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Sustainability and Dynamics of the Key Value Orientations for Effective Management in a Bulgarian Socio-cultural Environment¹

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Abstract

The research presents the dominating value orientations in the Bulgarian socio-cultural environment for the last 12 years. Two types of diagnostic tools have been used to determine the type of organizational culture whose basic characteristics include an assessment of leadership styles: the FOCUS Questionnaire [Van Muijen, J., Koopman, P., De Witte, K., De Cock, G., et al., 1996] and Cameron and Quinn's Questionnaire [Cameron, K., Quinn, R., 1999]. The former questionnaire comprises 1,332 respondents and the latter – 717 respondents working mainly in universities. According to the questionnaires, the four types of organizational culture are formed in accordance with their orientation towards their inner and outer environment but also depending on the flexibility and stability, the sustainability and dynamics or the extent of control and freedom of actions. Through a frequency distribution of the received data, it is expected that the average arithmetic and standard deviations will be traced on the types of cultures and through them, the dynamics of leadership styles will be reported throughout the years under study. The data has been processed by SPSS-21. The characteristic features of the Bulgarian socio-cultural context have been disclosed – preserving the stability and the status-quo in combination with orientation towards the external environment as well as orientation towards flexibility and freedom.

Keywords: organizational culture, values, leadership styles

1. Introduction

The dominant value orientations are successfully found in the definitions of organizational culture as a set of norms, values and attitudes that can predict future behaviors, forms of communication, but also be a prerequisite for effective management of the organization. Organizational culture is associated with the system of the beliefs and norms found, identified and developed by a group in the process of dealing with its problems of adaptation and internal integration. In this sense, the dominant organizational values are associated with concepts that describe the phenomenon of organizational culture, i.e. with the validity of the correct course of action, feelings and attitudes towards solving the problems in the organization. The importance of

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evaluation and management of organizational culture is growing due to the increasing need for fusion and modeling of the cultures of different organizations in restructuring, including in the university environment. The escalating role of culture is due to the increased dynamics, complexity and unpredictability of the external environment faced by organizations. As a result of the adaptation, response to the challenges and changes in the environment over time in organizations a dominant organizational culture evolves (Prahalad, Hamel, 1990).

As the individual who is faced with threats, insecurity and uncertainty, further reinforces the behavior to which they are accustomed, institutions also often meet challenges with even more consolidation of their core cultural values. Therefore, increasing competition in a university environment, changes and the pressure elevate the importance of organizational culture as organizational culture makes the organization and specifically the university not only stable but also adaptable as it is this stability that unites the organization. Culture strengthens the continuity and consistency of the organizational environment, ensuring adherence to clearly defined and agreed objectives and efficient management, providing clearly defined principles for dealing with the new circumstances. Clarifying the competitive advantages and strategic objectives is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the organization, both being entirely based on organizational culture. In this sense, measurement of organizational culture is becoming more important because of the need for a change and at the same time maintaining the stability and dynamics, stability and flexibility, but certain diagnostic methods for determining the basic cultural values of the organization can contribute significantly to achieving effective management of the organization. Therefore the key to determining the organizational culture is to identify aspects of the organization reflecting its core values. In the scientific literature there is a very wide variety of models for classification and evaluation of organizational culture according to different criteria. Each of them helps create a profile or pattern of the dominant type of culture in an organization. Detailed overview of the concepts and approaches in this area illustrates a variety of dimensions (Karabeliova, 2011). Organizational culture is considered a concept involving various components stable for periods of time, which undergo change and development (Ilieva, 2006). The fact that organizational culture has uneven dynamics confirms the understanding of the possible transformation of organizational values in different periods of time and justifies the hypothesis of a change in organizational attitudes relatively stable for different periods.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

In a summarized version one of the main hallmarks of an organizational value orientation can be formulated taking into account: the initiative of the individual, tolerance to risk, orientation towards goals, the integration between separate structural units, leadership styles and management support, control over the work, identifying the personality with the organizational form, the remuneration system, tolerance towards conflict, ways of communication (Karabeliova, 2011). These dimensions are sought equally, correlating them to the behavior of participants in the group, to the structure of the organization and to the external situation.

Without questioning the importance of the personality of the leader, organizational culture determines the desired models of leadership behavior and conclusions can be drawn on applied leadership styles. It is assumed that culture significantly affects the efficiency of management, but also defines what is expected of leaders. Take into account the socio-cultural model and the historical circumstances that have an important place in shaping the idea of a successful leader.

