THE NEED FOR CHANGE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE PRE-UNIVERSITY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT – A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

Georgiana-Viorica TEŞILEANU, Ph.D.
Marius BAZGAN, Ph.D.
Transilvania University of Braşov

Abstract: *The school is an organization that through its activity contributes to the development of culture. Any attempt to improve school activity must start from the knowledge of the school culture, as it is manifested at the level of managers and teachers. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the need to change the organizational culture of the state pre-university education institutions, realized through the perception of the tacher in these institutions.*

Keywords: *organizational culture; need for change; state educational institutions;*

1. Introduction

Organizational culture represents "a specific complex of values, leading beliefs, representations, meanings, and ways of thinking shared by the members of an organization, which determine the ways in which they behave inside and outside the respective organization" (Iosifescu, 2005, p. 42). It is built because of the repeated collaboration between the members of the organization, being created based on the values and beliefs of the individuals that make it up. Among the most important modeling factors are: the manner of leadership and implicitly the style of decision making, the level of formalism, the manner of organization, the policies and almost all the systems that offer value and support to a certain type of activity and a certain type of behavior. The important elements of manifesting the invisible organizational culture are: norms and rules, values, ideals, beliefs, representations. The visible part includes symbols, slogans, rituals, ceremonies, myths, behavioral patterns, jargon and perspectives related to the members of the organization.

The functioning of the organization has both intentional and unintended effects in the direction of maintaining or changing the organizational culture. The changes in the environment require an immediate reaction from the organizations, so that the challenge is not under the influence of "if we need change" but that of "how to change ourselves in order to increase efficiency" (Cameron, Quinn, 2011, p. 9). At organizational level, the change may involve: "changes to the basis of organization's construction, changes of tasks and activities, of the technology used, changes of organizational culture, changes in personnel management, changes in organizational performance and the image that the organization has created itself" (Kurb, 1992, cit. in Bogathy, 2004, p. 283). The organizational culture changes due to the need to adapt the organization to the changes around it or the desire to change the old procedures and identities. Changes in the culture of an organization can occur spontaneously, under the influence of macrosocial changes, emergent changes. Unlike emergent changes, "planned changes are systematically induced and directed to generate a new culture configuration" (Vlăsceanu, 2003, p. 276). The planned change of the culture of the organization involves a series of stages: the critical analysis of the organizational culture, conclusions on the organizational culture and triggering and directing the change of the organizational culture. According to S. Cristea (2009), "the sources of changes in organizations can be external or internal. In order to produce the desired changes, external pressures must be embraced by the

organization, so that culture becomes the essential filter, it can either favor or support change or, on the contrary, block it and distort it" (p. 12).

According to Schein (1985) the change of the organizational culture is very difficult, but not impossible, the success of the change of the organizational culture can be minimal, and the duration is measured in years not in months (cited in Bogathy, 2004, p. 284). According to Tanase (2015), the difficult process of cultural change "most often occurs after one or more problems have been discovered in an organization. In doing so, the result of change should be a positive one, which will bring benefits" (p. 29).

2. The specificity of the school as an organization

E. Păun (1999) defines the school as "an organization that teaches and produces learning. Its specificity derives essentially from the fact that it is invested with the function of producing learning and it structures all other organizational and functional aspects in this direction. What brings the school closer to other organizations is its characteristic of being a teaching organization. What sets it apart is that it produces learning" (p. 76). The unity in diversity of the school culture comprises the relationship between the education system, the ratio between the specific culture of the school as an organization and the subcultures manifested inside and outside at the ideological, managerial, pedagogical, community and psychosocial level. The culture of the school organization is highly diversified, with subcultures sometimes divergent and conflicting. We consider here the managerial culture, the teachers' culture, the didactic culture and the students' culture.

3. The evaluation of the organizational culture

The organizational diagnosis is the process of understanding how the organization works in the present, providing, in the same time, the necessary information for designing the organizational development interventions. The diagnosis involves collecting all relevant information and objective information about current operations, analyzing such data, drawing conclusions for potential changes and improvements (Bazgan, Popa, 2011).

