

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AT THE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES IN WESTERN ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT. No organization can be led efficiently if it is unaware of true values. Starting from this aspect, this study aims to analyse the organizational culture of professional emergency services in the Western part of Romania, a complex, social, formal, well organized and coordinated structure. Various ways of reform have been tried out; however only a few were concerned with starting change from the cultural elements, i.e. from knowledge, awareness and valuation of these elements. When collecting data, I used both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the conclusions of the research show that there are certain significant correlations between the dominant decision-making style and the cultural types, both existing and desired by the employees, according to the staff categories they belong to; and the profile of dominant rules reflects a special emphasis on the interpersonal values.

Keywords: *organizational culture, professional emergency services, O.C.A.I. Test, Decision Style Inventory, dominant values.*

Motto: “The dominance and coherence of culture have proven to be essential qualities of excellent companies.”
(Peters, Waterman, 1982)

Introduction

In our constantly changing society, the management of organizational culture must be an essential component of the transformation process of Romanian organizations. Because transformation, regardless if it occurs at the level of structure, at the level of ownership, if it concerns technology types or management strategies, it always requires cultural changes, since conservation and cultural maladjustment are opponents to the success of the process.

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Organizational culture is very important in sustaining the objectives of profitable growth of an organization. It forms and develops under the influence of certain dominant tendencies and some elements of change which act at the level of all components of the society. The steps oriented to the changing of some cultural elements within the professional emergency services must consider the whole range of social factors that have impact in this field of activity.

Although rather numerous, the definitions of organizational culture all tend to the idea that organizational culture designates the ensemble of values, beliefs, rituals, symbols, heroes and myths shared among the members of the organization. Organizational culture is analogous to the unwritten laws of a family, highlighting some inherent values and principles.

Remarkable contributions to this field have been brought by: A. Pettigrew, E. Schein, G. Hofstede, offering significant information, both theoretical and practical, regarding this concept.

When an organization is created, its culture will represent the foundation on which it will work, because it exerts a strong influence on some key elements, such as: decision making, management style and the evaluation of success.

“Three aspects of organizational culture are especially important in the analysis of the probable impact of culture on a given organization: direction, penetration and force.”²

Direction reveals how the cultural elements of the organization show a positive or negative correlation, to a certain degree, in the efforts of the organization of achieving its goals. Penetration refers to the degree of the expansion of cultural elements among the employees. Force indicates the level at which the members of the organization accept different cultural elements promoted by the institution in which they perform their professional activities.

The concept of organizational culture is fundamental for explaining some phenomena taking place within the organization, such as: creation of the hierarchy of values, interpersonal bonds, and the configuration of informational system, defining fundamental attitude toward changes in internal and external environment.

The present research sets off from the idea that organizational culture is the key of success within any organization bringing it closer to better functioning, favoring communication, adaptation, the confidence building and adopting common means in order to achieve the target objectives. Besides, any institution that presents a well outlined and effective organizational culture can be saved from the consequences of a derogatory economic or social environment.

² Ionescu, Gh., Gh., 1996: 51.

Generally, a strong culture reflects an organization whose members agree on the importance of certain values they follow, while a shallow culture sheds light on an organization in which there are no common values or activity types.³

Referring to the organizational culture specific to Romanian public organizations, we can say that this is in a period of transformation (characterized by a resistance to bigger changes), process-oriented (employees prefer routine activities which don't require too much responsibility, so they prefer anonymity), limited (employees identify mostly with the organization and not with the professional field they belong to) and maybe even a semi-closed system (they manifest reluctance to newcomers).⁴ From this point of view, most of the organizations from Romanian public activity require important changes when it comes to the system of values and management processes. So Romanian organizations require essential changes at the level of organizational culture, changes that especially highlight modern managerial principles.⁵

The proper knowledge and approach of organizational culture of professional emergency services in Western Romania (the Emergency Situations Inspectorate „Banat” of Timis County, “Semenic” of Caraş-Severin County, “Porolissum” of Sălaj County, “Someş” of Satu-Mare County) will offer managers the possibility to make capital out of the organization so as to assure its optimal change and development at an organizational level.

The conclusions of the undertaken research will be useful suggestions to improving the activities of the professional emergency services of Western Romania.

