

CORPORATE SUBCULTURAL SPECIFICS IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The issue at hand is most relevant to exactly the need for economic and managerial sciences to become more accurate and based on the real behavior of individuals in organizations, which is the only way to improve the process of economic decision making and increase the effectiveness of activities in organizations. Considering subcultures as a specific organizational construct, directly related to the specifics of national and organizational cultures, makes analysis of the prerequisites and challenges of modern management processes and expands the socio-anthropological discourse more in-depth. The reasoning is based on some of the results of a team survey conducted two years ago in Bulgaria on corporate social capital and specifically on the manifestation of subcultural constructs in the organizational environment among managers and employees in various fields. The in-depth interviews, as well as the application of the Minnesota test and the California Personality Inquiry, provide an opportunity to find unexpected homogeneity in the attitudes and perceptions of certain segments, such as the employee segment. Quite different and not as homogeneous is the group of managers, or the so-called management structures which turn out to be an interesting field of research on views on life, behavioral attitudes, eccentricity and originality of characters. Of interest is the perception of these specific subcultures in the context of their positioning on the opposition of rationality - irrationality, which is consistent with the consideration of culture itself as a dichotomous system of rational and irrational components. This is a prerequisite to build and operate good management practices. Socio-cultural incompatibility can be established not only in the organizational cultural dimensions, and especially in their interactions with the established national cultural matrix, but also in the specific and extraordinary manifestation of subcultural constructs leading to relevant deviations. This is the great challenge that business and especially its management faces, as the management profile is based not only on visible business specifics, but also on invisible, elusive components, such as elements of organizational cultures in general and specific corporate subcultural constructs.

Keywords: *Social-Economic Anthropology; National cultural matrix; Economic subcultures, Business Management*

INTRODUCTION

The modern formula in management sciences is based on the view that the problems of (business) organizations should be studied not only with their "visible" dimensions, but also looking in depth into their characteristics in order to identify and assess their "invisible" sides, which, in many cases, play a decisive role in the effective management of economic and social processes. The topicality of the problem is highlighted by the need for economic and managerial sciences to become more accurate and based on the real behavior of people in organizations, even if some of the identified manifestations are not very popular as findings. However, this is the only way to improve the economic decision-making process and increase the efficiency of activities in organizations.

Much of the specialized literature is devoted to the identification and analysis of subcultures in the political sphere, in particular in the socio-psychological aspect. This research in economic structures and business units is relatively more fragmentary and focuses mainly on the historical context in the formation of subcultures. The use of the term "subculture" in the study of business structures is not related to the derivation of definitions, but is taken for granted: the subculture stands out as a variety, distinction or differences from the dominant corporate culture.

Economic (corporate) culture itself is generally defined as a set of principles, norms and rules that are shared and maintained by the subjects in a given economic structure. The functions of this culture are related to the perception and affirmation of universal values in the process of economic activity with the creation of specific behavioral rules. The actions of the individuals are coordinated through the economic culture, and on the basis of the achieved consolidation the common goals and means are formulated. In fact, in everyday management practice, managers and employees are confronted with different subcultures - distinct varieties and even antipodes of the dominant culture of the organization.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

It is important to note that when defining subcultures, it is not just a matter of clearly demonstrated membership or affiliation, but rather of sharing certain values and identities. The development of different visions of the subculture in the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century tries to redirect the theoretical approach to its essence. Modern interpretations of the concept emphasize preferences, identities and groupings. Representatives of a subculture usually express their affiliation to it through inherent attitude and distinctive behavior. Therefore, the study of subcultures involves the study not only of their characteristics, but also of the ways in which they are constructed, interpreted and perceived. The subculture can also be understood as an expression of individual identity, to which the individual is oriented in one or another period of his life.

The main prerequisites are the degree of personal freedom and personal experience. The idea of subcultural theory is to explain and understand the distinctive forms of self-expression of people belonging to a subculture [4], offering a look at the dynamics of relations between them and asking questions about internal subcultural thinking, unifying ideas and behavior.