Focusing on the effective organizations, the research made by John Campbell (1974) and his colleagues has covered several critical dimensions, identifying thirty-nine key indicators. Although such a list is useful, however, it is impractical to consider so many dimensions. Realizing this, R. Quinn and J. Rohrbaugh (1983) reviewed the results of several studies on this topic and have determined that two major dimensions could account for a broad range of factors. In their study, the competing values scheme "combines these two dimensions, creating a 2x2 matrix with four clusters" (Tharp, 2005, p. 2).

The first-dimension places the values: flexibility, discretion and dynamism at one end of the scale and stability, order and control at the other end. This means that some organizations focus on adaptation, change and organic processes while others are effective, emphasizing the stability, predictability, mechanistic processes. The second value's dimension is marked by internal orientation, integration and unity at one end and the external orientation, differentiation and rivalry at the other end. Each quadrant defines those characteristics that organizations consider them the best. In other words, "these quadrants represent basic assumptions, beliefs and values. No quadrant is better than the other as no culture is necessarily better than another, but some cultures might be more appropriate in certain contexts than others" (Tharp, 2005, p. 3).
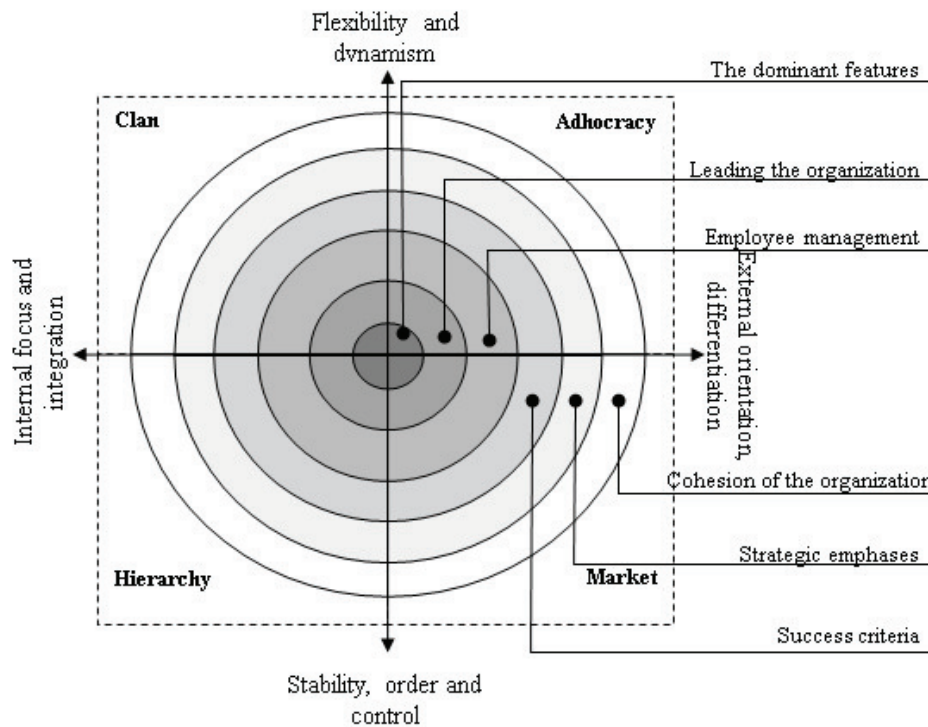
Figure 1. The competing values framework

Cameron & Quin (2011, p. 23) developed an organizational culture assessment tool, briefly referred to as the OCAI. It measures the organizational culture on the basis of six basic organizational cultural elements: the dominant features, the management of the organization, the management of the employees, the cohesion of the organization, the strategic accents and the criteria of success. The elements are related to four dimensions: discretion, external focus, stability and internal focus. Four types of organizational culture result from their combination: clan type culture, ad-hoc type culture, hierarchical type culture and market type culture.

Clan culture (A) is a place where people share a lot of personal information, as in an extended family, offers great importance to employees, promotes team spirit and involvement. Success is defined in terms of customer sensitivity and concern for people. "Organizations that embrace this form of organizational culture are rather oriented towards teamwork, programs that determine the involvement of employees at the expense of rules and procedures or profit" (Hudrea, 2015, p. 71). The organization emphasizes the long-term benefit of individual development, which is of major importance in terms of cohesion and morale.

