

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND ITS WAY OF EXPRESSION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

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The main theme of this paper is the role of organizational culture in a company and its way of expression within the organization, for its management, for its employees and for its competition. Organizational culture is undoubtedly one of the fashionable areas of management, with a relatively recent history. Its purpose is to sensitize readers to the importance of organizational culture for the success of an enterprise, and its objectives were: to define organizational culture and its influence factors, as well as to explain the role of its components in the organization as a whole and for its members. Practically, the interest in organizational culture began in the 7th decade, largely due to the performances of Japanese companies, performance explained by their specific culture. Although the concept is increasingly met in international and local literature, the process that prevents its practical implementation is the lack of scientific (theoretical) research at a company's level. The old generation of leaders lead based on knowledge acquired years ago, few are those who really consistently do research and are up to speed with the latest news in management, or in the economic field in general. This paper aims to identify key conditions that determine human activity in an organization and their relationship to the successful implementation of an organizational culture by exemplifying great successes of international companies. This is relevant, not only because these companies have huge incomes and recorded notable successes, but also because they enter and develop on the local market, trying to implement their thinking. Thus, local businesses can improve their business by adopting and adapting this way of thinking. The results of the research results reflect the fact that despite the concept that people are the main value of an organization, companies continue to ignore their employees, instead seeking the magic formula, the immediate solution or the latest management tool, not giving organizational culture the importance it deserves. We want to preclude the notion that it is easier to implement a new policy than to invest time to analyze and improve internal organizational culture. An organizational culture of success tries to improve old ways without losing the tradition, it brings advantages to the organization, to the management and to the employees.

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Organizational culture is the one that directs the employees to act according to the principles and values of the organization and to understand what is good, bad, ugly or beautiful for it. Organizational culture refers to those written and unwritten rules, concepts, ways of thinking that spiritually diverse an institution from another and that is reflected in every interaction with its external or internal environment. It is a lifestyle, a set of rules, traditions and beliefs common to all members of an institution.

R. Lynch suggests that organizational culture is a company's own set of beliefs, values and ways of empirical management which reflect in the company's structure and system, in the way the corporate strategy is developed and implemented.

As each person represents an unique human being, any manager without exception is bound to prove an infinite flexibility in his/her behaviour towards subordinates, on one hand, and in understanding their needs and aspirations on the other.

In order to accomplish this, it is necessary that each manager knows those elements that influence the human behaviour and efficiency. The main factors that characterise the human resources in an organization are creativity, ability to inovate, atitude towards work, needs and desires, character traits and group behaviour. These human traits can be influenced by managers in such way as to ensure maximum efficcieny in using human resources.

The efficient use of human resources in organizations requires ensuring and respecting certain conditions, conditions that directly influence the human activity. Thus, the main factors that influence human activity in an organization are:

- factors related to the employee: professional training, practical and theoretical knowledge about their work, work experience, creativity, innovation and other such factors which, as seen, are in a very large extent related to the employee. The manager can intervene here during staff selection and recruitment, identifying those individuals who best fit the organization, on a professional level.

- factors related to the organization: motivation policy, working conditions, company reputation, employee facilities, organizational culture and organizational behavior. These factors are heavily related to the organization, namely to its leadership, the manager liberty of action being restricted only by the limits of their creativity and imagination in terms of personnel policy.

- researching organizational behavior is a way of learning about the world through objective and systematic collection of informații. A good research in organizational behavior involves rigorous training in management-applied psychology or sociology. There are two basic techniques of organizational behavior research - *observation and correlation* - , to which a third is added, less used, namely, *experimentation*.

- the observation method requires that the researcher proceeds to examine the natural activities of people in the organizational environment, hearing what they say and observing what they do. Firstly, the researcher attacks the organizational environment with an extensive training on the nature of human behavior and a particular set of questions to be answered by the research. These factors provide a systematic framework for conducting the observation. Secondly, the researcher will try to keep permanent and careful records of the events he observes right as they emerge. He should not influence the behavior of the ones that are being observed in any form. Research results through observation are summarized in a narrative form, sometimes called a case study. This specifies the nature of the organization, the people and the events that were studied, the particular role of the observer and the techniques that were used.

