

THE COMPONENTS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Senior Lecturer Cornelia Elena TUREAC, PhD
“Dunarea de Jos” University from Galati

Abstract: *Knowing that the organizational culture functions constitute the base of notification and capitalization of the major importance, which is having for every company, regardless the domain of activity, dimension, economic potential or belonging to a certain national culture. The importance of the organizational culture is consisting of its functions, the importance is manifesting through some concrete elements the company level and not only. The organizational culture is allowing the identification and the description of some numerous situations and real facts, of human nature from the company's life, with major implications over the development and the activity results, that weren't taken into consideration in the managerial classic leading. This explains why the elements referring to the organizational culture were accepted very fast by numerous companies' managers from the developed countries.*

Keywords: *the organizations, function, particular form, organizational cultures, mission*

Jel classification: *I - Health, Education, and Welfare, I2 – Education, I21 - Analysis of Education*

1. THE FUNCTIONS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The necessity and the importance of studying the organizational cultures are deriving just from these functions. In general, it is appreciated the fact that the organizational culture is carrying out four principal functions, having the possibility of adding others, depending on the nature and the particularizations of the organization. Those functions are:

1. The function of integration of the employees from the company. During this process, the organizational culture can play a deciding role, if we have in view that the integration of the employees is a continuous process, which is not resuming just at the new employees. It is necessary a permanent maintenance of the integration cultural-organization.

2. The guidance function of the employees and the groups of employees for achieving the objectives anticipated of the company. This is a dynamic function, complex and difficult in the same time, if we are viewing the variable, whereby is operating, and namely the human. His mission is to contribute at releasing the latent energies for the employees, for carrying out of some actions unfolded in certain temporal conditions and economic ones, so that the objectives contained in the strategies and politics of the company to be carried out. Adopting some of organizational behaviours is essential on this plan. The principal role in exercising these functions is having the managerial culture, the decisions and these actions form a major component of the human resource management.

3. The function of protection of the company's employees, beside the potential danger of the ambient environment. Always the financial, social, politic, scientific, juridical context are incorporating evolutions which can affect both positively, and negatively the community of the employees from the company. The organizational culture constitutes the support of behaviours and organizational actions of preventive nature or of direct disapproval of the negative consequences. Passing the market economy is generating potential threats for the employee's communities from the commercial societies and autonomous administration, exceeding the organizational cultures implicated which have a major role.

4. Keeping function and the transfer of the values and the organizational traditions. This function is often ignored or underestimated. The organizational culture is the principal depositing of values and of traditions specific to every company. It is important, that when the generations are changed from the company, that must be maintained at all time. Beside the proper cultural value, the symbols, the rituals, the legends, etc, from the organization form the human fundament of exercising the precedent functions. Without strong cultures, well known and deeply rooted traditions, it does not exist medium and long term strong firms. The determinant role of the human factor in an organization is the base condition, which few companies ignore, and, implicitly, the preocular and the resources, which are necessary for assuring and increasing the competitiveness of the company.

5. The ensuring function of a properly background for developing the organizational capacity. From this point of view a characteristic of the contemporary

companies is the dependence of the performance of their organizational capacity. This organizational capacity is referring to integrating the specialized knowledge of the employees, integration that is strongly influenced by the organizational culture. As a result, it is necessary that the organizational culture brings forward the composition and maintains some organizational capacity, able to determine fast feed-backs, flexible and according to the opportunities and exogen and endogen changes of the company.

