

THE RELEVANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: A THEORETICAL-CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

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Abstract

The abstract has to include enough information for readers to be able to appreciate the nature and meaning. This article refers to the organizational culture as an element of human resource development within the organization. In this context, we highlighted the concept of culture, in the vision of several researchers. Different opinions regarding the notion of culture has enabled us to address the issue in question multiaspectively, developing a complex content on the given topic. Also, the organizational culture is analyzed, by highlighting the types and ways of its manifestation at different managerial levels. Through the content analysis on the organizational culture that targets, first of all, the people, we highlighted the impact that it can have on the development of human resources in the organization. Thus, in order to develop and implement an efficient system of human resources development, it is necessary to be based on an organizational culture accepted by all the employees.

Keywords: culture, organizational culture, values, norms, human resources, human resources development.

Classification JEL: O15; O19

1. Introduction

The organizational culture is of primary importance in managerial work. Its practical realization can be successful if the managers know and have at their disposal a theoretical conception. Therefore, the first step in research is directed towards the retrospective determination of the essence “organizational culture” content, the second towards the definitions published in the specialized literature, in the third we will refer to the typology of organizational culture.

From the very beginning we mention that the notion of "organizational culture" is frequently found in literature. But the analysis indicates that it is not addressed in all researchers in the same way. The existing approaches have given us the opportunity to formulate our own vision, which will be briefly stated below.

The collocation organizational culture, introduced in literature by Pettigrew (1979), enjoyed a rapid growth in popularity in the early 80s of the 20th century, but the phenomena of cultures have been identified before. The first concerns for the study of cultural systems were registered in the field of anthropology. Subsequently, the term culture was taken over by psychology, but there was no consensus regarding the definition of the concept in the two fields. The lack of consensus in defining organizational culture has been perpetuated in psychology, and over 160 different definitions were identified, and published in literature. [1]

2. The concept of culture

Culture is also understood as a specific way of organizing and developing human existence, expressed through the product of material and spiritual work, a system of social norms and structures, social values in ambience with people's attitude towards nature, between themselves and in relation to themselves.[2] The results of the research allowed us to find that the concept of culture had a twisted historical path. It has been used as a secular word that sophisticatedly determines a "cultural" person. Anthropologists understand by it the customs and rituals that

societies have developed throughout history. Managers use it to identify the climate and practices that organizations develop or the values and credibility of the organization.[3]

Nicholson (1988) suggests a very general acceptance of the concept of culture, namely: all the differences that distinguish the existence in one social community from that of another community (by social community can be understood a society, an organization, a group, etc.). The definitions published in literature differ in terms of the richness of the cultural aspects captured and the level of depth at which they are analyzed, in an attempt to capture those elements that distinguish between two or more communities. Thus, some consider a single phenomenon, while others have a holistic approach, including beliefs, rituals, habits, value systems, behavioral norms and ways of running business. In relation to the level of depth concerned, the definitions can be classified into the following categories: those that emphasize the visible aspects of culture, those that emphasize the meanings attributed to different aspects of organizational life and those that combine these two approaches. [4]

At the same time, Camilleri, C. suggests “to consider culture a formation that is built according to the promotions of the environment, a set of provisions designed to respond to them. [5] Steers, R. summarizes a definition of culture in the following dimensions: 1) relationships, where culture is the character of commitments in relation to social organizations that allow people to trust each other in so far as they can work together; 2) values, where culture constitutes deep beliefs or values that substantially affect behaviors in a common choice of the idea of culture. [6] Culture accredits, as Blaga, L. states, a new order in the universe, a "Sunday" one, producing an "ontological mutation" and impregnating with a new thrill, with a new color "the canvas of the cosmos".[7]

Next, we evoke the points of view regarding the definition of culture, which lead us to practice-praxiology. For this we turn to Ladriere, J. who considers culture an ensemble consisting of systems of representations, normative systems, expressions and action systems. [8]

3. Theoretical-conceptual aspects of organizational culture

In fact, the concept of organizational culture, in the sense of conceptual delimitations, derives from the anthropological concept of culture as an integrated set of values, beliefs, norms and social behaviors of individuals and groups (the way of being and thinking), on which articulates a diversity of particular manifestations. As the culture of the organization is an attempt to penetrate the atmosphere, meaning, feelings and the character of an organization, we will find several definitions:

- 1) model of beliefs and expectations shared by the members of an organization, rules that describe their behavior (H. Schwarts, S. Davies);
- 2) the symbols, ceremonies, and myths that express the core values and beliefs of an organization and its members (W.Ouchi);
- 3) set of philosophies, ideologies, values, beliefs, presumptions, expectations, attitudes and norms shared by the members of the organization (D. Hellriegel);
- 4) the beliefs shared by the managers of an organization (J. Jorsch);
- 5) the traditions and beliefs of an organization, by which it differs from other organizations and which ensures its stability (H.Mintzberg);
- 6) the deepest levels of basic ideas and beliefs adopted by the members of organizations (E. Schein);
- 7) set of values belonging to the organization, which helps its members to understand the purpose and the ways of action (R. Griffin). [9]