Of interest is the answer to the questions: whether subcultures form new configurations; whether subcultures discipline, limit, or offer space for individual differences and individual freedom to develop. In defining a subculture, it is often emphasized that its values differ from the values of a more widely accepted culture, although this definition is not recognized as universal. However, if the bearers of a subculture are perceived as a subordinate group, a certain hostility arises. As a result, the respective subculture may become a systemic opposition to the dominant culture and then it is considered an opposing subculture.

Two main approaches are applied to the phenomenon of subculture. On one side, subcultures are defined as countercultures, emphasizing the confrontation between the dominant culture and the culture of a group. Often such a subculture is considered a deviant type of culture. On the other side, subcultures are seen as social formations with their own normative systems. Members of the subculture share common values, principles and beliefs. According to this approach, the subculture is part of the dominant culture, not opposed to it. This approach is characteristic, however, without being absolute, for the research of subcultures within the organizational (corporate) culture.

The idea to study the corporate culture through the study of subcultures is to increase the efficiency of its activities. Attention to subcultures allows us to understand the contradictions in the organization that may hinder its successful functioning. For example, individual teams often confront each other, although the success of the whole company directly depends on the good interaction between them. A possible reason for the disagreement is the different understanding of the basic principles of work in the company and its values by the heads of departments or team leaders (and therefore the relevant members), which causes conflicts. It is problematic when a team does not accept the way of working together - such a situation creates tension not only between them but in the organization as a whole.

In fact, in each team there can be defined specific subculture (s), which is not necessarily an obstacle to the activities of the organization, but it is necessary for the company's management to know the different subcultures in the organization, to assess them objectively and to comply with them. The big problem is whether to suppress the existing subcultural differences in the organization, or to perceive them as a potential resource for its development. Through purposeful actions on the part of the management, the conflicts that have arisen can be resolved in the interest of the overall organizational goals and thus become constructive competition in the formation of its culture.

Most often, the corporate culture is identified with the value system of the organization, embodied in various aspects of its activities; it gives uniqueness to one organization over another. The culture of an organization can be called its spirit [3], it is easier to characterize than to measure. The culture of the organization is a heterogeneous phenomenon, but is dominated by basic value characteristics and principles of interaction, which are decisive if there arises a conflict within the organization. This does not exclude the possibility of having value systems other than the dominant culture.

The existence of organizational subcultures has been observed by a number of researchers [6] [7] [11]. Although conditional, this concept derives from the formations and groups in the organization actually created and existing in reality. They can be united by common or similar ideological and political biases, by certain social causes, by the way of spending free time - sports, entertainment, club activities, etc.

Organizations can become more flexible by allowing subcultures to emerge that stimulate their effectiveness. Although higher productivity is considered to be associated with a strong and unified culture, such organizations are not always adaptable enough to ensure their long-term development. Because like any social structure the culture of the organization as well is subject to change, but it is not an end in itself, but is aimed at the effective development of the organization and the achievement of results that benefit all members. At the same time, the organizational environment creates preconditions for generating subcultures that have a negative impact on the overall organizational environment and whose tolerance would be destructive for the organization.

In fact, the management of the organization consciously or unable to form and develop its culture under the influence of different types of cultures, which manifest themselves as subcultures of a group / team. They interact, and through the rational and / or irrational choice of managers they can become the dominant culture of the organization. Neglecting the role of different subcultures can turn value differences in the culture and behavior of teams or groups of individuals into disagreements and open conflicts that hinder effective work and the achievement of corporate goals. When the subculture of one team / group claims superiority over the culture of another, then the company turns from a coherent single organism to a number of distinct, which do not have a common value system and do not accept the common goals of management. Since culture is a combination of rational and irrational components, each of which affects in a specific way the management and the performance, the existence of subcultural relationships confirms the authors' thesis that human aspirations and individual incentives play an important role in business relationships.

To establish the genesis and development trends of both specific corporate and / or organizational cultures and subcultures, the use of the California Personality Inquiry (CPI) may be recommended. Due to its social orientation, it

is used very often. Included here are some of the questions from the famous Minnesota Multi-Factor Personality Inquiry (MMPI), which is mainly one of the most reliable tests for defining personality traits and is used by many recruitment companies in the study of candidates' personal traits and their relevance to their respective positions [1] [5].