Organizational culture and decision-making style

Decision is an important stage of management, because the managing process is based on devising, making and applying certain decisions. In terms of decision-making style, this is a “multidimensional characteristic”, which includes both the level of knowledge of the problem, the accuracy of the analysis of all details, the speed at which a person decides and the “confidence that the decider associates with the assumption that his or her decision is correct”, the time interval after which the post-decisional regret appears, its volume, force and significance, but also the “motivational constellation underlying the reasoning and which usually substantiates its decisions and even the fact that the values are concentrated or dispersed to certain levels, i.e. whether this style is well defined or unconscious.”⁶

³ Voicu, 2002: 60.

⁴ Coroiu, 2011: 252-253.

⁵ Coroiu, 2011: 257.

⁶ Vasilescu, 1986: 289.

Considering the fact that choosing an action strategy and establishing its way of implementation as well as providing the corresponding resources influences the way work unfolds, we can state that decision-making styles are tightly bonded with the aspects of organizational culture.

Organizational culture guides the members of an institution in the process of decision-making, in times when there is no clear guidance.

Organizational culture has a strong impact on the decision making process, acting in a discreet and insidious way, both on the surrounding decision-making environment, in its endogenous component, and on the deciders⁷.

The decision-making process means passing through some stages, one after another: the identification and definition of the problem, defining the criteria and decision objectives, setting the possible decision variants, choosing the best variant and the valuation of the result.⁸

A decision is made depending on a series of factors that form organizational reality. The identification of these factors is essential for the decision-making process. Even if respecting the stages of decision-making management, the probability of making an efficient decision is low without an analysis of these factors. If we refer to the professional emergency services, the internal factors that influence the decision-making process are: aspects related to the hired staff (leading and relational skills, the employees' involvement level, the degree of loyalty towards the organization, etc.), the component of the organizational level (organizational objectives and interests, specific services to citizens, etc.). External factors with an impact on the professional emergency services are: the particularities of interventions, socio-political aspects, technical equipment, the characteristics of citizens requesting support, etc.

When making any kind of decision, the decision-making style and the necessary level of group participation are also influenced by aspects such as: the degree of importance of the decision, the degree of involvement of the subjects, but mostly the available time.

The management of organizational culture

Management is regarded as a summing up of administrative duties, which involve negotiation skills, necessary in order to achieve the coordination of organizational activities.⁹

⁷ Văduva, A. & Stancu, C.M., 2007: 2.

⁸ Hâncu, 2002: 24.

⁹ Coroiu, 2011: 233.

The management of organizational culture refers to the extent to which the organization is actively and deliberately involved in the development of organizational culture.¹⁰

The management of organizational culture must be a permanent process and it has to represent one of the main interests of the person in a leading position. The most powerful influence on the organizational culture belongs to the managers at a superior level followed by the managers at a medium level. As management is becoming professional, exercised in an increasingly constructive manner, the impact of managers on organizational culture is growing more and more pronounced.¹¹

Currently, the management of organizational culture is especially concerned with managing cultural changes that are distinguished by the following characteristics: they are difficult to control, and progress is difficult to measure; the change of leadership is fundamental, changes are predominantly value-oriented, toward the quality of professional life, with particular interest in analyzing and transforming main dysfunctional beliefs.¹²

“Changing culture means working on three components: the physical, the psychological and the philosophical one”.¹³ Change on a physical level imply modifications of the structures, of decorative elements, configuration of the offices, furniture, artifacts or perceptible symbols of the organization (heraldic signs, flag, mascot, motto, etc.). Changes in organizational culture at a psychological level refer to the modeling of the organization members’ behavior, either by signs of recognition or by delegation of decision-making. The philosophical component targets values to which the employees relate when they analyze, justify their own professional activity and behavior. Only the changes that reach this last level are real lasting changes.

Short presentation of professional emergency services¹⁴

After the 15th of December 2004, according to H.G.R. (Government of Romania Decision) no. 1490/2004 and H.G.R. no. 1492/2004 Romanian professional emergency services act as decentralized public services subordinated to the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (as a result of combining the county Fire Departments and the county Inspectorate of Civil Protection).

¹⁰ Van der Post W. Z., T.J. de Coning, et al., 1997: 146-169.

¹¹ Nicolescu, Ov. & Verboncu, I., 2001: 281.

¹² Gherguț, A., 2007: 164.

¹³ Antonesei, L. si alții, 2000: 29.

¹⁴ Vastag, 2014: 8.