Adhocracy culture (B) encourages risk taking. It is a customer-oriented culture. The major objective of an adhocracy culture is to promote adaptability, flexibility and creativity. The leader in such an organization is innovative, confident, with a well-defined vision of the future and he shows initiative. The Adhocracy organization is characterized by a dynamic, entrepreneurial and creative workplace. The binder that holds the members of the organization together is the commitment to experimentation and innovation. Success means producing original products and services.

Market type culture (C) emphasizes on competition. It is characterized by constant adaptation to the market, "being oriented to the external environment and having as essential features competence, efficiency and productivity" (Hudrea, 2015, p. 71). It focuses on achieving the goals and it is customer oriented.

Hierarchical culture (D) is characterized by bureaucracy, rules, procedures and responsibility. It is characterized by a formal attitude with many hierarchical levels, focused

on the control and detection of errors. The values for this type of organizational culture are uniformity and efficiency.

Cameron and Quin's model has a wide practical applicability "because it illustrates, in addition to the dominant organizational culture type and its connection with leadership roles, the efficiency criteria, human resources management roles, organizational vision and mission" (Hudrea, 2015, p. 72).

4. Research methodology

The purpose of the research is to determine the perception of the members of the organization on the need to change the organizational culture at the level of pre-university education institutions included in the present study. The research method used with predilection was the multiple case study.

4.1. The objective of the research

The identification of the dominant organizational culture and the preferred organizational culture in the studied pre-university education institutions.

4.2. Research questions

✓ Are there any differences, at the level of the studied pre-university education institutions, regarding the dominant organizational culture?
✓ Are there any differences, at the level of the studied pre-university education institutions, regarding the preferred organizational culture?

4.3. Research participants

The research was conducted in three educational institutions in the city of Slobozia, Ialomița county. Thus, the research involved:
✓ 31 teachers, from a pre-school institution, between the ages of 18 and 68;
✓ 30 teachers, from a primary education institution, between 20 and 60 years old;
✓ 32 teachers, from a secondary school institution, between the ages of 30 and 60;
✓ 36 teachers, from a high school, between 36 and 60 years old.

4.4. Research tools

In this research we used the tool created by specialists Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn (2011, p. 23). By completing this instrument by the research participants, a picture emerges about the manner in which the organization operates and the values that characterize it. The tool is also very useful in determining the ways in which the organizational culture can be changed.

Participants were invited to describe the organization through responses to a set of items. The instrument comprises a total of six items. Each item has four possibilities. The participants divide 100 points in relation to the four alternatives. The total corresponding to the item with the four alternatives must summarize 100 points. After completing the "current" column the questions are repeated, remaining to be completed in the "preferred" column.

4.5. Analysis and interpretation of research results

Using the model developed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, we conducted an analysis of the current and preferred organizational culture for each of the four pre-university education institutions. For explanatory reasons, we present in more detail the profile of the organizational culture of the preschool education institution.

A (Clan)

D (Hierarchy)

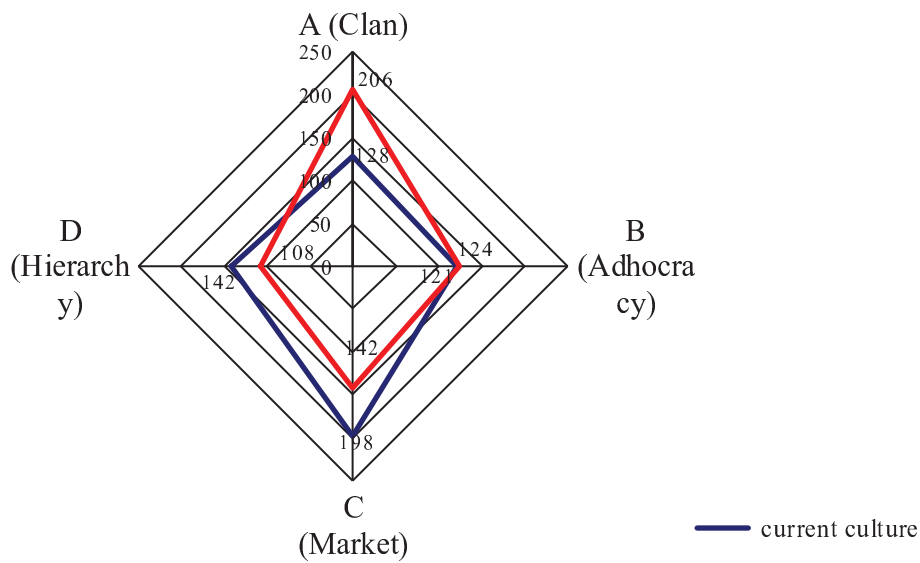B (Adhocracy)

