ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ANALYSIS MODEL

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Abstract: The studies and researches undertaken have demonstrated the importance of studying organisational culture because of the practical valences it presents and because it contributes to increasing the organisation's performance. The analysis of the organisational culture's dimensions allows observing human behaviour within the organisation and highlighting reality, identifying the strengths and also the weaknesses which have an impact on its functionality and development. In this paper, we try to present some models for assessing organisational culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organisational culture assessment and comparison between the desired situation and the existing one is a useful and efficient tool that can support the development of an organisation and the achievement of sustainable performance.
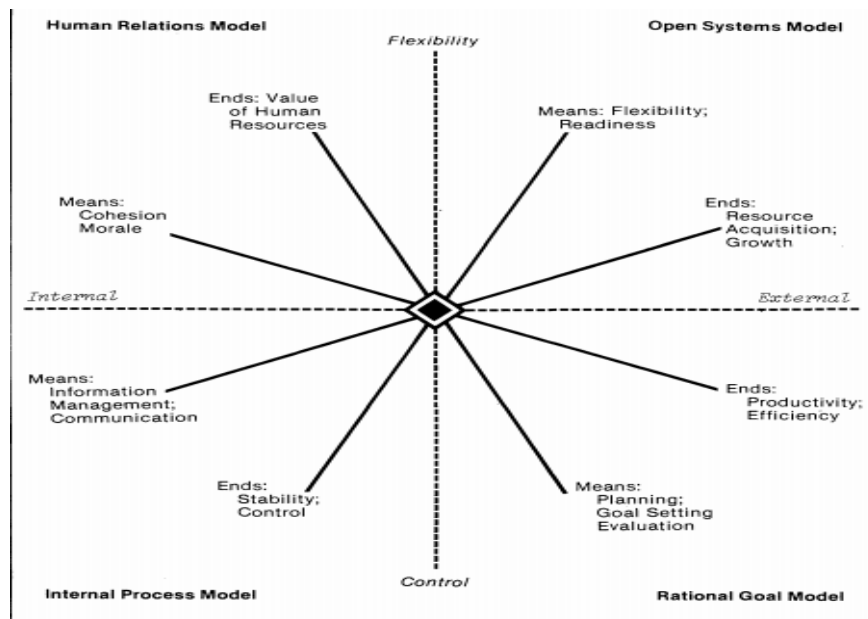
2. THE FOCUS MODEL (THE MODEL OF COMPETING VALUES)

The Model of Competing Values is called this way because it is based on certain dimensions that have opposite values. Organisations need to be adaptable and flexible, but, at the same time they also require stability and control. There is the need for development, for attracting resources and for external support, but also for proper management of internal information and formal communication. The model emphasises the value of human resources in the organisation, but it also emphasises the need to establish the objectives and an appropriate planning. The model was the creation of the American researchers R. E. Quinn and J. Rohrbaugh (1983), but later it was adapted by K. Cameron and R. E. Quinn (1999) emphasising the complex nature of organisational culture according to the following dimensions: internal/external focus and stable/flexible structure. It is also known as the Focus model. The two dimensions create four quadrants representing four sets of values that guide the organisational objectives in accordance with the external environment and with the internal integration.[7]
Figure 1 provides a conceptual representation of organisational culture with the help of the Competing Values Model. Each quadrant is highlighted by some key feature.

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[7]Gray J. H., Densten I., L. *Towards an integrative model of organisational culture and knowledge management,* International Journal of Organisational Behaviour, Volume 9(2), 2007, p. 595

Source: Quinn and Cameron, 1983, p. 42

Figure no. 1 Focus Model (Model of Competing Values)

The upper left quadrant, called the human relations model is characterised by flexibility and internal control. The emphasis is placed on the idea of cohesion and morals. The members are part of a common social system or of a clan and they are united by the development of a sense of affiliation and belonging to the organisation.

The upper right quadrant, also called the open system model is characterised by flexibility and external focus. This adaptive adhocracy emphasises innovation, creativity, adaptation, development, external support and acquisition of external resources. The members are united by inspiration and challenge.

The lower right quadrant, also called the model of rational targets is characterised by predictability and external focus. These organisations adapted to the market focus on competitiveness, productivity, clear objectives, efficiency and achieving the goal. The members are united by competition and orientation towards achieving goals.