- two researchers, Bensman and Gerver investigated an important organizational problem: what happens when the activities necessary to perform a specific task come in conflict with the official policy of the organization? They were interested in the illegal use of taps by workers in an aircraft factory. A tap is a steel hand tool used to cut a thred in metal. Possession of such a device by aircraft fitters was completely prohibited because workers could use it to adjust inappropriate or difficult to assemble parts, which could ultimately result in lower resistance of the metal structure or maintenance issues. Having a screw tap was a strict violation of the company's policy and a worker could be fired on the spot for it. On the other hand, maintaining a certain quota of work was necessary, and the use of a screw tap could have saved hours of disassembly and alignment. This conflict was resolved through cooperation between supervisors and inspectors to encourage cautious and appropriate use of taps. New employees were gradually introduced into the mysteries by tapping by older workers and supervisors ensured completion of the skills. Taps were used in front of the inspectors or to correct chronical inappropriate works. If he got caught, the one who had illegally used a tap, had to receive the supervisors punishment

even if it was he who suggested the use of the tap. All this resulted in the development of a social ritual to use this tool.

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A first approach to organizational culture on management terms belongs to T. Petersand and R. Waterman, who in their book called "In Search of Excellence" illustrate the relationship between organizational culture and the development of some firms. The term "culture" was used in economy from anthropology, both in economics and anthropology existing several meanings for this term "culture": phenomenologic, structural, critical and anthropological. According to several specialists, four types of cultures can be distinguished in every country:

- national;
- economical;
- on different branches of economical activity;
- organizational;

Organizational culture, as many other managerial concepts has many definitions. Thus, according to N. Oliver and G. Lowe, organizational culture consists of a set of beliefs, shared by most of the staff of an organization, beliefs about how people should behave at work and what the most important goals and tasks to accomplish are.

Another definition of organizational culture belongs to the Americans M.J. Stahl and D.W. Grigsby. In their view, organizational culture designates a set of values, beliefs and major meanings shared by the members of an organization.

Organizational culture can be defined as all the values, beliefs, aspirations, expectations and behaviors shaped over time in each organization, which prevail there, conditioning its functionality and performance.

The content of organizational culture is treated in different ways in the literature. Thus, Williams and Dobson structured organizational culture on three levels:

- of beliefs and convictions, embedded in the consciousness of the staff which often is unaware of these;
- of values and attitudes, which employees choose and display;
- of individual and group behavior within the organization.

Also other researchers make an analogy between organizational culture and an "onion" in the sense that both encompass multiple layers, only one of which is noticeable at first glance. All these approaches of the content of organizational culture have a common thing— identifying multiple levels that are overlapping. The forms of manifestation of organizational culture are largely intangible, less visible, but we believe that the main manifestation forms are the following elements: symbols, behavioral rules, rituals and ceremonies, statutes and the role of the staff, organizational stories and myths.

As major components of organizational culture, symbols provide meaning or common meanings to its members in relation to some organizational elements of group interest, allowing them to communicate and harmonize. The cultural symbols convey meaning that reflects the philosophy and values, ideals, beliefs and expectations shared by employees. For example, a symbol can be even the name of the organization when it represents an essential element of its activity. The names of competitive companies become in time symbol of what they represent for economy. Thus, Philips and Mercedes are symbols of top quality in televisions and, respectively cars.

The Logo of the company is often a major symbol for its employees and clients. For example, the „tiger“, the logo of the Exxon Company, suggests the power that the respective fuel generates and, at the same time the power that it beholds as one of the most powerful oil companies in the world. As you can see, this symbol is aimed both at customers - through power, symbolic for the

fuel quality - and at employees, and competitors – through the company's market position. The lion can be interpreted the same way, the symbol of Peugeot Company. The official language or the slang is also a frequent bearer of symbols in the organization. In competitive firms from developing countries, the practice of formulating commands or sayings that summarize the organization's work concept is increasing. In this respect, the 10 commandments used as informal behavioural guidelines at the American Bankers Insurance Group Company in the U.S., engraved in stone at the entrance of the general headquarters. A special symbolic value are seen in the fittings, furniture, paintings, colors, etc., used in the organization. For example, equipping the meeting room with a round or oval table suggests the idea of participation, of group action. The general manager's use of a of a huge desk and a big chair suggests putting a great emphasis on hierarchy, on autocratic vision in management. In conclusion, we can say that cultural symbols are used to express certain views and to promote certain values and behaviors within the company. They help focus the thinking, the behavior and the actions of the employees towards the crystallization of certain, typical, prevailing organizational behaviors.

