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ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AT THE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS LEVEL: RESEARCH ASPECT

The concept of organisational culture combines social behaviour and spiritual output of people in various institutions. To fulfil our goals it is necessary to describe the state of organisational and to define how to estimate the state of organisational culture. Thus, the motivation for this paper is to provide sources and tools to manage the state of organisational culture. First, we come up with assumptions that organisational culture and organisational performance are functionally related and organisation is a dynamic emergent system. It is possible to measure organisational performance. We also treat organisation and

organisational culture as complex systems. Our research assumes that the emergence of organisational culture is under influence of internal and external factors. Second, our tools of investigation and means of analysis are based on input-state-output model of a system where controllable inputs influence the environment of a system and help develop measurement system which causes the appearance of measurable outputs. Third, we prove the existence of dynamic emergent system and show organisation and its parameters in it. Our next step is to measure the dimensions of the space of organisational cultures of educational institutions. In order to outline these problems it is necessary to analyse basic definitions of our research, to define the idea of emergent property and organisational culture, to show organisational culture of public organisations and typology of organisational cultures of educational institutions. Our final step is to present assessment of organisational effectiveness in higher education institutions and prove the importance of positive culture as well as to describe the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI).

The notions of organisational culture and organisational performance are functionally related. According to J. Barney, culture can be a source of competitive advantage and therefore it develops an increased performance. As R. Quinn and J. Rohrbaugh have demonstrated, culture is related to the dimensions of performance [1; 2]. As for organisational performance, it is a measurable one. Attempts to measure organisational performance were made by R. Quinn and J. Rohrbaugh. As a result of multidimensional scaling procedures, two dimensions were outlined. «The first dimension is the organisational interest, and allows distinguishing organisations that focus on the internal side (the well-being and the development of people in the organisation) from organisations that focus on the external side (health and development of the organisation itself). The second dimension is related to the organisational structure and separates organisations that insist on stability and control from organisations that aim at flexibility and innovation» [1, p. 729]. These two dimensions put together encourage R. Quinn and J. Rohrbaugh to build a spatial model which proves the complex nature of any organisation. Thus, according to their model [1], an organisation is faced with standards defined by its competitive environment. Second, the respect of quality standards implies an organisational adaptation and the acquisition of new resources (e.g. financing, academic personnel, etc.). These changes go with stronger flexibility and innovation in the organisational culture (e.g. new courses programmes, alliances with other university, etc.) [1].

As organisation has appeared to be a dynamic emergent system, it needs means and tools of description to show its dynamism. Input-state-output model of a system makes it possible to demonstrate this phenomenon [3]. The reasons for considering any organisation as a dynamic emergent system are that each organisation has memory that its future state depends on its current state and inputs actuated. Moreover, development of an organisation is dependent on individual actions of members of an organisation having individual goals and is in a constant change [3].

Thus each organisation as a system undergoes influences and changes. These ones occur because of certain environment and controllable inputs into this system. Thus, we are able to define them as external and internal factors influencing organisational culture. The influence of these factors defines and creates collective values, beliefs, principles and behaviour inside the organisation and constructs its state. Thus each organization can be treated as a measurement system and it enables any organization to possess its performance indicators that is measurable outputs. The vision of an organisation as a dynamic emergent system makes it possible to define main parameters of this system. They are external factors influencing any organisation. By them we mean variables that can not be controlled (manipulated) by the organisation itself. There are also internal factors influencing organisational culture. They are variables influencing organisational culture that have been generated by an organisation's interior [6; 7]. Another important parameter appears to be the state of an organisation which describes the organisation and its culture. Measurable outputs are no less important parameters related to the state of organisation that can be measured. Finally, there are factors describing organisational culture that is parameters related to collective values, beliefs, principles, behaviour etc [4; 5].

In order to fulfil the tasks of our research it is necessary to single out some basic questions. Therefore we are to define how to operationalise the conceptual model of organisation as a dynamic emergent system. This is the question about choosing the variables describing information flows between the system and its environment, and between the subsystems. Another question is how to describe the state of organisational. This question is about choosing the variables describing an organisation as a dynamic emergent system, including collective values, beliefs, principles, behavior etc. One more assignment is to be able to estimate the state of organisational culture using performance indicators of an organisation [8–10]. This question concerns observability of the state of an organisation.