The lower left quadrant, also called the internal process model or the hierarchical culture is characterised by predictability and internal focus. The emphasis is placed on information management, documentation, stability, routine, centralisation, continuity and control. In such a culture, the members are united through internal controls that maintain the rules, policies and procedures.

Each quadrant has some features that a company can choose and use to function effectively. In other words, these quadrants are the basic assumptions, beliefs, values, and elements that make up the culture. None of these quadrants - Collaboration (clan), Creativity (adhocracy), Control (Hierarchy), Competition (Market) - is inherently better than the other, just as no culture is necessarily better than the other. But some cultures may be more appropriate in some contexts than others. The secret in using culture to improve

company performance is to adapt it, or certain component elements, to achieve organisational objectives. [8]

Organisations are rarely characterised by a single type of culture. They tend to develop a dominant organisational culture as they adapt and respond to the environmental challenges and changes. Those companies that meet all four quadrants presented above are considered to be "balanced," able to achieve performance. The leaders of these organisations are able to balance the conflicting requirements, suggesting that the high performance requires the simultaneous mastery of certain seemingly contradictory and paradoxical capacities.

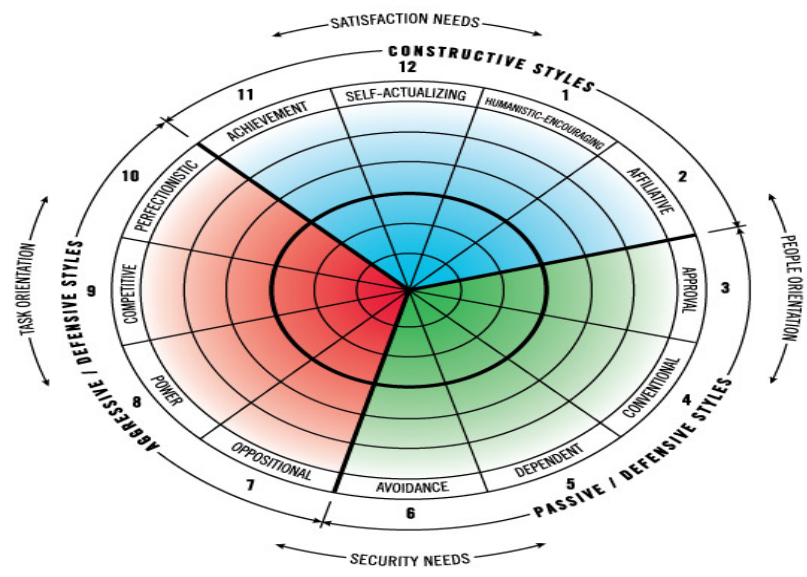### 3. THE HUMAN SYNERGISTICS MODEL

The Human Synergistics Model is a graphical representation in an integrated conceptual model known as the Circumplex. Based on several acknowledged psychological and management theories (including McClelland's theory), this model was created by the American Professor Robert A. Cook and the psychology specialist, J. Clayton Lafferty (1971), known as the Circumplex model. [9] The model measures 12 styles and attitudes of leaders, as well as the organisation as a whole. These are:

- **humanist – encouraging** – he/she is interested in the others and their development;
- **affiliation** – he/she shows interest in establishing relationships and in communicating with the others;
- **results** – he/she likes to get good results and prefers challenges; he/she always asks itself "how can excellence be achieved?"
- **self-development** – he/she is happy and self-confident, ready to try new things and he/she knows his/her limitations and strengths well.
- **approving** – he/she is interested in the others' opinions, he/she shows a "you get what you want or give up" attitude;
- **conventional** – he/she obeys the rules and procedures and uses them to integrate into the organisation;
- **subordination** – he/she needs the others' support to make decisions and he/she doubts himself/herself;
- **avoidance** – he/she avoids risks and prefers not to act in complex situations;
- **opposition** – there is criticism in the organisation that influences him/her and makes him/her feel alienated;
- **power** – the leader's attitude is guided by the motto: "I will the others what to do, because I do not trust them";
- **competitive** – he/she is subject to a lot of pressure because of the question: "what do the others think about me?"
- **perfectionist** – the leader's attitude is guided by the motto: "I can be better if I do everything perfectly."