Their main purpose is to solve operational problems including defending life, goods and protecting the environment, monitoring the risk types in their area of responsibility, analyzing and evaluating the operational situation, organizing interventions, specific medical activities in case of disasters, emergency healthcare and extrication, as well as psychological assistance, by:

- Prompt interventions, of maximum efficiency, within the response time established at European level;
- Rational allocation of the forces and means, on the same principle of response time;
- Maintaining the predictable risks at acceptable levels;
- Limitation of the loss of lives, material damages and negative effects on the environment;
- Protecting the citizens.

To this purpose, the professional emergency services are equipped with: water and foam carrying fire fighter trucks, mechanical ladder of 30 meters, and special vehicles for extrication with other different machines and equipments for cutting and clearance, fully equipped ambulances for any emergency response, resuscitation, trucks for transport and electric pumps etc., served by professional military.

PRACTICAL PART (Research methodology)

Goal of the research: Identifying the cultural profile of professional emergency services in Western Romania, in terms of reform and modernization, the cultural factor being approached as an essential element for the operation of these institutions.

General objective: emphasizing the organizational culture of these services, in order to identify possible changes that can and must be accomplished, at a managing level.

Research hypotheses:

H 1: There are significant correlations between the prevailing decision-making style at the level of professional emergency services of Western Romania and the cultural types, both existing and desired by the employees;

H 2: The specific position of the employees of professional emergency services in Western Romania (leading position or executive position) and their professional status (officers and noncoms) generate specific identity profiles in the register of global organizational culture orientation (existing and desired), in the inventory of basic cultural elements (dominant characteristics of the organization, leadership,

human resource management, the strategy of the organization, the values of the organization, the criteria of success – according to the O.C.A.I. model proposed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn), as well as different decision – making styles;

H 3: The profile of dominant rules reflects a special emphasis on the interpersonal values, due to the specific activities.

Participants:

The employees of the Emergency Situations Inspectorate „Banat” of Timis County, “Semenic” of Caraş-Severin County, “Porolissum” of Sălaj County, “Someş” of Satu-Mare County have been the subjects participating in this study (1450 subjects), officers, non-commissioned officers and contractual staff, with an average age of 39,5 years, both sexes (being a military institution, it is predominantly male, with a 95,7% of males), marital status: most of them married (76%), with secondary education (36% are university graduates) and the average seniority within the professional emergency services is 8,5 years.

Description of the investigation tools:

Taking into consideration that, by its nature, any organizational culture presents several aspects, some easier to study by qualitative methods while others by quantitative methods, for a genuine knowledge of the subject of research I used both methods.

a) Qualitative tools: semi-structured interviews, focus group, open, participatory, systematic observation, analysis of internal documents: work procedures, internal and external reports, mass-media articles referring to the institution, case study.

b) Quantitative tools:

O.C.A.I Test Questionnaire made up of 48 questions, divided into two groups: the first one identifies the existing culture in the organization, while the other one measures the type of culture preferred by the employees. It refers to 6 dimensions targeting the specific elements of organizational culture (dominant characteristics of the organization, leadership, management of human resources, the binder of the organization, the underlying values of the organization, criteria of success) of all institutions. For each of the 6 dimensions there are 4 variants of answers. For each of the 4 statements (of every dimension) the subjects have to assign a total of 100 points, depending on how appropriate they consider it for the organization in which they work (or wish to work – in the dimensions in the second part of the questionnaire). The evaluation is accomplished in a simple manner: the answers for the first statements of every dimension are added (all the A answers), and then this sum is divided by 6. All the other answers B, C and D are processed in the same way. In the second part of the questionnaire (where the desired culture is

diagnosed) the procedure is the same. Finally, there will be 8 scores, 4 resulting from the first part of the questionnaire and 4 from the second part. Each score is tied to a certain type of culture (Table no. 1) thus helping us to obtain the profile of the organizational culture.

