

The principles of organizational culture in research

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Abstract. Organizational culture semantically integrates the values, symbols, beliefs, myths, rituals, ceremonies and aspirations that define the spiritual space of an organization. Organizational culture is conservative by nature and will therefore oppose any innovation or trend of major management change. The sustainability of an inertial organizational culture is usually ensured through a series of managerial practices.

Keywords: *organizational culture, research, sustainability*

1. Introduction

When a group of people live and work together for a longer period of time, they share a series of values and opinions about the life of the organization, about what is right and proper for the progress and success of the organization. They contribute to the development of thought models and respectively to the establishment of behavioural models in accordance with the experience gained within the organization, with the interests and strategic objectives of the organization. All these models of thought and behaviour, as well as the capitalization of the tradition of the organization form the organizational culture (Hill and Jones, 1998)[1].

The concept of organizational culture semantically integrates the values, symbols, beliefs, myths, rituals, ceremonies and aspirations that define the spiritual space of an organization. Organizational culture is an intrinsic part of modern approaches to organizational and strategic management because it integrates the patterns of thought and behaviour generated, over time, in the life of an organization. Organizational culture is: a) holistic, in the sense that it is the result of an integration process; b) historically determined, in the sense that it reflects the evolution in time of the organization; c) anthropologically determined and socially grounded, because it is created and preserved by the group of people who make up the organization. It is a synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements, rational and irrational, individual and group between which dynamic connections with a strong impact on the performance of the organization are developed.

2. Developing an organizational research culture

The concerns of the specialists in research and consulting for the organizational culture began to crystallize in the early '80s, respectively after the publication of the famous book *In search of excellence* (Peters and Waterman, 1982) [2]. The book contains the findings of extensive research conducted by the consulting firm McKinsey to discover the correlations that exist between the efficiency of a firm and its organizational specifics. The research team was led by Peters and Waterman, and the research targeted U.S. companies with the best results recorded over a long period of time. The excellence of a company depends on several factors, but the one that emerged to be extremely important is the organizational culture.

Although it belongs to the area of the ineffable, organizational culture affects the way in which decisions are made in an organization and thus the concrete way in which it evolves, in the context of a strategy. Specialized studies prove that this organizational or institutional culture is the basis of the entire decision-making process, although it does not appear in the visible spectrum of the organization, only indirectly, through inertial consequences. Organizational culture integrates these values, beliefs and behavioural norms that have proven to benefit the organization in its past. In other words, organizational culture preserves all the values of the past, which have been historically validated in favour of the organization and its employees.

Organizational culture is the genetic code of an organization, its regulation in part written and partly unwritten but mandatory. Hence the importance of organizational culture in the implementation of strategic management. Organizational culture is conservative by nature and will therefore oppose any innovation or trend of major management change. That's why it's called an inert organizational culture. There is also the alternative of creating a dynamic organizational culture, but such a strategy is very difficult to implement. When successful, the dynamic organizational culture contributes fundamentally to the strategic success of the firm. The advantage of such a culture lies in the promotion of dynamic and creative thought patterns, models that encourage change and do not hold it back.

For a university, organizational culture is second nature. A spiritual nature materialized by tradition, rituals, legends and behavioural values that give personality to the university and, at the same time, give charm to student life. At the same time, this organizational culture condenses and is reflected in society, through "what we frequently call the fame of the university. This fame matters immensely for the way in which those who have managed to study and obtain the diplomas of these prestigious universities are appreciated.

In 1986, Harvard University celebrated its 350th anniversary, and America 350 years since the establishment of the first institution of higher education. John Adams used to say, "The Boston Council and our Harvard College have set the universe in motion." Indeed, Harvard University was and remained a symbol of excellence with the ideal progress of the entire nation as its ideal. Harvard boasts six US presidents, 30 Nobel laureates, more than 25 Pulitzer Prize winners, more than 200 Rhodes scholarship recipients and numerous congressmen, governors, ambassadors and members of the White House presidential cabinet. The election of J.F. Kennedy as president of the USA brought Harvard University to its social prominence.

The president was a graduate of this prestigious University, and four of the members of his cabinet were professors at Harvard: Robert McNamara, Douglas Dillan, Willard Wirdz and Robert Kennedy. They were also working with other Harvard specialists such as Archibald Cox, Richard Goodwin, Kenny O'Donnel, John Keneth Galbraith and others.

The examples may continue, but their message is clear. An organization that achieved such prestigious results knew how to build an organizational culture based on the concept of excellence and a model of strategic thinking. As Peters and Waterman pointed out in their famous book, the dominance and coherence of organizational culture proved to be an essential quality of perfect companies. Moreover, the stronger and more market-oriented this culture is, the less there is a need for policy manuals and strategies, organisational structures or detailed procedures and rules by activities and jobs. In these companies people find in most situations the solutions that are to be expected, because the ways of solving the situations are clear.

