptance, and identification within the social group or to avoid punishment brought about by the deviation (Azar; Birenbaum, & Sagarin). Despite the fact that organizational members are often unaware that norms exist, members continue to follow and reproduce them (Feldman, 1993) because the norms are guidelines that instruct members

about which behaviors to embrace or which to avoid (Birenbaum & Sagarin; Gibbs; Kolstad).

Norms that inform members about what they should not do are "proscriptive" norms (Birenaum

& Sagarin, p. 5) while norms that inform members about acceptable ways to perform and when

followed bring approval are "prescriptive" norms (Birenbaum & Sagarin, p. 5). Norms are,

therefore, defined by the expectations of the group and the acceptance of the behavior.

    Members' responses. Aarts and Dijsksterhuis (2003), Goffman (1971), and Morgan and

Krone (2001) defined norms in terms of responses to them and claimed that responses of

acceptance are related to the audience and the situation. Goffman classified typical responses as

"normal appearances," "typical appearances," and "proper appearances" (p. 240). He contended

that "normal appearances" are those that the individual expects to occur; "typical appearances"

are occurrences in one's "environment" that do not cause concern or threaten; and "proper

appearances" occur when improper behavior is observed but does not cause alarm (p. 240). He

cited an example of attendants at hospitals for mental patients who were not alarmed by the

behavior of the patients because in that setting the behavior was expected of the patients. These

would be "normal appearances" that receive no alarmed reaction because the behavior is

expected in that context even though the behavior would not be normal in a different setting (p.

240). Expectations are dependent on the context and the audience (Aarts & Dijksterhuis; Aarts,

Dijksterhuis, & Custers, 2003; Baker, 2006; Pillutla & Chen, 1999). In Morgan and Krone

(2001), health care professionals employed formal norms that distanced them from their patients.

When the health care professionals deviated by being friendly and more personal with patients,

patients indicated greater satisfaction due to the closeness they felt with their caregiver. When

health professionals followed traditional norms, their audience did not respond as favorably.

Norms require a response, and the response must be consistent with the way in which others

respond to it. Despite the fact that the behavior is observed to be consistent and accepted by many of the group members, as Gibbs (1981) argued, it is difficult to define norms because the percentage of agreement and consistency applied differs among the observers. Conway & Schaller (2007) suggest that culture emerges as members share consistent patterns of norms and rituals and imply that the strength of the norm is influenced by the correlation to held beliefs and the degree to which others in the culture identify with the cultural values. The number of observers accepting the behavior does not determine whether the norm is accepted. When members agree on accepted behavior, informal norms are easy to enforce because group members invoke an immediate reaction (Azar, 2004; Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Goffman, 1963; Heuser, 2005). Members communicate approval or acceptance of behavior with positive responses that might include mirroring the behavior (Teraji, 2007) or affirming it with verbal or nonverbal praise (Azar; Feldman, 1993). Expectations for behavior are communicated by members' responses, and what is accepted may vary due to the context or the audience.

Responses to deviance. When members fail to conform consistently to the behavioral patterns that have become accepted and expected, the norms will erode (Azar, 2004; Pillutla & Chen, 1999). The degree to which one deviates from the norm influences the ways in which members respond to the deviant. Those who deviate from the norms may be perceived as *rule breakers* or *abnormal* and can be stigmatized. (Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976; Foucault, 1965; Goffman, 1963). The social group stipulates the degree of deviance that will be accepted and dictates the response for deviance (Goffman, 1963; Goffman, 1959; Sherif, 1973; Stamper, Hafkamp, Ades, 2000). If members of the social group do not react with alarm, the behavior is considered *normal* for that group or at least for that individual (Goffman, 1963). Infractions of informal norms are not unlike the responses to conformity in that the response to norms depends

on both the audience who observes them and the context. Infractions of informal norms are met with disapproval, rejection, or nonacceptance of the individual (Birenbaum & Sagarin; Foucault; Goffman, 1963). Some cultures, however, may be more inclined to forgive violations of norms executed by those with higher status (Feldman, 1993; Goffman, 1963). Because consistent patterns create expectations, members of a social group who observe a member deviating once will expect deviance again. Goffman (1971) suggested that individuals come to expect certain behaviors and those that deviate in one area are likely to deviate in other areas. Some may perceive the deviation as a signal that the person may also exhibit other behaviors that are not expected. Even minor discrepancies in behavior can alarm members. Therefore, they expect consistently normal behavior, and when a member deviates from that behavior, others observing the deviance perceive it as a warning that the individual might deviate in other ways. When membership or inclusion is dependent on compliance with the norms, deviant members will receive negative responses that may include directives regarding ways to change the behavior, limiting opportunities for roles that lead to promotion or exclusion from the social group (Azar; Berthon, Pitt, Ewing, & Bakkeland 2003; Goffman; Feldman; Pool, Schwedgler, Theodore, & Fuchs, 2007).

Reasons Why People Conform to Norms

The degree to which individuals deviate from the norm may depend upon the social consequences for deviation or the benefits for compliance. While deviation may promise freedom from social control, Azar (2004) argued that people comply to norms because they will gain some benefit. The benefits of compliance may include social inclusion, reduction of uncertainty, and enhanced self-esteem. According to Feldman (1993) norms are enforced because people want to gain an advantage in a social setting by minimizing the potential for

failure. When group members follow norms, the level of uncertainty diminishes. Individuals are also motivated by and conform to norms to manage the impressions others have of them (Goffman, 1959). Adhering to the norms enables them to gain acceptance into the social group, to distinguish themselves, or to avoid negative reactions and embarrassment (Azar; Goffman, 1959; 1963; Pool, Schwegler, Theodore & Fuchs, 2007). Because of the need for acceptance, people try to maintain the illusion that they are normal by allowing others to see only that behavior which is intended for observation, carefully scripted, but only a partial disclosure of their full identity (Goffman, 1959). Goffman referred to this screening process of self-presentation as *front stage behavior*. He suggested that individuals display a different self when they are aware that others are observing their performance. People are less concerned about acceptance when presenting backstage behavior where a different behavior emerges, one that may not necessarily conform to others' expectations of normal behavior. Individuals presenting front stage behavior gain some personal benefit. Azar's study suggests that people continue the norm of tipping as long as the tipper perceives that they benefit from doing so. If conforming to the norm supplies no benefit, then the norm will eventually erode. However, even when conforming to the norm will not positively affect future interaction or excellent service, as with tipping, if the individual gains some benefit, the norm will not erode because the benefits outweigh the costs. Thus, despite the cost, people will comply with the social norm of tipping (Azar). Feldman (1984) argued that one reason group members conform to norms is that they want to distinguish themselves from other groups and protect their membership.

Members also desire the predictability that conformity to norms brings (Baker, 2006; Heuser, 2005; Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1997). Group members also conform to norms in order to avoid embarrassment and to preserve their image (Pool, Schwegler, Theodore & Fuchs, 2007).

Organizational members who receive little feedback or vague evaluations may comply with norms to retain social support and to be perceived as team players (Birenbaum & Sagarin, 1976). People seek acceptance through group membership; therefore, membership and the sense of belonging that it brings are the motivation for adherence to the norm (Birenbaum & Sagarin; Schepers & Van den Berg, 2007). At times the structure or physical setting leaves no other choice than to conform to the norm (Baker; Birenbaum & Sagarin). The 50 million shoppers with disabilities in Baker must conform to the norms of retailers who do not recognize and service the needs of those with a disability. Birenbaum & Sagarin cited an example of people who must conform to a norm when waiting for a seat in a restaurant. If the restaurant is not self service, patrons will not select the tray, utensils, and food and carry to their table. There will be no counter available for that. People are motivated to comply with norms to gain some social benefit, to avoid embarrassment and preserve their image, or because they have not other choice.

Reasons People Deviate

Non-responsiveness to a norm is normal if the members deviate because they do not recognize the norm. Azar (2004) suggests that sometimes norms are vague and unrecognizable; therefore, they may erode. Azar argues that everyone adheres to the norm in a slightly different way. The degree to which deviation occurs suggests that the norm may be vague. The norm is considered to be weak if the behavior is not performed with consistency among members. Birenbaum and Sagarin (1976) argued that reactions to criminal acts and common customs are invoked by members of a group. Members collectively agree on what behaviors are accepted but may disagree on how to deter the behavior.

Effects of Norms

Because norms are produced and sustained by a cultural group, members who reinforce the norms exert a degree of social control. In Dixon Shaver (1993), the organizational leaders created and reinforced the expectation that inmates should not collaborate. Inmates adapted their behavior to meet the expectations or implicit norms established by the organizational leaders. For example, inmates' requests for information were repeatedly denied, so they adapted to the expected behavior that prohibited asking for information. Inmates allowed newcomers to experience and learn about the culture on their own rather than offering advice on how it operated. One aspect of the culture that permeated practices was derived from informal rules or implicit norms that forbade sharing, trading, or helping other inmates. Some heeded the rules while others ignored them but did so secretly. According to Birenbaum and Sagarin (1976) people are constantly breaking rules to avoid control or changing them to avoid being perceived as deviant. The observer's perception of and response to the deviance as well as the circumstances and context determine whether the enactment of the behavior is acceptable. The observer may be in a position to affirm or diminish the norm. While a deviant may gain some power by deviating from the norm, a responder or group of respondents may punish the deviance and remove the deviant's power. In doing so, the respondents gained power. Goffman (1971) argued that teachers and police officers create social control when they address deviations from normal behavior in order to remove a potential threat.

Classifications of Organizational Norms

Because this study seeks to uncover the kinds of norms that exist in a manufacturing organization, I will briefly review studies that identify kinds of norms in organizations, the way they are produced, and the motivation for producing them. This review highlights distancing norms in health organizations, socialization norms for newcomers, conflicting norms between

management and subordinates in a correctional facility, forms of address norms, use of time

norms, and cultural norms in a manufacturing organization.

In organizations within the United States, working hard, being a team player, achieving

excellence, and doing whatever is needed to get the job done are qualities valued by

organizational leaders and members (Bassi & McMurrer, 2007; Heuser, 2005; Rees, 2007).

These personal attributes have become expectations for organizational members (Matthews &

Harrington, 2000; Peters & Waterman, 1982). A distinction that affects the enactment and

response to the norm is the audience or context. Because they are enacted by a social group, the

norms may differ due to the situation or the people interacting. In Morgan and Krone (2001),

norms changed based on the audience and context when health professionals who were co-

workers joked with each other and used less professional demeanor than they did with patients.

Co-workers did not employ distancing norms with each other because the norms that guided the

interactions between care giver and care recipient differed from those in interactions between

and among health care workers (Morgan & Krone).

Distancing norms. Health care workers are socialized to restrain from showing emotion

during a caregiver encounter and rely on scripts and routines to maintain distancing norms

(Morgan & Krone, 2001). When workers deviated from the distance norm and improvised by

expressing emotion, their identity was reconstructed and created change in patient responses.

When nurses maintained an authoritarian demeanor, care recipients asked fewer questions.

According to Morgan and Krone, the rationale for controlling emotions through distancing

norms was to enable the health professional to remain objective and avoid compromising the

care due to an emotional attachment.

Time norms. Time orientation is a norm that is deeply imbedded in the culture and may create conflict for a person when interacting with a social group that constructs the norm differently. Ballard and Seibold (2003) discuss ways in which organizational members produce norms that reflect and are influenced by time. The authors argue that organizational members co-create time norms by the way they structure communication when collaborating on tasks. Because time is not a renewable resource, organizational members value and use time differently. The task and the communication required order the time norms. For example, in manufacturing organizations, production goals dictate how time is used and the type of communication required. Time norms affect feedback, production cycles, and the kinds of technology used to complete tasks and to communicate. Communication is limited or furthered by time (Ballard & Seibold). According to Zelizer (2001), communities use similar time patterns to organize themselves and depend on the cooperation of other members to use the same patterns. Zelizer notes that time norms benefit the social group because they allow members to measure and classify things and identify relationships between phenomena. Bantz (1993) argued that members infer roles from the temporal means through which the interaction occurs. He also indicated that pace of speaking is an indicator of an organizational member's status. Often a subordinate will use a rapid pace to avoid consuming a supervisor's time. How long pauses last during turn taking and who makes longer pauses can indicate status. Time norms may differ for subcultures within the same culture due to the nature of the work. Conflict may exist between the two cultures due to different time perspectives. For example, according to Ballard and Seibold scientists work in "development time" while managers work in "planning times" (p. 407). Managers who have fixed deadlines to meet demands for production might pressure scientists who require extended deadlines to ensure quality and safety. The scientist could sacrifice quality

and safety to meet the manager's time demands, or management sacrifice profits to ensure proper development time.

Innovative norms. Russell and Russell (1992) surveyed CEOs and managers to examine perceptions toward innovation. They found a significant relationship between innovative norms and entrepreneurial strategies. They also found relationships between these innovative norms and decentralization. Russell & Russell defined innovative norms as norms that exist when organizational members are receptive to change. To produce innovative norms, organizational leaders must manage the context and create structures that cultivate innovation.

Newcomer norms. Newcomers to an organization are socialized and trained more often by peers than by supervisors. Comer (1991) examined types of information and channels by which newcomers actively received this information. One newcomer norm was that peers assist newcomers by volunteering the way things work in the organization, expectations about how to complete their work, and details on how the social process and hierarchy work. Newcomers with more experience were less interested in technical information and more interested in learning about organizational processes.

Technology norms. Use of technology forces us to develop and adapt quickly to new norms. We must alter social norms and comply with those norms unique to that channel in that space. To reduce uncertainty, Shneiderman (2000) suggested that members build trust on-line by making predictions about future encounters based on past history. To enhance trust, Shneiderman recommends that users disclose past history, provide references, gain certification from those who can legitimize and protect privacy, and provide easy access to policies. Shneiderman suggests that the structure of a website can instill trust in the user. It is also important to ensure

that users are aware of their responsibilities. To build trust, the web site creator can specify

guarantees.

Forms of address norms. Bantz (1993) argued that we can identify norms through

inference by examining an individual's vocabulary. He cites an example of organizations in

which titles are used for superiors. The use of titles for higher ranks or superiors suggests a

means for interpreting roles through language. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) reminded

ethnographers that forms of address norms can be an indicator of status. For example, exchanges

in which first names are used imply equal status while use of titles implies less familiarity

between the individuals, possibly due to the difference in status.

Discourse norms. According to Gunnarson (2000), discourse in banks is necessary to

build good relations. Through this discourse that leads to building relationships, organizational

leaders develop trust and demonstrate their shared values. Discourse constructs organizations by

building its history, creating vision, setting goals and policies, building an image, and

establishing relations with external public. In Gunnarson's study, he focused on the uniqueness

of each bank. To identify different approaches to advertising, he compared the culture and values

of each organization. The three banks studied were the Deutsche Bank, Barclays Bank, and

Handelsbanken. In the Deutsche Bank, the internal structure was more hierarchical than at

Handelsbanken, and advertising was considered more important. At Barclays Bank the structure

had many levels and used top-down communication. Advertising was produced on site, and

standardized procedures were emphasized. Barclays Bank used standardized procedures and

forms to communicate messages that included standard formats and standard texts. Barclays

utilized both local and national nonprint media channels to advertise and posters and brochures

to sell their products. Gunnarson argued that the images display the organization's culture of

both internal members and the external public. Image development was a new entity and focus for the banks, and developing internal and public image was important. This study illustrates that discursive norms used in advertising bank services were influenced by the different cultures. Gunnarson argued that the discourse influences organizations and is influenced by multiple cultures. He found that the perceived value of advertising differed from bank to bank and that advertising practices as well as discourse were influenced by the national and regional cultures.

Norms that Sustain Values

Before norm production processes can be analyzed, values that underlie and influence the organization's culture should be considered. Because the norms reflect and reinforce the cultural values, identifying those values will shed light on both why norms emerged and people conform to them. To answer my own question about why the organizational members with whom I worked continued to volunteer their time and their resources, I needed to look no further than the values that were imbedded in the organizational culture. These were stated explicitly in the mission statement, visible in the practices and processes, and reinforced by members through discursive acts. Not only do norms reinforce the organizational culture's values, but according to Ballard and Seibold, (2003), norms can reflect what members value. For example, time norms or the ways in which organizational members use time reflect how that culture values and uses time. An organizational member might pencil in a block of time for a meeting with an individual with the understanding that it might be re-scheduled. The flexibility that enables organizational members to meet task demands also constrains by producing a degree of uncertainty and less predictability. Inflexibility can be constraining when members are not able to restructure their tasks or are unable to adapt and make changes. If members are not flexible in making changes in ways they structure their time, they may be resistant to organizational change.

