CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MILITARY ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Alexandru RIZESCU, Marius RIZESCU

“Nicolae Bălcescu” Land Forces Academy, Sibiu

Abstract: The survival and development of an organization in a competitive society, is conditioned by its competitiveness in the field in which it operates. Being competitive means being efficient, and organizational performance, especially in the military organization, depends to a large extent on the performances of each individual, on the way he/she manages to value the qualities he/she possesses in the position he/she occupies, on the way he/she communicates with the other members of the military structure (subordinates, collaborators, superiors) to achieve an organizational environment that fosters efficient results and implicitly an effective organizational culture.

Organizational culture is a combination of human conscious and unconscious, rational and irrational, group and individual factors, which mutually influence each other and impact upon the performance of the entire system.

Keywords: organizational culture, management culture, organizational environment, functionality, individual performance, potentialities.

Nowadays, organizational culture is increasingly thought to be one of the factors with a key influence upon the performance of an organization. "It can either stimulate or weaken the effectiveness of an organization, depending on the nature of values, beliefs and norms” [1].

An obstacle to the efficient implementation of change and organizational development programs, such as total quality management (TQM) or re-engineering, is the vulnerability of such initiatives in front of the strong and poorly understood cultural influences [2].

Some of the change programs - especially TQM [3] - rebuild organization members’ habits, roles and responsibilities and therefore require initiatives that interact with the types of values, mindsets and modes of action already in force. If the existing cultural types are incompatible with the new values and cultural implications the defense, retraction and deformation of important information may occur [4]. These consequences may prevent the organization from implementing the changes that could support the improvement of individual and organizational performance.

If you recognize the potentially dysfunctional role of the culture and of the environment in implementing organizational change, it becomes necessary to develop strategies to analyze the potential problems and identify solutions to prevent unpredictable consequences.

1. Influences of organizational culture on organizations’ functionality

Thus, in most cases, good and very good results are associated with the capacity of owners, managers, and leaders to create, maintain and develop a strong organizational culture, that gives new
impetus to the organization's members to achieve goals. In a strong organizational culture, most managers share a common set of beliefs, values and behaviors on how that business should be managed. New employees that come into contact with this set of cultural values adopt it both in their formal and informal manifestation.

The manner in which the managerial culture influences the performance of companies can be explained in several ways:

- directs efforts to a common specified objective or set of objectives;
- develops a strong motivation for employees to achieve the expected results;
- provides a structure and a system of mechanisms that coordinates the efforts of employees without having a set of procedures or a formal system.

In 1983, Denison has conducted a study on the culture and performance of 34 companies, obtaining a series of results that supported the claim of Deal and Kennedy, according to which, organizational culture is closely connected to the performance of organizations. Although the instruments used by Denison to measure performance have been the financial elements which, as he accepts, may suffer different influences depending on the specificity of the industry, business cycle and financial objectives, he did reveal important correlations between culture and performance. Schein builds his model by identifying the connections between efficiency and a series of specific values. He focuses on the role of organizational culture as a key mechanism that allows the organization to adapt, act and survive. Schein believes that the issue of organization survival is the main factor that shapes the culture of the group. The mission, basic tasks and efforts of all members revolve around this issue. Basic assumptions on "what" and "how" are critical to how an organization works to survive and develop. Moreover, the manner in which relationships between group members are developed is seen as a key factor driving the performance the group.

Coyler [5] has also conducted a study on the relationship between organizational culture and performance, with results that supported the earlier findings. Coyler has used both financial and non-financial elements to study 72 retail stores. She found that where managers’ perception was harmonized with that of the subordinates there also was a significant relationship between organizational culture and performances.

