MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES
AND
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONAL CULTURE ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN ROMANIAN COMPANIES

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Abstract: Organizational culture refers to the values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization. Organizational culture includes an organization's expectations, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid. Organizational culture influences: the ways the organization conducts its business, treats its employees, customers, and the wider community; the extent to which freedom is allowed in decision making, developing new ideas, and personal expression; how power and information flow through its hierarchy; how committed employees are towards collective objectives.

Environmental adaptation and behavioral integration are two major problems the organization of this beginning of century is confronting with. Organizational culture is one of the solutions to solving problems.Firstly, the paper presents the concept and the characteristics of organizational culture and secondly, aims to highlight the influence of national culture on it and the special features of this concept in Romanian companies.

Keywords: organizational culture, national culture, set of values, rules, Romania.

INTRODUCTION

As individuals we are born into a culture, we form in a culture, and in our lives shape our own cultural horizon, which comprises a set of values, beliefs, ideals and hopes. Thus, we are surrounded by culture and also create culture, we are creations of culture we are born and creators of culture and creators prospects of continuous development.

Such individuals, organizations "live" and "survive" by the same rules, and the personality and image of each organization are primarily designed for people who compose it. Once in the organization with their own ideas about them, about others, about welfare and happiness, about bosses and subordinates, they propagate their beliefs while assimilating the habits, rules, restrictions existing within it. From this mixture of beliefs, ideals, behaviors, languages, is born the culture of every organization.

Every human being has certain personality traits which help them stand apart from the crowd. No two individuals behave in a similar way. In the same way organizations have certain values, policies, rules and guidelines which help them create an image of their own.

Organization culture refers to the beliefs and principles of a particular organization. The culture followed by the organization has a deep impact on the employees and their relationship amongst themselves.

Every organization has a unique culture making it different from the other and giving it a sense of direction. It is essential for the employees to understand the culture of their workplace to adjust well.

The important aspect about the culture of a company is that people can become familiar with the organization or even better to anticipate the behavior, if they understand the "chemistry" of that composition.

According to American authors, organizational culture "implies rituals, symbols and stories associated with a class of persons, providing an insight into people's beliefs and values, the things that are important to them and the reasons behind these elections." *(Dygert and Jacobs, 2006)*

The authors Nicolescu and Verboncu defined organizational culture as a "combination of values, beliefs, aspirations, expectations and behaviors shaped over time in every organization which predominate in the organization and conditions its direct and indirect functionality and performance." *(Nicolescu and Verboncu, 2008)*

Alexandru Puiu, in "Management - analyzes and comparative studies", defines organizational culture as "a structured set of results and spiritual organization, integrating a system of values and beliefs that is cultivated and transmitted systematically among its members, outside the unit." This vision is distinguished by highlighting both the spiritual elements and materials that make up the culture. *(Puiu, 2007)*

The Components of Organizational Culture

A variety of experts have provided different models of organizational culture in the literature. While different, they all agree that organizational culture is a multi-dimensional construct comprised of a variety of elements, such as: *(Management study guide, 2016)*

1. *History/Folklore* – the early years of a company have an enduring effect on culture. The early leaders of a company leave a legacy through stories and legends that are passed on through the years. The tone and message of these stories helps underscore what is valued in the organization.

2. *Communications/Symbols* – communications are both formal (e.g., employee newsletter) and informal (what is discussed in the break room).

Symbols are communication short cuts that are usually visual (e.g., placing ample visitor parking next to the main entrance is a visual symbol of the importance of customers and partners).

3. *Metrics/Rewards/Recognition* – what is measured is what matters in an organization. Likewise, what individuals are recognized and reward for is also a clear indication of what is important in the organization.

4. *Behavioral Rules/Norms* – behavioral rules evolve over time. These rules define how individuals are expected to interact with each other and how work should be approached in the organization. They are typically unspoken or recorded rules that are evident in the day to day behavior of employees.

5. *Valued Skills* – what skills are most evident in senior leaders? What skills are most important for promotions? These are the skills that are most valued.

6. *Valued Traits* – similarly, what traits are most evident in senior leaders? What traits are most important for promotions? These are the traits that are most valued.

There are several *factors which affect the organization culture*:

The first and the foremost factor affecting culture is *the individual working with the organization.* The employees in their own way contribute to the culture of the workplace. The attitudes, mentalities, interests, perception and even the thought process of the employees affect the organization culture.

Example - Organizations which hire individuals from army or defense background tend to follow a strict culture where all the employees abide by the set guidelines and policies. The employees are hardly late to work. It is the mindset of the employees which forms the culture of the place. Organizations with majority of youngsters encourage healthy competition at the workplace and employees are always on the toes to perform better than the fellow workers.