How Norms Facilitate Change

The nature of a norm is to bring organizational behavior into conformity, but the creation of a norm is born out of deviance (Pool, Schwegler, Theodore, & Fuchs, 2007). When a member or a group deviates from the accepted and expected practices, change occurs. This is useful information to organizations assessing their readiness for change. If members create new ways of doing things and that kind of environment is cultivated in the organization, readiness for change is higher and resistance to change is less likely. Understanding norms may also help those who want to initiate change (Bantz, 1993). When the membership of the social group changes, the socially constructed (Berger & Luckman, 1967) norms are likely to change also (Feldman, 1995; Kolstad, 2007). Change, is therefore, an output and part of the perpetual process of the newly developed norms (Azar, 2004; Feldman; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997) due to changes in membership, structure (Sagie & Weisberg, 1996; Schneiderman, 2000), and situation (Aarts, Dijksterhuis, & Custers, 2003; Pillutla & Chen, 1999; Workman, 2001) and indicates organizational members' readiness for change (Quinn & Spreitzer). Organizational leaders value the ability to influence members' productivity and performance by predicting and influencing variables that lead to conformity of norms (Baker, 2006; Kolstad, 2007; Morley & Shockley-Zalabak, 1997). Much of the literature about norms that focuses on effects yields promising methods for predicting processes that lead to desirable outcomes (Azar; Kolstad). Understanding the effects of norms is helpful for organizational leaders, consultants, or researchers who may want to alter variables that produce more favorable outcomes. Schein (1996) argued that organizations change as they learn and that learning influences the way they change. Organizational norms that encourage educational advancement produce an environment for change. An organization in which innovation is valued is one that expects and anticipates

change. Not only does learning promote change within an organization, but changes occur with the addition or withdrawal of members as the dynamics among the group members change. Keyton (2005) argues that culture is constantly changing as members move in and out of it and interact with internal members and those outside the culture. As an open system, one that interacts with the environment, change is inevitable for organizations (Katz & Khan, 1967). As members interact with one another, creating and reinforcing communication patterns and processes for problem solving, decision making, and organizing work, the system produces change. Norms serve as both the input that feeds the system and the output, or that which the system produces as a result of the change. Therefore, norms help create change in organizational systems.

In my analysis that follows in chapter 5, I will examine ways in which organizational members of a tire-mold manufacturing organization identify norms and their reasons for conforming to them. I will identify the expected and accepted practices that the cultural group created and the social practices that reinforced them. I will draw from information about the kinds of norms as I classify these that are unique to this organization and identify organizational values the norms sustain. I will also consider the degree to which the creation and adoption of norms influence change in the organization. In the chapter that follows, I will discuss methods and theories that guided data gathering and analysis and provide a rationale for these methods.

CHAPTER IV: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The stories, daily routines, and values commonly shared within an organization reveal a great deal about the organization, its members, and the way systems operate. A cultural analysis of organizational norms requires a method that does not impose the researcher's preconceived ideas but allows for synthesizing, comparing, and interpreting members' experiences to explain ways of doing things in this organization. This chapter explains the rationale for using qualitative methods that include narratives and ethnography as a logical method for collecting and analyzing data.

Qualitative Methods

A cultural study that examines motivations and processes for sustaining cultural norms compels a method that explains phenomena based on *near experience* and *thick description* (Geertz, 1973). Near experiences are those which the researcher examines at a close distance. As researchers observe experiences first hand in the context in which they occurred, their interpretation of the data is based on more than the number of times an event occurs or the amount of communication to effect change. As the researcher uses triangulated methods to experience and understand the phenomena, the description or interpretation becomes richer, or thick. Thick description leads to verifiable support for the claims that researcher makes. This inquiry requires qualitative methods that enable the researcher to gain knowledge of the culture by examining the processes and discourse that create the culture.

Qualitative methods enable the researcher to examine a broader picture of phenomena under observation. The researcher can examine both the variables that influenced an outcome and the processes that changed the variables. Morgan and Smircich (1980) defined the extremes of qualitative and quantitative approaches and argued that the use of either is dependent on the

social phenomena under examination. Because the social phenomena to be examined in this case study include processes and discourse that are fluid, controlling for intervening variables, as a quantitative study requires, would interfere with natural processes. Furthermore, qualitative methods are less restricted by the researcher's agenda.

One of the most compelling reasons for using qualitative methods in this study is that they provide broader descriptions of the phenomena. Dyer and Wilkins (1991) argued that exploring the discourse and environment of individuals provides a "rich description of the social scene" (p. 615). Qualitative data provide descriptions that quantitative data may not provide. For example, in Mitroff and Kilmann (1976), leaders with similar personality types identified similar characteristics about their ideal organization. Based on the Myers-Briggs assessment, the leaders were categorized into groups with those who had similar personality types. Participants who wrote narratives about the perfect organization revealed that each group expressed different ideals for the organization, and those ideals reflected their own personality type. The stories that each leader told revealed information about the way they made decisions and preferred others to make them. These stories revealed something about the leaders' psychological processes. Qualitative methods yielded these findings that quantitative measures might have missed. Morgan and Smircich argued that quantitative methods are based on scientific approaches and allow for examination of phenomena within a context and without isolation. Empirical methods emphasize objectivity and therefore create distance between the researcher and the subjects (Weick, 1983). Weick argued that empirical studies evaluate behavior from a distance and cannot adequately account for or explain the subject's meaning. Quantitative methods begin with a claim or hypothesis and then research to find evidence that supports or negates the claim (Warren & Karner, 2005). Qualitative methods seek understanding and answers to questions

found in the data. Because the questions asked require an understanding of the reasons for the behavior, process, and the environment rather than a measurement that would indicate cause and effect or prevalence of phenomena, the most pragmatic method to use in this case study is a qualitative method.

Qualitative methods are best used when a broader description of the phenomenon is needed. Researchers benefit from using qualitative methods because the descriptions provide context, the data are not restricted by a narrow research agenda, and they add to the knowledge that cannot be obtained through quantitative methods. Qualitative methods create knowledge about perceptions, interactions, and environment.

Using multiple qualitative methods to gain an understanding of the meanings of symbols used among organizational members allows for thick description (Geertz, 1973) and derives from the individuals who create and sustain the culture. This thick description strengthens the conclusions that the researchers draw. While the researcher analyzes the data and provides a description based on observations, thick description uses the organizational member's voice and interpretations. Keyton (2005) argues that cultural analysis should integrate both "insider and outsider perspectives" (p. 163).

In this case study, the data collected were derived both from narratives of the organizational members and my ethnography to gain a deeper understanding of the culture and meanings for the norms. These methods are detailed below, along with an explanation of the methodology that guided the inquiry and analysis.

Narratives

Narratives are the stories that organizational members tell about how they participate in the culture. They reveal a great deal about perspectives, motivations, and ways in which

members participate in producing and re-producing the cultural norms. In the present study, a demographic questionnaire yielded information about the organizational members and helped write the narrative. Interviews also gave voice to one third of the organization's members and reflected their goals, perspectives, and values.

Organizational members' narratives magnify ways in which normal is constructed through social interactions, discursive practices, and the organizational culture. Bazerman (1994) argued that people use language to construct social realties. Pratt (2001) compared the language of winning sports teams to that of successful organizations. The metaphors used in the stories were ones that reflected constructive, positive, and powerful actions. He argued that winning organizations not only use powerful language in their stories, but also reflect strength in their actions. They use metaphors to construct a collective reality. The metaphors help explain, reflect, and make sense of the organizational culture.

Narratives are logical arguments that lead to discovering a reality and help individuals make sense out of life events (Czarniawska, 1999; Fisher, 1968; Stuhmiller, 2001). Fisher suggested that through narratives we can better understand others and build on the rationality of their narratives by understanding their arguments. Characteristic of the narrative and that which will benefit this study is that the narrative accounts for arguments and reasons, and recounts or reviews historical and biographical information (Fisher). Keyton (2005) argued that interviews are helpful in gathering information to help identify cultural characteristics and interpret their meaning.

Researchers have used narratives to explain such phenomena as how individuals cope and seek help during the aftershock of an earthquake (Stuhmiller, 2001); why sharing on an electronic bulletin board about pregnancy concerns led to empowerment (Arnold, 2003); and

how narratives can be used to help examine organizational tensions and identify solutions to facilitate the process of organizational development (Brown & Kreps, 1993).

Narratives often create strategies for organizational members. (Kahane & Reitter, 2002). As organizational leaders repeat stories embedded with cultural values, they reinforce certain actions that are prized. These stories provide a guide for interaction that is accepted and behavior that is normal. As members repeat the narratives and act on their meaning, the narrative strategically guides the interactions of the organizational members within and outside of the organization.

Narrative theory helps examine and explain ways in which organizational members construct normal. According to Fisher (1968), the narrator relays truth and helps make sense of the world (Stuhmiller, 2001). Barnett (2005) found that newspaper writers used narratives to frame the way the public perceived Andrea Yates as a mother who had murdered her children. Barnett found that writers framed Yates as a "traitor" to her family and society. Barnett also discovered a "quest" theme in the articles she reviewed. Based on the articles she reviewed, the public sought a punishment for Yates' crime. Through narrative analysis Barnett found that the journalists' construction of *normal* was consistent with a socially held view that motherhood is expected of women. Their narratives not only reflected this cultural view, but also reinforced it.

The interviewee's awareness of recording devices may influence their communication initially. According to Eco (1990), however, the effects are only temporary. As the interviewee engages in the interview process, recording devices become less of a concern and they resume normal patterns of speech.

In this case study, narratives will reveal what organizational members consider to be normal. Because information was gathered from multiple sources and members, data will reflect the organizational culture's values and ways in which they are reinforced through narratives.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a form of data collection that relies on the researcher's observations. The researcher observes the daily routines of the culture that occur with consistency, recording accounts of events, behaviors, and discourse (Wolcott, 2001; Van Maanen, 1988). Geertz (1973) claimed that the ethnographer creates perspectives through the constructions of those being observed. In Moscardino, Axia, Scrimin, and Capello (2007), the researchers relied on observations as well as interviews to make sense of the family members' experiences with terrorist attacks on their community. The ethnographer observes members of a culture in a natural context, rather than in a programmed, laboratory setting. As a participant in the culture, the ethnographer gains insights into the culture regarding ways of doing things and reasons for doing things, as well as individuals' perceptions about processes. Ethnography allows the researcher to examine the culture by identifying the practices, rituals, routines, and discourse through observation (Keyton, 2005). Becoming a member of the culture enables researchers to immerse themselves in those same activities and behaviors so that the ethnographer can decipher the meaning these things have for the culture.

The ethnographer is also able to discover discrepancies in patterns of behavior that appear consistently with some members of the culture but not with others. When researchers use observation and interviews, they find more by examining differences between what is said and done. Goodall (2000) claimed this to be one of the strengths of ethnography because it leads to discovery of the unspoken and uncovers more of the text. Van Mannen (1979), who used

ethnography in his study that examined the culture of law enforcement officers, argued that

ethnographers have the opportunity to uncover the difference between what subjects *say* and

what they *do*.

Ethnography also emphasizes the influence of the location of the researcher on ways in

which data are interpreted. As researchers interact with the texts, their perceptions influence the

way they see things. The stance of the interpreter is influenced by that individual's perceptions

(Goodall, 2000). Two researchers could attempt to record and re-present the same scene, and the

reports would differ due to the researchers' perceptions which influence the inferences they

draw. The researcher interprets what is said and observed by considering the context, history,

conflicts, environment, and economical forces that affect both the interpreter's point of view and

the conditions out of which the discourse emerged (Goodall). In fact, Sanday (1979) claimed that

a condition for ethnographers should be that they observe a culture different from their own.

Outsiders can more easily identify differences in a culture not their own. Using ethnography in

this study will enable the researcher to examine her perceptions of the organizational culture and

the environment in which the narratives emerged.

Organizational members collectively reproduce assumptions about the way things are in

the organization. These taken-for-granted assumptions and ways of doing things lead

organizational members to engage in organizational speak as in Dixon Shaver's (1993) and

McKendy's (2006) prison research. When asking other questions or clarifying information, the

researcher may become aware of false information during the interview. Strauss and Corbin

(1998) argued that a limitation of both qualitative and quantitative research methods is that both

require an actor to describe. That description reflects the author's point of view. To account for

the interviewer's perspective, Wolcott (2001) warned researchers to allow the interviewee to

speak and, when reporting their narratives, to acknowledge commentary as the researcher's interpretation.

Van Mannen (1979) identified two kinds of concepts that emerge when analyzing observations: first-order and second-order. First-order concepts are those that describe the properties in the data. Second-order concepts are the theories researchers form as they examine and synthesize the data. He argued that first-order data yield operational data (the ethnographer's observation of conversations and activities) and presentational data (that which the informant tries to portray).

In order to draw valid conclusions, the researcher seeks valid information. However, according to Van Mannen (1979), the informants may provide false information because they want to look good, they may be misinformed, or they may not know why they do what they do. It is the researcher's job to identify these inconsistencies and distinguish between operational and presentational data or determine what is fact or fiction. Because informants often falsify information, the researcher must determine whether the informant speaks the truth. Identifying falsification is a significant finding.

Van Mannen (1979) identified types of fiction that may be uncovered by the perceptive researcher. Flaws that the informant indirectly discloses about her/himself that suggest character defects are "hidden failings" (p. 546). Blatant character defects the informant reveals are those which openly violate social norms and are known as "rotten apples" (p. 546). "Collective secrets" are controversial practices certain members engage in that are commonly known to insiders but not openly discussed (p. 545).

An output of the ethnography is the researcher's sense making and interpretation of patterns among the members of the culture. They draw conclusions that distinguish between

things people normally do and their deviations. The ethnographer becomes aware of these discrepancies and, based on other observations, identifies them and attempts to make sense of them. The ethnographer sees phenomena that members of the culture may not see and, therefore, have no use for discussing, because for them, they do not exist. According to Feldman (1995) the norms are part of the culture members take for granted and do not discuss. Ethnographers study processes people take for granted or the norms a culture produces. They become aware that a norm exists when someone asks a member of the culture who deviates from the norm to account for the deviation (Feldman, 1995).

Grounded Theory

This case study relied on the voices of the organizational members and the interpretations of the researcher who observed and experienced the culture. Unlike many studies that begin with an idea of why a phenomenon occurs, guided by a theory that explains the communication, this study relied on the data to generate the theory. In this study, grounded theory was used to analyze the data and develop claims that help describe, explain, predict, and control. This theory originated with the Glaser and Strauss (1967) study of terminally ill patients and the messages about their illness that they received from loved ones and health care practitioners. Examining the texts, the researchers were able to find and classify messages and then identify perceptions the patient had about the effectiveness of the ways in which information was given. Theory was built and based upon the interactions of patients, health care givers, and family members, the outcome of which was a better understanding of a process and the ability to modify that process.

If a theory is valid, the phenomenon should occur consistently under the same conditions giving it explanatory power (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1990). If one chooses to prevent an occurrence of an undesirable output or control variables, the theory is helpful in identifying what

conditions can be changed to modify an outcome. Grounded theory is capable of doing both.

When the researcher makes assumptions based on a theory, those assumptions limit the scope of

the investigation. Theory building and data analysis through grounded theory are less affected by

the researcher's assumptions because the theory is derived inductively by examining the data,

identifying similar themes, coding those themes, creating categories, suggesting an explanation

for the occurrence of the phenomenon, and identifying conditions under which those same

patterns, codes, and categories would occur in similar contexts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967;

Singleton & Straits, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Wuest**,** Merritt-Gray, Berman, & Ford-

Gilboe, 2002). Glaser and Strauss argued that arriving at theory inductively from the data is

more sound than using theory to guide the data collection and has the potential to influence the

outcome. When theory is based on data that won't change, the theory won't change. However,

theory derived deductively is constrained by the examples used to explain it and is subject to

change when examples are not consistent or do not support the claims of the theory. Glaser and

Strauss developed methods for analyzing data when they applied and explained their use and

rationale for grounded theory. They defined theory as a way to conceptualize phenomena and

claimed that theories should apply closely to the concept and that the data should form categories

that apply to the theory, be relevant, and explain the data.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) used both qualitative and quantitative methods together to

verify results. They emphasized the use of comparing concepts and categories to validate. In

their study they identified *social loss* as one of the concepts that emerged from the interviews

and observations with the categories of *loss of family* and *loss of occupation* with terminally ill

patients. Through interviews and observations, participants consistently revealed that patients

experience the concern for loss. Health care practitioners can anticipate the perception and form

messages sensitive to that concern. Using comparative strategy also enables the researcher to generalize. Through comparisons among concepts and categories the researchers found that Americans don't know they are dying until the later stages of an illness or until it is evident to the patient due to severe pain or rapid changes. However, in Japanese culture health practitioners are more open and disclosure occurs earlier in the process. They discovered properties of the category that differed in another context that provided the ability to explain.

Grounded theory is used most often to examine relationships among phenomena. Researchers conduct interviews and make observations to understand perceptions and practices of patients and health care providers and use grounded theory to analyze data. Grounded theory is often used to examine women's health issues (Wuest, Merritt-Gray, Berman, & Ford-Gilboe, 2002) because the context from which the behaviors emerge and the ways in which the environment affects the behaviors can explain why a behavior occurs. Grounded theory has also been used for marketing research to understand consumer needs and buying patterns (Goulding, 2002; Locke, 2001). As concepts arise, researchers identify relationships between variables, interpret the meanings, explain ways in which context influences the discourse, and predict behavioral patterns. As social patterns emerge from the data, stakeholders can participate in identifying the patterns and become active in making changes.

The analysis of data in this study relies on the more recent developments of grounded theory advanced by Strauss and Corbin (1998), who agreed that the theory emerges from the data but concluded that the researcher depends on both critical and creative thinking in analyzing the data to identify categories and themes. Grounded theory relies on a systematic process for analysis that includes three steps: describing, conceptualizing, and theorizing (Strauss & Corbin). The final step of theorizing is dependent on the effectiveness of the description and

conceptualization. Theorizing relies on good description to interpret and explain. Conceptual ordering, forming categories for related attributes or comparing among groups, events, places, and things, also relies on good description.