Leaders attract attention and are seen as role models. Interest in the connection “leadership - organizational culture” is understandable because the leaders are those to establish, maintain and change organizational values. However, in an already established organizational culture there is a two-way connection – on the one hand the leaders promote culture and on the other – they determine its dynamics and possible change (Ilieva, 2006).

Organizational processes are carried out in a specific environment. The environment can also dictate behavior that leaders introduce in the form of symbolic action. Thus organizational culture is able to respond to changes through leadership styles as well. This would happen, for example by drawing attention to the main objectives of maintaining a high standard of product quality; technology; staff; level of interpersonal relations, openness in communication: formal channels; using feedback; good system of incentives and sanctions: precise criteria; commitment to the final result; connection with motivation; promptness; positive values of employees: tool values; extreme values; attitude towards change: understanding the need; choice of strategy; understanding of the causes; overcoming resistance.

The subject is the dynamics of leadership styles in Bulgarian organizations in different periods of time. Attached are two types of questionnaires that explore the same constructs. The aim is to establish stability and dynamics of the key value orientations in different periods of time. The leading hypothesis is that despite the fact that organizational culture is measured by different tools, due to the general theoretical framework of methodologies used, there should be no significant differences in cultural orientations that determine the effective management for various periods of time. Confirmations are found in the interaction of national culture with organizational, leadership and organizational culture. The relationship between culture and leadership is complicated, but there are clear arguments in both directions – the leaders forming and changing culture, but culture is stable and difficult to change under the influence of a leader, other factors also play a role. Organizational culture is a result of target-oriented actions of leaders. Changing organizational culture is not a random act of a random leader. The hypothesis is that organizational culture determines the type of leadership styles as it influences perceptions of people in the organization. The arguments for such a hypothesis are based on both studies of Bulgarian scientists (Ilieva, 2006, Karabeliova, 2011) in this regard and the empirical data of foreign authors in the past two decades, for example Project Global Leadership GLOBE, Cameron and Quinn’s research on managerial competences and skills, 1999. In this context, effective management is a function of culture in an organizational and socio-cultural plan. Competences of leaders vary by cultural type.

To test the hypotheses the condition is ascertained of the types of organizational culture and a comparative analysis is made between different years with specific methodologies used for the relevant period. The research tasks are solved using a number of statistical methods to track averages and standard deviations for the types of organizational culture. The data have been processed with standard statistical package SPSS for Windows 21.

3. Methodology

Two tools have been used to measure organizational culture based on the same theoretical model. Psychometric characteristics mentioned by the authors of versions are adapted for Bulgarian conditions, allowing them to be used in such studies.

The questionnaire FOCUS [Van Muijen, J., Koopman, P., De Witte, K., De Cock, G., Et al., 1996], which is designed to measure the four types of cultures, namely: the objectives, the support, the innovation and the rules contains 35 statements. A Likart six scale is used that ranges from “1 – Never” to “5 – Always” and is required to assess how typical of the organization are the statements. Four types of cultures are characterized by a number of characteristics. The culture of objectives is found in the pursuit of organizational goals, objectives and values embodied in their strict enforcement, accurate evaluation of performance and results. Culture of support in the organization is characterized by trust, mutual understanding and supportive communication. The innovative kind of culture is manifested in risk taking, openness to criticism and flexibility. Culture of the rules is aimed at complying with standards, strict enforcement of orders and commands. The questionnaire was adapted for Bulgarian conditions by S. Ilieva.

The questionnaire Cameron and Quinn [Cameron, K., Quinn, R., 1999], built on such a theoretical construct that defines the types of cultures as clan, ad hoc, hierarchical and market. The four types of organizational culture are separated according to their orientation to the internal and external environment and to the flexibility and the stability and the degree of control and freedom of action. It fits in the so called “Model of competing values” to study the types of organizational culture. The questionnaire contains 24 items. Each type of culture is established by four types of statements, which measure respectively organizational characteristics, the type of leader, the glue of the organization, its strategic focus and criteria for success. The following criteria outline the inherent values of different types of cultures. For clan culture are inherent loyalty, tradition, interpersonal relationships and teamwork, where the head is the “father” of the organization and strategic objectives are achieved by teamwork, a high degree of commitment and work ethics. For ad hoc culture is characterized by orientation to the external environment, strategic goals and values of innovation and creativity, leaders are innovators and entrepreneurs. A priority for the hierarchical type of culture is stability in the organization, the manager’s role is to coordinate and organize the implementation. For the market culture the most important consideration is the impact of the external environment and search for competitive advantages. Respondents shared a 100-point evaluation of the four alternatives within each of the aspects presented in the organization. The reliability of each of the questionnaire is high, respectively ($\alpha=0.88$) and ($\alpha=0.90$), according to Cronbach's alpha coefficient. With the methodologies used can be investigated the desired change in cultural values and development in a particular direction in response to future competitive requirements and specific styles of management. The tool is used by various researchers, and data from analyses confirm the reliability and robustness of the method. Correlation of different types of organizational cultures is oriented to similarities between the culture of support and clan culture, innovations are an analogue to ad hoc culture, targets are linked to the market culture and the hierarchical culture is linked to rules.