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[8]Tharp M. Bruce. *Four organisational culture types. Haworth: Organisational culture with white paper*, 2009, p. 3 available online at http://www.haworth-europe.com/en/content/download/30883/1230768/file/white-paper_Four-Organisational-Culture-Types.pdf

[9] Klisz Eric. *Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Human Synergistics' Circumplex Model*, 2005, p.1

Source: Human Synergistics Romania, www.humansynergistics.ro
Figure no. 2 The Circumplex – Human Synergistics Model®

The Circumplex Model is not a personality test. It is an instrument used to measure attitudes and behaviours, styles adopted in the organisation. It works on the premise that you can choose a particular behaviour in a given situation, actually renouncing what is inadequate, inappropriate in your attitude.[10]

The styles presented are divided into three categories, within the circumplex:

Constructive styles (blue) - oriented towards staff satisfaction

Passive-Defensive styles (green) - promote people/security

Aggressive-Defensive styles (red) - show task achievement/safety

In constructive cultures, the achievement of the set tasks can lead to achieving personal satisfaction. A balance is created between independent thinking, initiative taken and consensus and teamwork. Individuals appreciate interhuman relationships; they are constructive and open in the relationships between them.

In the passive-defensive cultures, the individuals' behaviour is characterised by the need for security and minimum predisposition towards risk. Individuals act in such a manner as not to injure the others' behaviour, avoiding any type of interpersonal conflict. The rules, procedures and orders are fulfilled without question. In such a controlled environment the positions are well defined and the supervision is intense. Managers do not emphasise the very good results, but they do not miss the opportunity to show at any time any negative aspect of the employees' activity within the organisation.

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[10]Report of Local Government and Shires Associations Company of NWS, accredited to use the Human Synergistics instruments, available online at http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/3185-human-synergistics-culture-change-program.asp

Aggressive-defensive cultures emphasise the individuals' defensive behaviour that reflects the need to maintain the hierarchical position in the organisation and to reach the need of security through an aggressive approach of the assigned tasks. [11]

According to Gerry Clarke's opinion, the President of Human Synergistics International, a specialist in organisational culture, in Eastern Europe the aggressive-defensive culture is stronger than in North America, the same with the oppositional style, information drawn from comparative studies conducted in over 40 countries in Eastern Europe, Western Asia, Latin America and the USA.[12]

All types of cultures measured by this instrument have a direct impact on the employees' activity and on the company's operation – they and also linked to the staff satisfaction, motivation, teamwork, quality of products/services as well as other organisational efficiency criteria.

4. THE DENISON MODEL

Developed based on 20 years of studies and research, the Denison Model of organisational culture describes a theory of organisational behaviour that emphasises the strong link between culture and performance. The American Professor Denison, the creator of this model, has emphasised the following cultural dimensions: Involvement, Consistency, Adaptability and Mission.[13] Each of these dimensions includes three other features.

Source: http://www.denisonconsulting.com/
Figure no. 3 The Denison Model of organisational culture assessment

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[11]Report of Human Synergistics Company, Culture report: a profile of the impact newspapers and their departments, 2000, available online at http://readership.org/culture_management/culture/data/final_culture_report.pdf

[12]"Organisational culture – drive of business", 2004, available online at http://www.cariereonline.ro/articol/cultura-organisationala-motor-al-afacerii?page=0,0

[13]Pirayeh N., Mahdavi A. M., Nematpour A. M. *Study of Organisational Culture Influence (Based on Denison's Model) on Effectiveness of Human Resources in Karun Oil & Gas Production Company*, Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 5(9): 1886-1895, 2011

Involvement – effective organisations empower employees, they count on teamwork, they develop human skills at all organisational levels. Top managers, the executives and the employees are actively involved in the work they perform and they feel they are part of the organisation. The members of the organisation can influence, to a certain extent, the decisions that have an impact on their work and they feel that the tasks performed lead to the fulfilment of the set objectives.

Specific features:

- **empowerment**: employees have authority, initiative and ability to manage their own work;
- **orientation towards teamwork**: the organisation counts on the team's efforts;
- **skills development**: the organisation invests in the employees' skills development.[14]

Consistency – defines values and elements that form the basis of a strong organisational culture.