The nature of the business also affects the culture of the organization. Stock broking industries, financial services, banking industry are all dependent on external factors like demand and supply, market cap, earning per share and so on. When the market crashes, these industries have no other option than to terminate the employees and eventually affect the culture of the place. Market fluctuations lead to unrest, tensions and severely demotivate the individuals. The management also feels helpless when circumstances can be controlled by none. Individuals are unsure about their career as well as growth in such organizations.

The management and its style of handling the employees also affect the culture of the workplace. There are certain organizations where the management allows the employees to take their own decisions and let them participate in strategy making. In such a culture, employees get attached to their

management and look forward to a long term association with the organization. The management must respect the employees to avoid a culture where the employees just work for money and nothing else. They treat the organization as a mere source of earning money and look for a change in a short span of time.

The culture of the organization is also affected by *its goals and objectives*. The strategies and procedures designed to achieve the targets of the organization also contribute to its culture.

Individuals working with government organizations adhere to the set guidelines but do not follow a procedure of feedback thus forming its culture. Fast paced industries like advertising, event management companies expect the employees to be attentive, aggressive and hyper active.

The sex of the employee also affects the organization culture. Organizations where male employees dominate the female counterparts follow a culture where late sitting is a normal feature. The male employees are more aggressive than the females who instead would be caring and softhearted.

The clients and the external parties to some extent also affect the work culture of the place. Organizations catering to UK and US Clients have no other option but to work in shifts to match their timings, thus forming the culture.

Types of Organizational Culture

According to Robert E. Quinn and Kim S. Cameron at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, there are four types of organizational culture: Collaborate (clan), Create (adhocracy), Compete (market) and Control (hierarchy) *(Quinn and Cameron, 1999)*:

- − Clan oriented cultures are family-like, with a focus on mentoring, nurturing, and "doing things together."
- − Adhocracy oriented cultures are dynamic and entrepreneurial, with a focus on risk-taking, innovation, and "doing things first."
- − Market oriented cultures are results oriented, with a focus on competition, achievement, and "getting the job done."
- − Hierarchy oriented cultures are structured and controlled, with a focus on efficiency, stability and "doing things right."

This typology reflects the range of organizational characteristics across two dimensions that were found critical to organizational effectiveness.

All cultures promote some forms of behavior, and inhibit others. Some are well suited to rapid and repeated change, others to slow incremental development of the institution.

For example, Quinn and Cameron associate the lower two cultures (Hierarchy and Market) with a principal focus on stability and the upper two (Clan and Adhocracy) with flexibility and adaptability. A Hierarchy culture

based on control will lead mainly to incremental change, while a focus on Adhocracy will more typically lead to breakthrough change.

The right culture will be one that closely fits the direction and strategy of a particular organization as it confronts its own issues and the challenges of a particular time.

According to ***Charles Handy's model,*** there are four types of culture which the organizations follow *(Handy, 1985)*:

1. Power

There are some organizations where the power remains in the hands of only few people and only they are authorized to take decisions. They are the ones who enjoy special privileges at the workplace. They are the most important people at the workplace and are the major decision makers. These individuals further delegate responsibilities to the other employees. In such a culture the subordinates have no option but to strictly follow their superior's instructions. The employees do not have the liberty to express their views or share their ideas on an open forum and have to follow what their superior says. The managers in such a type of culture sometimes can be partial to someone or the other leading to major unrest among others.

2. Task Culture

Organizations where teams are formed to achieve the targets or solve critical problems follow the task culture. In such organizations individuals with common interests and specializations come together to form a team. There are generally four to five members in each team. In such a culture every team member has to contribute equally and accomplish tasks in the most innovative way.

3. Person Culture

There are certain organizations where the employees feel that they are more important than their organization. Such organizations follow a culture known as person culture. In a person culture, individuals are more concerned about their own self rather than the organization. The organization in such a culture takes a back seat and eventually suffers. Employees just come to the office for the sake of money and never get attached to it. They are seldom loyal towards the management and never decide in favour of the organization. One should always remember that organization comes first and everything else later.

4. Role culture

Role culture is a culture where every employee is delegated roles and responsibilities according to his specialization, educational qualification and interest to extract the best out of him. In such a culture employees decide what best they can do and willingly accept the challenge. Every individual is accountable for something or the other and has to take ownership of the work assigned to him. Power comes with responsibility in such a work culture.

The Impact of National Culture on the Organizational Culture

An organization operates in a national or multinational space, where human resources have certain specificity in terms of social values, religious, aesthetic. Therefore, organizational culture is heavily influenced by features of the culture of senior levels, including national culture that has the strongest influence.

An important factor influencing organizational culture is the characteristics of the national culture. In literature there are different views on the concept of national culture, the explanations historians show that this field of national culture consists of language and morals, literature and traditions, fine arts, but setting national culture targeting psychological mechanisms. About Culture Organization was said to be similar national culture, that has its' origins in history, myths, heroes, signs and symbols, evolves around the values inherited by the organization from generations before, creating the same kind of collective subconscious and influences critical ability of the system to change.