The examined scales are grouped into two different test batteries. The first form covers the years 2003, 2008 and 2012 using toolbox Focus, and the second was specifically designed for self-

assessment of respondents with leadership status of members of the organization and is based on the tools of Cameron and Quinn.

4. Results

Quote of the first test battery. A comparative analysis has been presented using the tool FOCUS of a total of 1336 persons in three different years of respondents from the same field of activity, respectively, for 2003 – 96 people, in 2008. – 612 and in 2012. – 623 people. Respondents were divided into groups depending on the studied demographics: gender: men - 47.5%; women - 52.5%; age: up to 25 years of age – 4.9%, 26 to 35 year-olds - 41.0%; 36 to 45 year-olds – 26.2%; over 45 year-olds – 27.9%; by experience – up to 2 years – 32.8%, up to 3 years – 19.7%; over 3 years – 45.6%. In different periods of time the distribution of the respondents shows relative equality.

Data analysis shows differences in perceptions about different cultures over the years (See. Table 1). For 2003, the most clearly reflected is the culture of objectives ($x = 4.22$, $sd = 0.81$). The interpretation of such a result goes to the idea of reinforcing the principles of the market economy at the time. Moreover, there are the obstacles to the rapid changes in the external environment to which inevitably comfortable adaptation is sought. Important values that are manifested are associated primarily with finding ways to competitiveness and initiative. Taking risks is another way to overtaking the competition. Another preferred culture for 2003 is that of the rules ($x = 4.06$, $sd = 0.71$). It reflects the preference for stability and order. The external environment changes dynamically, but the level of uncertainty about the future remains - ($x = 4,00$; $sd = 0,73$) for 2008 and ($x = 3,84$; $sd = 0,78$) for 2012. Although over the years it tends to lower values it holds forefront again, with the exception of 2008, when it is aligned with the culture of support ($x = 4,01$; $sd = 0,87$). However, in the Bulgarian socio-cultural environment, according to the surveyed universities the preferred culture remains the culture of objectives. The results of descriptive statistics attribute the highest values to the culture of the objectives for 2008. ($x = 4,14$; $sd = 0,57$) as well as for 2012 ($x = 4,01$; $sd = 0,67$). Thus, there are no changes observed in the value orientations, but it must be noted that the willingness to take initiative retains its high values - ($x = 3,76$; $sd = 0,77$) for 2003, ($x = 3,93$; $sd = 0,73$) for 2008 and ($x = 3,78$; $sd = 0,81$) for 2008. Nevertheless, susceptibility to change remains in the last places. Dominant remain the preference for adherence to formal rules and standardized procedures but organizational values are important and those that are aimed at realizing good profits, adaptability, innovation and productivity are also appreciated. These data show the culture of objectives and that the rules are quite similar in each period under study. Another link can be found between the results – a culture of support and a culture of innovation. Thus, stability, order and control and decentralization are associated with entrepreneurship and creativity. The supported values of trust, high morale and a sense of equality and understanding retain their importance, but come last in 2012 - ($x = 3,66$; $sd = 0,90$) for 2003 and ($x = 4,01$; $sd = 0,99$) for 2008

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of types of organizational culture for 2003, 2008 and 2012

<i>Periods</i> <i>Cultures</i>	<i>2003</i>		<i>2008</i>		<i>2012</i>	
	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Rules</i>	4,06	0.71	4,00	0.73	3,84	0.78
<i>Innovationa</i>	3,76	0.77	3,93	0.73	3,78	0.81
<i>Aims</i> <i>(Objectives)</i>	4,22	0.81	4,14	0.57	4,01	0.67
<i>Support</i>	4,01	0.87	4,01	0.99	3,66	0.90

Culture in studied universities is seen as dynamic and flexible, but this is directed more to the correct performance of the tasks rather than to team building ($x = 3,34$; $sd = 0,65$). The culture of innovations for 2008 comes last ($x = 4,14$; $sd = 0,57$), but for 2012 ($x = 3,78$; $sd = 0,81$) it is ahead of supportive culture. Respondents in 2008 show higher levels of commitment to each of the types of organizational culture. The findings are confirmed after a test for multiple comparisons. Differences have been established between the study periods at each organizational culture.