Our final problem is how to manage the state of organisational culture that is how to control an organization.

For interpreting the mentioned above problems it is important to define some concepts of the research. The basic definitions for our analysis are the notions of organisation, complex system, emergent property, observability and controllability.

Organisation is an entity comprising multiple people, such as an institution or an association, that has a particular purpose.

Complex system is a system composed of many components which may interact with each other and the environment.

Complex systems have distinct properties that arise from these interactions, such as nonlinearity, emergence, spontaneous order, adaptation, and feedback loops, among others.

Emergent property is a property which a complex system has, but which the individual components do not have.

Observability is a measure of how well internal states of a system can be inferred from knowledge of its measurable outputs.

Controllability is an ability to be controlled or managed, particularly changed from state A to state B.

As for the idea of emergent property, it is a unifying epistemological concept. Systems thinking may be understood as epistemological theory, or at least as a theory whose strength lies in its epistemological aspects. Such an understanding is considered in view of the similar concerns and conceptual similarities which systems thinking shares with phenomenology, a consideration which yields two additional aspects of emergent properties. The correspondences seen to exist between systems thinking and phenomenology lead to the conclusion that the two fields taken together illuminate an untapped source for future interdisciplinary research [11].

Organisational culture should not be treated as an independent phenomenon as it is a point in the space of organisational cultures in the modern global society [8; 12–14]. In order to clarify the meaning and place of organisational culture of a particular organization, it is necessary to define the dimensions of this space and its metrics, that is to measure distance there. Finally, it is important to define the place of organisational cultures of educational institutions [15] and prove their importance in the space of organisational cultures.

The concept of organisational culture takes its origin in cultural anthropology [4]. Organisational culture is considered to refer to the values and beliefs that provide norms of expected behaviours of employees of any company

[4]. E. Schein defines organizational culture as a social force that is largely invisible yet very powerful [16]. According to the definition of “The Business Dictionary”, organisational culture encompasses values and behaviours that “contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization” [17]. Another opinion is that organisational culture represents the collective values, beliefs and principles of organizational members and is a product of factors such as history, product, market, technology, strategy, type of employees, management style, and national culture; culture includes the organisation’s vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, environment, location, beliefs and habits [18]. No less important is the definition stating that organisational culture is an emergence – an extremely complex incalculable state that results from the combination of a few simple ingredients [19].

One more definition is worth mentioning [8]. It admits that organizational culture is the company’s social and spiritual field, shaped by material and non-material, visible and disguised, conscious and unconscious processes and phenomena that together determine the consonance of philosophy, ideology, values, problem-solving approaches and behavioural patterns of the company’s personnel, and are capable of driving the organisation towards success [8]. And finally a more generalised point of view about organizational culture defines that it is a set of explicit and implicit rules of what is and is not acceptable behaviour in an organisation, influenced by core values, norms and underlying assumptions [20]. The mentioned above definitions give a thorough understanding of the problem of organisational culture and outline its major features and properties. The abundance of definitions of organisational culture helps to single out such properties of the concept as reference to the organisational values communicated through norms, artefacts and observed in behavioural patterns [4; 16].

The essence of organisational culture or its credo lies in the fact that one should make a list of organisational values that can encourage full commitment in people. We can outline the following organisational values which are necessary to manage any organisation properly. They are:

- fair and just treatment for everyone, including fair pay based upon equitable pay differentials for level of work and merit recognition related to personal effectiveness appraisal;
- leadership interaction between managers and subordinates, including shared context, personal effectiveness appraisal, feedback and recognition, and coaching;

- clear articulation of accountability and authority to engender trust and confidence in all working relationships;
- articulation of long-term organizational vision through direct communication from the top;
- opportunity for everyone individually or through representatives to participate in policy development;
- work for everyone at a level consistent with their level of potential capability, values and interests;
- opportunity for everyone to progress as his or her potential capability matures, within the opportunities available.