Grounded theory uses both *open* (identifying concepts) and *axial* (interpreting and uncovering relationships) coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This kind of microanalysis requires that the researcher attend to data rather than making the data fit within the parameters of the researcher's thinking. The researcher is able to examine and interpret through comparisons of similar patterns implicit in the data. To analyze this data, the researcher asks questions and then makes comparisons based on the answers to those questions. Strauss and Corbin recommended asking four different kinds of questions for interviews and analysis. These include: *sensitizing, theoretical, structural, and guiding*. The sensitizing questions ask about the nature of what is happening, who is involved, how it is happening, and what it means. Theoretical questions compel the researcher to consider how things might be related. Structural questions guide the interview and the development of the theory. Guiding questions are open-ended questions and lead others to questions that seek more specific information.

Questions generate responses that the researcher examines and compares to find phenomena that are similar. People make comparisons when they use metaphors and similes. One thing stands for another. We use the properties in the comparisons to convey specific meaning. When using the same concepts to compare different incidents, one should look for properties that exist in both. Theoretical comparisons force the researcher to consider abstractly what things are different or the same and the assumptions we must make to draw inferences and make comparisons.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that the researcher examine the texts word by word and phrase by phrase asking questions that lead to salient ideas. The researcher then compares these salient ideas. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that coding line by line is important in the beginning of the coding process so that the researcher conducts the level of microanalysis needed to identify concepts and categories in future data.

In order to organize the data, the researcher must use a coding system. Singleton and Straits (1999) define *coding* as the process of numbering categories. During open coding, the researcher compares responses among the interviewees and analyzes for similarities and differences. Based on the results of the comparison, the researcher conceptualizes by grouping similar ideas together and labeling the phenomena. As researchers code the data, they may discover that some similarities or differences are unique to a group of people. Concepts used in interaction evoke a cultural image (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and, therefore, help identify characteristics of the culture.

Open coding is a means by which the researcher opens up the text to reveal the interviewee's thoughts. When researchers expose these thoughts and recognize events or objects as significant, they are conceptualizing. Once researchers identify a concept and label it as a phenomenon, they may then group similar concepts together. Warren and Karner (2005) suggest that researchers use open coding when they label themes and patterns to analyze the data. They suggest that once researchers have read and re-read the data identifying themes, they should then decide which theme should prevail and determine the focus of the analysis. These themes become the core categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Conceptualizing leads to classifying concepts that share similar properties. Often the participant will use an "in vivo" code for a concept (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 105). This is a

code that the respondent creates and references. When researchers classify the phenomenon into codes, they influence ways in which readers see the data. The researchers must interpret in order to describe the phenomenon. When they classify similar things together, they acknowledge that they see phenomena in a certain way and interpret those attributes. In doing this, they look at them in a way that others may not have seen before, thus creating new knowledge or theories (Strauss & Corbin).

Categories are the groups of concepts that emerge among related concepts and help limit the number of units a researcher considers at a given time. The category heading describes and explains the phenomena. When the researcher identifies a category, the concepts labeled are considered properties of the phenomena. The properties or concepts describe and explain the category.

Memos are researchers' notes that question, analyze, suggest a future direction, or identify possible links with other concepts. Memos enable the researcher to discover relationships between categories and identify core themes.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that once researchers have identified concepts, they should also identify the properties of those concepts and differentiate among them to determine the degree of difference through "axial coding" (p. 124). Strauss and Corbin defined this term as finding relationships of properties between categories. Categories derive from labeled phenomena to explain processes. Subcategories derive from the respondent's actual words and the researcher's conceptualization and help answer questions about the phenomenon. The explanation derives from the "axis" of the category and subcategory to help explain relationships between the properties and concepts (p. 123). According to Goulding (2002), axial coding occurs when relationships between properties form a core. To guide in axial coding, the researcher

develops a paradigm or a perspective toward the data. The analyst determines categories by referencing the phenomena during open coding and by considering the actions or consequences.

Strauss and Corbin (1999) suggested that a category has reached a point of saturation when no new properties or dimensions of the properties emerge. They emphasized the fact that the researcher must continue to compare one piece of data with another to verify claims due to the fact that the researcher engages in deductive reasoning to draw conclusions about meanings when interpreting data.

This study relies on qualitative methods to gather and analyze information generated by the organizational members. Narratives address the accounts of organizational members and recount the events that create and sustain the cultural norms. Observations reveal practices that are consistent or inconsistent with stated practices and suggest what the culture values. Generating theory from the data reduces the risk of theory changing due to examples that do not support it, because the examples derive from the data and are contextual.

In the chapter that follows, I describe the organization and processes I observed during the interviews and my ethnography. In chapter 6, I explain how I analyzed the data using grounded theory to identify categories and their properties that emerged from the data. I compare the themes that emerged among different groups for differences and similarities and then offer my interpretation of what the themes revealed about the culture, its values and norms.

CHAPTER V: DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Like most competitive industries, tire manufacturers must meet customer expectations of

safety and quality performance, remain compliant with industry ISO9000 standards, and race

against other manufacturers to increase market share by promoting and selling their most

innovative and cost effective products. The values imbedded in this culture helped drive

production and aligned with the mission statement and goals of the organization. I present these

findings and conclusions in chapters six and seven, but in this chapter, I will explain how I

collected the data that provided the foundation for the findings. In the first section, I provide

details about the method used, the process of gaining access to an organization, and recruitment

of participants. I then present an itinerary of events for each day followed by a description of

observations made during the three days I was there.

My plan included using multiple methods of data collection, which consisted of a

demographic questionnaire (See Appendix E) of the interviewees, face-to-face interviews (See

Appendix F), and observation of organizational members during normal work hours in the

organizational setting. I used both open and closed questions to allow participants to account for

and recount (Fisher, 1968) events they had experienced that would indicate communication

processes and practices that were common in that organization. Observations recorded through

field notes allowed me to observe members' performance and gain a better understanding of the

organizational environment. Use of ethnography extended the members' narratives and allowed

me to detect areas in which stated goals were not always practiced.

Gaining Entrance

Gaining access to an organization to conduct research about its cultural norms proved to

be more of a challenge than I had anticipated. I discovered that personal knowledge of a decision

maker in an organization yielded more positive responses than cold, impersonal calls. The

decision maker who helped me gain access to the organization was the plant manager of the tire-

mold manufacturing organization who had been in that position since the plant opened. Access to

the organization was contingent on the authorization of a few other decision makers. To protect

their image and insure confidentiality, the parent company's legal department insisted upon

signed agreements stating that the company's name would not be revealed in the study. The

parent company, not the mold facility, regulated access of visitors and researchers with several

pages of compliance documents to enforce adherence to their expectations.

Scheduling

Once I had secured the proper authority to enter the organization, the plant manager and I

agreed on dates for conducting the interviews. At his request, the plant manager arranged the

times for members to meet with me and secured the conference room for the interviews. The first

list included only enough time for 15 thirty-minute interviews. Since my original request had

asked for 30 interviews, I requested that I be allowed to interview more people. I explained that

spending more time with more organizational members would provide a better sample and more

accurate reflection of the cultural values and norms of the organization. The plant manager

produced a revised schedule that included 30 minutes of allotted time for 30 interviews over the

course of three days. He also granted my request to shadow members of the organization during

the workday at times when I was not interviewing.

Recruiting Participants

Recruitment of participants was far less difficult than finding a site for the study. The

plant manager solicited my request for participation through company email and distributed the

official consent letter that explained the study and included a consent form (see Appendix C) to

volunteers through inter-office mail. Twenty people responded to the first request and claimed

that that were eager to help. The rest were recruited with a second email message requesting a

few more participants since the goal was to secure 30 interviews.

The plant manager had reserved a room for three days to conduct interviews. Access to

this space was limited as meetings were scheduled almost every day in the conference room. In

fact, the week prior to my visit, a consulting firm had conducted interviews for the purpose of

deciding how to best downsize the parent organization and its operations. Some participants

expressed anxiety over participating in another interview that could lead to negative

consequences for their organization. Others claimed they volunteered because they had not been

given the opportunity to participate in the previous interviews. Although the letter with the

consent form explained the purpose of the study, it was apparent that some members either did

not understand or did not believe what they had read. I assured them that the study was just to

help me examine organizational norms and processes in their organization.

The Interview Process

As the interviewees entered the room, I welcomed them and asked a question or two to

establish rapport. I introduced myself and asked whether they were ready. I reminded them that I

would be taping the interview but that no one in the organization would have access to the

recordings or transcripts. After asking them to be seated, I collected their demographic

questionnaire (see Appendix E). When two of the members who had not previously submitted

the demographic questionnaire were asked to complete the form before the interview began, I

observed that they could not complete it and inferred that they were unable to read. The first

individual stared at the page while I repeated instructions about what to do for the first question.

When another individual also appeared to be unable to read, I administered the questionnaire orally, asking each question and writing the answer for that member.

After running a sound check for the recording equipment and seeming to have no difficulty with the recording, I began the interview. (Later I discovered that as long as people were close to the microphone, they could be heard. When they relaxed during the interview and moved back, I had difficulty hearing and understanding everything they said.) I read the questions but maintained eye contact as they responded. I took no notes and relied solely on the audio recording.

The Itinerary

Day 1. I arrived at the organization's site before 8:00 a.m. I was told that most workers had already begun or would begin their day at that time. I was greeted by the administrative assistant, given a temporary identification pass, and ushered into the office area. The administrative assistant showed me the conference room where the interviews would take place. After setting up the recording equipment and organizing papers, I welcomed my first interviewee.

Each interviewee was allotted 30 minutes and, conscious of keeping workers from their jobs, I adhered to this time limit as much as possible. Some interviews lasted longer and some were shorter because some had more to share while others gave brief responses. After a few interviews, I discovered the questions that required more thought and ones that yielded more lengthy narratives. I adapted the pacing of my questions in order to allow more time for these.

The interviews ended by 12 noon, and I went to the lunch room to get a snack and observe break time. Organizational members were helpful and friendly by pointing me in the direction of the lunch room and reviewing the limited selections in the vending machines.

Although there seemed to be awareness that a newcomer was present, I was welcomed with similar kinds of bantering and teasing exchanged among the organizational members.

Interviews resumed at 1:00 p.m. and lasted until 3:00 p.m. When the interviews concluded, I settled in to observe organizational members from the front office. This space was a large cubicle in an open area where both line workers and management passed to exit or enter the building. People began to leave around 4:00 p.m., but prior to that time, there was little traffic. I could sense that the administrative assistants were uncomfortable with having someone in their presence writing about them and conversed with them frequently to ease some of the tension. I was acutely aware that my presence as a researcher disrupted their normal routines. One administrative assistant offered a tour of the organizational site. She pointed out what departments worked in different areas of the building and why certain people shared spaces separated by cubicles. She pointed out that organizational members who work closely on similar designs are in close proximity to each other so that they have access to each to other and can talk among themselves when they need to collaborate. Each desk contained a computer and swivel chair with at least one partition that created a six foot wall that helped enclose the space and create a hallway. Most desks contained personal memorabilia: family photos, greeting cards, art work, a coffee mug, but few books. My observation ended when the administrative assistants were ready to leave for the day.

Day 2. I was scheduled to observe line workers and plant operations on the second day. After being subjected the previous day to teasing about my suit and heels that would not be appropriate in the factory, I heeded advice to wear older clothes and comfortable shoes. I was asked to arrive at 8:00 a.m., although line workers had begun the day at 6:00 a.m. This was at the

request of the plant manager who wanted to be certain one of the managers was on duty at the site to direct me.

I first observed the worker who makes the tools that cut the steel molds. He explained details about the machine he used, the composition of the products used to make the tools, and the purpose for the tools. He also discussed his longevity of employment with the organization and his future plans. He seemed to take pride in the fact that he was one of the few in the plant who knew how to operate the machine that makes the tools. He allowed me to examine the finished product under a microscope. The interviews I had conducted the day before began to make more sense to me once I observed first hand the spaces and tools many of them had referenced in their interviews.

After observing the tool maker, I went to a quality inspection where only two people occupied a large, but enclosed space. These individuals read specs to determine which tools should be used to measure and inspect the products and to ensure that the proper dimensions were used. They relied little on verbal communication between them; each worked independently, focused on accomplishing the task before them. They did, however, use a computer frequently to check information and input data.

Observation in the quality inspection area ended at 9:30 a.m. when the plant operators observed break time. Machines were silent as operators migrated to the "lunch room." Having become accustomed to the bantering of this work place, I ignored warnings that I should hug the wall and brace myself for the stampede of workers who would make a quick and deliberate exit at 9:30 a.m. I survived the stampede but was left with no one in the factory to observe. Lights still illuminated the area, but machines were not operating, and there was no one to be found in this vast area that contained more square feet and more open space than any other part of the

building. As I walked around the building, I found, as I had on the first day, that most of the line workers were in the lunch room, a room large enough to seat only 20 people, with 10 foot ceilings and a window view of a grassy area and some trees.

After break time, I observed one of the line managers whose office window provided a view of the plant. The manager had just been placed in that role a few days prior to my entrance in the organization. His office was in the plant part of the facility by the wall that separated the plant from the office areas. His dimly lit office contained two desks, each with a computer. The floor was not carpeted like offices on the opposite side of the wall but was concrete like the plant floor. Windows lined one wall and allowed him to view the production line. While I observed him, he entered data on his computer, responded to numerous phone calls, and left the office often to talk with line workers. He, too, engaged in conversation to eliminate the discomfort he felt with a researcher's presence. Line workers also passed by his office several times. He indicated that normally, the workers would stop in to talk with him, but none would stop in because I was there. He explained that he used those opportunities when they stopped in just to say hello to get to know the workers. He claimed that those with whom he was able to establish a relationship were more likely to respond favorably to a request for a task, and these opportunities allowed him to avert problems before they occurred. He claimed that he liked his work and was happy in his new role.

After the line manager, I observed one of the line workers who operated a high-powered machine that cut grooves into the tire molds. While waiting for the machine to complete its cycle, the operator explained to me what the machine was designed to do, pointed out the intricate tools that penetrate the tough steel, and described the production process before the molds arrived at his station.

The observations ended when the workers took their lunch break. During this time, I wrote field notes and prepared for the afternoon interviews. Interviews resumed at 1:00 p.m. and lasted until 4:30 p.m.

Day 3. On the final day of interviewing, the plant manager was out of the office. I conducted the final interviews from 8:00 a.m. until early afternoon. I had gained a better understanding of how the organization divided labor, skills needed to accomplish tasks, and the physical structure of the building.

Observations

Researcher's stance. I had gained personal knowledge about the parent company of the organizational site I was examining through local newspaper articles, discussions with community members, and personal observations over the 10 years of my residency in the community and during data collection. The mold facility and parent company were both housed in the community in which I was a resident. Neither I nor any of my family members had been employed at either organization but had frequented the location of the parent company for purposes unrelated to the study.

The Organizational Environment

The decision-maker that granted entrance into the organization was the plant manager of the mold facility that employs approximately 100 members. The facility is also a division of a larger organization that manufactures tires headquartered in the same Midwest town. Both are for profit organizations. The plant manager who managed the design, engineering, and manufacturing of tire molds at this facility had been with the organization for approximately 15 years at the time of this writing. He designed the facility and workstations so that organizational members would have the best access to people and resources and so that production would flow

in a logical and efficient manner. Since the parent organization resided in the same town, interviewees often referenced organizational members of the parent company as "those guys over *there*" or referred to practices as what is done "across town." Their comments framed the organization "across town" as vastly different. The parent company's structure was described as more hierarchical that required its members to pass through many chains of command to reach the ear of a decision maker. Because "the other" organization had more members, was a larger facility, and was not in close proximity to the mold facility, members at the mold facility did not have a great deal of exposure to the members of the other facility and claimed that they were able to create their own unique culture. Many interviewees referred to the mold facility as having a family atmosphere. They explained that they felt this way because they had access to the leaders, who not only listened to them but also implemented good suggestions. They were encouraged to submit suggestions in the "suggestion box," which incidentally hung on the wall opposite the entrance of the lunch room. These were reviewed periodically. Those who had submitted suggestions that were useful were rewarded and publicly recognized with a photo and memo on the recognition board, placed on the same wall as the entrance to the lunch room. Because the organization had only 100 members, individuals seemed familiar with the members in their department, and all interviewees knew the plant manager and called him by his first name.

The physical structure of the mold facility is one story in the front half, flat, with hallways and few closed doors that enabled quick access to all members. The "other" organization is several stories high with more than one building that occupies a few blocks in the small town. The tire manufacturing facility has a few smoke stacks that rise above the houses in the vicinity, interfering with the aesthetics of the skyline. At one time, the smoke stacks produced byproducts that not only polluted the air with a horrible odor but also disseminated

pollutants that created a substance on people's homes in the area. A class action law suit forced

the company to alter its practices and eliminate the problem. The company suffered from the less

than favorable publicity over this crisis. While repairs were made to eliminate the cause of the

pollutants and homeowners received restitution, the appearance of the facility remained

unaltered.

The Mold Facility

Unlike the multi-story structure on the "other side of town," where traffic is heavy during

rush hour and becomes congested at lunch time, the one story rectangular mold facility is shaded

by trees on a quiet street zoned for manufacturing and office buildings. The mold facility

resembles the contemporary architecture of the surrounding buildings made of concrete and brick

with a metal roof. Well manicured grass and plants occupied the space between the sidewalks

and the building to welcome occupants and guests. Glass doors, framed by steel, lead to

entrances and exits.