In the opinion of professors Ovidiu Nicolescu and Ion Verboncu, the organizational culture “lies in all the values, beliefs, aspirations, expectations and behaviors that are shaped over time in

each organization, which predominates within it and directly and indirectly determines its functionality and performances". [10]

Marian Năstase considers that “organizational culture represents the totality of values, symbols, rituals, ceremonies, myths, attitudes and behaviors that are dominant in an organization, are transmitted to future generations as the normal way of thinking, feeling and acting and have a decisive influence on its results and evolution”. [11]

Problems related to organizational culture are in the spotlight of researchers too, in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, by defining the nominated concept, from the point of view of philosophy, Zelenschi A. confirms that organizational culture can be defined only starting from man, because the founders and bearers of the organization's culture are people. The system of symbols, traditions, rituals, values and behavior rules shared by most of the staff of an organization, the way of thinking and acting that underlies the organizational activity, the way of internal integration and adaptation to the external environment constitute the organizational culture. [12]

In the same context, Covaș L. defines the organizational culture “a system of values and concepts, shared by all employees of an organization, which determines their behavior and the character of the institution's activity”. [13]

Culture can also be approached from the perspective of:

- strategic, as a closed system that first defines the person or institution, then gives them direction to everyday life;
- tactical, it means that refers more to the organization's routine - as a system of meanings that directs the specific actions we take every day; the members of the group have a cultural paradigm at the level of values, which causes specific rules and regulatory sets in relation to their actions.

Specialists give a great importance to organizational culture, considering it essential to the organization's success. Strong cultures influence the members of the organization in such a way that they work together for its benefit. Thus, successful business organizations have strong cultures, which allow them a high degree of adaptability to the external environment and a sustained pace of optimization / improvement in their field of activity.

At the same time, Schein distinguishes three levels of organizational culture. At the most superficial level there are the material manifestations of culture: the stories circulating in the organization, the rituals associated with various organizational events, the dress code, aspects related to the design and interior decoration or the building architecture. The next level is represented by the organizational values, and the deepest layer of organizational culture is the fundamental beliefs of its members. These are, in most cases, tacit and difficult to identify, due to the fact that they are considered "self-evident".[14]

Schein sustains that at the second level, the values are still being tested - they are what he describes as "supported values" and thus cannot or can be practiced throughout the organization. At this level, we can say that individuals have to mimic to some extent some values. Attention to customer needs, for example, can be a value registered in a policy statement and departmental objectives. According to Schein's view of culture, only when these second-level values are absorbed by the organization's subconscious and become implicit premises of behavior, they truly deserve to be considered its culture. Thus, in this example, attention to customer needs must become a way of behaving, which nothing can compromise even when operational difficulties arise.[15]

A similar bifurcation of the approach can be identified in the organizational culture concept. Some authors' investigations are oriented towards observable phenomena, such as: rituals, stories and testimonies of beliefs. Others advocate for shared and preconceived elements of organizational culture - the values, beliefs, and assumptions carried by the members of the organization. The values, beliefs, and assumptions cannot be so easily and clearly observed by overt behaviors or

codified beliefs. In this way, the existence of two cultural levels is recognized: observable manifestations and hidden or interpreted manifestations, the research methods being limited to one level or another.

In relation to this, B. Schneider suggests to target only some of the most operationalized and relevant elements of organizational culture, the most accessible to be estimated, in the form of concentric rings (basic-centered assumptions, then the others: values, norms, behavioral models and the finished product), and Bigas A. represents three levels of analysis of organizational culture (Table 1). If we place the basic elements of organizational culture on a horizontal axis, in which the movement from left to right represents their distribution directly from observable to unobservable, we could obtain the following picture:

Table 1. Levels and elements of culture

Culture levels	Specific elements	Methods and tools
Visible artifacts	Ceremonies Rituals Customs Myths Legends, stories The heroes of the organization Language and symbols Official documents Office arrangement	Conversation Interview-based survey Observation Documents analysis Group discussions
The level of values	Values Beliefs Employees' perceptions of different types of culture: Power, role, task and person.	Group discussions Handy&Harrison Questionnaire List of values
The level of basic assumptions	Those values of maximum depth that make up a stable pattern that underlies most of the manifestations of the organization.	Group discussions

Source: BIGAS A., *The organizational culture - a model of identification and level analysis* Journal of Organizational Psychology, Center for Applied Psychology, The University of Bucharest , Vol. I, No.1, 2001, p.69

Approaches to the content of the organizational culture, even if they differ to an appreciable extent, have one thing in common - the identification of several overlapping levels.