In his famous books: *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values and Cultures and Organizations*, Professor Geert Hofstede, Director of the Research Institute on Intercultural Cooperation, Limburg University, Maastricht, The Netherlands, has demonstrated that each individual is the bearer of patterns of thought, feeling and potential manifestations acquired throughout his life. Many of these models were learned in childhood, because at that time an individual is most able to learn and assimilate. Specialized research has shown that as some thinking and feeling skills have been imprinted in a person's mind, they must give them up before they are able to learn something different and this renunciation is harder than their initial learning. [3].

Using analogy with how computers are programmed, Geert Hofstede calls these patterns of thinking, feeling or action mental programs. We stress that this is not a powerful analogy, because people cannot be programmed like computers. An individual's behaviour is predetermined only in part by his mental programs; he has a native ability to deviate from them and to react on the basis of creative and intelligent models (Brătianu, 2002). [4].

In the opinion of Geert Hofstede (1996): "Culture is always a collective phenomenon because it is ultimately accepted at least partially by people who live or have lived in the same social environment where it was learned. It is the collective programming of thought that distinguishes members of one group (or category of people) from another. Culture is taught, not inherited. It comes from an individual's social environment, not their genes. Culture must be different from human nature, on the one hand, and from individual personality, on the other, although the exact boundary between human nature and culture, as well as between culture and personality, is a topic of discussion in the world of social scientists."

Creating an organizational culture to achieve excellence in research is a fundamental process, because the inertial forces will oppose any initiative that will have a different direction than that of the culture existing at a given time. Inertia creates resistances to change, which can manifest themselves in different forms: fear of the unknown, lack of information, threat of status, threat of acquired knowledge, fear of failure, difficulty to give up, lack of visible advantages, threat of authority, traditions, anxiety, feeling of vulnerability, threat of self-esteem, stress, etc.

3. Sustainability of organizational culture

The stronger the organizational culture, the greater the inertial forces will be. The sustainability of an inertial organizational culture is usually ensured through a series of managerial practices, synthesized by Rosabeth Moss Kanter as follows (Clarke, 2002, p. 11) [5]:

- Be suspicious of any new idea coming from a lower level just because it is new and comes from a lower level. You never know what can be hidden behind it and who actually has an interest in promoting it.
- Insist that the people who need your approval to act get the signature from a few other managers. This is time-consuming and can sometimes even create difficulties for them to discourage them. Bureaucracy destroys any enthusiasm in promoting new ideas.
- Ask departments and employees to criticize the proposals of others.
- Express yourself critically freely and refrain from boasting.
- Treat identifying problems as evidence of failure to discourage employees from notifying you when something is wrong in their department.
- Control everything carefully. Make sure frequently that everything that can be counted is counted, respectively everything that can be evaluated is evaluated.
- The decisions taken must remain secret, in particular those concerning the reorganisation or modification of the organisation's policies and strategies. These decisions will be announced at the limit of the time available, in order to keep the employees in a permanent state of alert.
- Assigns to managers at the lower levels, in the name of delegating authority, the responsibility to find solutions regarding the dismissal or transfer of employees, respectively, to propose solutions to all problems with unpleasant consequences for employees.
- Above all, it is good to prove on any occasion that you are part of the management team and that you know very well everything that happens in the company.

Such a managerial attitude destroys the enthusiasm of innovation and scientific research in any university. At the same time, the desire to expose and disseminate the results of the research turns into a reporting attitude, the emphasis being on the quantity and observance of the procedures. Such an organizational culture will have to be reshaped so as to stimulate and not to hold back scientific research and, in particular, research excellence.

According to change management theories, the thawing of organizational culture and the production of change involves a series of actions and training programs for all those who have managerial responsibilities, such as them (Clarke, 2002, p. 137) [5].:

- to be aware of the need for change at the level of the entire organization;
- to understand what each individual needs to do to support the realization of change;
- to learn new behaviours that allow the intensification of cooperation and communication within the organization;
- to change their attitudes towards change and to collaborate with each other;
- to start the process of analysing how to implement the change and development of a new organizational culture, which would stimulate scientific research

4. Conclusions

For the academic environment, it is important to emphasize that change itself is not an end. It is done so that all those interested in conducting a performing scientific research to obtain a real support and a permanent stimulation from the university management. This means the awareness of achieving a flexible integrative environment between teaching and research activities, as well as an adequate motivational system for rewarding performing results.

Excellence in scientific research cannot be achieved by emphasizing the obligation of research tasks by the very status of teacher, but by stimulating and rewarding those who manage to promote innovation and best integrate the didactic process with the research one. This desideratum has already been demonstrated as possible and necessary by research universities, where academic excellence integrates perfectly with excellence in scientific research.

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