It is significant to understand that the role of managerial leadership at every organisational level is to make these organisational values operationally real [10; 21].

Organisational culture requires a model for its detailed description. A model, based on the open systems theory and the work of Schein, can offer a holistic approach in describing organisational culture. On the basis of this model, the determinants of organisational culture were identified. The determinants are strategy, structure, support mechanisms, behaviour that encourages innovation, and open communication. Values, norms and beliefs that play a role in creativity and innovation can either support or inhibit creativity and innovation depending on how they influence individual and group behaviour.

Speaking about organisation culture of public organizations [3; 6; 7], we should note that organisational culture is recognised as a critical ingredient of organisational effectiveness. However, the popular “excellence” model of managing organisational culture is unsuited to the contingencies and character of many public sector organisations. Termed here the cultural control model, it is the only widely shared understanding of good culture and how to create it. As a generic prototype of culture it is limited, since it relies on management imposing a culture on a work force devoid of subcultural conflict.

Three other models of organisational culture are introduced which offer more promise for the public sector: the subcultural model; the professional-managerial multiculture; and the public service or public interest model.

These other models are recognized in the culture-building strategies and they claim that culture is deeply-rooted and not readily malleable by management and that subcultures affect organisations in various, not necessarily negative, ways. While the cultural control model reminds us of the significance of culture to better management, subsequent research has refined models of

organisational culture which are more consistent with the values and ethics of professionalism and good administration [22].

E. Schein’s model of organisational culture as assumptions, values, and artifacts leaves gaps regarding the appreciation of organizational culture as symbols and processes. Mary Jo Hatch examines these gaps and suggests a new model that combines Schein's theory with ideas drawn from symbolic-interpretive perspectives. The new model, called cultural dynamics, articulates the processes of manifestation, realization, symbolization, and interpretation and provides a framework within which to discuss the dynamism of organizational cultures. Implications of the cultural dynamics model for collecting and analyzing culture data and for future theoretical development are presented [16; 23].

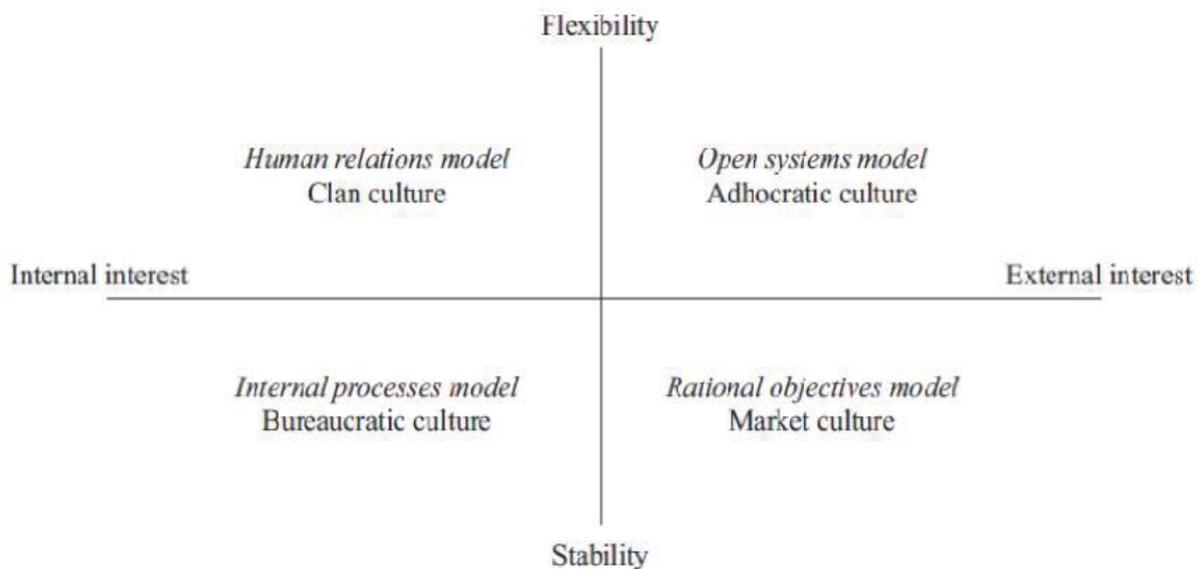


Figure 1. Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s model

The model describes «four types of organizational culture – clan, adhocracy, hierarchy and market, – K. Cameron and S. Freeman [24] elaborated the key attributes of this classification. This system covers the following aspects of an organisation:

- flexibility and incremental progress vs. stability and control;
- external focus and differentiation vs. internal focus and integration» [8, p. 11517].

Following the model, “a clan culture has a focus on the internal flexibility, concern for people and good attitude towards consumers; an adhocracy culture has an external focus combined with high flexibility and individual treatment for

people; a hierarchy culture focuses on internal support and values stability and control; a market culture has an external focus and values stability and control” [8, p. 11517].

This model makes it possible not only to present organisational culture as a dynamic process but also to assess organisational effectiveness in higher education institutions culture.

In order to assess organisational effectiveness in university culture, K. Cameron’s nine dimensions are mainly defined from the perspective of students, academic personnel and administrative personnel. They are students education satisfaction (SES), students academic development (SAD), students career development (SCD), students personal development (SPD), faculty and administrators employment satisfaction (FAES), professional development and quality of the faculty (PDQF), system openness and community interaction (SOI), ability to acquire resources (AAR), organizational health (OH) [25].

As for the term school culture, it generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity. Like a larger social culture, a school culture results from both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices, and it is heavily shaped by a school’s particular institutional history [27]. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff members all contribute to their school’s culture, as do other influences such as the community in which the school is located, the policies that govern how it operates, or the principles upon which the school was founded. Generally speaking, school cultures can be divided into two basic forms: *positive cultures* and *negative cultures*. Numerous researchers, educators, and writers have attempted to define the major features of positive and negative school cultures, and an abundance of studies, articles, and books are available on the topic.

Positive school culture should be treated as preferable in any institution [26; 27]. Positive school cultures are conducive to professional satisfaction, morale, and effectiveness, as well as to student learning, fulfillment, and well-being. The following list is a representative selection of a few characteristics commonly associated with positive school cultures:

- The individual successes of teachers and students are recognized and celebrated.

- Relationships and interactions are characterized by openness, trust, respect, and appreciation.
- Staff relationships are collegial, collaborative, and productive, and all staff members are held to high professional standard.
- Students and staff members feel emotionally and physical safe, and the school's policies and facilities promote student safety.
- School leaders, teachers, and staff members model positive, healthy behaviors for students.
- Mistakes not punished as failures, but they are seen as opportunities to learn and grow for both students and educators.
- Students are consistently held to high academic expectations, and a majority of students meet or exceed those expectations.
- Important leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from staff members, students, and parents.
- Criticism, when voiced, is constructive and well-intentioned, not antagonistic or self-serving.
- Educational resources and learning opportunities are equitably distributed, and all students, including minorities and students with disabilities.
- All students have access to the academic support and services they may need to succeed.
- No assessment as well as organisational culture assessment is possible without a proper instrument. The OCAI [5] was designed to identify the dominant culture of an organisation by profiling that organisation across a quartet of organizational culture types (i.e., clan culture, adhocracy culture, market culture, and hierarchy culture). It serves as a means of evaluating the level of organisational culture in any institution and defines the ways of effective management of higher education institutions in Ukraine.

Organisational culture and organisational performance are related. Organisational performance is a measurable phenomenon. Organisational culture is a dynamic and complex system. The idea of emergent property is a unifying epistemological concept which unites two fields.

The place, dimensions and the role of organisational cultures of educational institutions should be defined.

The credo of any organisational culture is to provide a list of organisational values in order to promote effectiveness and full commitment of people. It is the role of managerial leadership to make the values operationally real.

The OCAI is considered to be the effective instrument for cultural assessment within any higher education institutions.

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