Thus, Williams, Dobson and Walters structure the elements of organizational culture on three levels:

- of beliefs and convictions, imprinted in the consciousness of the staff of which they are often unaware;
- of the values and attitudes, for which the employees of the organization opt and which they display;
- the tertiary or deep level, which brings together the beliefs, convictions of employees, their major assumptions about the meaning and ways of carrying out the organization's work.[16]

Another approach that belongs to D. Roberts reveals three other levels within the organizational culture:

- the external, surface level, composed of behaviors, slogans, documents and other observable elements of the organizational culture;
- the second level, consisting mainly of the values and rules that are shared by the organization`s employees regarding what is good or bad in the company, risk taking, development of the organization and employees, services provided, etc.; it is reflected in the symbols and language used in the organization;
- The tertiary or deep level, which brings together the beliefs, beliefs of employees, their major assumptions about the meaning and ways of carrying out the organization activity.[17]

In studying organizational culture, researchers had to go through the variant when an organizational culture viewed in the form of a model did not involve the common structural element, but rather becoming a specific culture. In our attempts to systematize the information regarding the organizational culture, we considered it rational to focus on the types and models of organizational cultures, distinguishing them by the content of orientation to concrete and specific.

The most common typology of organizational culture is that of Ch. Handy.[18] The author distinguishes four dominant types: culture of power, role, task and individual. Handy's model considerably simplifies the reality of the organization's culture, which is certainly composed of elements of all four types.

However, the author highlights some very important essential aspects of culture, such as:

- How does the organization treat power and / or centralized control, diffuse throughout the organization?
- What kind of power is respected in the organization-personal power (charisma), power of resources (guards), power of positions or power of experts?
- What working methods are preferred — individualistic, competitive, collaborative?
- Do people have to adapt to the structure or does the structure serve people?
- Whose interests are best served by the dominant culture — of leaders, of those who hold key positions, of certain groups, of individuals?[19]
- What about other stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, shareholders?

The French researcher R. Sainsaulieu [20] identifies the following types of organizational culture:

- the culture of withdrawal or submission, in which the organization is based on purely technical relationships and the participation of individuals (as a personal effort investment) is minimal. The role of the manager is to indicate the rules to be followed;
- the culture of fusion or humanity is present in homogeneous organizations that work by consensus. Within it, we find a balanced mixture of formal and informal aspects. The dominant value is integration. Deviants risk being punished or excluded, being treated as a danger;
- the culture of negotiation or debate, which mainly promotes professional values. The activity is based on projects, and the structure of the organization - on groups of debates and negotiations regarding the activities to be carried out;
- the culture of separatism or mobility, oriented towards individual values, the internal structures being designed to ensure promotion and a successful career. The degree of integration is low.

Another model presumed by Stanley D. Truskie is one based on competitive conditions and concrete actions in the form of a cooperative culture, inspiring culture, consistent culture and culture of achievement.[21]

The culture of cooperation derives from the term "collectivism", having roots in families with their values. As in the family, the foundations of the culture of cooperation are trust, care for each other, mutual help. The key to a culture of cooperation is the interaction of members, which emphasizes the human resources.

The model of inspirational culture comes from special institutions (religious organizations, social agents, charities). The members of this culture are inspired to achieve, because they believe passionately in this culture and are dedicated to humanistic cultural values, social responsibilities and individual potential. This is the culture of gratitude and compassion.

Consistent culture models come from military / political organizations. The leadership of these organizations is characterized by predictability and order. This is where the results are monitored and plans are elaborated down to the smallest detail, the possible deviations are identified and the organization of their correct solution is organized.

The model of achievement culture is based on the values of scientific communities. Its members are promoted according to the criterion of contribution in the intellectual product, for them the cultural values are related to intelligence, inventiveness, ingenuity. Worth is considered a key criterion in gaining respect from both colleagues and superiors.

4. Conclusions

Therefore, the organization is defined as having a spirit, an ethos, a climate of its own. Even if, from a physical point of view, several organizations can be identical or look alike, then from the point of view of organizational culture we are dealing with different entities. Each organization forms its own rituals, ceremonies, particular gestures. Unwritten habits are formed, which are transmitted from one generation to another, patterns of behavior are sometimes imposed by those who lead or harvested naturally in the specific training area. As in any actional and transactional field, a corporate spirit is born.

An organization can be identified by its culture. The external environment of the organization exerts a great influence on the organizational culture. A strong organizational culture helps the organization to adapt to the external environment. The managers have an important role in preserving, maintaining, shaping the corporate culture through their attitude, which can determine the adaptability / inadaptability of the organizational culture to the external environment.

The organizational culture also has an impact on human resources development. At the organizational level, a human resources development system cannot be developed and promoted without being based on certain values that form the organizational culture.

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