

## THE EVOLUTION OF CULTURE AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

Camelia ȘTEFĂNESCU

“Spiru Haret” University, Faculty of Management

***Abstract:** There are three forces that influence the quality of work and determine its results: organizational culture, leadership and power. This paper is focused on the first amongst those mentioned, the organizational culture, and on the way this must adapt to the process of change that organization is submitted to. The organizational culture is each time perceived more as an element greatly influencing the transformations produced within the company. All interests, needs, goals and functions that constitute the dimensions of an organization, are reflected through the organizational culture. In this organizational culture quality appears as one of the most important strategic objectives of the company, this being the approach the hereby paper sets as goal.*

***Keywords:** organizational culture, leadership, managerial culture, organizational behaviour.*

### 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE NEED OF ADAPTING THE ORGANIZATION TO CHANGE

The environment in which the organizations run is actually perceived as an environment which national borders fade away more and more, the organizations extending their activity beyond the national borders.

The organizations that have developing and extending strategy through internationalization must undergo the changing process supported by the adaptability to the international environment. In the mean time, the organizations that run on the national markets are obliged to comply with the changing process supported by the adaptation to the influences of the international environment that interferes with the national one, through multinational organizations or through organizations from other countries that operate on the national market. In such a dynamic and competitive environment, the coordinates and the characteristics that define it are of a great diversity.

The main characteristic of the international environment is the *complexity*, which is associated with evanescence and risk. The

complexity of the international environment is determined by the existent differences between the conditions of the organizational environment of different countries, the evanescence of the environment, the continuous change of the same and the managerial risk.

The manner in which a company carries out its activity is obviously influenced by the environment in which it runs. This influence is perceived both from the areas of the internal environment of the company and especially, from the factors of the external environment (providers, competitors and customers, shareholders, investors, regulator and administrative organs, mass-media, economic conjuncture and international politics, the development manner of the national economy and the cultural particularities, national habits, the skills, the tastes, the moods and the expectative of society). All these factors of environment print the particularities specific to the values that govern the organizational culture and the specific manner of structuring the intra-humanitarian relations.

Up to the point of developing a global organizational culture, the companies that run in the international environment must cope with the differences in values, traditions and

habits that characterize each market on which they run, must rapidly adapt to the changes and form multicultural teams. The organizations that run in other countries, encounter a series of differences in comparison with the environment known from the country of origin, differences that cause for their strategies to be submitted to the process of change. From the differences often encountered, there can be exemplified:

- Sales, distribution and advertising methods (direct sale, through local or foreign dealers, through own distribution network);
- National culture (values, norms and practices);
- Technological environment (level of applied technologies, technical and functional level of the equipments, level of computer usage, of mechanization);
- Knowledge (technical, of marketing, at academic level).

Generally speaking, the international environment is evanescent, meaning unpredictable. The complexity of the international environment causes for the organization management to be put in the situation of making quick decisions to face unpredictable situations. From the factors that lead to the growth of evanescence of the international environment, we distinguish:

- diffusion of technology, which have led to the growth of the number of industrialized countries, so that the sales of products and services in these countries encounter unpredictable difficulties;
- liberalization of international commerce and of the capital markets;
- competition of imports and threats of exports.

In an age of global competition, of technological innovations, of turbulence and discontinuity, the international environment is continuously submitted to the process of change. The transformations that take place at technological, informational, structural, relational, cultural and human values level, amplify the complexity and the evanescence of the environment. In this context, the capacity of the company to adapt to the requirements of the environment is given, in a decisive proportion, by its attitude towards change. The

change is a characteristic and continuous process, which may be planned or unplanned and which may determine other change or a chain of changes, generating temporary disturbance or radical turn points. People are affected by change and react in different ways, because change triggers emotional reactions, and it has repercussions that can be accepted, rejected or ignored. The change may be perceived as an opportunity, being characterized by dynamism, flexibility, activity, motivation, stimulation, but also as a threat, characterized by stress, time and money consumption, worry, irritation, incertitude or failure. At the level of the organization, the need for change must be clearly explained, as well as its importance for the organization, and especially, the effects of the change upon the members of the organization. The building of an own identity based on the developing of certain new cultural schemes at organizational level, eases the acceptance of changes. The purpose of such attitude is that of determining all employees of the organization to „digest” the change as an issue that they wish, to ask for it, being aware of its necessity. This attitude is based on certain valid values and convictions, cultivated at the level of the entire organization and that allow the creation of a common vision upon the manner of involving in order achieving certain major goals within the organization. In order for this desire to come true a major transformation at cultural level is needed. This must be oriented towards the values of innovation, of continuous learning, of performance which, in fact, represent the goal of any change at organization level.