From the visitor parking space, a concrete sidewalk led to the building that opened into a

lobby area. The high ceiling in this area created an open space. Anyone who entered the building

also used this as an exit. Guests were greeted and detained in this area. Managers could meet

briefly with a client at a small table away from the receptionist's area. A phone on the wall

provided access to organizational members. A 90 degree turn to the left led to windows opposite

the administrative assistant who disabled the electronically locked door for those with a

member's identification card or for visitors who had registered at the window and were

sponsored by a member. The administrative assistant could observe and easily identify those who

were members and those who were not by whether or not they wore an employee card.

The tile floor in the lobby changed to carpet on the other side of the locked door. The work station for the administrative assistants was a bar height flat surface that forced one to lean over or stand tall to effectively view and interact with the administrative assistants. The cubicle strategically formed a wall with a space the size of a door for a few select people to enter or exit. The wall of one administrative assistant was adjacent to the plant manager's office. The carpet muffled the noise of footsteps or heavy work boots. This area was heavily trafficked by organizational members who were traveling to and from the rest rooms, lunch room, meeting room, and factory. Additionally those who wanted to meet with one of the supervisors often checked with the administrative assistant prior to their visit. With the exception of the door that buzzed people in during morning, lunch, and evening, noise in this area was minimal.

Hallways lining the offices and board rooms provided access to leaders, meetings, and the plant. The width was wide enough for two individuals to comfortably walk side-by-side and conduct business. The heavy wooden doors hung only in offices for managers but were open while the manager was in the office. Designers, accountants, and engineers occupied open workstations without doors. The open hallways, workstations, and office doors enabled access to organizational members.

The walls were painted with neutral tones lighter than earth tones, and the carpet contained complementary colors with mixed earth tones. A framed mission statement adorned the wall outside the board room where the interviews took place. Bulletin boards occupied several walls in the hallway outside and in the lunch room. One board outside the lunch room contained pictures of employees who had made suggestions that saved the company money. The suggestion and the amount saved were noted along with the employee's name. Several interviewees stated that they had frequently submitted suggestions. They explained that the

ultimate reward is not the recognition but having some control over their work process. While I was carefully studying one of the recognition boards, a manager stopped to elaborate on why they use this form of communication. He indicated that this was an internal motivator and cost saving mechanism. Another board listed employees by department and identified personal information including number of years with the company, degree earned, where it was earned, and what it was. This board highlighted academic successes of employees, emphasizing that mobility in the company was dependent upon ongoing education.

The purpose of the bulletin boards in the hallways was multifaceted. One purpose was to publicize and reward contributions to the company. Another was to create awareness of what the company expects of superior performers: to gain more education and think of ways to improve processes. The boards were mediums for communication - communication about the employees and messages from the organization.

Bulletin boards in the lunch room communicated messages about educational opportunities and seminars available. Some employees also publicized personal items for sale. I observed several of the office workers perusing the self-improvement advertisements. Few plant operators took notice of this board.

The managers' offices occupied the front part of the building that faced the parking lot and a quiet street lined with trees. The production line for the mold manufacturing was located in the back half of the building. I noted that the facility was organized by departments. Those who do similar work had work-stations in close proximity with others doing similar kinds of work. With the exception of those who worked in the factory, all members had a computer at their workstation. Lighting varied throughout the building, and some areas were quieter than others. For example, in the department where design engineers worked, the ceilings were lower, and

lighting was directed at the work stations to illuminate small areas of work space. Noise levels were also minimal, with the hum of computer fans and occasional conversations at normal decibel levels. Work groups that depended on frequent communication made more noise and often played music. The lighting was also brighter in this area. In the back of the facility, the line workers used high-tech and heavy machines while sharing a single computer terminal. The noise level was much higher due to the machine noise and volume required to talk over the machines. Lighting in the production area was broader and brighter than in the offices. The ventilation was better in the production area with the higher ceilings and air conditioning system. On a hot humid day when the temperature outside reached the upper 90s, both the line workers and I wore long sleeves to stay warm.

The line workers worked independently but also relied on and were somewhat motivated by the productivity of those with whom they interfaced. For example, those who worked in quality control and inspected molds relied on specs transmitted electronically by the design team. They also relied on the work teams who would stockpile molds that were ready for inspection. If a mold did not meet quality standards, quality control personnel sent it back to the line worker who had worked on the part that required modification. These workers were within view and walking distance of the quality control room, and consequently they interacted often.

Members could exit the plant area through two different doors on opposite sides of the plant area. The exit doors were heavy and required force to operate. Exiting the plant area, the organizational member entered into the office facility that was clean, carpeted, quiet, less bright, had no clocks, lower ceilings, a warmer temperature, and was a space that did not require safety equipment.

Artifacts

While observing organizational members, I also observed their environment, the tools they used to communicate, and the symbols that held meaning for them and enabled discourse. The architectural design of the building, the floor plan, construction materials, and division of space helped facilitate the work flow and enabled face-to-face access to organizational members. Symbols that communicated the organization's purpose and corporate affiliation were visible at the entrance from the street, in the lobby, and in offices and hallways throughout the building. Examples of these artifacts included the sign in front of the building, a metal statue, a tire clock, and fragments of tire molds.

A sign placed at the street entrance of the building displayed the company's name with the same colors, font, and logo used on most of their corporate communication documents. A steel statue resided in the main entrance, the likeness of which is a symbol used in their corporate logo. The symbol has changed since my visit, I have been told, to reflect a new corporate initiative.

Steel tire rim clocks could be found in a few places throughout the building. The plant workers revealed that they were commissioned to design and craft a few of these as rewards. The shape was round like a tire, made of steel like the molds and rims, and had black hands made of tire rubber.

Fragments of steel and rubber tire molds were visible in the managers' offices, the board room, and some areas in the plant. Managers claimed to have these in their offices in order to explain to clients, sales personnel, and cross functional members of the organization about their unique design. Some of these fragments were rewards and served as reminders of innovative efforts or benchmarks for future successes.

Rituals

The organizational members engaged in rituals, the date and time of which were not always scheduled but occurred when circumstances or events compelled the execution of the ritual. For example, it became a ritual for supervisors to praise members who had exceeded expectations by devising a way to save time or using an alternative product that was equally as effective but less expensive. These praise sessions were referred to as "atta boys." The "atta boys" affirmed good performance and encouraged others to strive to earn one. The employee handbook does not make mention of these; therefore, one may conclude that the practice is not a sanctioned policy but rather a form of communication imbedded in the culture.

The card game at break time is another ritual. Those who begin their 12-hour shift at 6:00 a.m. expect a break at 9:30 a.m. The time is firm as many meet in the break room to play a game of cards. The card game takes place every day. Because the 12-hour shift workers work four days and have the next three off, the players are different each day. This ritual allows line workers to playfully harass and dominate supervisors with skill and wit. The game also provides a system for inclusion of new and current members. I was offered the opportunity to join the game, which meant that someone would have to drop out to include me. I declined the offer but observed the game and was not the only spectator. Others stood around watching and interacting with the players. The bantering among players and spectators created more noise but also invited more interaction. The players seemed less subdued than they had been at their work stations. They were louder and interacted with more than just those in close proximity.

Another ritual I observed was being greeted by the administrative assistant when entering the door. She knew every employee's name and gave each a personal greeting with a smile. After the first day, she did not require that I sign in or show the temporary identification card and insisted that I "just come on in." Most who passed her desk did not linger, but almost all

exchanged a brief greeting. Few of the members' conversations with her seemed top priority or business related. The interchanges were more social and enacted for the purpose of changing the normal pace.

Spaces

While at least two-thirds of the organization's workforce was male, females were an integral part of the organization. Female managers seemed to have the same expectations as male managers. They were expected to work the same kind of shifts and fulfill the same kind of roles. I observed few differences in treatment of workers at this level. However, the expectation for administrative assistants seemed quite different. These women engaged in more discussion with organizational members than any other females observed. They often walked to someone's station to deliver a message. This kind of social exchange seemed expected from these women. They spoke to most of the workers about personal issues. They teased and joked with the members. More bantering occurred with the line workers in the plant. The administrative assistants touched the line workers with a pat or a friendly tap. This kind of interaction did not occur with the managers.

They were also expected to support supervisors with tasks for company social events. For example, a few years ago one of the administrative assistants was asked to drive off site to purchase beverages for a pizza party that was an earned reward for a department. She was also asked to unload and deliver the beverages to the party venue. As she stated in her interview, she was pregnant and slipped on the ice while carting the beverages into the building. As a result of the fall, she went into pre-term labor. She averted a miscarriage, but required more frequent bed rest throughout the remainder of the pregnancy. The sofa in the women's lounge was an accommodation for her temporary disability. She is still asked and expected to do these kinds of

tasks and accepts the responsibility without question. She had, however, without asking, begun to use the handicapped parking spots until she delivered a healthy baby.

Females could enter the women's restroom from the plant side or the office side. Few organizational members occupied this space since a larger percentage of the workforce was male. For the few female workers, this space provided many accoutrements. Hand lotions, perfume sprays, and cosmetic samples were among those at the sink area provided to refresh the worker. Soft lighting and a sofa invited the weary to lounge. However, to insure repeated exposure of the corporate message even during down time, displayed on the inside stall doors were explicit reminders of the company's mission statement. I did not have the opportunity nor did I ask to visit the men's restrooms and will not be able to compare these gendered spaces but wanted to include a description of this space because it will allow me to compare and contrast this space with other spaces and provide evidence of ways in which the organizational culture is created and sustained through discourse.

With the exception of quality control, I did not observe any females working in the plant. One woman in quality control had brought homemade coffee cake and invited several in the offices and most in the plant to stop by for a piece. I was told that this female worker did this often. Those who indulged showed appreciation with a verbal thank you and a brief exchange of conversation.

In addition to interviews, I observed members working and taking breaks. The "lunch room," as members referred to it, was a space for all members of the organization to take breaks throughout the day.

The Lunch Room

On the first day of interviewing, I broke for lunch with the rest of the organization around noon and went to the lunch room where organizational members consumed packed lunches. Many enjoyed the change of pace and scenery by playing a card game with the plant manager. The card game seemed like a ritual, something that occurred consistently to remind them that they owned the time. The vending machines were aligned against a painted cement block wall and offered coffee, sodas, or candy and snacks. There was no cafeteria even though this space was referred to by organizational members on the day shift as the "lunch room." Across from the vending machines was a row of windows that allowed natural sunlight to brighten the space and make it appear larger. Tables and chairs for about 20 people were all utilized. Some members entered and exited after a brief conversation and a purchase from the vending machines. Some lunched or smoked outside where picnic tables and chairs were provided. There were no smoking areas inside the building.

Time orientation was different for the line workers than for the managers. I noted that almost every manager and non-line worker wore a watch while, while with the exception of one or two, line workers did not. A large clock that hung in a prominent place in the plant served to remind the line workers when to take their 9:30 a.m. break and helped them monitor the time it took to complete the tasks. I became aware that break time was a sanctioned time the line workers claimed because one group was eager to have me visit their workstation but insisted that I come after the 9:30 break. The line workers were conscious of taking their full 15 minutes, while other members of the organization stood during break and entered and exited within 5 minutes.

Work Practices

During the second day of interviews I observed the factory workers. These workers were also dressed quite differently than other organizational members. Typical dress in the production area included jeans, steel toed shoes, and safety goggles, which were required to enter this area. It was obvious by the dress, the lighting, the noise, the space, and the orientation to time that I was entering a vastly different part of the organization. However, the line workers seemed more eager than the office workers to have their work observed and wanted to explain every minute detail about how their craft contributed to the team's productivity and efficiency. One line worker explained the intricacies of the machine that makes the tools used to cut the metal molds. They seemed to want me to pay attention to their work. I received more of a welcome from this group than from the design engineers and managers.

I was very aware that safety was important in this area. Robotics and elevators carted the heavy steel from one station to the next. The room was organized so that work and products flowed sequentially and with little interruption. Workers were not required to do any heavy lifting but were equipped with back braces. The factory workers also stood most of the time. Although chairs with backs were provided, even those who had to read designs and get instructions to set the machines stood to do so. Line workers worked independently but depended on other organizational members producing on schedule so that they could accomplish goals.

The interviews and observations provided a picture of the physical space of the organization as well as the practices and behaviors of the organizational members. Observations highlighted and emphasized messages that were present during the interviews and provided the basis for the findings and conclusions in this study.

CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS

Descriptive analysis uses data to describe what is going on in an organization, while interpretation relies on the researcher's sense making to explain the meaning (Wolcott, 2001). This chapter relies on the discourse of organizational members to describe and interpret cultural norms and values within this specific tire-mold manufacturing organization. The discourse revealed cultural distinctions between groups that emerged through comparisons of themes and indicated that groups reinforced cultural values using different norms. The demographic survey, the ethnography, and the interviews provide triangulated views of the organization, yet bear evidence of collective cultural values and norms, despite differences. The theoretical explanation for these findings is grounded in the data but relies on the researcher's interpretations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The following reference responses from and observations of the four cultural groups that emerged during analysis. Administrative and plant workers are two cultural groups within the same culture that share the same values but have different norms that support these values. The differences between these two groups became apparent during the interview process and suggested that two different cultures existed within the larger culture. I witnessed distinct practices that differed in each group and different ways each group reinforced the values of the organization. References to administrative workers include managers, engineers, designers, information technology specialists, and administrative assistants. References to plant workers include machine operators and those who work in quality control. Plant workers occupy the workspace on "the other side of the wall," one male plant employee referencing the cinderblock wall that separates the work spaces of the two groups. Although a few plant members have supervisory roles, I refer to them as plant workers because they direct and interact often with

plant employees and occupy space in the plant area. Responses, environment, and norms differed between males and females also and led to distinctions between these groups. The small representation of female interviewees reflects the demographics of the organization. The few females employed in the plant worked mostly in quality control and did not operate the machines. Female plant workers read specs from the computer or blueprints and used some robotics but did not operate the large machinery.

Demographics

The demographic survey revealed information helpful in describing personal characteristics of the employees. The plant manager, who arranged for me to observe the manufacturing processes and conduct interviews, helped recruit volunteers to be interviewed. Consequently, the 30 interviewees who received the demographic survey (see Appendix D) represented a cross section of the 100 employees and approximately half the number of employees who work during the day. The distinctions below reflect that 27 interviewees returned their questionnaire. To encourage participation and ensure a greater degree of privacy, I did not include a question about whether they were administrative or production workers. The majority of organizational members and interviewees are white males. Although most employees are Euro-American, one African-American and one Hispanic volunteered. An Asian employee also volunteered to participate in this study but withdrew due to his apprehension about his ability to speak English. Female employees comprise a disproportionately small part of the organizational population. Of the 30 interviewees, 24 were males: 13 administrative and 11 plant employees. Six interviewees were female: five administrative workers and one a plant worker (see Table 1). The majority of interviewees claimed to have good or excellent physical health. More claimed to

have excellent mental health (see Table 2). Ironically, two employees who rated their physical

health as just fair rated their mental health as excellent.

Table 1

Male and female administrative and plant workers

	Administrative	Plant	Total
Male	13	11	24
Female	5	1	6
Total	18	12	30

Table 2

Employee assessment of physical health

Fair	Good	Excellent
4	15	8

Employee assessment of mental health

Fair	Good	Excellent
2	14	11

Status in the organization is commensurate with the employee's level of education;

therefore, employees pursue education to gain more opportunities for promotions or variety in

their work. Demographic data indicate that more of the administrative employees had earned

higher academic degrees, whereas, most, if not all, plant employees had little college education

(see Table 3). Two administrative employees had earned master's degrees, and eight had earned

bachelor's degrees. Several had earned associate degrees, and some were working toward

completing a degree. The fact that more administrative than plant workers had completed college

and were pursuing higher degrees was not surprising, but plant workers were also motivated and

spoke of their desire to obtain educational degrees. Interviewees indicated that education was the means to gaining a promotion and the other benefits that accompany a promotion. The company not only provides the incentive to earn a degree, but they also provide the means. Based on the employee handbook at the time of the study, the company reimburses employees for college coursework on the condition that they earn an "A" or "B." Employees in the plant have a difficult time taking advantage of this benefit due to working 12-hour shifts, and as one plant member indicated, they must pay for the credits and wait until they complete the course work to receive the reimbursement. Both of these conditions create an obstacle that the administrative employees do not face, as they only work eight-hour shifts and can more easily attend night classes without disrupting production. The absence of a production line worker on the other hand, can disrupt production and delay deadlines. The daily, steady production of line workers enables the organization to achieve output goals, and a line worker's absence during a shift affects production to a greater degree than the absence of an administrator during the day. Many administrative workers enter their jobs having earned at least one degree and are aware of the personal sacrifices and time commitment required to finish a degree while working full time.

Table 3

Employee level of education

Level of education	Employees
High School diploma or GED	8
Some college classes	3
Associates degree	6
Undergraduate degree	8
Completed masters degree	2

The daily and weekly number of hours employees work also distinguished plant from administrative employees. Administrative employees reported working as many as 50 to 60 hours per week while plant employees worked an average of 40 hours per week but in 12-hour

shifts. Plant operators worked four 12-hour days and then worked three days the following week. Many indicated liking the number of days off but found it difficult to plan for events. Unlike education, longevity with the company was not an indicator of status but suggested the degree of loyalty. The length of employment with the company varied from as many as 27 years to as few as six weeks.

Field notes from observations and interview texts formed the descriptive analyses and interpretations that follow. Multiple readings of the transcripts revealed the patterns of similarities and differences among the cultural groups, and summaries of responses to each question yielded generalizations based on consistency of employee responses. The findings below address each research question and provide the rationale for interpretations. The first research question considers the cultural values of the organization and ways in which members create and sustain them.

RQ 1: In what ways are the cultural values created and sustained?