In the Bulgarian socio-cultural environment there seems to be a stable orientation of competing alternative values for development. On the one hand, there are risk-taking activities related to higher profit and entrepreneurship, and on the other – direct management and stable control. There are registered higher values to the strict observance of the hierarchical sequence in coordinating the organization's objectives. Changes in the external environment have not caused serious transformations in the choice of organizational values. Perhaps the explanation for this can be found in the uncertainty of the new, skepticism due to applied changes, fear of risk and maintenance of traditional methods assessed as effective.

The hypothesis of a change in the choice of dominant organizational values over time has been confirmed. The results can probably be explained by a number of factors, such as the dynamic socio-economic, political and technological environment over the past ten years. There is a trend to creating different alternatives, evaluating and selecting the most appropriate solution to the difficult situations. Preferences have been registered to searching for a suitable exit in complicated and profound problems or relationships. At the same time there is reliance on enforcement of judgment in resolving problems that threaten the implementation of the tasks, despite partial satisfaction of needs and interests. These results largely coincide with other studies in the same field (Ilieva, 2006; Karabeliova, 2011). Therefore the adherence to rigid organizational activities of the organization is considered effective. In the years of study, this understanding does not undergo transformation. Formal rules and hierarchy are perceived as a reliable way to survival and competitiveness. Analyses show that the dominant values to compliance with the objectives of the organization are maintained. However, the importance of value orientations to innovation and support grow throughout the studied stages of time. Respondents in 2003 place most significance to the culture of objectives. In 2008 and 2012 this trend is also maintained.

In this sense, to be effective in managing, the leaders would be focused on promoting competitiveness and aggressive orientation to improving performance on the market. Employees are motivated to be proactive, to invest additional efforts and work vigorously. Management is focused on orientation to customer needs. However, the management of employees' adaptation to work and a strong system of control that leaders exhibit are another important feature of the applied styles. The trend is to implement systems for monitoring and evaluation of results and monitoring progress. Coordination is encouraged in the organization. Team management with supportive feedback does not emerge as a priority in leadership styles for any of the studied periods. Expansion of staff competence and career development are encouraged, but not particularly to a great extent. However, leadership styles have an increased desire to encourage people to offer innovations, to expand alternatives and to facilitate the emergence of new ideas. Constructing a clear picture of the future competes with the aggressive market orientation.

Quote of the second test battery. At the beginning of 2015 a new survey on types of organizational culture took place on. 717 people working in the education sector from five different universities in major Bulgarian cities were surveyed. Respondents were divided into groups depending on the studied demographics: gender: men – 56.9 %; women – 43.1 %; age: up to 21 year-olds – 15.5 %; 22 to 40 year-olds – 59.6 %; over 40 year-olds – 25.0 %; work experience – up to 2 years – 33.8 %; up to 3 years – 20.7 %; over 3 years – 42.6 %. Managerial position – 30%; serving employees – 70%; from the capital – 57.5, from a big city – 30.7; from a small town – 11.8%.

The results of the descriptive statistics (See Table 2). When using the FOCUS tool assign the highest values to *culture oriented towards support* ($x = 4,80$; $sd = 0,94$). These data partially cover the data when using Cameron and Quinn's questionnaire and are associated with the dominance of *hierarchical type of culture* ($x = 21,10$; $sd = 4,50$). Values of clan culture are closest to those of the hierarchy culture and it can be argued the priority is assumed to be the atmosphere of mutual understanding, empathy and tolerance. The basic standards that are supported in this type of organizational culture are aimed at facilitating the efficient, cohesive, non-conflicting and functional teamwork; creating conditions for good interpersonal relations. Highly valued are personal development and teamwork ($x = 21,45$; $sd = 3,86$). In terms of leadership styles results demonstrate skills that are characterized by being dynamic, entrepreneurial and creatively oriented towards risk-taking. The main emphasis is placed on experimentation and innovation. The focus of the organizations having ad hoc culture ($x = 19,43$; $sd = 4,75$) is on the outer positioning with a high degree of flexibility and individuality, ability to take risks, to innovate, an important prerequisite for innovation is the flexibility and adaptability. Innovative organizational culture according to survey data with the FOCUS tool ranks last ($x = 4,47$; $sd = 0,74$). Indeed, it is very close to the culture oriented towards objectives ($x = 4,59$; $sd = 0,73$) and the culture oriented towards rules ($x = 4,53$; $sd = 0,65$). Yet here were observed discrepancies in the reporting of the dominant value orientations of the high requirements to people, commitment and responsibility for their tasks. Understanding of proper behavior in the organization is most closely associated with controlling, strict adherence to rules and procedures, and compliance with the position and status in the organization which each person has.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of types of organizational culture in 2015