In its intention to highlight the importance of the managers role in the actions of implementing a change at organization level, Rosabeth Moss Kanter notices that, “the managers who discover the adequate changes that they must imply in their organizations and successfully implement these changes, allow their organizations to be more flexible and more innovative. Since the change is such an essential part of the existence of the organization, the managers are especially valuable for all types of organizations” (Rosabeth Moss Kanter, 1989, p.85). This is

the characteristic of a management of efficient change. At opposite pole, the resistance to change is inevitable and hard to beat if the persons affected by the change have the belief that this will create harsh disequilibrium in their life and activity. An incompetent management of change produces exactly the same reaction.

## **2. THE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR**

The organizations are social inventions meant to obtain some common goals through group effort, the essential characteristic being the coordinated presence of people, and not necessarily of the things. The domain of organizational behavior consists of understanding people and leading them in order to work efficiently. The organizational behavior refers to the attitudes and the behavior of the individuals and of the groups within the organizations, systematically studies these attitudes and behaviors and assures the ability of understanding how they can be managed and changed efficiently. It also studies the way in which the organizations can be better structured and the way these are affected by the events from their external environment.

The domain of organizational behavior refers to the manner in which the organizations can survive and adapt to change, because, in fact, all organizations have as goal surviving. Thus, the members of the organization must:

- be motivated in order to adhere and stay within the organizations;
- fulfill their basic work, presenting faith in what the productivity, quality and manner of service are concerned;
- be flexible and inventive.

The domain of organizational behavior refers to all these basic activities. The inventiveness and the flexibility, which help in adapting to a change, are especially important for the contemporary organization.

The organizations, in order to achieve their goals, depend of the interaction between people and their coordination. A great part of the physical and intellectual work of the organizations is carried out by groups, whether

they are permanent work teams, or they are teams for the accomplishment of certain projects on short term. Also, in all organizations there are informal groups due to the fact that friendships are developed and individuals form alliances in order to fulfill their tasks. The quality of this informal contact in terms of communications and morality may have a strong impact in achieving the company's goals. Because of these reasons, the concern of the organizational behavior is to make people work efficiently within the team.

Those who study organizational behavior are interested in attitudes – how satisfied people are with their jobs or how dedicated they are to the goals of the company. Behaviors like innovation, cooperation, conflict, resignation or ethical failures are important areas of study for the organizational behavior. Often, the change of the organizational behavior, through process, structure and system modification, proves to be easier than changing mentalities, organizational cultures, in their whole. The creation of a new reaction within the behavior and the attitudes of those involved, the deep understanding of the organization's culture and of the change levers that have most chances in proving to be efficient within the particular organization are actions that presume an all-over effort of changing attitudes, values and convictions of all employees of the company.

## **3. PRESENT COORDINATES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

There are three forces that influence the quality of work and that determine its results: organizational culture, leadership and power. Subject of many specialty literature works, especially after 1970, when the concept naturalizes in theory and in economic practice, the organizational culture values, in the *traditional vision*, traditions, rituals, symbols, beliefs, models, meant to sustain the interest of groups and individuals of the members of a certain organization. *The modern vision* of the concept proposes a more dynamic perspective of defining organizational culture, which includes the way culture is learnt, transmitted

and changed. From this perspective, the organizational culture is considered to be a set of values and basic behaviors “that a group invents, discovers or develops, as it learns to solve its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which function well enough to be considered valid and therefore, are transmitted to the new members, as being the right way of perception, thinking and feeling in relation with those issues”. (Florescu, C., Popescu, N., 1988).

The organizational culture is each time much more perceived as an element that greatly influences the transformations produced within the company. The earlier the company develops, at institutional level, a coherent set of practices, values and behaviors, that have as a result the organizational culture, the more it will influence the perceptions, livings, attitudes and behaviors of the organization members.

All these interests, needs, goals, functions that form the dimensions of a company, are reflected through the organizational culture. This influences actions and decisions at organizational level and expresses in the shape of interaction of individuals and of groups that form the organization. In this quality the organizational culture appears as one of the most important strategic objectives of the company.

Usually, the persons who work for a long time within an organization have the tendency to keep the traditions, “house rules” or “the way things are done around here”, while the newly recruited try to change the state of things. An organizational culture of success tries to improve old practices without losing the spirit of tradition. This benefic equilibrium is not easy to obtain. First of all, it is needed that within the organizations to be a high level of trust among the employees, secondly, it is necessary for the individuals that for part of an organization to have demonstrated their personal integrity. All together, these conditions constitute the bases of a common destiny within an organization, the employees assuming the principle of shared faith, meaning we lose, but mainly we win together.