Cultural values distinguish one cultural group from another, and norms sustain processes for reproducing the values. Keyton (2005) defined organizational culture as the set of "artifacts" (p. 23), "values" (p. 24), and "assumptions" (p. 25) in the organization and argued that narratives identify cultural values and explain ways in which they are sustained. In the following section, I will identify and describe the cultural values and then offer evidence from observation and interviews of how these values are created and sustained. Analysis that includes interpretation or implication follows the description and evidence of the value. The most significant values that emerged were *innovation, speed, accuracy, autonomy,* and *education.*

Innovation

Profit and competition with similar organizations stimulate the innovative process and therefore drive organizational members to utilize innovativeness to create new designs for faster, safer, and sleeker tire performance. Innovation is a value of the organizational culture that underlies many of the practices and norms. Competition among tire-mold manufacturers is influenced by time demands and necessitates innovation to maintain or accelerate the production process. Despite the standardization of processes to comply with ISO9000 regulations and insure quality and safety, mold manufacturers must also be innovative. Organizational members indicated that the company provided incentive programs for all employees to develop new ideas. Employees are encouraged to submit ideas that would save time or reduce costs and are rewarded when their idea is accepted and implemented. The *suggestion box***,** an artifact that reflects the importance of this value and is conveniently located outside the employees' break room serves as a reminder to consider innovative ideas even during down time. Organizational leaders reinforce the value of innovative thinking by acknowledging the creator and rewarding them with time off, a meal, or a promotion. Members displayed evidence of this value by suggesting that they had their best day or were most satisfied when their idea had been accepted and implemented. One employee described his sense of accomplishment when the company accepted his department's money-saving suggestion.

> Our department made some significant improvements to a machine process…and
> the first few times we tried it we did a lot better than what we thought we
> did…and the organization recognized that and…as it turned out….it's turned into
> like a half million dollar savings…in recent memory that was probably the best
> day I've ever had. (Male, administrative)

Another employee valued the support and appreciation of organizational members when the company accepted his recommendation.

> My best day was probably when we, when I issued the results of taking a component out of a big project that had a cost reduction. It had been retired. It was not needed; it was put in there because everybody else does it. Through almost a year of testing, research and everything, I told them to take it out…found out we could. So when I issued that report and presented it to everybody and showed them the amount we were going to save, cost and everything…everybody was very happy to see what we saved. (Male, administrative)

Innovations in the previous examples resulted in saving the company time and money. Because time-saving measures reduce costs and enhance production, this tire-mold manufacturing organization also values speed.

Speed

Competition drives production and invokes the need for speed. In the tire-mold manufacturing organization, *speed* is a cultural value. The performance of each part of the production line affects the speed with which other line workers are able to complete their tasks. If a department or line worker is responsible for delaying production, employees become frustrated and dissatisfied. One member expressed the responsibility he assumes and the dilemmas others face when inefficient work delays the process.

> I know from their stand---or from their point of view I guess, on what it's like if you don't get the stuff when their schedule requires it. Or if when they do get it, if it's just not up to the quality it should be, and I know what kind of problems that that will create for them. So I think that probably is always in the back of my mind, making sure that I do everything that they need, so that it makes their job go. (Male, administrative)

For the design team who creates the blueprints for the molds, time is measured by weeks or months, and a calendar is used to set goals. They may take as long as six months to complete a design and affect the production time of operators. Once the plant operators receive the design, production depends on those who weld the layers of steel, inspect for deficiencies, transport the steel, use high-powered, million dollar machines to cut and drill the mold, and prepare the molds for delivery. These workers also depend on the efforts of a 20 year veteran of the company who customizes drill bits capable of cutting through thick layers of steel and etching meticulous designs. The mold facility must respond to supply deadlines influenced by competitors in order to retain customers. This time-driven organization depends on speed in every area of its operation. A male plant worker stated that his group was rewarded for a speedy turn around time when they were able to go from the drawing to the end product in two and a half weeks.

> We had some turned around in extremely short time, and that's what makes us what we are, is that we're able to take the drawings, the conception to production in a really short time. (Male, plant)

Practices and procedures reflect the cultural values of an organization (Keyton, 2005). Speed is implicit in the practices and procedures of organizational members. One of the interviewees indicated that members adhere to time-saving standardized practices and that a member who deviates is punished. One person indicated that supervisors withhold some information about a machine's capability from the operator to prevent damage to the machine because a machine breakdown creates greater delays for line workers and always costs the company time and money. The design of the building and work space is an example of an artifact that reflects the value of speed in the organizational culture. Work stations for plant operators are located next to each other so that pieces can be moved easily from one station to another to avoid time delays.

The large clock that hangs on the two-story wall in the plant reminds workers of how long the task takes them to complete and how much time they have to meet production deadlines. The fact that employees are sometimes rewarded for speed with time off is another indicator that speed is a cultural value. The time members use to take breaks differs between the cultures due to differences in the length of shift and other variables. Plant operators work 12-hour shifts between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Plant workers linger in one place during their break of 20 minutes. Administrators take frequent but brief breaks that last five minutes or just long enough to purchase a coffee or soda in the break room. Like artifacts and values, assumptions or beliefs derived from the organizational leaders and co-workers also define the culture (Keyton, 2005). One example of ways the assumptions sustain the culture is that the members adopt the belief that the organization depends on their ability to produce with speed. This belief is reinforced during evaluation time when supervisors establish goals with members. These goals align with corporate ones that project the number of units they should produce in a specific amount of time. To support and achieve corporate goals, supervisors supply members with a goal of increasing their production (based on the previous year's production) and reducing the amount of time for production. Because organizational members rely on technology to achieve goals in the least amount of time, they value technology that allows them to do so. Employees who work hard and are loyal to the company are rewarded with time-saving technology, like faster computers. Competition creates the need for speed in production that relies on the efforts of interdependent organizational members. Members are motivated by a sense of accomplishment and sometimes by tangible rewards like pizza parties, shirts, faster technology, or, the most valued reward, time.

Accuracy

Organizational members' innovation and speed contribute to production goals, but human and technological errors conversely influence the rate and quality of production. Therefore, accuracy is a cultural value imbedded in the practices, procedures, and beliefs of the culture. Corporate and individual goals and members' satisfaction are measured by this value. One member indicated that his satisfaction was greater when there were no mistakes. Most members indicated that machine times and errors were criteria used for evaluating goals. Some perceived that they might be at a disadvantage when peer evaluators were not aware of goals or when evaluators were not aware of the degree to which another individual had contributed to production or errors. There was agreement among administrative and plant operators that productivity time and accuracy were valued and essential in meeting organizational goals. Reducing errors helps reduce the number of production pieces rejected that are costly and become a factor in setting and evaluating goals.

> We're evaluated on: productivity, attendance, attitude…[we're evaluated negatively] if
> productivity isn't going up, or rejections are not going down. (Male, plant)

The value placed on accuracy in this organization is reinforced when managers attempt to quantify human and technological errors. Interestingly, the measurement quantifies deviance rather than compliance.

Cultural values comprise collective values of organizational members and emerge when employees discuss the qualities and interests they share with co-workers. Male administrators indicated that they interact most with employees who share their goals and objectives, those who are direct, organized, value accuracy, consider multiple options before taking action, "keep their nose to the grindstone" and are "hard workers." (Male, administrator) Members often take personal responsibility for the outcomes errors produce. A male administrator indicated that his

worst day occurred when his miscalculation caused production to shut down and resulted in a loss of $400,000.

The organizational values discussed previously enhance production, add to the bottom line, and can increase the employee's satisfaction. Another value, *autonomy*, provides more personal benefits to the employee and, as Positive Organization Scholarship (POS) indicates (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, and Grant (2005), can also result in time-saving and cost-saving measures.

Autonomy

Both administrative and plant employees value the freedom to decide the most efficient process for organizing and completing their work. This freedom, defined as autonomy, is one variable that contributes to employee satisfaction and enables organizational members to thrive in their work (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Soneshein, & Grant, 2005). Respondents referenced ways in which they thrive and are more satisfied when they have autonomy over their work. The majority of them indicated that they would rather work alone than in a group and perceived that they were more productive when working alone. Not only do organizational members value the independence autonomy provides, but they also gain social benefits when they perceive that organizational leaders trust them. One male plant employee described the kinds of expectation placed on the employee in an environment where autonomy thrives.

There is an honor system…there's no time clock…you're just expected to be here on

time…you know, you're on your honor…we fill out our own time cards. (Male, plant)

Collaborative goal setting is another indicator of how the organizational members value autonomy. Those who indicated that they set goals with their supervisor expressed satisfaction with this method. Collaborating with the supervisor on goal setting resulted in feelings of

happiness, confidence, and empowerment. The preference for working alone is another indicator that autonomy is valued in this organization. More than half of the respondents prefer to work alone, and this preference was consistent among each group. Their reasons for this define the autonomy they value. Many preferred working alone because they could work at their own pace, there were fewer distractions, and they could choose the time they needed to interact with others. Many qualified their preference by stating that they also work well in groups and appreciate the additional ideas that other group members bring to the discussion or problem solving situation. However, many of them cited the obstacles that additional group members pose: it is a more time-consuming process, there are too many ideas to consider, members' ideas are not really considered because the leader has an agenda, and groups don't allow time for independent thinking.

An autonomous work environment enables workers to complete tasks without supervision. Although members follow standardized procedures and the final decisions of organizational leaders, members value having little supervision. The majority of respondents indicated that their comfort level or productivity would decrease if they were closely supervised. Two plant workers indicated that they worked harder when closely supervised due to the fact that they were conscious of someone watching them and wanted to perform well. Those who indicated that their comfort level or productivity would diminish cited such reasons as: they would be nervous and think too much about every step that they normally do instinctively; they would feel as if they were being judged and the stress would cause them to make more mistakes; or they would take more time to look over their shoulders wondering whether someone were still watching.

The company expects workers to organize and manage their workload rather than having leaders dictate how they spend their time.

I have over the last five or six years seen them pushing more empowerment…they expect more out of you doing it yourself, being more responsible for yourself. (Male administrator)

Organizational members value the independence autonomy provides when they work alone on a project without supervision, collaborate in goal setting, and experience the benefits of perceived empowerment. Members can enhance their autonomy, speed, and accuracy by obtaining more education. Doing so provides great value to both the organization and the organizational members.

Education

Nearly every interviewee made reference to the importance placed on education at every level of the organization. Employees provided evidence that they value education when they revealed that pursuing further education had become part of their personal and work goals. Education provides many benefits to both the employee and to the organization. Benefits to members include: promotions, variety in work, status, and satisfaction. The organization benefits by having more skilled workers and cultivating creativity that leads to innovation and grooms change agents.

Education that results in earning a degree paves the way for entrance into positions, departments, and special projects. Level of education defines the member's status and the kinds of opportunities offered. Many indicated that the reason to pursue further education was to gain challenging work and opportunities for different assignments. Some have moved from plant to administrative work by gaining more education. Even some with college undergraduate degrees

pursue master's degrees because the company pays for it. Lack of education can hold people back from achieving more opportunities to work on different kinds of projects that might keep them satisfied and provide a means for personal growth. Education is not only rewarded with promotions and variety of work experiences but is also reinforced with public praise in meetings on bulletin boards, and through the primary source of communication for the organization, email, which is used routinely to announce promotions. Both administrative and plant workers stated that people who are promoted typically have more education. The company benefits from workers who are gaining not only skill, so that they can fill more roles in the company, but also learning that stimulates creativity and encourages innovation. Learning also implies that people change, and as a result, the environment changes. Therefore, educating the work force can facilitate change in an organization.

Some argue that promoting only those who have pursued more education may cause organizational leaders to overlook hard workers who are loyal and have potential. One administrative worker echoed this sentiment.

> I do feel that they are way too hung up on education. Although I, I believe in education, I also believe that real world experience is unbeatable. And I think [ABC company] as a whole has lost focus on real world experience. And we have many examples of guys who have been here a long time and know a lot of things, but they can't get promoted because they don't have enough education…But we know, and I think everybody in the back of their mind knows that if they leave, they would be losing something…And I had one of those in my group that I was able to take care of….You know. I guess I wish there was none of that going on. (Male, administrator)

Another employee considers the importance placed on education which creates a false measure of what workers who gain on-the-job training are capable of doing. One male administrator sarcastically remarked that

> You have to have like a bachelor's degree to go to the bathroom. I have no degree. No. I have no degree. But I'm very good at what I do. (Male, administrative)

Additionally, because training for production work is machine-specific, workers must receive on-site training. While production workers value this, many expressed a desire to pursue further education.

Education provides many personal benefits to the employee that also results in valuable benefits to the company. Through education, employees gain mobility, status, and satisfaction by having more variety in their work and a valuable asset paid for by the company. Education benefits the organization by increasing the breadth of knowledge and skill of the work force and by promoting creativity that cultivates a readiness for change. New knowledge and learning processes create an environment open to change. The benefits of personal and organizational growth through education can overshadow the benefits that longevity and loyalty add to the environment. Some perceive that measuring the ability or skill level of an employee by their academic degree may be problematic when some without degrees work hard and are loyal. Despite the perceived limitations and inequitable access, organizational members are aware that education is valued.

Due to industry competition that drives production through practices and procedures, organizational members sustain organizational values of innovation, speed, accuracy, autonomy, and education. Sustaining these values depends on the degree to which employees internalize the values as their own and are motivated to reinforce them. Intrinsic motivation provides the

incentive for many, but management incentives provide additional motivation to sustain the values. Norms, produced and reinforced in the culture, provide another means for sustaining cultural values within the organization. The following section will identify and describe these norms within the organization and explain the processes for creating and reproducing norms.

The second research question considers the role norms play in producing and sustaining organizational culture.

RQ 2: In what ways do the norms sustain the cultural values of the organization?

Norms are socially constructed by a group of people who set the expectations and reinforce them through rewards and punishments. The norms provide social expectations of accepted behavior and discourse within the context of a group and sustain the cultural values derived from social groups that create the culture in the first place. Organizational members identified norms that they had observed, experienced, or learned from another member. These identified by the employees were not stated policies in their employee handbook but were developed and reinforced by the cultural groups within the organization. Expectations that have become norms in this tire-mold manufacturing organization fall into three broad categories: *time norms*, *relational norms*, and *learning norms*. In this section, I will provide evidence of these norms and explain ways in which they sustain the cultural values.

Time Norms

The topic of *time* emerged often and with all organizational members. Members revealed that time norms impact satisfaction and productivity and sustain social and organizational values. Supervisors participate in creating and reproducing the norms when they deviate from the usual work schedule to reward workers. They may give people time off, allow them to build up comp time, or come in early and work late.

This isn't per se company policy, but we allow people to work overtime hours and sort
of build up comp time…where they can, instead of using their vacation, they can use time
from there to take a day off. (Male administrator)

The practice is accepted because having flexibility provides the autonomy that members value. Giving more time to the company than is expected is a norm that is rewarded. Organizational members who routinely work overtime, work on special projects, and relocate for the company often receive special compensation and are usually promoted in the next job.

Norms create confusion for new employees who are not aware that social norms sometimes supercede stated policies. Another time norm members follow is to ignore the 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. core-hours statement in the employee handbook and begin working by 8:00 a.m. Although company policy allows for flex hours for administrative employees, employees acknowledge the norm of maintaining core hours, as one administrator indicated.

As far as protocol, we're expected to act professional[ly]. There's core working hours,
9:00 to 3:00 is core working hours. But normally I think everybody would say everybody
should be to work by 8:00…and should stay 'til 4:00…you know. Even though the core
hours are 9:00 to 3:00, really things start at 8:00…or even earlier. (Male, administrator)

Although the company dictates one policy, the organizational group members construct another by complying with the expectations of organizational members. Newcomers learn this norm by observing and heeding the advice of other members. One employee who did not conform to this norm was told by a co-worker that his noncompliance was perceived as tardiness and reflected poorly on the supervisor. The worker had relied on the employee hand book but was not aware of and did not follow the social norm. More latitude is granted to the employee who needs to leave

early at the end of the day. One employee claims feeling empowered by the norm that allows him

the freedom to leave early and choose when to make up the time off.

> If we have to leave early for whatever, dentist appointment, doctor's appointment,
>
> whatever,…cause I normally work 'til 4:00, if I need to leave at 2:30, I can go ahead and
>
> leave at 2:30 and then just tell my boss, you know, "I have to leave, I'm leavin at 2:30
>
> on Thursday, but I'll stay over that hour and a half Friday night, or I'll come in Saturday
>
> morning for a couple of hours to make up that time for leavin early." And then they're
>
> just, "Okay," you know, "yeah just make sure you just put it in." (Male, administrative)

The company policy that allows individuals to work core hours and use discretion regarding

when to come in and when to leave implies that the company supports autonomy. However, the

fact that management and social norms discourage employees from exercising this freedom

implies that conformity to social norms that save face and manage impressions is more

important. When a social value (autonomy) conflicts with a production value (speed, accuracy,

or innovation) the conflicting social value is not supported.

> *Break time norms.* Time norms influence the amount of time people spend during break

time. Plant operators are allotted 12 minutes for breaks, but they take 20 to 25 minutes.

Management allows this unless workers habitually exceed the 20 minutes.

> Once every month they kind of step down on that to make people realize
>
> that they do have a certain amount of time for the breaks. A lot of time it's
>
> abused, but most of the time it normally works out pretty good." (Male,
>
> plant)

Management had originally established the 12-minute break policy based on an eight-hour shift.