Table no. 1 – Types of organizational cultures

<p>The Support (Collaborate) Culture "Oriented cultures are family-like, with a focus on mentoring, nurturing, and <i>doing things together</i>."</p>	<p>The Adhocracy (Create) Culture "Oriented cultures are dynamic and entrepreneurial, with a focus on risk-taking, innovation, and <i>doing things first</i>."</p>
<p>The Hierarchy (Control) Culture "Oriented cultures are structured and controlled, with a focus on efficiency, stability and <i>doing things right</i>."</p>	<p>The Market (Compete) Culture "Oriented cultures are result-oriented, with a focus on competition, achievement, and <i>getting the job done</i>."</p>

Source: *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. San-Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E.. 2011

Decision Style Inventory (DSI) – was made up by Mason, Rowe and Dickel¹⁵ and it consists of 20 items/situations (each with 4 response options) describing four main ways in which people generally make decisions (directive, analytical, conceptual and behavioral), differentiated by two dimensions considered simultaneously: smaller or larger cognitive complexity and orientation toward rational or intuitive. To each of the four answer variants corresponding to the questionnaire items, the subjects have to assign a number of 8, 4, 2 or 1 points, depending on how appropriate the answers are for them. After adding up the assigned points, the obtained scores are in a relation with a certain type of decision-making style, and thus we find the dominant style.

Table no. 2 – Basic styles of approaching decision-making problems in organizations.

Decision style	Characteristics
Directive	Reduced cognitive complexity and orientation toward the rational. Deciders with this decision style are efficient and logical, especially focusing on "here and now". They have the necessary willpower and energy to accomplish difficult tasks and are oriented toward power and control, sometimes exploiting others for their own interest.
Analytical	Increased cognitive complexity and orientation toward the rational. Analytical deciders usually make a deep analysis of the situations they are facing so as to find the best solution. They are people who like to solve problems, to search for clear and real facts and to study them thoroughly.

¹⁵ Rowe, Mason & Dikel, 1982: 217.

Conceptual	Increased cognitive complexity and orientation toward the intuitive. Conceptual deciders are creative and able to see more options to solve a problem and to foresee the consequences better.
Behavioral	Reduced cognitive complexity and orientation toward the intuitive. Deciders with this decision style help the people they work with, they are open to their suggestions, they use persuasion and embrace a more relaxed control style.

Source: *Managing With Style: A Guide to Understanding and Improving Decision Making*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Rowe, A. & Mason, R. 1987, pp 45-50

Questionnaire regarding dominant rules and values in an organization – The questionnaire has been elaborated starting from the Kuczarski Model of changing the organizational values and it is used with success in the process of changing organizational values, but also in the ensemble remodeling of organizational culture. The questionnaire contains 50 items grouped around 10 normative-value dimensions (the pride to belong to the organization, concern for excellence, team spirit, trusting hierarchy, concern for good management, concern for colleagues, concern for citizens, innovation, interest in formation, atmosphere of confidence within the organization). For all the items the respondents have to express their degree of agreement by choosing one of the variants: A (fully agree), B (mostly agree), C (mostly disagree), D (fully disagree). The corresponding scores for every choice are added up for every normative-value dimension and the total is multiplied by 10, thus each obtaining ten percentages. These results are transferred to the interpretation grid of the dominant rules and values within an organization.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the obtained results:

H 1: Correlations between decision style and organizational culture.

From a statistical point of view I could notice the following significant correlations between the existing organizational culture and decision style:

-The hierarchy type of organizational culture (control) correlated positively with the directive decision – making style ($r = 0.46$ at $p < .05$) and the behavioral decision-making style ($r = 0.23$ at $p < .05$).

The first correlation obtained, the one between the hierarchy type of organizational culture (control) and directive decision – making style supports the theory of Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn which claims that in organizations characterized by a formal attitude with multiple levels of hierarchy there is a pronounced sense of organization, with a special emphasis on respecting deadlines, the deciders being oriented toward power and control, elaborating detailed plans for the implementation of their decisions.

Although the two decisional styles, directive and behavioral, may appear antagonistic, it seems that in the present research the existing culture type at the level of professional emergency services in Western Romania (supportive type of organizational culture) correlated positively with both. The positive correlation with behavioral decisional style is, for sure, a result of the specific activities carried out by the professionals in emergency situations which, under the pressure of time, cannot always afford a minute analysis in order to take a decision, because the interventions they participate in carry on in a fast pace, the life of people, animals and the safety of goods and environment depend on the response time and efficient, quick decisions taken at the scene.

Thus, considering the nature of tasks and missions in which the staff of professional emergency services participate (services mostly marked by complexity and uncertainty), a balance between decision-making styles is recommended, both at individual level and at the level of the group of deciders, i.e. a harmonious blend of the rational and the intuitive approach, of concern for the tasks and caring for the people.¹⁶

Between the desired organizational culture type and decision-making style, only one significant, positive correlation came out:

-Between the supportive type of organizational culture (collaborative type) and the analytic decisional style ($r = 0.65$ at $p < .05$).

