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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AS A DETERMINANT OF MANAGERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUCCESS

The article focuses on organizational structure for two reasons: first, to better understand the phenomenon of organization and explain how notions and ideas included in management theory and ideology give rise to managerial practice and the reality of the organization; and second, to try to distinguish those elements of organizational culture which affect the formulation of the mechanism favourable to achieving success by managers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Results of cross-cultural and international research on management divide researchers into two schools of thought. The first school is of the opinion that efficient and successful management is, to a large extent, based on universal rules, practices, and possession of general knowledge all of which are equally important in every country and can be learned by managerial staff. The second school, however, maintains that the management process is by its very nature considerably limited culturally (Richman 1965).

As a result of comparative research on management, the idea of "culture" has been included in the examination of phenomena occurring in an organization; this examination points to a diversity of attitudes and practices among managerial staff and employees in various countries. Culture in this research is treated as a background consideration, an explanatory variable, or factor, affecting the development and reinforcement of beliefs.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AS A DETERMINANT OF SUCCESS

Analysis of the literature shows that investigations of only psychological conditions of success in the widely understood management field has tended to identify and anticipate universal elements and to examine success phenomena in situations where systems and structures already have a determined stability. This is exemplified by research conducted on success in highly developed

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societies, the results of which pointed to the necessity of regarding phenomena occurring in an organization as universal, and deprived of any cultural component. The point there was to specify certain elements considered universal which would be capable of being adopted by members of other societies.

McClelland's (1961) analysis of the motives behind businessmen's achievements proved that this phenomenon cannot be explained without cultural interpretations of the need for those achievements. It turns out that one is motivated, to a greater degree, by goals rather than by achievements. Hence, there are clear-cut motivational differences in the strivings to succeed between members of developing countries who wish to satisfy their physiological and safety requirements and members of developed countries who wish to fulfil their egotistical and social needs through a complex economic system.

The term "success" refers to that behaviour of a member in a given community which aims at achieving an intended goal; i.e., it is efficient behaviour. This efficiency comprises of in Obuchowski's opinion, "...an agreement between the assumed state of a task and its achieved state." (1985, p. 128).

Success in one's life performs a regulatory function, which means that a successful person achieves definite goals, plans, and accomplishments in the environment where he/she functions. Striving for success combines with the wish to carry out definite internalized values in the socialisation process. Besides character traits, culture is the other factor stimulating an individual to an activity which may assume a number of forms.

3. FUNCTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

For use in this article, culture is considered as a social, or normative, cohesive force binding an organization. This cohesive force expresses social ideals, beliefs, and values which have become common to all members. Certain values, serving as models for attitudes, are imparted in the process of communication by means of myths, tales, rituals, anecdotes, and legends, as well as by specialized language.

Culture, understood as important common values and beliefs, fulfils the following functions in an organization:

- 1) it gives organization members a sense of identity;
- 2) facilitates the formation of involvement in, and sense of responsibility toward, something wider than one's own ego;
- 3) strengthens the stability of a social system which constitutes an organization; and

4) it contributes to providing meaning which may shape and guide the behaviour of others (Smircich 1983).

However, it needs to be pointed out that these functions can only be fulfilled provided that culture is not treated fragmentarily and artificially in isolation from reality, as a number of management theoreticians do treat it. They view culture as an emerging wholeness with clearly defined characteristics resembling the structure of an organization.

Results of empirical research indicate that organizational culture is a dominant form for controlling the behaviour of members of organizations, and functioning of the organizations cannot be understood without a prior understanding of their culture. This results from the fact that an organization through its activities provides the members with a common reference system, language, and instructions, thus making it possible to find solutions to atypical problems which are favourable in achieving effectiveness by both individual members and the organization as whole.

According to Schein (1984), culture is a model of fundamental assumptions which a community has discovered, accepted, or extended in coping with the problems of external adaptation and internal integration and which are, simultaneously, articulated to such a degree that they are capable of being imparted to new members of the group as correct models for perceiving, feeling, and thinking about the problems.

4. FACTORS FAVOURABLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

As the result of research conducted by Wilkins and Martin (1983), it is possible to distinguish conditions necessary for the formation of a relatively high degree of social acceptance for certain values and models of attitudes in an organization.

The authors stress the fact that history and stable membership are a very important factor. It turns out that the longer the history of an organization with stable membership, the higher the probability that its members with more seniority will impart their knowledge to new members, creating specific historical framework which Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 53) define as "institutionalization of commonplace knowledge". New employees regard certain social facts as intrinsic determinants of the situation in which they are functioning. This means that a transmission occurs of its own kind in which commonplace knowledge, undergoing specific consolidation, changes into something that anthropologists call "culture". This is exemplified by Japanese organizations, whose practices concerning employment are related to the

conditions and favour the development of socially “contoured” knowledge (Konecki 1992; Ouchi 1981).

