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Organizational culture versus work motivation for the academic staff in a public university

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of a research study that aimed to identify the type of the organizational culture existent in a Romanian state university, the way it is perceived by the employees, and identifying the type of the organizational culture wanted by the employees. We also evaluated the work motivation. The research sample included 102 university teachers, aged between 25 and 57. We used ESA Questionnaire for the work motivation, and Organizational Culture Questionnaire. The main organizational culture existent was the power type and that the employees hope for a support type. Teachers had a high self-actualization motivation.

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1. Introduction

The daily program of an individual means meeting with organizations: workplace, school, transport companies, service providers and utility companies, shops, hospitals, banks, etc. As a result, it is impossible to avoid organizations when it comes to public life. Organizational culture is formed through repeated interactions between members of the organization, bringing together the beliefs and values of individuals who compose it. Organizational culture exists regardless of organization, it „ties the organization” to a chain of tacit meanings, which offers specific

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meanings of all human activities and organizational processes. One of the most important factors in building organizational culture is due to peculiarities of interactions between employees and quality of organizational communication. The impact of an organization culture is crucial when it comes to its members' work motivation. The organization is said to meet a series of human needs: affiliation (explained by the fact that members receive affection from colleagues), psychosocial comfort, social recognition, achievement. Motivation for work generates attitudes toward work. It must be developed to enable managers of organizations to change attitudes toward work and performance.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Objectives

Diagnosis of organizational culture in a state university in Romania; diagnosis of work motivation for teachers from a state university in Romania; the relationships between the variables studied. The present research is meant to highlight the following aspects: motivational structures that characterize the university teaching staff (captured by *ESA questionnaire*, Form A); the extent to which work satisfies the employees 'motivations (*ESA questionnaire*, form B); the motivational climate expected by the employees in future (*ESA Questionnaire*, Form C); perception of organizational culture in university (existing culture); the organizational culture that employees want in university (desired culture); the relationship between age / academic degree and motivational structures / organizational culture; the way in which a particular type of motivation is associated with a certain perception of organizational culture.

2.2. Description of research sample

The research sample consisted of 102 teachers from a state university in Romania. The average age of the subjects is 34.18 years (standard deviation 7.10), minimum age of 25 years and maximum age of 57 years. In terms of genre, female subjects were prevalent (75.5%). Distribution of subjects by gender variable is illustrated by the frequency table below (Table 1). In terms of academic degree, we obtained the following distribution: junior assistant 11.8%, assistant 34.3%, lecturer 24.5%, associate professor 14.7%, professor 14.7%.

2.3. Methods

The *psychometric method* was used to achieve the research. *ESA Questionnaire* was used to assess motivational structures at the workplace (Ciucurel, 1996). It is an elaborated questionnaire developed from Schein's classification and the expectancy theory developed by Vroom. *ESA Questionnaire* comprises three sections. *Section A* seeks to capture the types of motivation at the workplace - what motivates employees, what they want to have (salary, allowances and bonuses, profit sharing, close relationships between team members, competent and understanding seniors; recognition of personal competence, professional development opportunities, promotion opportunities). There are 21 items, whose scores are calculated on three scales: economic motivation, social motivation and self-motivation. *Section B* captures the characteristics of the workplace (*valence*), stating the extent to which current conditions of employment meet the employees' needs. *Section C* assesses the extent to which employees expect their working place to satisfy future necessities and desires (*instrumentality*). Applied to a group of 100 subjects (general population) there were obtained the following Alpha Crombach internal consistency coefficients (factors): E = 0.635, S = 0.678, A = 0.670. Alpha Crombach coefficient throughout the questionnaire was n=0.720, and on both sides of the questionnaire (split-half method) it was n=0.695 and n=0.712 respectively.

Diagnosing organizational culture questionnaire (Harrison & Stokes, 1972) was used to assess the organizational culture. It assesses the existing culture of the organization to which the subjects belong, and the culture they prefer on the other hand. The instructions of the test explicitly require the subjects to think of the top management of the organization. Scores for four types of culture are being calculated according to the responses to the questionnaire: *power, role, and task* and *support* culture. A high score for one culture indicates that it is more pronounced in the organization or satisfies the respondents' preferences completely.

The culture types of the survey are: *Power (P)* – in a power-based culture, access to resources is unequal. A resource can be anything that a certain person wants, but is controlled by another person. Those who have power use resources to satisfy or prevent the others' needs and thus control their behaviour. *Role (R)* – in a role-based culture based, there is a system of structures and procedures affecting the leaders 'power. The power struggle takes place within the limits of some rules. The duties and rewards of those who play different roles are clearly defined, usually in writing, and are subject to an explicit or implicit contract between organization and individual. Employees perform different functions to receive certain rewards. Both individuals and organization must comply with the commitments they made. *Task (T)* – power and role-based cultures depend on the use of external rewards and punishments to motivate employees. The task-based culture gathers employees around a common purpose. It uses the mission of the organization to attract and release the employees 'personal energy to achieve personal goals. *Support (S)* – the support-based culture can be defined as an organizational climate based on mutual trust between individual and organization. In such an organization, people feel they are valued as human beings, not like pieces of a car or as mere developers of tasks.