Geert Hofstede (1996) believes that there is a *"culture in the narrow sense",* i.e. "a civilization" or "refinement of the mind", which is focused on issues such as education, art and literature and a *"culture as mental software"* which corresponds to the concept of culture from anthropology, which include patterns of thought, feeling and action.

Features of national culture from which individuals of an organization come, put their impact on culture of that organization.

According to opinions expressed by Hofstede (1996), in particular national cultures differ in terms of values, while the organizational cultures are targeted using practices that are the most visible part of the culture and which can be oriented in certain limits. Thus, it is desirable that the values of founders and other important leaders to become practice for other members of organization.

This is not simple that most values were learned in the family and in school. In this view it is important that consistency is achieved between the values promoted by founders and leading leaders on the one hand, and values assumed by most employees, on the other hand. From this point of view, there may be organization with a strong culture and a culture organizations labile poor.

Regarding our country, any organization working with people who are trained in the Romanian space, and through education, the environment in which they live, have assimilated values, norms, and specific elements of Romanian culture.

Organizations operating in the Romanian influenced by an average of disapproval of society. Being an old society and quite socialist, as we find that it is not precisely our expectations, we deny totally.

During the transition period of our country, the impact felt at both the group and individual level can be considered cultural shock. The confusion between the desire for stability and the change manifested simultaneously, lack of hierarchies of stable values, which should fill a gap of 50 years, the need for new ideas and new meanings for work and life, the desire to copy Western democracies mechanisms are currently some of the most important features of the Romanian society, which inevitably are found in organizations regarded as *social systems.*

A study conducted in 2006, in order to discover the specifics of organizational culture in Romanian companies, highlights three trends *(Human Synergistics România, 2006)*:

1. Excessive competitiveness

Everything revolves around "win" or "lose". People constantly trying to prove that they are better than their peers, not necessarily to the objectives of the organization. This often need to prove beyond space tasks priority and move in any situation no matter how insignificant as it: you have to win every debate any polemic, any dispute. Any idea once expressed is sacrosanct and they are willing to fight until the bitter end, not defending it. If the losing dispute, prefer to retire than to admit defeat.

This behavior it may seem natural, but is not. And, above all, not at all helpful. At the individual level, generates stress and conflict, and at the organization produces the dissolution of the organization, dividing them in camps and even polarization after strictly personal interests.

2. Conventionality

Although it seems paradoxically, measured Romanian organizations have a great deal of conventional, that is starting to respect rules and procedures. This start is a reaction of the people against increased aggression of the organization and represents a simple loophole of escape in front of individual responsibility.

The rules become more important than ideas. As the said a manager of a very powerful organization dominated by this feature: "Here's a great idea, shame that we have a rule that forbids it." Lack of conventional does not mean, as we may be tempted to interpret, repeated violation of the rules, but the awareness that their role is to help work and then when they do not, they must be changed.

3. Self-development

This is the paradoxical dimension. Romanian organizations have a high level of orientation towards the future, for the better, to quality, to overcome creative obstacles.

This comes not only from the proverbial capacity of the Romanian people "to manage" but a sincere concern of members to make something of

quality. This tendency was manifested practically in all leading organizations measured and must say that most fell into this category. This result showed us absolutely importance that special environment from Romanian organization has in the formation of consciences and working practices. They have a missionary role in this regard, which did not find in stable economies.

Many researchers organizational culture put particular emphasis on the strength of a culture and organizational performance, with "strong" culture and cultures "weak". The existence of a strong culture does not necessarily mean efficiency, because a strong culture, but incompatible with the adopted strategy will not lead to achieving good results. So no intensity culture, but especially her ability to adapt to the environment turns it into an instrument of success *(Ionescu and Toma, 2001)*.

CONCLUSIONS

Each organization has its specific typology, that distinguishes it from others and characterize the mode of action of its employees. Regarding our country, it was noticed that we have a very strong national culture, which is a historical source for the characteristics of organizational cultures in Romanian companies. Referring to organizations founded before 1989, they have not a culture well framed in a certain pattern (i.e. Western). The exception is perhaps younger organizations set up directly on a well-defined organizational structure or rather on a model successfully imported.

Overall management of each organization wants its orientation towards a particular model of organizational culture (for reasons such as vision, mission, strategy, etc.), but everything starts from the individual and personal or professional ambitions differ from one individual to another, leading to heterogeneous patterns within each entity of an organization.

We can say that only by researching the origin and evolution of the Romanian spirit can determine and explain the status quo in which today materializes Romanian mentality and character, and also the condition they are in Romanian organizations.

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