The criteria depending on which the organizational cultural systems allow a series of

classifications, refers to the domain of activity of the company, to the nature of the work, to the size of the organization, to the system of performances, to the type of feedback, to the attitude towards risk and to the structure.

The first amongst them, *the culture of power*, is specific to the entrepreneurial companies of small dimensions, of the politic organization’s type, of syndicates, etc. The in such way structured organization has the advantage provided by the quick adaptation to the requirements of a dynamic market. The main characteristics reside in the communication from top to bottom, centralized control, and authoritarian leading style, the decision being the expression of power and not of procedures. This type of system is attractive for the individuals focusing on power, on assuming risk or on the resource control. The success depends of aggressiveness and of the ability of working in a competitive ambient. The authority center imposes a radial communication, in which the decisions are transmitted from the center towards the periphery structures, and the information start up from the periphery towards the center. The members of the group depend of the center and need security insurance.

*The culture of the role* is characteristic of the bureaucratic organizations, standardized and formalized; to it, it is associated the image of a *pyramid* or of that of a *Greek temple*. The power is the expression of influence through rules and procedures, meaning the power of position. The organizations focused on roles function well only in the established environments, uncompetitive, and are governed by the mechanical bureaucratic formulas. The columns of the “temple” represent the employees and the roof the leaders – a clear differentiating of each one’s status. Without “roof”, the employees would lack strategic orientation and protection, and without “columns”, the leading would not make sense.

*The task type culture* characterizes the matrix-like organizations (combination of functional structure and that of project), and the authority comes from the expertise capacity. The fulfillment of tasks by specialist is important, throughout a common effort. This is a culture that encourages the team and the dynamism, without fix roles, meaning the

collaboration with the specialist from different areas is relevant.

*The person type culture* is present in the organizations built for individuals who already are institutions by themselves. These have high abilities; they are already chosen from their college period and are one of the best students.

*The Club culture* is characterized by security and stability, evoking a paternalist vision upon the organization. The attached values, beside the ones announced above, are fidelity towards the organization, sharing and assuming certain missions, of organizational goal and objective. There are promoted people from the inside, and the hierarchical ascension is, usually, slow. The organizations that develop this type are the military and the religious ones.

*The fortress type culture* is a siege culture, because among its attributes there is encountered instability, insecurity, provisional state. The organizations with such culture do not offer chances of development and continuity of employees carrier, does not promote values such as attachment, fidelity, identification or security. It is typical to the companies from the petrol or hotel domain.

*The operator culture* is present in almost any type of organization, in all its functional departments. The supposition operators are starting off from is that there are colored situations and unpredictable ones. The attached values are competence, presence of spirit, communication and team work. Innovation and the unpredictability of the situations bump in the rigor of the hierarchy and of formalism, and thus, the operators feel suspended among the two pressures.

*The engineer's culture* is specific to the organizations that manipulate technology. The supposition that maintains this type of cultural system is that according to which there are objective solutions, which the more are impartial the more they are deantropomorphised, and therefore more scientific.

*The culture of the executive manager* appears and is shared at superior managerial level and is based on the idea that the goal of an organization consists of making money. The top managers are no longer connected to the issues from the bottom of the organization and get to lead quasi impersonally. In such an

occupational subculture, the employee is a resource consumer and not a producer.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The organizations are part of the daily existence of individuals, guard their relationships, shape their interaction and circumscribe their behavior. Without culture and organizational behavior, no structure is functional, these being integrated and perceived by the members of the organization as a unique and undividable entity. The deep understanding of the organizational culture and of the change levers that have the greatest chance of proving to be efficient in the particular culture, presumes an overall effort of changing attitudes, values and convictions of all employees of the organization. In order for this desire to come true a major transformation at cultural level is needed. This must be oriented towards the values of innovation, of continuous learning, of performance that, in fact, represent the goal of any change at organization level.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Boboc, I., *Comportament organizațional și managerial. Fundamente psihologice și politologice, vol I, Comportament organizațional*, Editura Economică, București, 2003;
2. Florescu, C., Popescu, N., *Trecerea la o noua calitate prin conducerea științifică a schimbărilor*, Editura Politică, București, 1998;
3. Hofstede, G., *Cultures and Organizations Software of the Mind*, Mc. Graw-Hill, 1991;
4. Johns, G., *Comportament organizațional*, Editura Economică, București, 1998;
5. Kanter, R.M., *The New Management Work*, Harvard Business Review, November/ December, 1989;
6. Shein, O., *Organizational Psychology*, Editorial Hamilton Press, London, 1993;
7. Stanciu, Șt., Ionescu, M., *Cultura și comportament organizațional*, Editura Comunicare.Ro, București, 2005.