However, plant operators at the mold facility currently work 12-hour shifts. Company policy

stipulates that breaks should last only 12 minutes, but workers and management practice and reinforce a different time norm. Management claims to support this norm but asserts the right to retract the break time extension.

Break time norms are more significant to plant workers than administrative workers. Not only is the length of time workers use for breaks a norm that distinguishes the social groups, but equally important is the time of day plant workers take their breaks. The norm is reinforced uniformly by members of the plant every day at 9:30 a.m. when plant workers leave their work stations to take their break. I was warned that I would not find anyone to observe in the plant at 9:30 a.m. The fact that administrative workers did not even mention break time is significant. Based on my observations, most of the administrative workers take short, five minute breaks in the break room at random times of the day. Many of them take their beverage back to their work station and seldom stay in the break room to chat. The break time norm is different for each social group, yet each group reinforces the autonomy they value.

Productive time-of-day norms. Environment and biological time clocks influence members' energy and productivity. Therefore, patterns for productivity surges become norms and expectations for organizational members. Many organizational members claim to be more productive during the early morning or late afternoon hours. Most members claim that they are more productive during the early morning due to fewer interruptions. Several from the administrative staff implied that they used the early morning hours to plan their agenda for the day or held meetings. Half as many indicated that they were more productive in the afternoon due to the fact that they had built momentum that peaked at this time of day. Some preferred working after others had left for the day and cited that they found it peaceful to finish up things when others had left. Like those who indicated being more productive in the morning, some

enjoyed greater productivity in the late afternoon due to fewer interruptions and distractions. Although only one member experienced a normal ebb and flow of productivity which wasn't influenced by the time of day, many suggested that productivity was dependent on the project, people involved, wait time, or other variables outside of their control.

The socially constructed time norms sustain cultural values that allow the workers to decide how to structure their work and leisure time. While it is difficult to measure the impact of time norms on productivity, members revealed that time norms influence their degree of satisfaction due to empowerment. Empowerment, in turn, may lead to greater, more efficient productivity.

Relational Norms

Relational norms that strengthen membership in the culture can reinforce hierarchy and reinforce production and innovation goals and enhance satisfaction for workers. However, relational norms differ with each culture, and newcomers must learn the norms for their culture. At times, relational norms reinforce the hierarchy. A newcomer to the organization learned that the expectation for boarding the corporate jet was to allow the senior staff members to board the private plane first.

> You let the senior people get on first and if you're the most un-senior person then you get the seat right by the door and furthermore you get to pass out pop and cookies and you're essentially the stewardess, flight attendants. (Male, administrator)

Sometimes relational norms define who is included and excluded in social groups. Plant operators don't socialize a great deal with office workers unless they have worked with them on the floor before they were promoted. Plant operators reference the office workers by their location, "across the wall."

The guys out on the floor call the office guys, they call it across the wall, so you don't

really interact with those guys a whole lot unless- unless you worked with them out on

the floor and they got promoted up front. (Male, plant)

Relationships between newcomers and seasoned employees help reproduce organizational

norms. As newcomers observe other employees and ask questions, they become acquainted with

what is normal in the organization. The employees are willing to help newcomers by making

them feel accepted in the organization. The relational norms provide inclusion for newcomers

and reinforce procedural norms.

They've [the newcomer] always got somebody to turn to and talk to and ask questions.

(Male, administrator)

Relational norms are valued by some members who maintain them by managing impressions and

by withholding criticism. One more direct male plant employee claims he places the company's

interests at a higher priority by being less guarded about offering criticism. He claims

Everybody else is much more guarded,…I'm very assertive in doing things,. And I'm not

always worried about if it's going to make me look bad. (Male, plant)

By demonstrating an interest in employee concerns and listening to suggestions in face-to-face

interactions, managers try to build relationships with employees during lean tours. In lean tours,

two managers tour the plant facility two times every week to gain information, troubleshoot, and

build relationships. During these tours managers ask questions, invite suggestions from and

become better acquainted with the workers. This relational norm sustains the cultural value of

innovation.

Systems and people frequently change in an organization and force members to assume

different roles and practices. An engaged and supportive learning environment can help reduce

the uncertainty that members face. *Learning* emerged as a prominent norm among the

organizational members. These norms are created by the social groups and are sustained to help

members make sense out of the organizational system and culture. Learning norms take place

through mentors, experience, and observation.

Learning Norms

    Mentoring

    Objectives of the learning norms include: learning how members of the organization

address managers and co-workers, what daily routines are, how long plant workers can take

breaks, and how to fit in with organizational members. Employees rely on mentoring norms

when socializing newcomers, as one employee describes.

> They usually stick the new person with him [a mentor] with this person….he'll drop
>
> whatever he's doing at any point in the day, no matter what he's working on, if you
>
> have the littlest question. (Male, administrator)

As one administrator suggested, learning norms provide expectations of organizational values.

> He [his mentor] wouldn't give up on something until something was fixed and
>
> working. (Male, administrator)

Mentors may sometimes help employees learn strategies for building relationships and balancing

work with personal priorities.

> He's [the mentor] the one that taught you that you need to get out and about and
>
> socialize more with people and interact with people so that you have some
>
> common links outside the company…and people are more likely to work with you
>
> if they're friends with you rather than just being co-workers with you." (Male,
>
> administrator)

One female administrator enlists the help of a mentor whose longevity provides helpful knowledge and constructive criticism.

> Because you know they have-they've been here for years. They know the process.
>
> And they'll let you know what you need to improve upon. I like that. (Female,
>
> administrator)

Another employee reflected the value of learning from employees with more knowledge by suggesting that a mentor should be someone who gets the job done and one whose ability workers trust. While expressing his regret for the fact that he has none, one male plant member enumerated what he perceived to be the qualities of a good mentor: someone he could talk with about career decisions, gain advice from problems that occur on the job, trust to give honest feedback, and who would be a role model. One plant operator seeks mentors and opportunities to receive mentoring by observing someone who knows how to do a job he wants to learn to do; he then asks the worker to teach him that job. The mentor has equal status and is not necessarily someone with whom he has spent a great deal of time. As a result, the learning norm often reinforces the relational norm as members collaborate.

Experience. One of the most effective and frequently encountered instructors of norms is experience. As one female administrator suggested members learn from an act that receives a negative response through "well by experience, by learning I would think…like, just trial and error I would think." (Female, administrator) Experience and co-workers taught one worker the fact that he needed to know the status of the people on the corporate plane and follow the norm.

> Make sure you know the status. If the vice-presidents climb on there, they
>
> don't want to be sitting in the right seat. And I've actually seen some
>
> people getting bumped from planes for things like that. (Male, administrator)

Observation. Members also learn norms through observing other employees and asking questions.

> Hanging around with the other employee, I guess…watching them, hearing them talk.
>
> (Male administrator)

A female employee argues that members intuitively learn norms by observing.

> I think it's a learned thing…You just watch it around you. You see how different people
>
> are treated or promoted or not promoted or opportunities are given that you learn that
>
> they like things done a certain way. (Female, administrator)
>
> The socially constructed time norms benefit members and the organization.

Both relational and learning norms reinforce the cultural values: innovation, accuracy, and education. Members gain satisfaction in their work environment by being able to manage their work and time and become most dissatisfied when they are not able to control time. Because the organizational culture values autonomy, members produce time norms that reinforce this cultural value. Members gain social benefits through relational and learning norms. Because the norms are socially constructed, members observe and gain approval or disapproval from other members.

The previous section about learning norms addressed ways in which the norms are reinforced and communicated; however, the following section discusses the roles and processes of communication in reinforcing the norms. The third research question considers this.

RQ 3: In what ways are the norms communicated and reinforced?

When a norm is enacted, the act produces a change, and therefore, the deviation implores a response (Goffman, 1969). Responders may choose to accept the norms by repeating, rewarding, or reinforcing the norm demonstrated. When a norm is rejected, people respond

negatively by punishing the actor through exclusion, noncompliance, or ridicule. People become aware of the norms when others respond with acceptance or rejection. When an individual deviates from it, responders communicate acceptance or rejection of the act and therefore reinforce the norm.

Social groups create the norms and communicate when expectations have been fulfilled. Often co-workers in the organization will point out what is expected in contexts that are out of the norm. As mentioned previously, a co-worker informed a male administrator about the norm of allowing those with more status to board the corporate jet first. Some norms are communicated by observing what other members are doing or not doing. Yet some members learn the norms through experience, or trial and error. In the absence of training, experience may be the best teacher.

Trial and error. Yeah. I think that it's definitely, I think.. through training. The[re] really

is no training. There is, they give you a mentor to work with. (Male, administrator)

A negative response to a behavior reinforces the fact that the behavior is not a norm. A positive response reinforces the behavior, so members observing this response will continue to follow the norm to gain a similar response.

Organizational norms are reinforced through rewards and punishments. When members exceed the managers' expectations, they are rewarded. Members were rewarded for response or delivery time that accelerated production or as one male administrator said, "Anything that is an improvement to the quality…of the process." (Male, administrator)

Members are rewarded for compliance to the norm as well as for positive deviation or for exceeding the expectations of the norm. They receive negative consequences or punishment for noncompliance or negative deviation from the norm. One administrative worker implied that

compliance with policies and processes was rewarded. "I've tried to work through the system so I like to think hard work, loyalty to the company are…you get good things out of doing those things." (Male, administration) In the following example, exceeding expectations by working overtime and taking on extra projects was rewarded by having opportunities to work at other plants and gain promotions. The norm that was reinforced was that good things come to those who exceed expectations.

> The employee that puts out the extra effort and voluntarily puts in overtime and works on special projects, specifically related to the firm or someone else[who is] willing to move…And usually they come back, if they come back, they come back rewarded or they're rewarded by a promotion to go to that job. We've had a lot of our people that have moved, have been to various operations around the United States or somewhere else. (Male, administrator)

The norm of exceeding expectations is a positive deviation that is frequently reinforced through non-expenditure rewards. Supervisors often reward for a positive deviation, which is exceeding productivity expectations, by allowing workers to leave work early.

> They've got a thing set up back there where they give the workers less time – how does that work? They give them less than what they need to get done for the week, and when they get that done, they're allowed to go home…So that's kind of nice. It gives them something to look forward to. They get rid of that, and there's really no reason for them to go out there and work themselves to the bone I guess. (Male, plant)

Behavior that falls short of expectations is a deviation that yields a negative response. For example, an employee indicated that he learned to follow the chain of command when he deviated from the norm and spoke to someone higher in the hierarchy about his supervisor to

resolve an issue. The response he received from his supervisor was negative and costly. Absenteeism, and especially chronic absenteeism, likewise deviates negatively from the expectations set for employees and receives a negative response. One administrator explained the consequence for chronic absenteeism. "Our company does not put up with absenteeism. Strike one, strike two, strike three, you're out." (Male, administrator) Absenteeism is a deviation from both organizational policy and social norms that yields negative responses. An absence affects the productivity of other plant workers and may create the need to pull a line worker as a substitute for the absent worker. To gain compliance and reinforce the norm, absent members are issued a verbal warning. When these warnings are not effective, written warnings are used and become part of their permanent record. If workers are absent after the written warning, they are forced to take leave without pay. If a fourth incident occurs, the employee is terminated. Administrative workers indicated that absenteeism is a greater problem among the plant operators.

The final section of this chapter identifies cultural groups based on the dialectical tensions that emerge and create the distinctions between groups. This section compares the ways in which norms differ between groups yet sustain shared organizational values. Despite the use of metaphors that describe the organization as a "big happy family," power differentials underlie many of these differences and create rhetorical dialectics among the organizational members. Findings in this section will address research question four and explain the ways in which norms differ among the cultures.

RQ 4: In what ways do norms differ in co-cultures of the same organization?

While organizational members share the same values, their environment and roles influence how they interact and distinguish how they identify with the organization. Differences

often create tensions and reflect the values and norms each group adopts. When members of a culture embrace one view and reject another, dialectical tensions occur and cause members to gravitate to members who share their view (Hauser, 1991). Dialectics create divisions or distinctions between groups out of which a new set of norms emerge. As Baxter (2004) argued, the dialectics emerge in the dialogue of cultural members. Discourse of the organizational members revealed the tensions between competing values that created divisions.

Among these dialectics is the tension between innovative thinking and doing things "someone else's way." (Male, administrator) While management encourages innovative thinking and rewards it, organizational members must follow standardized processes to maintain steady productivity and ensure the quality and safety of the product. Most members indicated that their productivity increased and they were more satisfied when they worked alone. Many indicated that they were more innovative when they were able to work alone initially and then consider ideas with a group. Consequently, procedures that limit autonomy also limit opportunities to become innovative. A male administrative worker described the differences between supervisors with different perspectives of autonomy. The male administrator claimed that having autonomy enhanced his efficiency, productivity, and satisfaction.

> With our old boss, our errors---I don't remember the exact number, but would say high, and then with our new one…they're almost next to nothing, in just the span of a year. There's a difference of like night and day…my comfort level's a lot better with the more of a hands-off…supervisor than somebody that's always standin over your shoulder every hour; "Where are you at? How long do you think it will take you to get to this? [With the new supervisor] Maybe if you just come in in the morning and he says, "Now, you're still working on this, right? You think you'll have it done today or whatever?"

And then he disappears, and you don't see him. You don't feel like you're on as much of

a deadline I guess, to get it done as somebody always standing over you all the time.

(Male, administrator)

Goal setting is an indicator of the degree to which employees have autonomy. Plant members

must maintain a level of production set for them by organizational leaders.

Five years ago…the outlook or the expectations from the management was "25 to stay

alive." That means get 25 molds out a month. Now, we are in a production mode…Now

we're—our goal is like 62 units. (Male, plant)

Despite the fact that many workers indicated that they set goals collaboratively with

management, it is the management in this organization that sets and evaluates production goal.

The illusion that members have a high degree of autonomy creates a dialectic for those

who perceive that members have equal power. Members eventually find that they must serve the

agenda of those with higher status and greater power. Although many members referred to their

organization as a "big happy family," (Female, administrative) members also experienced the

dialectic of catering to the wishes of the "higher ups from across town." (Male, administrative)

Differences in the environment, physical structure, and procedures create the need for

each group to develop different norms. Plant workers have developed different relational norms

than administrative workers due to the nature of their work and the environment. The plant

referred to the administrative workers based on the physical structure that separates them from

"those on the other side of the wall." (Male, plant) The physical structure influences how the

plant workers perceive their access to administrative workers. The difference in the physical

structure at the plant with the high ceilings, concrete floor, bright lighting, cool temperatures and

loud noises reflects the degree to which their operations and roles differ. Administrative workers

occupy spaces that include carpeting and private cubicles to minimize noise and low lighting and moderate temperatures to cultivate a peaceful environment conducive to creativity. Plant workers expressed that noise reduction and warmer temperatures are environmental factors that would increase satisfaction. Due to lengthy exposure to these adverse environmental conditions, plant workers value longer breaks more so than the administrative workers. The cold temperatures and distances between work stations prevent workers from engaging in casual conversations that build relationships. The extension of break time and their social activities, like card playing and bantering during breaks, provide opportunities for plant operators to build relationships. The day I observed in the plant, a female plant worker invited members to stop by her station for coffee cake. Having the cake in her area enabled the operators in her area to interact with others in the plant. I was informed that this was a weekly event. The fact that plant workers welcomed me as an outsider by inviting me to participate in their social activities (the card game and banter) and encouraging me to visit their area to explain their operation is another indicator that the plant operators value relational norms. The seclusion of the administrative workers behind partitions that were physical barriers and separated them from other teams limited their interaction with other members. The nature of interaction is distinctly different for administrative workers and influences the norms for their group. They interact with co-workers and managers through email and share office space with those who support their work. They have more opportunities for social interaction and relationship building because their work requires collaboration among team members, and therefore, they lack the need for a sanctioned break time. The nature of administrative work requires less repetitive, less physical procedures than that of plant workers but requires ingenuity and continuous problem solving.

Cultural distinctions are made along the lines of opportunities for promotion and education. While most organizational members value the opportunity to have variety in their work and earn promotions, the opportunity is not equally available for all members. Members who advance are those who earn advanced educational degrees, agree to work on special projects, and relocate for the company. Even among administrative workers, opportunities for promotion and projects are limited, but the opportunity to further one's education is offered to all employees. Despite the 12-hour shift that poses difficulty for plant workers to further their education, some plant workers have received associate degrees and gained a promotion to administrative work as a result. However, constraints differ for plant and administrative workers. Plant workers are more constrained due to the interdependence of the plant workers to meet productivity and time goals. Line workers depend on the steady, uninterrupted flow of work from each line worker to achieve goals and complete projects. If plant workers were to alter their schedule to attend classes, this alteration would affect other workers and productivity deadlines. For administrative workers, project deadlines may loom for several months. They are, therefore, able to leave work to take a class without significantly affecting the work of others. The fact that plant operators share a computer terminal among several members creates yet another inequality for them. Speed of production drives the method of communicating information and supersedes initiatives to build relationships. Based on interview responses, the most common form of receiving information about the company is through email. Members indicated that mass emails announce promotions within the company. Some administrative workers indicated that they received several emails per day containing information from the corporate office about the company. The fact that plant members have less access to these kinds of announcements that

contain information and also provide reminders that might inspire some influences the degree to which they can pursue opportunities.

The plant and administrative workers have different roles and consequently have different norms. The norms help each culture manage tasks and relationships and define the roles they play. The fact that the opportunities for promotion and education are not equally available to each group suggests that one group is more empowered than the other. These power differences are apparent in two other co-cultures: those who differ in race and gender.