It is estimated that organizations with strong organizational cultures will often obtained superior performances. The major cause of this phenomenon is that these cultures tend to align, to drive and redirect the members of a company to achieve specific goals. This is actually true only to the extent that these objectives represent important objectives of the organization, established through strategies and policies both at a global and an individual level, according to functions or other considerations. Performance will not be boosted unless the attitudes, behaviors and methods used in business are related to the real needs of the organization. In this case powerful cultures may cause people to act in ways that are rather destructive than constructive, and undermine the competitive ability of an organization. One of the greatest dangers that occur in organizations with strong management cultures and notable results is that feeling of pride for obtaining performances turns into arrogance. It is one of the factors which will before long negatively affect the company, by preventing the top management from anticipating or noticing the important changes brought to the environment. The outcome will be a gradual discrepancy between the management culture of an organization and the harsh reality, a fact which will most probably cause it to enter in crisis.

Inadaptable management cultures are those cultures which focus on the company, on
establishing very rigid rules and procedures, on creating bureaucratic structures and which manifest their interest in others only in terms of their personal interest, without giving even the slightest attention to market trends. In such cultures, managers tend to ignore the relevant contextual changes and to inadequately respond with strategies and other organizational practices, showing a reactive attitude, aversion to risk and little creativity. Information flows slowly throughout the organization, formal elements are emphasized, control is very tight, which diminishes the motivation and involvement of employees. It creates an environment everybody even those who believe in their good faith, find it difficult to express themselves in. Moreover, even the values, attitudes and behaviors of those who try to act in the right direction imposed by the realities of business can be affected.

Adaptive cultures manifest themselves in opposition to these. Adaptive cultures focus on the present and future situation of the environment. Starting from these considerations, managers schedule the organization's activities so that they are optimally directed to accomplish the set-objectives, strategies and policies of the company.

Adaptive cultures support risk-taking at different hierarchical levels, favour relationships of trust between the members of the organization and stimulate them to take a proactive stance. Managers working well with each other to identify problems and implement viable solutions; they believe that together they can overcome any difficulty which an organization may face. There is a large opening to change and innovation, individual and collective initiative is encouraged.

In such managerial cultures which try to predict and adapt to situational changes, managers carefully monitor both the external and the internal factors of the organization, initiate exchanges and encourage the expression of leadership at all hierarchical levels.

In many cases, organizational changes are due to managers that show a particular involvement in the organizational processes. Among the first actions they are made aware of, is to raise the awareness of employees to the fact that the organization is facing a crisis situation or that certain factors require a swift change of one or more organizational features. To produce these changes, managers communicate their vision and strategy as clearly as possible. They take advantage of each opportunity to repeat, again and again, messages about intended changes. At the same time, the language used is continually adjusted in accordance with the characteristics of the audience so that messages are as clear and direct as possible and have a maximum impact. Very important is the fact they act on the transmitted information and indirectly on the resolution to implement the officially declared information. Further on, in order to expand and accelerate the initial changes, they try to create coalitions at all hierarchical levels, which should be deeply involved in this process and minimize resistance to change.

These behaviors appear to be caused by a system of values that emphasizes the legitimacy of meeting the requirements of the organization. Values stress the importance of processes and of people that can cause beneficial changes for the organization.

It is important to note that the leaders of a company encourage those who have initiative and who perceive the opportunities a change could bring to the company and at the same time have the ability to win the minds and souls of those employees who are not aware of the need for change and organizational culture. Therefore, it is necessary for higher level managers not to be anchored solely in the short-term activities, as these may leave a large part of company resources unused and erode its long-term competitiveness.
Management culture is basically a framework, a reference system that significantly shapes the perception that managers have on the surrounding environment, perception also reflected in the decisions and actions they take. The following table gives an overview on the characteristics of the managerial cultures that we have already mentioned:

Manifestations of managerial cultures' characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adaptive Cultures</th>
<th>Inadaptable cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Values</strong></td>
<td>Most managers take interest in their customers, shareholders, employees, etc.</td>
<td>Most managers take interest only in themselves, in a small group they belong to, or in a specific product (technology) associated with their work group. They appreciate risk-free situations at the expense of their employees' initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They appreciate those people and processes that can implement the required changes in the organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviours</strong></td>
<td>Managers pay attention to their customers and initiate changes when it comes to defending their interests, even if it means taking certain risks.</td>
<td>Managers tend to have a bureaucratic almost isolated behaviour. As a result, they fail to change their strategies in order to adapt to or take advantage of the changes occurring in the business environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the situation we have presented, amendments to organizational processes are becoming increasingly more visible: new strategies and organizational policies emerge, strategic formulas and organizational policies are adapted to the business environment, the number of hierarchical levels is reduced, business activities are decentralized, and a new system of motivation is implemented. All these rely on the reassessment of the system of values, values, attitudes and behaviours of the staff, highly stressing the needs’ requirements for the firm clients. Thus, the top management must identify the essential elements favouring the surviving and developing of the organization, be open to changing or replacing the management culture components. A special situation is that of harmonizing the need to maintain certain values, important believes for organization stressing change from outside or inside the organization. That’s why, top management role is to balance stability tendencies and conservatism of the organization members stressing the change and encouraging the organization staff to express its creativity and take risks in order to register maximum results. Next we refer to a culture maintaining model [6] that stimulates performances:
2. Military Organization Specific

Army is a special social structure, built at peace in order to specifically be involved in the war. The specificity relies on applying the instrumental will to des-organize the adversary and impose one’s own will, thus gaining a truce or capitulation. As an organized combat group, the military institution is featured by high uncertainty. The gravity of the task and the military social structure ask for a reasonable organization in terms of Web definition. At war, the organization and function of the human group involved in the combat turns from system based form to horizontal based task and relationship organization.

The organization birocratism relies on Max Weber ideas that, starting from the idea of an efficient administration organization based on position delimiting and specialization, has conceived an organization model based on a well stipulated hierarchy and on its members loyalty.

Besides its birocratism limits assessed by Weber (killing the enterprising spirit of the free thinking and initiative, the possibility to lose control on the impossible to shape elements, on power, love hate, etc) the implementing of this model, led to others, such as:

- Awaiting new developments by means of impersonal solution rules;
- Decision centralizing
- Hierarchic category isolating
- Developing interpersonal power relationships

In the context of birocratism organization, Merton speaks about “exerced incapacity” of the individuals as negative effects on human factor. The daily base of a routine leads to developing preferences, delimitations, antipathies, exerting a constant pressure on this one, thus imposing a methodological behaviour, cautious and
disciplined. The conformity and fidelity in terms of prescribed acts is encouraged more than necessary thus providing a comfortable safety. The norms’ adopting, initially conceived as goal based means, thus reaching a “goal shifting” which turns an instrumental value into a final value. The adhesion to formal procedures leads to behaviour formalism and even ritualism. All these feature bureaucracy personality: the individual who organize his entire career on gradual promoting, by means of ignoring the general and institutional means. Such vision on career impose fear of risks and innovation, without personal involvement. All these are the comport price offered by wish of permanence, fear of change and innovation. In other words, it is about psychological contract between individual and organization, which offer the individual the uncertainty reducing, organization and continuity balance. At peace, military staff is marked by the bureaucracy as the Army’s task at peace is abstract and symbolic.

3. Influences of the organization climate on military organization functionality

This consequence of the inter-actions among people within military organizations is changed in time under discontinuity influence created with social capacity to process the data and to interfere in the decision making process. By means of these elements, we may establish whether we are facing a favorable climate or an unfavorable one.

A favorable labour climate brings along the mobilization of energies in order to commonly solve the issues, the loyalty, cooperation and labour satisfaction. The requirements of an unfavorable climate are the lack of satisfaction in work, stress, wasted time, and complots, reducing or blocking the communication with superiors. The providing of a positive evolution within organization climate in the military organizations refers to students, cadets and voluntary military being helped in their effort to integrate and understand the significance of the principles and norms, the reason and exigency, the need to act unitarily and also the maximum operability of a task, the special value that order and discipline hold for the army’s combat capabilities. Thus, we highlight the fact that the norms and values provide the organization climate only if they are:

- Uniform- the same for all soldiers, regardless of rank or position;
- Constant- permanently perceived as imperative norms, reference frame for the group’s activities and situations;
- Clear and exact- not only for content, but also for form and their significance;
- Accessible- presented and explained as to be properly perceived by the military.