3. Research results

3.1. Diagnosis of work motivation

The descriptive analysis of data for the three dimensions of *ESA Questionnaire* had the following results:

Section A (motivation for work) - employees are characterized by: Well developed *economic motivation* (average to high interest for factors such as: salary, benefits and bonuses, ability to obtain additional income, etc.) (Score average 21.60, standard deviation 3.307); Highly developed *self-fulfilment motivation* (high interest for factors such as: recognition of competence at the workplace, professional development, promotion opportunities) (score average 24.12, standard deviation 4.506); Poorly represented *social motivation* (low interest for factors such as: group activity, close relationships between staff members, informal leader of the group, the formal leader's management style) (score average 17.33, standard deviation 5,194). **Section B (characteristics of workplace - valence)**: the current working conditions of employees are perceived as satisfying average to low economic necessities, average self-fulfilment needs, average social necessities. **Section C (job instrumentality)**: employees believe that the future working conditions will satisfy average economic necessities, average self-fulfilment needs, and average to low social necessities.

Table1: Descriptive statistics indicators - ESA motivational structures

	Section A			Section B			Section C		
	economic	self-fulfilment	social	economic	self-fulfilment	social	economic	self-fulfilment	social
average	21,60	24,12	17,33	6,77	10,37	4,85	8,02	10,88	8,36
median	20,00	23,00	16,50	6,00	11,00	5,00	7,00	9,00	7,00
Standard deviation	3,307	4,506	5,194	3,403	3,731	1,992	3,755	5,066	3,623
minimum	18	14	11	2	3	2	3	3	4
maximum	28	32	28	12	15	9	15	17	16
asymmetry	0,664	-0,204	0,762	0,180	-0,520	0,437	0,535	-0,105	0,906
kurtosis	-1,075	-0,314	-0,556	-1,473	-0,948	-0,705	-0,889	-1,700	-0,563

3.2. Diagnosis of organizational culture

Existing organizational culture: High representation of *power*- type culture (average score 46.77, standard deviation 9.192); Average to high representation of *role*-type culture (average score 41.11, standard deviation 8.533); Average representation of *task*-type culture (average score 36.48, standard deviation 6.245); Poor

representation of *support*-type culture (average score 25.64, standard deviation 3.409). One can notice the prevalence of *power*-type culture, followed by the *role*-type culture. The interviewed employees consider that their organization is characterized by unequal access to resources and power struggle. Those who have power use resources to meet or prevent the other's needs and thus control their behaviour. Those who align themselves with the power are recognized and benefit from numerous advantages. The others are asked to obey the rules or are penalized. The *role-type culture* comes on the second place. In such a culture, regulations are the most important. At university level, regulations and procedures in force are elements of *role*-type culture. Leaders are interested in rules, procedures, efficiency. Given their high number, people feel overloaded, stressed and tend to dismiss these regulations.

Desired organizational culture: Poor representation of *power*-type culture (average score 27.73, standard deviation 10,363); Average representation of *role*-type culture (average score 39.27, standard deviation 7.373); Average to high representation of *task*-type culture (average score 41.70, standard deviation 7.335); Average to high representation of *support*-type culture (average score 41.28, standard deviation 13,345). One can notice the prevalence of both *support* and *task*-type culture. The *support-type culture* has a specific organizational climate based on mutual trust between individual and organization, in which people feel they are valued as human beings, not just as mere developers of tasks. This type of culture usually prevails at the level of departments and corresponds to people-centred management. The *task-type culture* gathers employees around a commonly realized and accepted purpose. This promotes a *task*-focused management; the task and its fulfilment are the most important. At the same time, people are respected and self-motivated. This type of culture usually works in project teams, *Research Centres*, *Training departments*, etc. The *power-type culture* is the prevalent existing culture; it is followed (in order of frequency) by: *role-type culture*, *task-type culture* and *support-type culture*. The preference order for the desired culture is reversed. The *support-type culture* comes first though it is the least developed under the circumstances.