RQ 5: In what ways do the power differences reinforce the cultural values?

Differences in Power

One obvious difference between groups is that some wield more power than others. Members who wield less power were those with less education, lower status, fewer opportunities for variety or promotions, and those who differed in ethnicity and gender. The fact that less than one-third of the organizational members are female and only 3% of the workers are from different ethnic backgrounds suggests that there is little diversity among the workforce. Females are employed in both plant and administrative areas with white males assuming most of the management positions. The administrative staff employs only one individual whose ethnicity differs from his co-workers', and the plant employs two. Organizational members' location shapes their knowledge and experiences and influences their perception of the degree to which they can participate freely and fully (Wood, 2005). Their location influences ways in which they interact with other members and the degree to which they feel accepted or included. One female perceived that she received different treatment than males who had equal status and claimed that she was often patronized. A female administrator expressed regret for those who promise things they don't deliver and use the power to gain compliance.

They'll [those who wield greater power] say whatever is necessary to get

you to do what they want you to do." (Female, plant)

When locations differ, some members are treated like outsiders but don't challenge these social norms so that they can be perceived as normal to fit in. The experience shapes their knowledge of what to expect from other members and influences ways they respond in future interactions. The only African-American worker in the tire-mold facility indicated that he dislikes working closely with people who express racial prejudices but does not challenge hurtful comments because he wants to fit in. He claims

I just learned to deal with it. Because see, I'm the only black that works here…you know they don't—they don't be direct, but they be indirect you know. And it don't bother me, I guess as much as it would someone that's not I guess, used to hearing racial, you know statements….I learned to deal with it through the years and I kind of keep the calm side on to deal with it like that." (African American, Male, plant)

Despite the fact that some in the organization have created social distance through their comments, due to the inclusion of others, this young African-American male actively participates in social activities like the card game and the bantering between members of each social group.

Cultural values and norms are not etched in stone but are revealed through the discourse of the members. The values can be illusive when perceived values conflict with stated practices that privilege production goals above relational goals or standardized processes above autonomy. Managing these dialectics often requires perceptual changes or conforming to the norms of those wielding greater power. Environmental differences, nature of work, and social differences precipitate the need for different norms that define cultural groups within the organization.

Organizations develop an identity derived from the values, beliefs, artifacts, and rituals that reflect and define the culture. Competition that drives the goals and practices of the tire-mold manufacturing industry influences cultural values for each organization in that industry. Leaders and employees produce norms that sustain industry and corporate values of speed and innovation. Relational norms that provide support for members and sustain the interdependent work needed for productivity also contribute to sustaining the cultural values. To achieve organizational goals, employees rely on one another to produce a quality product at a fast pace, to learn and apply knowledge while cultivating an environment for change, and to build trusting relationships that motivate them to exceed expectations. Members reinforce norms through discursive practices that reward or punish compliance of norms. Cultural artifacts within the environment of the tire-mold manufacturing organization, the way physical space is used and the objects used to complete tasks reflect the values and distinguish cultural groups. Break time rituals also define the cultural groups and produce norms that sustain the cultural values. Due to differences in nature of work, ethnicity and gender, and differing degrees of power, members develop different social norms to sustain their culture. These differences distinguish the groups that develop norms that sustain these subcultures.

In the chapter that follows, I will explain the implications of these findings for this organization and others like it and address ways in which the findings from this study might be useful for future research. The final chapter identifies limitations of this study and changes that would enhance the study if it were replicated. I also address the kinds of studies this case might generate and ways in which it might further other communication studies.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS

In my quest to determine what motivated the members of a nonprofit organization to volunteer their time and resources and receive little in return, I discovered in this case study that motivation of organizational members is dependent on the degree to which they identify with the organization and its values. The motivation to conform to organizational norms differs for each organization and depends a great deal on the constituency of the culture. However, a common motivator among cultures for sustaining norms is that both members and the organization benefit in some way (Azar, 2004). Members who conform do so because they consider the benefits to be meaningful and they perceive that future rewards and positive treatment depend on compliance (Azar). When members are aware of the rewards for compliance and meet the expectations of the social group, they strengthen their membership in the group and reinforce its norms. They gain a sense of belonging or increased satisfaction with work processes and environment. Members' efficiency and performance often improve when norms reduce uncertainty and increase predictability (Langbein & Jorstad, 2004; Russell & Russell, 1992). When members form an identity with the organization, they are motivated to adopt the norms that sustain the values of their social group. Researchers indicate that norms do not erode when members gain some kind of personal benefit (Azar, 2004; Baker, 2006; Workman, 1999). In the tire-mold manufacturing organization, organizational members who adopted the norms gained personal benefits like social inclusion, recognition, promotions, and the ability to enhance their image. Just as competition stimulates invention in the tire-mold manufacturing organization, predictability and satisfaction fuel motivation to conform to norms. Because norms reinforce the cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions that permeate the perspectives and practices of organization members, members seldom discuss or think about the norms but actively participate in reproducing them to

reduce uncertainty. Doing so provides social benefits and enhances satisfaction of members in the group. When members adopt the norms, they are better able to predict co-workers' or leaders' response to their behavior. Reducing the uncertainty and having their behavior affirmed enables members to build confidence, trust, and social capital (Azar, 2004; Baker, 2006; Comer, 1991; Feldman, 1993; Heuser, 2005; Russell & Russell, 1992).

Implications

Norms that reinforce values that sustain member satisfaction lead to employee retention. Satisfied workers develop a loyalty toward the organization and help reduce turnover and absenteeism that save the organization time and financial resources. Employee satisfaction also leads to enhanced performance and efficiency (Bassi & McMurrer, 2007; Skerlavaj, Stemberger, Skrinjar, & Dimovski, 2007). Therefore, norms that increase satisfaction also reinforce cultural values that sustain work processes and promote progress. This case study also suggests that organizational values and norms that enhance employee satisfaction lead to positive outcomes like loyalty to the company, a readiness for change, and a supportive work environment in which members acknowledge the interdependent nature of work. The findings of this case study add to the knowledge of organizational processes for cultivating change and retaining members.

Satisfaction leads to retention. Employee satisfaction is an outcome of work environments that enable personal development. Today's workforce, unlike that of the Baby Boomers who were motivated to work for the end goal of retirement, value work environments that enable personal development and greater balance, which yield a higher degree of satisfaction (McDonald, 2006). In the tire-mold manufacturing organization, gaining a promotion and having opportunities to learn new positions motivated workers because the incentives provided personal benefits that enhanced satisfaction. When a member's behavior or idea was rewarded with public

praise or recognition, the member's satisfaction increased. Consequently, the member and the observers continued the behavior. Organizations interested in cultivating a satisfied workforce to retain workers should routinely identify and review rewards or motivators that encourage behaviors or ideas and enhance satisfaction. Strategies for goal achievement should support processes that enhance employee satisfaction. When organizational members are satisfied in their work environment and form a loyalty to the organization through its members, the organization should experience a decrease in employee turnover and reap the rewards of significant financial savings (Skerlavaj, Stemberger, Skrinjar, & Dimovski, 2007; Wilson, Keyton, Johnson, Geiger, & Clark, 1993).

Satisfaction leads to reinforcement of cultural values. The values that influence satisfaction, performance, and goal achievement in the organization unify members due to the interdependent nature of their work. Members depend on the efficiency and speed of other members to complete their tasks. When members contribute to the satisfaction of others by affirming co-workers, they gain co-operation. When members share common values, they engage in collaboration to problem solve and accomplish goals. While the cultural values of speed, innovation, autonomy, accuracy, and education unify members of the organization, the ways in which members internalize and reinforce these values distinguish the group from other cultures. As members in the tire-mold manufacturing organization sustain the core values, they internalize the value of education or innovation by taking classes or submitting suggestions and strengthen the values and the culture. Conformity to the norms provides personal benefits that perpetuate and reinforce the norm. By adopting the learning norms, members are able to further the goals of the organization and are often rewarded for significant contributions through a promotion or more satisfying work. For the tire-mold manufacturer, rewards that build social

capital, trust, and identity reinforce the importance placed on relational norms in the organization. The trust, implicit in the autonomy the members have, produces employee satisfaction and breeds more trust and loyalty. Loyalty to the organization was rewarded for one interviewee who, at the time of data collection, had been an employee for 26 years and now holds a position in upper management. This individual indicated that rewards had motivated him to earn a master's degree and provided opportunities that increased his satisfaction with and loyalty to the company.

Processes for Change

This study contributes to research about ways in which organizations create a culture for change (Bassi & McMurrer, 2007; Skerlavaj, Stemberger, Skrinjar & Dimovski, 2007; Zimbalist, 2005). Industry demands that members of the tire-mold manufacturing industry frequently adapt to change. The organizational values of autonomy and innovation cultivate a work environment that enables members to make that adaptation. Organizational members must work interdependently to meet these demands. Increasing member satisfaction through rewards that welcome innovative ideas produces an acceptance for that change. An understanding of an organization's culture and the processes for creating the culture can be the foundation on which organizations develop strategies for implementing change (Skerlavaj, Stemberger, Skrinjar, & Dimovski). Clues about the culture are imbedded in the practices, beliefs, architecture, and rituals (Keyton, 2005). This study contributes to research about ways in which members are motivated to comply with norms and reinforce them and identifies the kinds of norms that support the cultural values of a speed-driven tire-mold manufacturer. Promotions and job satisfaction are motivators that perpetuate the production of the norms. This study adds to knowledge about communication processes that affect motivation and change in similar kinds of

organizations. Organizations that seek ways to cultivate an environment for change may find this case study useful due to the demonstration of deviation that leads to positive changes. Reducing uncertainty or gaining personal benefits that enhance satisfaction are motivators for adopting the social norms, but some members deviate from norms to gain the personal and organizational benefits that change brings.

Stability and Change

The birth of a norm commences with deviation; therefore deviation leads to change. Engaging in an innovative process is to engage in a form of deviance. In the tire-mold manufacturing organization, departure from normal is rewarded when the outcome is positive and improves the current system. An environment in which members are encouraged to be innovative produces growth and satisfaction when members exercise autonomy. While members must comply with safety standards and standardized processes that maintain the flow of work, members are satisfied and thrive most when they are able to decide how to organize and complete their work (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Soneshein, & Grant, 2005). Workers with autonomy are also more likely to produce innovative ideas. When members deviate from normal processes and produce these innovative ideas, the deviation leads to change. Education and learning norms cultivate an environment that prepares members for and creates change. Organizational members who are learning are ready for change. Because members are motivated to comply with norms to reduce uncertainty and gain inclusion, their noncompliance receives a negative response that deters them from repeating the deviant behavior. However, a deviation gives birth to new norms and cultivates an environment for change. In the tire-mold manufacturing organization, members are rewarded for developing ways of doing things that improve the current system. Engaging in an innovative process is to engage in deviance. This

departure from normal is rewarded when the outcome is positive. The innovative process requires a departure from normal, and members are encouraged to be innovative. Therefore, members gain personal benefits when they produce ideas that deviate from normal when the deviation or innovation is positive and accepted. However, deviation can also produce negative outcomes that are not rewarded. Conformity to the norms enables a greater degree of certainty in interactions and promotes inclusion within the social system. Deviance disrupts the equilibrium and creates tension that produces uncertainty and sometimes exclusion. Often, in competitive environments, the expectation is to exceed the norm or deviate in a positive direction. In this case study, members who exceeded their parts-per-hour production goals were rewarded because their deviation produced positive results. Absenteeism, however, is a negative deviation with negative consequences. As a result, chronic problems with absenteeism resulted in permanent exclusion.

Limitations

Time. Having limited time to interview and observe organizational members was a limitation of this study. The richness of an ethnographic study of a culture is found in the researcher's experiences through immersion in that culture (Feldman, 1995; Goodall, 2000) and observing at a close distance (Warren & Karner, 2005; Weick, 1983). Having only three days to observe and interview members limited the number of conversations I had outside of the conference room with interviewees. The few days I was in the organization did not afford the kinds of data field research yields when the ethnographer spends several weeks working as an organizational member and becoming a part of the daily operations. While I was afforded some time to observe, most of my time was spent isolated, in the conference room, conducting interviews. The limitation of time influenced the kinds of questions and the structure I used in the interviews. Originally I had been allotted 10 minutes with 15 interviewees. I petitioned for

and was granted 30 minutes with 30 members and time prior to and following interviews for observations. Had I been given more time to conduct the interviews, I would have used a different structure for the interview and employed more open-ended questions to enable the interviewees to share further about their perspectives and be less encumbered with my agenda. This kind of structure would have allowed me to ask more probing questions to gain more information about a specific topic or to clarify. Despite the uniformity of my questionnaire, I discovered a subtle difference in the responses of the two cultures. Plant operators had a greater tendency than administrative workers to share longer stories and provide more examples; administrative workers answered the questions more directly with fewer explanations, more qualifications, and in less time. The two questions at the end of the interview that asked the interviewees to describe their best and worst days at the organization revealed a great deal about the cultural values and yielded personal stories that revealed members' perspectives. Having more questions like these two would have enabled the interviewees to discuss more about perspectives and motivations for deviating or conforming to the norms. I did not have a great deal of access to administrative workers due to the limited time that I was offered to observe in the organization. Therefore, more of my observations were devoted to plant workers, and field notes about administrative workers were based on just a few hours of observation. I drew more inferences about the administrative workers and relied to a greater degree on what they stated in the interviews and what plant operators stated about them. Due to the fact that administrative work is often independent and administrators communicate a great deal through email or small group meetings, spending more time in the organization and working more closely with members would have provided better access to both cultures. Becoming more immersed in the culture as a

member would have also enabled me to interact with members through another medium for which I could not account in this study, email.

Relationship to plant manager. My familiarity with the plant manager may have created some barriers for members and caused reluctance to disclose information. Some prefaced responses with a question asking for assurance that the plant manager would not be informed about what they had to say. Despite the fact that I did not ask for their names on the demographic questionnaire, that the consent form promised confidentiality, and that at the beginning of each interview I assured them that their responses would be confidential, several expressed concern for whether others in the organization would have access to the information and seemed reluctant to share fully and freely.

Stance as a researcher. My stance as a researcher presented another limitation when collecting data and observing organizational members. Some members assumed that my interview questions would contribute to data for the previous organizational assessment conducted by a consulting team from California that took place the week prior to my visit. They were aware that my stance was that of a researcher, and some members may have been reluctant to share or may have framed responses based on what they thought they should say. Some believed that I was there to assess their organization and make suggestions about changes, like the interviewers from the consulting firm who had interviewed several employees the previous week. I was also aware that some members had never before been invited into the board room where the interviews were conducted and seemed to be sitting and responding in such a way that suggested that they now perceived they had power and status. They sat in the chairs with a relaxed posture, leaning back, one leg crossed over the knee, moving back and forth. Their responses indicated that they perceived themselves to be experts. Some responded by trying to

protect the image of the company and justified their responses with examples or comparisons about how good it is in their organization compared with the one "across town." The fact that they were in a board room, with a researcher, having their responses recorded may have influenced some of the employees to speak differently. Organizational speak, an accepted response that contributes to preserving the image of the organization, is not uncommon (Dixon Shaver, 1993). While observing one manager, several plant workers walked by his office door multiple times. The manager explained that those workers would usually stop in to say hello but were not doing so because I was there to observe and they wouldn't want their conversations to become part of the research. Conversations on the plant floor during observations were much less guarded as employees spoke about their roles and how their work supported that of others. They described more about working relationships during these observations. Because the organization has few hierarchical levels and work processes are interdependent, members in the plant have worked with the design team members in the administration. During the observations, plant members discussed ways in which these relationships are important. Plant workers often referenced the fact that suggestions generated by plant members usually help the designers. Spending more time with organizational members observing as an insider would have yielded more responses that were less guarded to provide a deeper assessment of the culture.

Technical difficulties. Having run tests prior to each interview, I was satisfied that the audio levels were appropriate. Even after listening to a few of the recordings each night after the interviews, the audio levels seemed adequate. Not until I began to transcribe did I realize that the audio levels were fine at the beginning, but as interviewees relaxed, they began to sit back in their chair and inadvertently pull away from the microphone. Consequently, I had some difficulty in transcribing. I was, however, able to decipher most of what the speakers said. To

overcome this difficulty in the future, I would ask the interviewees to remain close to the

microphone and project their voices. I would also transcribe a few interviews at the earliest

opportunity to insure that the recording was adequate. Providing a clip-on microphone might

alleviate this problem also.

Demographic questionnaire. Another limitation was that I could not distinguish between

the demographics of administrative or production workers because I did not request this kind of

information in the questionnaire. It would have been helpful to quantify level of education,

number of years of employment, level of satisfaction, and age between the groups. To insure that

I receive all questionnaires in the future, I would be prepared to collect information orally if the

participant had not brought the form to the interview.

Future Research

Modifications of this study that allowed for more time with the organizational members

during interviews and greater access to members for observations would be beneficial. Future

research that examines correlations between learning and change, autonomy and satisfaction, and

ways these variables influence productivity would be beneficial. Progressive organizations face

the challenge of balancing a stable environment in which processes enable workers to thrive with

one conducive to change that enables the organization to improve processes and create

opportunities for employee growth. Research that examines processes that help organizations

achieve homeostasis, yet adapt to change would serve organizational communication scholars

and consultants who advise progressive leaders about these kinds of processes.

Learning and change. The fact that competition drives the values in the tire-mold

manufacturing industry implies that mold manufacturers and other tire companies would share

some of the same values. Future studies that compare the values of organizations within the same

industry would indicate other variables that might contribute to the values and norms in similar

kinds of organizations and whether other organizations within the same industry have similar

values, processes and norms.