Organisations tend to be effective because they have strong cultures and they are coherent, well-coordinated and integrated. The employees' behaviour is based on a well-defined set of values and the leaders have the skills necessary to reach an agreement even when there are very different views. Consistency creates a strong culture that is based on beliefs, values, symbols that are understood and supported by the staff. Consistency is a powerful source of stability and internal integration resulting from a mind-set common to all members of the organisation and from a high degree of compliance. [15]

Distinctive features:

- **core values**: the existence of a common set of values;
- **consensus:** both general consensus and the ability to reconcile differences that occur;
- **coordination and integration**: although different, the members of the organisation work together to achieve organisational objectives.

If the first two dimensions refer to the internal integration process supported by Edgar Schein, the following two points emphasise the organisation's need to external adaptation.

Adaptability – transforms the requirements of the external business environment into action. Ironically, organisations that are well integrated are often the most difficult to change. Adaptable organisations are those that take risks, learn from their own mistakes and have the ability and experience necessary to create change. They are based on a continuous change of the system leading to improved group skills in order to provide value to customers. Three features characteristic to adaptability have an impact on organisational effectiveness:

- **creating change**: the ability to perceive and meet the requirements of the external environment through change;
- **customer orientation**: the organisation understands and responds to the customer's needs, anticipating their future needs; this feature reflects the degree to which the organisation is concerned with customer satisfaction;

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[14]Macarie F. C., Şandor D. S., Creţa S. C. *Organisational culture of public institutions in Romania*, 2008, p. 3 available online at http://publicwomen.ro/public%20wdoc/cultura_org.pdf
[15]Denison R. D., Haaland S., Goelzer P. *Corporate culture and organisational effectiveness: Is Asia different from the rest of the world?,* Organisational Dynamics, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2004, p. 98–109

- **organisational learning**: the organisation receives, decodes and interprets the signals from the external environment, turning them into opportunities to encourage innovation, information collection and skills development.[16]

Mission – defines a significant long-term direction for the organisation. Successful organisations have a well-defined purpose and a direction defining the organisational and strategic objectives which express the company's vision for the future. The mission reflects a clear, concrete direction both for the company and for its members. This dimension is characterised by three features:
- **strategic direction**: there is a clear strategy in the organisation that gives meaning and direction to the employees;
- **aims and objectives**: the management sets ambitious, but realistic goals that are understood and measurable.
- **vision**: there is a long-term vision that creates excitement and motivation among employees and which is not affected by short-term objectives.

As many other contemporary models of management and organisational effectiveness, the Denison circumplex focuses on the contradictions that arise as organisations achieve the internal integration processes and the external adaptation. For example, the market-oriented organisations, towards the external environment, often have internal integration problems. On the other hand, those that focus on internal integration and on intensive control, have difficulties in adapting to the external environment. Effective organisations are those that are able to resolve these contradictions without resorting to compromises. As it can be seen from Figure 9, the Denison model has two axes, a vertical and a horizontal one, which have divided the model into four quadrants. The vertical axis represents the degree and type of centralisation of organisational culture. The horizontal axis refers to the organisation's degree of flexibility. Denison's research shows that the highest performances are achieved by the companies that have strengths in all four quadrants. These are those that know very well "why they exist" and which is the direction towards they go (Mission). The employees share and support the company's vision, they use their skills and abilities to achieve organisational goals (Involvement).

The model is often used as a diagnostic method in profiling organisations to highlight strengths and weaknesses and to suggest ways in which organisational culture can influence their effectiveness.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The three models can represent a starting point in assessing organisational culture at enterprise level. The Focus Model is a general model intended to promote successful management, improvement of organisational efficiency and creation of value for the organisation. The Human Synergistics Model and the Denison Model can be considered as complementary. The first catches the organisation's members' attitude in relation to the need of satisfaction and security, and, on this basis, classification in a particular type of organisational culture. But the model does not refer to the external environment and to the organisation's ability to be flexible and adaptable, to cope with rapid changes. The

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[16]Gillespie A. M., Denison D. R., Haaland S., Smerek R., Neal S. W. *Linking organisational culture and customer satisfaction: results from two companies in two industries*, European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, 2007, p. 7

Denison Model highlights both the need of the employees' internal integration and the importance of the external adaptation process, providing an opportunity to shape a certain cultural profile of the organisation. Undoubtedly, the analysis and evaluation of the organisational culture represents a complex process that must also take into account the cultural dimensions identified at company level.

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