This is why we think it necessary to make a systematic call for the stipulations, in terms of their role in regulating the military relationships, juridical and ethical speaking. It must understand the fact that inter-discipline does not represent an issue, but a permanent one of the activities, regardless of their content; it refers to man’s relationship with himself, with the others, with the assigned tasks with the team.

The activities organization strict concordance with the legal requirements, military regulations represent the border of an efficient intervention to create and maintain a climate of order and respect towards accurate stipulations and military oath.

Therefore, commanders must convince and impose a receptivity attitude towards labour principles and norms, a military specific activity. Everything the Commandant says and does must fight for military values obeying, in order to create a real cult in terms of legality and social and institutional unity.

Thus, we underline the fact that the military life exigency and rigors do not lead and must not lead to restraining the human understanding space, the consideration to human being or the restraining of the military personality expressed as enthusiasm, optimism, inter-helping, active
co-working, goods’ mutual sharing, etc. on the other hand, due to military organization specific, the more complex the activity is, the more difficult the obstacles are and the more need there is for understanding and co-working.

In this context, the organization climate must be perceived as an intrinsic dimension or indices of the life quality for any military organization – an important factor in providing the group’s positive evolution, by means of the effects constantly exerted on the spirit state, conduit and results, and of the personal military life. The climate must not be neglected, either within quotidian training process or within troop’s education, military and subunits’ combat training, even less at war, when there are so many disturbing factors of the psycho logic balance, which effects may be diminished, up to annihilation, in terms of a deep concern of the commanders, of the military collectives in order to maintain the positive organization climate.

The acquired experience led to the conclusion that a favourable organization climate for efficient activities is not acquired by means of administration formal measures, but of military organization direct interventions, which go up to motivation, attitudes and behaviour’s changing.

This imposes an accurate assessment of the organization climate taking into account the psycho-social conditions of the activity, the information system and communication, the inter-human relationships, the attitude, behaviour and commander’s working style, as well as the significance that the military assign to their subordinates, in one situation or another.

The creating of an optimum activity climate, within military organization, is possible by means of commandant’s authority and prestige regardless of the hierarchical level. This refers to dignity, force, influence, training and leading capabilities, all of these providing the conscious subordination, and non-conditioned execution. The commandant’s authority is strictly correlated to the leading style, to the means to guide the subordinates’ activity. The commandant must be capable to adapt his behavior according to every situation, to prove tact and combine exigency with permissiveness. When the commandant obeys every subordinates dignity and personality, he is exigent but high principled and, honest and appreciated, involved in his concerns; thus the cohesion increases, people mobilize more in order to register new success. The chief’s state of mind, the sociability and communicability represent factors to influence labour proper climate.

The positive organization climate is accomplished when the commandment relies his behaviour on the following coordinates: thorough organizing of the team, and of the subordinates, according to well stated goals and tasks; he expresses trust in subordinates, he informs his subordinates on matters of interest; he takes into account their suggestions and proposals; he is principled in rewarding his people and punishing them; he uses motivation and relies on the sense of duty; he takes responsibility for the decisions made; he helps subordinates; he uses and promotes his subordinates according to their skills and capabilities and also to their efforts.

4. Conclusions

The organization climate consolidating depends on the means to assess the organization (unofficial relationship structuring, the number and reports among informal subgroups), the level reached in building up the cohesion (increase, stagnation, and progress), the causes affecting the team building (members’ behaviour, leading style, etc). That is why, the commandant even without using assessment social-metric methods of the organization climate, focusing on surprising the content of the indices as collaboration and friendship among team, the communication reports and cooperation
ones, the means to get involved in the misunderstandings, has the possibility to interfere in time to make the necessary corrections.

Bibliography