C (Market)

— current culture

Figure 2. Profile of the organizational culture of the preschool education institution

The data showed that in the studied pre-school institution, the dominant organizational culture is of type C (Market). On the other hand, the preferred organizational culture is type A (Clan). Thus, from the perspective of the teachers in the pre-school education institution included in this study, the premises of changing the organizational culture from type C culture (Market) to type A culture (Clan) exist. This perception can be explained by the increased need for collaboration of teachers, the need for a friendlier organizational climate, which creates the conditions favorable to personal development. The interpretation of this organizational profile can advance the idea of the need to reduce control and to diminish bureaucratic procedures while maintaining customer orientation, adaptability and innovative manifestations.

Synthetically, the results of the OCAI regarding the current and preferred organizational culture by the teachers from the studied educational institutions are presented in table 1.

Table 1. The current and preferred organizational culture of the educational institutions included in the study

Education cycle	Current culture	Preferred culture
Primary education level	C (market)	A (clan)
Primary education level	B (ad-hoc)	D (hierarchical)
Secondary education level	D (hierarchical)	A (clan)
High school education	C (market)	D (hierarchical)

We note that, regarding the organizational culture of the educational institutions included in this study, there are notable differences both in terms of the current organizational culture as well as in terms of the preferred organizational culture. These differences can be explained by several factors: the manner of conducting and making decisions, the different external demands, the different needs and expectations of the educational actors (students, teachers, parents), the diversity of the scientific fields represented by the teachers and, not lastly, the specificity of the activity carried out.

5. Conclusions

The educational institutions studied have a distinct organizational culture. Diversity is manifested both in the dominant and preferred organizational culture. The vast majority of the members of the studied school institutions prefer a different organizational culture than the dominant one in the present. This is one of the most important premises of the need for organizational change.

Despite this perception, the research did not capture the connection between the current or preferred organizational culture and the degree of achievement of the organizational objectives. The limitation to the four educational institutions included in the study leads to the impossibility of generalizing the results.

References

Bazgan, M., Popa, D. (November, 2011). *Organizational Culture Assessment in the University Environment*. Prezentat la The 17 International Conference The Knowledge-Based Organization, „Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, Sibiu.

Bogathy, Z. (2004). *Manual de psihologia muncii oraganizaţională* (Handbook of organizational work psychology). Iasi: Polirom.

Tharp, B., M. (2005). *Four Organizaţional Culture Types*. URL: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b0e2/fd342fcf402920e264f15070276b79be1e25.pdf [accesed on 20.09.2018].

Cameron, K.S., Quinn, R.E. (2011). *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture. The 3rd edition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint.

Cristea, S. (2009). Managementul organizaţiei şcolare în societatea cunoaşterii (Management of the School Organization in the Knowledge Society). *Tribuna învăţământului*, 987/16-22 februarie 2009.

Hudrea, A. (2015). Cultură organizaţională în mediul universitar românesc (Organizational culture in the Romanian university environment). *Revista Transilvană de ştiinţe administrative*, 1(36), 68-77.

Iosifescu, Ş. (2005). *Managementul şi cultura calităţii la nivelul instituţiei şcolare* (Quality management and culture at the level of the school institution). Bucharest: ISE.

Păun, E. (1999). *Şcoala – abordare sociopedagogică* (School – sociopedagogical approach). Iasi: Polirom.

Tănase, I.A. (2015). Change within Organizational Culture. *Junior Scientific Researcher*, 1(1), 27-32.

Vlăsceanu, M. (2003). *Organizaţii şi comportament organizaţional* (Organizations and organizational behavior). Iasi: Polirom.