Lack of institutional choices within a given organization, and also the situation in which other organizations functioning within the parent organization are not accepted, favour the development of Organizational Culture.

The third factor favourable in shaping Organizational Culture, according to the above-mentioned authors, are interactions among the members. An organization which stresses its members’ non-specialized careers ensures its own cohesiveness thanks to the advancement of people with a thorough knowledge of various levels they had worked at previously; that is, its members are promoted from within and up through the ranks. An organization guaranteeing its members the right to influence its decision-making processes somehow supports the creation of collective knowledge about how participation functions in the organization. So, through its activities, the organization provides its members with a common reference system, language, and rules of behaviour in atypical situations. This is possible since Organizational Culture is characterized by a flexibility permitting the possibility to utilise various information in solving problems within the organization.

5. ROLE OF MANAGERIAL STAFF IN THE FORMATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

There is no doubt that we are dealing with such a phenomenon as organizational culture; however, a question arises about the role of managerial staff in the formation of Organizational Culture.

This role results from empirical research that the process of management and the manager’s role itself should be treated as a symbolic activity. By using a definite style of management, the manager has a wide range of means for communication, which may be used for developing organizational ties as well as for conveying a philosophy of management, rationalizing, implementing activities, motivating employees, and facilitating the adaptation and socialization of new employees (Pfeffer 1981). Managers are practically assigned such a role. It is the managers’ position and the fact that they have formal authority that some of them feel obligated to define the reality and experiences of other members of the organization according to their own image of a “good” manager. For these managers, failure to fulfil this obligation is no less than failure to fulfil their organizational role as a whole.

Selznick’s research (1957) shows that managers achieving success in an organization give strategic direction to that organization’s activities through shaping the image, or thought pattern, which constitutes a reference point for

employees and managers lower in rank. As a result, the manager and his activities embody organizational values and goals. So, strategic management requires a certain understanding of the organization's activity, which goes beyond a formal arrangement, i.e., beyond an objectified and somewhat static pattern of obligatory meanings. The manager's activities are isolated by fragmentary experiences which can be interpreted by relating them to certain contexts, defined by use of language, ritual, myth, story, dramaturgy of situation, or other types of symbolic constructs. The role of these symbols is that they enable managers, in their proceedings, to structure experiences of those people they affect, thus contributing to the creation of common perceptions concerning what should exist (Pfeffer 1981).

According to Smircich and Morgan (1982), managers give meaning to situations in which they perform a considerable role. Their procedures and remarks create and shape, in the consciousness of employees, the image of the organization's global view, which in turn, in one way or another, affects activities within the organization as a whole. This enables managers to influence the evolution of culture, when one takes into symbolic consequences of their activities through popularizing and developing desirable values.

Therefore, the task every manager is to discover ways to utilise legends, tales, anecdotes, and other symbolism properly in order to carry out their own detailed goals, i.e., to achieve success.

If we assume that managers of a given organization are interested in shaping the meaning of a specific situation, then we can also assume that they will be interested in creating a situation where meaning is given to certain values stimulating achievement or where a situation is created which Veblen (1971) and Merton (1968) defined as "learned incompetence."

6. DETERMINANTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

On the basis of what has been said, one may ask the question, which determinants (measurements) of organizational culture condition the realization of goals and success by organization members?

Research results concerning this problem make it possible to distinguish determinants (measurements) defined as sociological. This is the category of cultural variables related to values, concepts, myths, and to their influence on motivation, attitudes, behaviour, and effectiveness of organization members. They are determinants of organizational culture and, at the same time, variables which may be the object of research, influencing the process of functioning and managing the organization, and are mechanisms favourable to success achieved by its participants (Richman 1965). These determinants are:

- level of achievement motivation,
- attitudes about authority relations,
- place in the class structure and mobility of organization members,
- opinions about affluence and material possessions,
- opinions about risk-taking,
- opinions about organizations and managers,
- opinions about changes,
- opinions about the form of ownership,
- relations-environment (ways organizations co-operate with other organizations).

Measuring the above-mentioned variables in empirical research will enable one to describe, explain, and perhaps predict the influence of those factors on the process of creating organizational culture and on its functioning. It will also enable one to define certain mechanisms of managerial staff functioning. Defining the range within which a certain model of behaviour favourable to success is designated by cultural determinants will make it possible not only theoretically to describe and explain that model but it may also constitute the starting point for planning managerial careers in the organization.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Including cultural variables in research will make it possible to construct a general model describing an organization's cultural arrangement, elements of the management process, its dynamics, and effectiveness. Research of this type would be "research in progress" consisting, among other ways, in undertaking problems important both theoretically and practically; thus, research results may be useful in practice and in developing theoretical knowledge. Research-in-progress treats phenomena in the categories of inter-subjectivity emergence, context, and interpretation that will permit a better analysis and synthesis of phenomena occurring in an organization.

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