Types of culture	x	SD
Clan	21,10	4,50
Ad hoc	19,43	4,75
Market	20,84	4,11
Hierarchical	21,45	3,86

The results are somewhat unexpected, given the general theoretical platform of the two questionnaires. Organizational environment corresponds to the outside environment through a series of key factors such as competitors, partner institutions, etc. Efficiency criteria according to FOCUS concentrate on achieving the objectives and satisfactory results. The availability of market values by type is the main way to find an answer to the requirements of the external environment characterized by rapid change and effective interaction with stakeholders.

It can be concluded that the highest respondents surveyed by Cameron and Quinn's questionnaire have evaluated cultural practices applied in the hierarchical type of culture, followed by values that are specific to the type of clan culture. Next, the respondents have placed market type culture, and lastly – the hierarchical type of culture. And so innovative attitudes take the lead and not the reported in FOCUS strict rules and procedures that become the vehicle for internal integration and support for adequate response to the external environment, which explains the predominance of the culture oriented support, regardless of the tools. Internal stability accounts for the integrity of the organization and strengthens its position in the external environment.

The logic of such an arrangement of values could be found in the need to meet the requirements of the environment through stability and innovation. Therefore, the last place of the culture of innovation in FOCUS can be seen as a result of their dominance. Thus, leadership style relies on stability as a precondition for flexibility. Organizational environment is managed through consensus and teamwork. This would contribute to the establishment of favorable conditions for the development of personal, innovative and creative potential by encouraging participation in decision making, affection and loyalty. Key values that provoke and build leadership through participation based on solidarity, participation, sense of “us”, trusting each other. The line of behavior that is maintained in the market type of organizational culture is competitiveness, productivity, gaining higher profits and risk-taking. In this respect, the organization is focused by the leaders on external positioning and differentiation. People are driven to compete and are oriented towards achieving the objective. Leadership style “preaches”, proclaims uncompromising and demanding attitude towards work.

The main focus is on creating the conditions for better and quality education; personal contacts are acceptable between management and employees. It could be argued that aspirations are expressed in meeting expectations on both sides. The dominant aim is to focus on external competition and market positioning. *In the last place*, Cameron and Quinn's method of ad hoc type of organizational culture scores the lowest, which mainly relies on achieving innovation in the organization. Interpretations of such internal focus of orientation are anticipating threats and maintaining stability. There are different opinions on the culture of rules corresponding to the

hierarchical culture in different questionnaires. Both cultures come respectively penultimate and last, but this counts as “a good sign” for the positive changes in organizational culture and respective leadership styles.

5. Discussion and Implications

Assuming that there is no difference in the application of FOCUS tools and Cameron and Quinn’s questionnaire, reporting the dominant organizational culture is partly confirmed. Significant discrepancy is registered in the adoption of new ways of working and development according to both questionnaires. The results can probably be attributed to some specifics in both studied environments. Nevertheless, there is a shift towards the creation of new alternatives and evaluating and selecting the most appropriate solution from the educational product consumers’ perspective.

Both questionnaires report that adherence to the clan culture, to support respectively, is the basis for stability and innovations. Cameron and Quinn’s methodology holds a balance of four types of cultures, which is a prerequisite for the organization to maintain its stability. These same conclusions have been made with FOCUS research methodology as well. Survey data show that more clearly distinguished, as compared with the remaining two, stand the clan and market cultures. An exception to this trend is the organizational characteristics that is based on the hierarchical and somewhat ad hoc type of cultures.

In conclusion it can be said that no significant differences are observed in the study with two types of questionnaires on solid organizational actions that are considered effective since they include responsibility for the implementation of tasks arising from the profile of both organizational environments. Also key symbols of organizational culture in the Bulgarian socio-cultural context are the orientation to preserve the stability and the status quo, combined with orientation to the external environment and orientation towards flexibility and freedom, combined with internal orientation. The opposite types of organizational culture – marketing and clans are two basic psychological tools of measurement – intrinsic motivation and stability. Semantically what opposes values along this continuum is the positioning of the organization against the internal and external environment on the one hand, and on the other – the opposition to the orientation towards flexibility and preserving the stability and the status quo.

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