Comparing the findings in this case to findings in a case study that examined an

organization within a different industry would be fruitful as well. One would expect to find

different values and norms due to differences in outputs and processes in another industry. An

analysis that identifies the variables that differ in other organization would indicate how these

different processes contribute to different outcomes. The analysis would also yield more

information about what motivates workers to conform to norms and what deviations promote

change.

This study began as a journey to discover the kinds of organizational environments that

contribute to stigmas toward people with physical and mental disabilities. Interview questions

were included that asked about organizational members' attitudes and perspectives toward

members with disabilities. Although some members had worked with people from different

organizations who had disabilities, few members in the tire-mold manufacturing organization

had a disability. Upon discovery of this deficiency in the data, the focus of the case study became

that of identifying norms that sustained the organizational culture and the implications. However,

a few findings about ways in which stigmas are reproduced in the tire-mold manufacturing

organization are worth noting. In the demographic questionnaire, members were asked to rate

their physical and mental health. The majority of respondents rated their physical health as fair or

good and rated their mental health as very good, the highest rating. This indicated that members

either perceive themselves to have excellent mental health or they do not enjoy good mental

health and are not willing to discuss it. Members were reluctant to discuss how they perceived

members with disabilities, but the majority of interviewees claimed that they would be open

about their own illness if it might potentially interfere with the work of others. Their responses

indicated that they would offer assistance, but several stated that that they would have difficulty

working with these members if the disability interfered with their own performance or

production. A future study that examines treatment of organizational members with disabilities

and assesses the cultural values and norms that create the environment for the member with the

disability would be helpful in creating strategies that enhance support for these members. This

kind of study would indicate the degree to which members with disabilities are stigmatized and

the kinds of norms and processes that might reduce stigmas toward this group of people.

Members of the tire-mold manufacturing organization indicated that they would help the

individual who had a disability. They assumed that the individual with the disability would need

help. As Keyton (2005) suggests, assumptions of a group define that culture. It would be logical

then to deduce that by changing the assumptions, cultures can change. The kind of study that

reveals assumptions that, if changed, would change the culture are beneficial to organizations

and our society.

　　This study could be helpful in assessing the degree to which organizational environments

sustain values that include members with disabilities. This case study revealed that cultural

transformation or change is more likely when members have autonomy and are learning because

members are rewarded for and desire new responsibilities that allow them to grow. Therefore,

researchers and organizations seeking methods to assess environments and develop strategies for

change may benefit from this study.

　　What began as a way to appreciate and understand cultural assumptions and values that

influence volunteerism in a nonprofit organization emerged into a case study that offers

explanations about cultural norms and insights about how deviance precipitates organizational

change. I have watched organizational members endeavor to block change because they fear the

uncertainty it brings and organizational leaders who desire change but lack the understanding

that cultural transformation enables change. It is my hope that this research can be used to assist

organizational members who want to lead their organization through change. Ironically, my

journey to discover what motivates people to comply with norms led me to a greater

understanding of deviance; for change is born out of deviance. My journey to discover normalcy

was anything but normal and yet, it was through this abnormal process that I discovered a new

self, one that perpetually changes by learning from organizational members in a tire-mold

manufacturing organization, scholars, and mentors. My goal for this project was to a) finish it, b)

learn something useful, and c) acquire new knowledge and processes that will enable me to help

other people and organizations find more effective ways of using communication to achieve

goals. I have achieved each of these goals. When my advisor says "It's soup !" work toward this

project will end, but I will continue to think and write about the things I have learned, the

experiences I have had, and the people that I have met. I have learned useful things about culture,

norms, organizations, and communication that have given me a better awareness of self and what

motivates me to adopt cultural norms. I have also acquired knowledge that will inform my

teaching and other research projects and gained the experience of conducting a cultural

assessment. This study helped me understand what motivates organizational members to adopt

norms. In the next study, I would like to examine how different cultures socialize newcomers.

Because newcomers are not familiar with the organization or it members, they must learn about

the culture through formal and informal methods. The degree to which they identify with the

culture and assume the norms that sustain it is an indicator of their commitment to and

satisfaction with the organization. I would also like to further examine motivators for positive deviance or thriving, as positive organizational scholarship. I am interested in learning more about not just what motivates people, but also the degree of satisfaction they enjoy when they are doing what motivates them. In any future study my goal will be to use the knowledge, methods, and processes to help people learn and change.

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APPENDIX A
Executive Summary

Bowling Green State University

Department of Interpersonal Communication
302 West Hall
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403
Phone:(419) 372-8349 Fax: (419) 372-0202

RE: Executive summary and request to collect data for a research project

I am a third year doctoral student at Bowling Green State University in the School of
Communication Studies. I have an M.A. in Organizational Communication from BGSU. My
primary research interests have been in the areas of Organizational Communication and Health
Communication. The study I would like to conduct in your organization will be used in my
dissertation and will add to a growing body of literature regarding organizational culture and
stigmas toward individuals with health problems.

I am requesting to observe and conduct interviews in your organization for a research project. I
will need a person in your organization to help me identify and contact the individual who can
authorize my entrance into the organization to conduct this study. I would be glad to meet with
the person who will be making the decision to give me permission.

Benefits to the Organization
Findings from observations and interviews will provide information about your organization's
internal communication and organizational culture. This kind of assessment could be used to
identify whether communication strategies align with organizational goals and strategies;
whether the organizational culture produces the kind of climate conducive to cooperative
performance; or help identify efficiencies/deficiencies in the current internal communication
system. I will provide a summary of my research findings for the organization that maintains
confidentiality of all participants. Your organization would not only benefit from the feedback
this analysis would provide, but research gained from the use of your site for this project would
benefit other researchers and organizational leaders.

Purpose of the Study
- To examine the attitudes and perspectives of organizational members about health issues.
  Productivity in organizations is dependent on the cooperation and
  participation of organizational members. This research project looks at the
  ways in which organizational members' discourse can influence employee
  performance and productivity.

- To examine organizational culture
  The organizational culture is defined by the, strategies, goals, mission
  statement, policies, artifacts, and perceptions of the organizational
  members. Assessing the organization culture will help identify ways in
  which the environment impacts communication and performance.

- To examine communication systems in the organization and identify ways in which norms are established about physical and mental health.

  Each organization has a unique communication system that produces norms. This study will examine ways in which norms are produced and ways in which those norms enhance or inhibit productivity.

Conditions for the Study

I am specifically requesting the following:

- To **observe** the communication without (as much as possible) interfering with your employees for one week and
- To **interview** 30 employees: I am asking for permission to recruit organizational members from each level of the organization. I am asking that you or a representative assist me in recruiting interviewees with the understanding that the interviews will be voluntary and confidential. I am asking to:
  - Conduct interviews during lunches, breaks, or after office hours
  - Have access, if possible, to a conference room or office space
  - Use a list of office email addresses to solicit participation for interviews
  - Have access to inter-office mail system (to correspond with participants)
  - Acquire access for me to observe the work of the organization in public spaces
  - See brochures about the organization, public messages, prospectus

Email messages will be sent using the researcher's Internet service to recruit participants. I will be asking to have 30 minute interviews with willing employees, an interview that will be recorded and transcribed. All participants and the name of the organization will be kept confidential. I will not use the organization's or the member's names in my report.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to conduct my study in your organization. If you have any questions, please email me at hampton@bgnet.bgsu.edu or contact me by phone at 419-420-9856. You may also contact my committee chair and adviser, Dr. Lynda Dixon, at lyndad@bgnet.bgsu.edu or 419-372-7172.

Thank you for your help. I will be calling you soon as a follow-up to this letter. Thank you for your time in considering this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Cheri Hampton-Farmer
Teaching and Research Assistant, Doctoral Student
Bowling Green State University, School of Communication Studies

APPENDIX B
LETTER TO PROJECT MANAGER

June 5, 2004

Dear Larry (pseudonym):

Thank you agreeing to help me gain entrance into Company XYZ (pseudonym) to collect data for my research. I have enclosed an executive summary that identifies the purpose of the study and explains conditions for the study. I have included more than one copy to forward to organizational leaders who may need the information to secure authorization.

I will need an official letter from you or someone who can authorize my entrance into the organization addressed to the Human Subjects Reviews Board at Bowling Green State University or to me stating that I have been authorized to collect data based on the conditions addressed in the executive summary or other conditions stipulated by you. I must have this letter to submit my application to the Human Subjects Reviews Board (HSRB) whose job it is to insure that all participants in the study are treated fairly and not harmed in any way.

I will also need the dates that would be most convenient for me to come to your site and collect data. As I mentioned in the executive summary, I would like to visit the site for one week during which I would observe and conduct interviews. Recruitment of participants would take place prior to that week. I am not able to recruit participants until I have final approval from the BGSU's Human Subjects Review Board.

Thank you for your assistance in making this opportunity become a reality for me.

Sincerely,

Cheri Hampton-Farmer

APPENDIX C
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Bowling Green State University

School of Communication Studies
Interpersonal Communication
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0237
(419) 372-8349
Fax: (419) 372-0202

SUBJECT: Research project: Your perspective needed

I am a Ph.D. student at Bowling Green State University conducting a study of organizational members' perspective on health issues in the organization. I would like to interview you about discussions you have had with organizational members about health issues.

The face-to-face interview should take about 30 minutes. These will be tape-recorded and later transcribed withholding the names and identities of the participants to insure confidentiality.

I would like to include your responses in this study and invite you to participate. If you are willing to participate, please review the dates and times below and reply to this message by email: hampton@bgnet.bgsu.edu or inter-office mail indicating that you are willing to participate and the day and time you would be available for an interview. Please provide your contact information so that I can forward a consent form and confirm your appointment.

Thank you for your interest in this project and for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Cheri Hampton-Farmer

July _____   _____   _____
11:00-11:25   11:00-11:25   11:00-11:25
11:30-11:55   11:30-11:55   11:30-11:55
12:00-12:25   12:00-12:25   12:00-12:25
12:30-1:00   12:30-1:00   12:30-1:00

APPENDIX D
CONSENT LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of Research:
"Constructing Normal: Discourse and Productivity"

Primary Investigator:
Cheri Hampton-Farmer, M.A.

Dear Study Participant,

I am asking for your participation in a research study that will help me complete one of the requirements for my dissertation about interactions among organizational members and its impact on productivity. After reading this information, you are asked to sign a form that gives your consent to take part in our research study.

What is this study about?
This study is designed to hear you tell about the experiences you have had interacting with people in the organization, especially those with physical or mental limitations. Participants must be at least 18 years old.

The Researcher
I am a third year doctoral student at Bowling Green Sate University in the School of Communication Studies. My adviser, Dr. Lynda Dee Dixon, is supervising this project

What will you be asked to do?
I am requesting that you allow me to ask you a series of questions about your experiences taking care of your loved one. The questions will be asked in a face-to-face interview that will be audio-taped. After signing the attached consent form, I will ask you to complete a brief written questionnaire about your age, education, and year working with the company. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. The recorded interview will then be written word-for-word. Your name will not be used.

What will we do with this information?

When I have interviewed the members from your organization, I will write a summary of all of the interviews. The interview tapes and papers will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home office. Your name will not be repeated anywhere in our transcriptions. Your signed consent form will be stored in a separate file from the other information I collect. This study is confidential, which means that I will not use your name. Because the goal of our study is to gain a clear knowledge of your experiences in the organization, direct quotes may be used in my report. I will, however, **not** use your real name with any of the quotations.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may quit or withdraw your consent at any time without prejudice or penalty. If you decide to quit or withdraw, I will not use any of your interview.

Questions?
If you have any questions about the study, please ask. If you have questions later, please contact me by phone at 419-372-3405 or email: hampton@bgnet.bgsu.edu or my adviser, Dr. Lynda Dee Dixon at (419)372-7172 or by email at lyndad@bgnet.bgsu.edu. You may also contact Rich Rowland, Human Subjects Review Board Chair, Bowling Green State University, (419)372-7716 or hsrb@bgnet.bgsu.edu with questions about your rights as a research participant.

Please keep this cover letter for you reference, and sign the attached consent form if you agree to its terms. Thank you for considering our request for your participation.

Sincerely,

Cheri Hampton-Farmer

School of Communication Studies
Interpersonal Communication
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0237
(419) 372-8349
Fax: (419) 372-0202

Bowling Green State University

Title of Research:
"Constructing Normal: Discourse and Productivity"

Investigator:
Cheri Hampton-Farmer, M.A.

I have read the attached cover letter. I agree to participate in a research project that that will interview me about my interactions with organizational members and its impact on productivity.

I have been told that the audio-taped interview will take approximately 30 minutes and that I will be asked questions about me. I have been told that the research is confidential. My name will not be used.

_____
Printed name

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Please verify that you are over 18 years old by checking the box ☐

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

APPENDIX E
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Project: Constructing Normal in Organizations

Demographic Questionnaire:
- ☐ Please complete the brief questionnaire below after you have read and signed the consent form.
- ☐ Bring completed forms to your scheduled interview. Return both the consent form and the demographic questionnaire in the envelope addressed to Cheri Hampton-Farmer.
- ☐ To insure confidentiality, only the researcher will examine the contents of the sealed envelope.

1. Are you male or female? (Circle one)

2. How do you describe yourself ethnically?

3. What is your marital status?

4. How would you describe your physical health?   Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent

5. How would you describe your mental health?   Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent

6. What was the last educational degree you earned?

7. How long is your commute to work?

8. On an average, how many hours per week do you work for the organization?

9. How long have you been in your current job?

10. How long have you been with the company?

11. How many hours per week do you spend with co-workers doing social things? (Going to lunch, having coffee, playing golf, running…)

12. What percent of the time on the job do you spend in both written **and** face-to-face communication with organizational members? (Estimate)

13. What percent of the time on the job do you spend interacting face-to-face with organizational members? (Estimate)

14. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the most satisfied, how satisfied are you in your current job? (Circle one)
    Least 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 Most

Interview Questions: Constructing Normal Dissertation
Researcher: Cheri Hampton-Farmer

Thank you for taking the time to allow me to interview you today. I will be recording this interview.

Today is (Fill in date and time). I'm so happy that you chose to be part of research. I will be asking you questions about your work here at XYZ and about your perceptions of interactions with individuals in the organization. You may refuse to answer any question and anything you say will be kept confidential. Are you comfortable?
May I begin?

1. To what degree does your work environment affect your satisfaction at work?

2. What kinds of changes would increase your satisfaction level?

3. Are you more productive during a certain time of day? When?
      (follow-up question as necessary)

4. Describe your productivity level when permitted to work on a project alone or with a group.
      (Explain why you prefer to work individually or with a group.)

5. Describe your level of productivity and comfort level when you perceive that you are closely supervised.

6. What part of your environment influences your productivity the most?
      (people, location, noise, lighting, processes, access to
      information/people/resources,…)
      Explain.

7. What kinds of personal work goals do you have?

8. What kinds of organizational goals do you have?

9. Are work goals set for you by the organization?

10. How are your personal goals evaluated or measured?

11. How are organizational goals evaluated or measured?

12. What kinds of performances are rewarded and how are they rewarded?

13. What kinds of performances or behaviors are discouraged or punished?

14. How are performances and behaviors punished?

15. What are some rules or accepted ways to do things or work with others in your organization?

16. Were these rules or accepted ways written?
    (How did you find out about them?)

17. How do employees know that these are norms?
    (Were any written or shared at orientation?)

18. How do rules and ways of doing things become adopted with new employees?
    (Are they communicated, observed and followed, punished for infractions…)

19. Do you have a role model in the organization?

20. Whose example do you follow and why?

21. Were you or are you being mentored by someone? If so, by whom?
    (Provide a description of what they do in the organization.)

22. What is your primary source for obtaining information and in what form do you receive it?

23. How do you acquire information about people in the organization?
    (Water-cooler talk, email, office memos, publications, face-to-face interactions…)

24. Tell me about a time when you heard about a process for doing things?

25. How are decisions made about how you do your work?

26. What kind of access do you have to organizational leaders?

27. With whom do you interact the most? (identify job function rather than name)

28. In what ways are those with whom you interact like you?

29. To what extent does working closely with people who are like you are matter to you?

30. Are there characteristics that would bother you about other people with whom you may work? If so, what would those be?

31. How do you interact with those who are different from you?

32. Have you ever known someone who has a mental disability?

33. How would you interact with a co-worker who had a mental disability?

34. Does your organization have policies about ways to treat individuals with physical limitations?

35. Does your organization have policies about ways to treat individuals with mental limitations?

36. Have you worked at other places that had policies about ways to treat individuals with physical or mental limitations?

37. Have you ever had to work with someone who has a physical limitation?
    If so, could you tell me about that experience?

38. Have you ever you had to work with someone who has a mental limitation?
    If so, could you tell me about that experience?

39. If you had a physical or mental limitation, would you disclose this information to individuals at work? Why or why not?

40. Have you ever had to work with a physical limitation?

41. Have you ever had to work with a mental limitation?

42. How do you think your co-workers perceive individuals with a physical disability?

43. How do you think your co-workers perceive individuals with a mental disability?

44. Tell me about your worst day at your organization.

45. Tell me about your best day at the organization.

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your interactions at Company WYX?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. I want to remind you that a pseudonym will be used for your name when the tape is transcribed and no one else will see these responses, with the possible exception of professional researchers who will agree to keep this information and your identity confidential.

Thank you. (Stand and shake their hand) I'll walk you out.