As a consequence, H 1 is partially confirmed.

The revealed positive correlations between the desired supportive organizational culture (collaborative type) at the level of professional emergency services in Western Romania and analytic decision-making style support the O.C.A.I. model, because cultures which promote open discussions and active involvement of the staff in task solving increase commitment in the decision making process, weighing out and looking for alternatives and solutions in order to make the best decisions.

H 2: The comparison between the categories of staff, according to the specific of their position (leading or executive position) and to their professional status (officers and noncoms) regarding the existing and desired organizational culture, basic cultural-organizational elements and decisional styles.

First of all we have to state that there were no significant differences noted from a statistical point of view between the considered staff categories (persons with leading positions – persons with executive positions; officers-noncoms), regarding the existing and desired organizational culture. The general profile of the existing organizational culture is mainly characterized by the hierarchical cultural type, whereas,

¹⁶ Iftimescu, 2005/2006: 182.

when speaking of preferences, all categories of staff emphasize the component of the supportive type of culture.

Nevertheless, a few differences were observed regarding certain basic cultural-organizational elements. Thus, the following statistically relevant differences were observed between staff in a leading position and staff in an executive position:

- the staff in an executive position perceives the existing binder inside organization in accordance with the specific of the supportive type of organizational culture, while for the staff being in a leading position the binder of the existing level of organizational culture rather corresponds with the hierarchy type of culture;

- The personnel being in an executive position has a more accentuated preference for a leadership in accordance with the ad-hoc type of culture, while the personnel being in leading position prefers a leadership characterized in terms of the hierarchy type of culture.

The only significant difference between the lot of officers and noncoms is that the noncoms consider that the binder which holds together the members of the organization targets the team spirit, loyalty, mutual trust (i.e. aspects associated with the supportive type of culture), as opposed to the officers who believe that the employees are bound together by strong rules and well outlined military procedures (aspects specific to the hierarchy type of culture).

In terms of decisional style, the results have not emphasized statistically relevant differences between the lot of officers and noncoms, and referring to the specific of their function, it was established that the staff being in a command position have a more accentuated preference for rational decision-making style ($t = 3.41$ to $p < 0.001$).

As a consequence, H 2 is partially confirmed.

As there was only one statistically relevant difference in terms predominant decision-making style between the categories of staff considered in the research, depending on the specific position they are involved (management or executive positions) and professional status (group of officers and group of NCOs), and only small differences were noted when it came to some specific dimensions of existing and desired organizational culture and no significant difference in the general profile of existing or desired organizational culture, we can say that the two categories of staff are a relatively homogeneous group (at least in terms of organizational culture and predominant decision-making style).

H 3: The profile of dominant rules and values within the professional emergency services in Western Romania.

Any organization sets its goals according to their own aspirations: what goals it aims to reach, this being manifested in the collective values of the organization.

Values and rules are fundamental components of organizational culture and of the underlying decision-making style. They are resources that encourage or discourage us in the actions we take.¹⁷

Values influence the understanding of what is good or bad in an organization, being closely related to the characteristic ideals of a human group. Values define the organization and determine its organizational behavior. The rules represent the views of the group on what is right and wrong. In formal terms, this can result in laws and, informally speaking, in social control.

From the questionnaire on the norms and values prevailing in an organization I could draw the following normative value profile of professional emergency services in Western Romania:

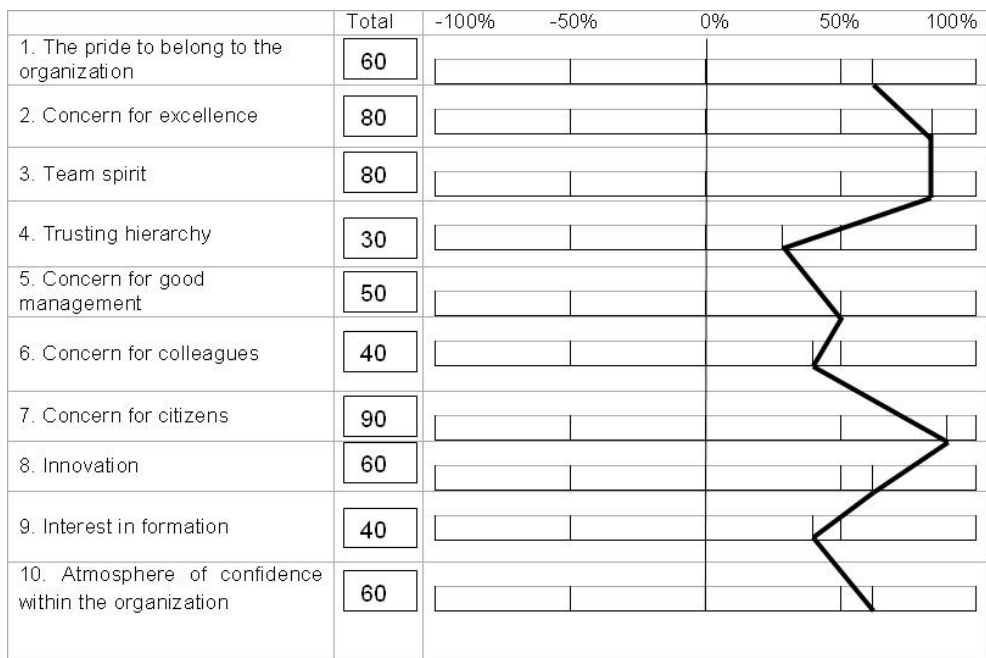


Figure 1. The normative value profile of professional emergency services in Western Romania

When grouping the 10 dimensions of normative values into three categories (personal, interpersonal and labor values), we can say that the normative value system is geared mainly towards interpersonal aspects (team spirit, concern for people seeking help) and then to the labor (e.g. innovation), minimizing personal normative values (e.g.

¹⁷ Coroiu, 2011: 224-225.

interest to training). Therefore, we describe the investigated group as characterized by concern for others (colleagues, and people seeking help), the openness to change and less of a desire for self-accomplishment.

The big distance to power (persons in command positions are perceived as "omniscient", they have the main coordinating role in the overall activity of these services), a management style where decisions are often imposed without consulting and excessive control may be the motives why normative values like trust in hierarchy scored a lower result among employees.

Identifying this profile will be a very useful tool for staff in leadership positions in the professional emergency services, providing them with information and real support on the most appropriate practices to be adopted in order to motivate employees.

Staff in leadership positions must follow the declared values (resulting from the application of the questionnaires, preferably anonymous, or contained in speeches, projects), so that these should overlap the operational values (those found in the decisions, strategies and effective operating modes).

However, this profile will have an important role in the management of organizational culture as it reflects the desires and goals of employees, explaining their long-term concerns, and it allows identification of potential areas of conflict generated by different values in the intervention teams.

H 3 is confirmed.

Suggestions on managing organizational culture in the professional emergency services in Western Romania

Given the types of organizational culture (current and desired) identified in the professional emergency services, the characteristic styles of decision making and the profile of dominant values and rules, the management of organizational culture should particularly aim at capitalizing competence of the whole staff (regardless of the professional category) of the organization and at structuring it so as to achieve a synergy effect.

Also, since decision making is a very important aspect in the work of managers, organizational success depending on their ability to make good decisions, involving all staff in the process, organizational culture management must consider the protection of staff against risks during the decision making process by finding various possibilities of action, always having various alternatives at hand.

All these issues are extremely important so that the staff in leadership positions can develop the feeling of stability, continuity and appropriate behavior among employees.

On the other hand, the management of organizational culture in the professional emergency services should focus on the principles and theories of modern management, as values and objectives are catalysts for economic and social reforms promoted in society.

Some of the measures that an effective management of organizational culture must consider are¹⁸:

I. Increased communication within the intervention teams and between different teams (teams fighting fire in buildings, forests, vegetation, search and rescue teams in enclosed spaces and waters, medical first aid teams and teams of transport of victims to hospital facilities, teams of extrication of victims of various accidents, CBRN teams – interventions in case of chemical accidents, bacteriological, radiological and nuclear or other natural disasters, or pyrotechnical teams – land reclamation and destruction of unexploded munitions etc.), because:

- better communication allows solving problems in a shorter time and, often, even prevents them;
- faster decisions and increased degree of responsibility assumption by employees;
- decreasing or even eliminating the differences between formal declarations of the staff in leadership positions on the one hand and the attitudes and behaviors displayed by them on the other hand.