However, organizational culture stands not just for values and principles, it means the company's openness to new, acceptance of changes, development of good communication between employees and between departments, bringing managers down to the level of each individual employee, a climate that support creativity and positive relations between people ... it means creating a place where people love coming to every day. Organizational culture incorporates the following:

- staff ethics;
- attitude towards risk;
- attitude towards competition;
- attitude towards the client;
- attitude towards the employee;
- attitude towards external forces;
- management style;
- identity;
- control.

Managers should be aware that an effective organizational culture brings only benefits to the organization, both on short and on long term. "Management leads culture and culture leads behaviour" (Dygert and Jacobs 2006: 21). Leadership guides the direction organization is headed, they express it through organizational culture, and the staff follow it and reach the desired performances, in the same time feeling satisfied and appreciated for the work they have done.

However, in implementing an organizational culture, managers must be aware of those disturbance factors that may have a negative influence if not controlled. They can create misunderstandings, quarrels, frustration and all this leads to a drastic decrease in performance. Usually employees are frustrated not by their work, but by the working environment, by colleagues, by managers, by the fact that they are not appreciated, etc. The most important elements to be controlled, to be coordinated so as not to create conflictual situations are called "the 4 C's" (Dygert and Jacobs 2006: 32):

- change: an organization is constantly changing, in a process of growth or, conversely, in a decrease, which will generate more and more situations. People struggle with change and fight even between them because of these changes;
- Competition: competition has always been a reason to quarrel between employees, but competition can be positive as long as it stimulates creativity and good cooperation. Internal competition should be transformed into teamwork. The employee must learn to enjoy the success of his colleague, and even help him because the situation may change at any time;

- cooperation: when two people or a group cooperate in a certain situation, success is three times safer than if they all pull in different directions, because it is proven that teamwork is more effective than independent work;

- control: control can be the power that unites or divides in an organization. A good measurement of the level of authority required in each situation is key to success. Sometimes, people must be guided in a certain direction and strictly be controlled in what they do, but sometimes it is better for employees to learn to think for themselves, not always be told what to do.

It is very important for employees to understand organizational culture because it affects their daily work through the benefits they receive, through how they interact with colleagues, through how they dress at work and everything else relating to work at the office. Own experience and observation will help employees, in time, to understand the way in which actions are taken in the organization and which are "the house rules". Also, the organizational culture provides them with economical, spiritual security, with the need for recognition and self-esteem that the human psyche craves for. A job means added value, not just execution (for that there are machines). Thinking that the employee works for the boss, should be changed into a different attitude, namely that the employee works for the customer to meet his/her needs and requirements.

Culture actually expresses the way human resources of the company are seen and what behavior the employees must adopt both in the working process and in different situations they face during their activity within the organization. At first glance, one might say that all successful organizations have similar cultures, since they have asserted themselves on a market with fierce competition. But it is not the case. It is almost impossible to identify two identical cultures from two different organizations. This difference in culture is due to several factors, factors which influence the organization, giving it a certain type of culture. Among the factors that influence an organization's culture, the following can be mentioned: the founders of the organization, the national culture within which the company operates, age and size of the organization, managers, the activity profile and the work nature, characteristics of the human factor, etc. All these elements offer each organization a certain system of values and a certain perception of reality. To grasp the true importance of organizational culture it is enough to observe some successful organizations and the values they promote.

McDonald's is a company known practically all around the world, with restaurants open in our country as well, in almost every major city. Headquartered in Illinois, the company had become the leader in the fast food business and a rolemodel for aspirants in the franchise business. It can be said that the company's success was due to its management and its mission: "fast service of hot snacks, in a clean restaurant, at affordable prices". The company has developed a true "cult of quality". Nothing is left to chance in a McDonald's restaurant, from the interior design, to the equipment and staff behavior. All these are dictated in an operating manual created at headquarters. The manual gives instructions for employees on how to present themselves, what to tell customers and how to do their work. Hamburgers and fries are made in a way as to respect the most strict uniformity. Preparation of hamburgers is made with great care and each employee is trained to know which layer of meat comes first. Employees in a McDonald's restaurant have a certain dress code and must be very careful with their customers. A McDonald's employee has several tasks in the restaurant: he/she serves, cleans, helps unload the supplies, which means that not everyone is able to integrate in the work environment at McDonald's.

Organizational culture is a concept that is slowly making room in our companies, but they have a lot to make up for over the multinationals that are coming to Romania with a certain mentality, with a vision of success, built in a stable and competitive economic environment. And often, this view makes them proficient, through the people they select and the values they adopt. At this level, organizational culture can make the difference between a successful company and one that struggles to survive.

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