In this case, the characteristic scaling is extrapolated to the behavioral sphere of management processes. In this sense, scaling could be simplified by specific clinical and verification scales being adequately remodeled to the organizational environment and formulated according to the following parameters:

Scale A: Dominance; Scale B: Potential for status; Scale C: Sociability; Scale D: Social Presence; Scale E: Self-acceptance; Scale F: Mental and physical comfort; Scale G: Achievements through independence; Scale H: Flexibility; Scale I: Masculinity, femininity (firmness and softness in reactions and social provocation).

Applied in the frame of economic and in particular business subcultures, these scales provide some clarification of the identified subcultural constructs. This type of questionnaire would be effective in surveying larger samples with a larger number of respondents and can be used in various studies in this direction, based on already made basic conceptualizations on the topic.

THEORY

Changing the organizational culture is an appropriate, but at the same time difficult and responsible task due to the conservatism of culture, the specific cultural profiles of each business unit and the lack of modern perception of the cultural context by management. The change in the culture of the business structure or organization depends on and starts with the change of the individual factor at all levels [2]. If human capital changes, then the culture of the organization can change. A necessary condition for the change is the management to have a clear vision for it in strategic terms.

It has been found [9] that the deficit of modern corporate culture is a result of the lack of a kind of maturity (in the case of business maturity). This fundamental characteristic - business maturity, which is relevant to business culture, is seen as a rational factor for corporate governance, but at the same time in the establishment of business maturity and irrational behavioral dimensions. In principle, the sense of social identity is enhanced in the presence of strong social capital, when social norms and individual behaviors are mutually conditioned in a process of continuous development and change.

The culturological (socioanthropological) approach creates preconditions for careful consideration of the context and perspective. Regardless of the direct connection of subcultures with the specific corporate culture, they are also self-

constructed constructs that can provoke various corporate (social) anomalies, and as mentioned, subcultural constructs lead to or generate deviations in corporate (social) behavior. It is an indisputable fact that cultural practices and visions frame a certain organizational deviation, this process is often prolonged, constructing potential agents of social control from the internal organizational environment to seek an answer to the complex managerial question "what exactly was not and is not right" Such cultural formats can arise in organizations when leaders "investigate" what they define as potentially scandalous economic or social behavior [10].

As mentioned above, it is not typical to derive definitions when talking about economic or organizational (corporate) subcultures. In most cases, clarity comes from the context analysis. Actually subcultures are the smaller groups that consciously or not, rationally or irrationally, bring to the fore profiling determinants, which fit primarily components of the national cultural matrix with a prominent role in the corporate environment, namely values, language or religion, lifestyle, ethnicity, region, etc. The research is focused on the analysis of attitudes towards the economic system as a whole or its elements, as well as towards individual entities as participants in business processes. The impact of the cultural component is long-term and multidirectional and in this context subcultures develop specific ways to encode and decode the meaning of information norms, rules of communication, the hierarchy of values. In identifying a subculture, it is noted that it opposes the generally accepted one, and the analysis is aimed at establishing whether specific constructs always confront it or complement it in a unique way, given that this fact sometimes leads to additional deviations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A study was conducted in 2019-2020 by two Bulgarian scholars, the paper's authors - Adelina Milanova and Pavlinka Naydenova [8], among managers and employees from various business and organizational areas in Bulgaria, such as construction, pharmaceutical industry, tailoring and fashion design, business services, science and education. The study is focused specifically on the nature of subcultures - manifestation of informal grouping in the business environment, and outside business contacts; their interpretation as a kind of role cultures. The analysis of the role and impact of specific organizational subcultures provides an opportunity to build a foundation for developing good practices in accordance with the specific business context and aimed at achieving effective management in a specific organizational milieu.

Based on the established fundamental dependencies, as one of the main focuses in conducting in-depth interviews, the focus on institutionalization was formed as a process that generates a certain institutional environment and at the same time depends on it. The question in this case is? focused on defining the prerequisites for generating subcultural constructs and hence their role - positive

or negative, on the functioning and management of the business unit. The fact is that there are quite big difficulties in explaining certain tricks, in defining categories, etc., which required at certain moments to make some explanations in order to understand the essence of the problem. In-depth interviews showed contextual misunderstandings and misunderstandings, which could also have a multivariate explanation. For example, employees, mainly in the fields of education and science, and business services, have a much more rational view of institutionalization, demonstration of openness, adaptability and assertiveness. Only less than 1% of the respondents show some hesitation, which can be explained by subjective reasons or considerations. The group of managers turned out to be interesting, although not so homogeneous.