II. Promotion and harmonization of individual initiatives with teamwork at all levels of hierarchy. Anonymity, still quite present in the Romanian public institutions, should disappear; employees expressing valid opinions and interpersonal interaction at work should be valued. Moreover, a culture that does not encourage employee involvement in the act of leading, where subordinates are not stimulated in their interaction, independence and participation in decision-making, will affect the smooth running of work in an organization.

III. Optimization of organizational climate (it is known that it is closely linked to organizational culture) and increased employee performance. This measure will be extremely useful especially as a motivation, as the motivational system is very poorly known in all public systems in our country, both in terms of recognition of merit and in terms of organizational climate.

¹⁸ Coroiu, 2011: 257-259.

IV. Organizing classes with predominantly practical use to prepare and train employees, but according to the new trends seen internationally – it is very important to retain and motivate staff.

V. Encourage the system of values and rules of behavior (for example: cooperation, competition, initiative) that the management wants to be immortalized in culture. A genuine reform depends considerably on making a change in the value system as it relates to human existence itself. Changes in the value system are essential to the success of modernization, but they cannot be made at once, only in time, because they are elements with a high level of resistance to change, involving fundamental changes in the consciousness of individuals.

Great care must be taken because the process of change can have negative effects, as the solutions found are not always consistent with the situational context.

Conclusions

The information obtained by statistically processing the data collected shows a well-defined strong cultural identity of the professional emergency services in Western Romania. We deal with military organizations, with a well-structured, strictly controlled environment, characterized by a hierarchy type culture. The activity of these services is governed by an extensive system of rules and formal procedures, but there should be greater emphasis on the moral aspect, caring for the employees, paying more attention to their professional development. The staff in leading positions should try, according to different situations, to use facilitating, mentor-like behavior.

We also note that, generally, when employees of these emergency services have a task, a dilemma or a conflict, they search for information from different sources, consider all possible solutions, and then make decisions. They are being logical, focusing especially on the "here and now", adopting (due to the specific activities undertaken) an attitude of adaptation, willing both to take risks and to prevent / avoid them.

The results have important implications on the use of management tools, on how they should be individualized according to the specificity of each category.

The exact radiography of organizational culture and the correct identification of the decision making style will prove extremely useful for the staff in leadership positions, regardless of their level in the hierarchy, they will be able to act according to the values, beliefs, regulations of their subordinates, so as to meet their personal needs and expectations and to boost their motivation and job satisfaction.

Also, knowledge of organizational culture and its proper handling can be a powerful tool to influence employees, allowing staff with control functions to shape moods, attitudes and behaviors in the work of subordinates.

It is possible that the results obtained are differentiated by the type of subjects (male or female), the type of missions in which they participate (fire fighting, SMURD – Mobile Emergency Service for Resuscitation and Extrication, pyrotechnic, CBRN - Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear accidents, search and rescue in water and enclosed spaces) or by the nature of the job they occupy (post operative or inoperative positions), therefore an important issue to be addressed in future studies is to achieve cultural profiles according to these criteria, but also to include a greater number of service employees of the professional emergency in Romania, covering other regions of the country (if not a whole research aimed at the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations).

It is important to note that the results are relevant only for subjects participating in this study, at the time of the application of questionnaires, and comply with the specific professional activity, with the cultural particularities of the area, the level and type of training. Conduct of further research will have the purpose to emphasize that the results are similar to other samples with subjects belonging to professional emergency services in other areas of the country and even to other structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

This research could be of help to managers but also unit psychologists, employees of the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, so that they might get a better understanding of the dynamics of their institutions, as seen through the subjectivity of group members.

My undertaking might be a major premise for better communication inside the organization, as well as among organizations, and also for the optimization of the decision-making process. With the right knowledge of the cultural profile of the professional emergency services, managers can anticipate the degree of success of the strategies they devised for the development of the organization and can build adequate support policies and strategies, to fit the culture and the environment of a given organization.

The activity of unit psychologists in professional emergency services in the Western part of Romania should focus more on this invisible “force” beyond things we can easily grasp and notice (organizational culture), as this is the social energy determining people to take action.

Unit psychologists might consider staff training so that they understand their own reactions to change in the organizational culture and their reactions to other employees, in the process of change, thus enabling them to recognize that organizational development is strongly linked to their own adaptability skills.

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