3.3. Evaluating the relationships between research variables

In order to test *research hypotheses*, there were used procedures specific to inferential statistics (correlation analysis, Chi-square test). **Hypothesis 1: There is a correlation between age of the academic staff and their perceptions of organizational culture.** Weak and statistically insignificant inverse correlation between age and existing power-type culture; Weak and statistically insignificant direct correlations between age and existing role-type culture / desired role-type culture; Statistically significant inverse correlations between: age and existing support-type culture (average correlation $r = 0.35$, $p <0.001$), age and desired support-type culture (strong correlation $r = 0.62$, $p <0.001$); Statistically significant direct correlations between: age and existing task-type culture (weak correlation $r = 0.22$, $p = 0.023$); age and desired task-type culture (weak correlation $r = 0.21$, $p = 0.030$); age and desired power-type culture (strong correlation $r = 0.58$, $p <0.001$). One can notice the young people's preference for support-type culture as well as their preference for task or power-type culture with increasing age. **Hypothesis 2: There is a correlation between academic grade and perception of existing organizational culture.** There is a statistically significant association between *academic grade* and the dominant perception of existing organizational culture (Pearson Chi-Square = 23.993, d.f. = 8, $p = 0.002$). Junior assistants and assistants tend to perceive organizational culture as a power-type one, while associate professors and professors lay a significant stress on the role-type culture. It is also noted that only course holders (at which level the self-development needs are intense) culture is perceived as a *task*-type one. **Hypothesis 3: There is a correlation between academic grade and desired organizational culture.** There is a statistically significant association between *academic grade* and *desired organizational culture* (Pearson Chi-Square = 120.877, d.f. = 12, $p <0.001$). Junior assistants, assistants and lecturers tend to prefer a support-type organizational culture type (followed by the role-type culture). Associate professors prefer the task-type culture and professors are in favour of power and task-type culture. **Hypothesis 4: There is a correlation between teachers' age and their motivation for work.** In terms of age and *motivational structures*, the correlation analysis revealed the following: *Section A*: age positively correlates with economic motivation ($r = 0.60$, $p <0.001$) and negatively with social motivation ($r = -0.50$, $p <0.001$); correlation between age and self-fulfilment motivation is statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$); *Section B*: age negatively correlates with social motivation ($r = -0.61$, $p <0.001$), other correlations are statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$); *Section C*: age positively correlates with economic motivation ($r = 0.50$, $p <0.001$) and negatively with

social motivation ($r = -0.41$, $p < 0.001$); correlation between age and self-fulfilment motivation is statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$); On the whole, one can notice direct correlations between age and economic motivation and inverse correlations between age and social motivation (as the age increases, the emphasis on economic factors increases to the detriment of social factors). **Hypothesis 5: There is a correlation between academic grade and motivation for work.** There is a statistically significant association between *academic grade* and *motivation for work* (Pearson Chi-Square = 77.488, d.f. = 8, $p < 0.001$). Junior assistants, associate professors and professors are dominated by economic and self-fulfilment motivation. Assistants and lecturers, however, have an intense motivation for self-fulfilment and social needs. **Hypothesis 6: There is a correlation between academic grade and perception of workplace motivational valence.** Association between *academic grade* and *perception of job in terms of satisfying needs* has not reached statistical significance (Pearson Chi-Square = 6.159, d.f. = 4, $p = 0.188$). However, lecturers tend to appreciate their workplace as satisfying their self-fulfilment needs to a larger extent than others. **Hypothesis 7: There is a correlation between academic grade and job instrumentality.** There is a statistically significant association between *academic level* and *expectations on satisfying future needs* (Pearson Chi-Square = 45.971, d.f. = 8, $p < 0.001$). Assistants expect to primarily satisfy their self-fulfilment needs, while lecturers and professors are expected to meet both self-fulfilment and social needs. Junior assistants are expected to meet social needs to a larger extent than others. **Hypothesis 8: There is a correlation between desired organizational culture and motivation for work.** There is a statistically significant association between *desired organizational culture* and *motivation for work* (Pearson Chi-Square = 65.222, d.f. = 6, $p = .000$, phi = 0.80). The effect size index shows a strong association between variables. It is apparent that *power-based culture* is preferred by people with a high economic motivation. People with high social motivation want a *support-type culture* and people with prevailing self-fulfilment motivation prefer support-type culture but also role and task-type cultures. **Hypothesis 9: There is a correlation between existing culture and workplace motivational valences.** There is a statistically significant association between *existing culture type* and *workplace motivational valences* (Pearson Chi-Square = 16.992, df = 2, $p < 0.001$, phi = 0.48). Subjects who constantly notice the economic valences of the workplace tend to perceive the existing organizational culture as a power-type one. Subjects who believe that their work meets their self-fulfilment needs tend to have a heterogeneous perception of existing organizational culture. **Hypothesis 10: There is a correlation between desired culture and job instrumentality.** There is a statistically significant association between *desired culture type* and *job instrumentality* (Pearson Chi-Square = 71.549, df = 6, $p < 0.001$, phi = 0.83). People who expect future work to satisfy their economic motivation prefer a *power-type culture*. Those who expect social motivation want a *support-type culture* and persons who expect to satisfy their self-fulfilment prefer *support, task and role-type cultures*.

4. Conclusions

Organizational culture is formed through repeated interactions between members of the organization, bringing together the beliefs and values of individuals who compose it. There are strong paradigmatic factors that customize organizational culture, such as: leadership style and decision-making manner, level of formality, organizational structure, and almost all systems that provide value and support for a particular type of work and behaviour. The organization meets a series of human needs: affiliation (explained by the fact that members receive affection from colleagues), psychosocial comfort, social recognition, and fulfilment. As regards motivation for work, teachers of the investigated organization show *self-fulfilment motivation*, followed by well-developed *economic motivation* and poorly represented *social motivation*. As regards workplace motivational valences, the university is perceived as a means of satisfying self-fulfilment needs to an average extent, economic needs to an average to small extent and social needs to a small extent. There were no differences between motivational valences and teachers' expectations as regards their workplace. As regards existing organizational culture, *power-type culture* comes first, followed by *role-type culture*. In terms of *desired organizational culture* there is a need for change, given the preference for *support and task-type culture*.

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