In these circumstances, the team's idea was to apply to the answers of the employees segment scaling, written according to the Minnesota test and the California personality questionnaire. The reason for outlining a generalized picture of the highlighted parameters - dominance, potential for status, sociability, social presence, self-perception (self-confidence), mental and physical comfort, achievements through independence, flexibility, masculinity / femininity, gives us the established homogeneity in terms of attitudes and perceptions of this segment.

The results obtained regarding the indicated parameters on the respective scales are not very surprising:

Dominance - 2nd degree,

Potential for status - 3rd degree,

Sociability - 3rd degree,

Social presence - 3rd degree,

Self-perception - 3rd degree,

Mental and physical comfort - 3rd degree,

Achievements through independence - 2nd degree,

Flexibility - 2nd degree,

Masculinity / femininity - 3rd degree (in favor of the second option).

The calculations are on scales from 1st to 5th degree, in which the results of the answers of the employee segment are distributed as an average value.

It is clear that regardless of whether they are theoretically informed about the impact and superimposition of subcultures in the business environment, employees, representatives in almost all surveyed business structures, show a clear awareness of the formation of positive and negative subcultural constructs that are difficult to distinguish as rational or irrational, but definitely affect the efficiency of the management process and the optimal functioning of business units. An occasion for moderate optimism is the employees' assessment of parameters such as potential for status, sociability, social presence, self-perception, feeling of mental and physical comfort in the middle part of the scale. It is worrying that dominance, independence and flexibility are determined by a lower value, which, although not definitively enough, may mean a kind of specific institutionalization (establishment in the organizational environment) of a particular subculture. The example of the low degree of dominance in the subcultural group of the "demotivated" as a specific subcultural construct is indicative, which in itself is a signal of a deficit of good management practices and respectively of good management. This means that the business culture of Bulgarian organizations still strongly reflects inequality (high power distance according to the relevant index-IPD), typical of the Bulgarian cultural matrix, which in turn blocks attempts to introduce a consultative type of management, which has proven to be more effective in world practice.

The idea to integrate, albeit partially, in the in-depth interviews the scaling done through this test is justified by the more complex specifics of the issue, but as a final result the answers to the questions demonstrate that it cannot be said that the true informal nature of communication dominates, rather we are talking about an imitation of informality. This fact rejects the thesis of manifested differential interactions in the organizational environment, there is a special type of amalgam of manifestations of national and organizational cultural dimensions and stronger or weaker subcultural burdens; The common ideological and even political biases are clearly present, come in the form of value constructions and are quite well expressed; The social cause is declarative rather than internally conceived and realized; Shared taste preferences form groups that lean toward relevant subcultural constructs, and sometimes these groups are so strong that they dominate the generation of status, security, and equity in a corporate (organizational) environment.

CONCLUSION

A reason for optimism in the modern research of business management is the increasingly definite place occupied by the problems related to the cultural specifics of individual organizations and the attempts for their in-depth understanding.

The existence of subcultural connections in the organization is argued from a new point of view by the thesis that human motives and aspirations are central to business life and that in many cases not only material goals and incentives are

leading. It is also necessary to contextually assess the rational and irrational inclinations and actions of individuals in the business environment.

Socio-cultural incompatibility can be established not only in the organizational cultural dimensions, but also in the specific and extraordinary manifestation of subcultural constructs. In reality, the debate on the difficult interaction between economics, management and culture, in all their complexity, is still ongoing due to the heterodoxy of the relationships studied. The author's views are close to the general idea of Mary Parker Follett, who, in the twenties of the last century, for the first time conceptualized the need for scientific research on the psychological aspects of management. Problems in management are mainly problems of human relationships, which should be studied in their they must be studied in their multi-layered and profound nature. The tendency to humanize the business is related to the growing role of informal entities in formal organizational structures.

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