Knowing the functions of the organizational culture represent the base of the notification and reevaluating the major importance for each company, regardless its domain of activity, dimension, economic potential or affiliation to a specific national culture. The importance of the organizational culture is consisting just from its functions, this importance is manifested trough some concrete elements at the level of the company. The organizational culture allows the identification and the description of numerous situations and real facts, of human nature for the companies' life with major implications over the developing and the results of the activity, which weren't taken into consideration in the classic managerial approaches. This explains why the elements referring to the organizational culture were accepted by numerous company managers from the developed countries. Frequently, it was noticed in the approach based on the organizational culture, that the pulse of knowledge and understanding of the decisions and managerial actions, on which the concepts and methods of scientific management was based on ration and certain scientific rigidity could not be offered. The managers had grasped that the effectuation of calculations and obtaining numbers, although very useful, they were not succeeding in reflecting the significant intangible elements in a company. The organizational culture is involving, trough its nature of approaching human-management and it has in view all the employees of the company. It is not possible the knowledge and taking into consideration the elements of the organizational culture without an "immersion" of human reality from the firm. The limits of managerial approaching from distance exceed in this way, based on questionnaires, statistics, etc

2. THE COMPONENTS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The components of the organizational culture are vastly intangibles, less visible. Still we can consider that the principal components of the organizational culture are the next elements: the symbols, the behaviours norms, rituals and ceremonies, the rules and the role of the personal, the stories and organizational myths.

1. *The symbols.* In the capacity of major components of the organizational cultures, the symbols offer common meanings or understandings to its components over some organizational elements of group interest, allowing communication and harmonization.

The cultural symbol can be represented by an object, an event or a formula what is serving as an instrument of delivering a message with a specific signification within the company. Through cultural symbols, there are ways transmitted, by the employees, that reflect the philosophies and values, ideals, beliefs and shared expectations. For example, a symbol may be itself the naming of the organization when represents an essential element through its activity. The naming of competitive firms become, in time, symbols for what they represent in economy. The emblem or logos of the company is often represented as major symbol for the employees and its customers. A symbolic valuable part is presented as way of decoration, furniture, pictures, colours, etc. used in the organization. In this way, we can affirm that the cultural symbols “serve for expressing some conceptions and to promote certain values and behaviours in the firm”. They contribute to the thinking orientation, behaviours and employees actions, crystallizing some organizational behaviour, typical, or predominantly, at the company’s level.

2. *The behaviour norms.* This component of the organizational culture are splitting in two categories of norms:

The first category, the best known, is represented by the formal norms, implemented through official regulations of organizational nature such as: rules of interior order, rule of organization and functioning, descriptions of functions and positions. The documents, to which some decisions are added and adopted by the manager of the firm, contain provisions referring to the employees’ behaviour in situations that have significant implications over the operation performance organization: relations Head-subordinate relations, security work, presence in the company, receiving and treating visitors, confidentiality of the information, rewarding the efforts and performance, the penalties provided etc.

The second category of behaviour norms are the informal ones, which have a big influence over the organizational behaviour, although they are not registered in any document. Taking shape during the previous period, the informative norms are establishing the way of approaching and behaving in human situations that are representing a big importance, for the majority of the employees: the holydays of important social events, anniversary of the company, other legal holidays or religious, personal events celebrations of the employees (promotion in position,

birthdays, marriage, children birth, pensioning), etc. In the current activity of the firm, the formal norms and informal interpenetrate, conditioning the development of the organizational behaviour predominance, at the level of the organization.

3. The rituals and the ceremonies. In close connection with the organizational norms are the rituals. Through those are programmed some events and the progress, promoting and celebrating these values and major behaviours from the framework of organizational culture. A ritual represents a set of planned actions, with a dramatic content, giving a cultural expression to some organizational values, for consolidating them within the organization.

4. The status and the role of the personnel. The status is referring to the hierarchical position and the prestige of an employee within the organization, as they are perceived, usually, by its members. The status is showing that a person is better perceived, competitive and influent comparing with others and vice versa. The status expression of a manager is represented by the difference that the others are showing in a usual way. The status of an employee in a firm is having a triple determination, that is:

- Functional – is reflecting the profession and the type of the achieved activity;
- Hierarchical- reported to the position that the employee occupies, to the level of competence and responsibility;
- Personal or informal- is reflecting the knowledge, qualities, aptitudes and employee skills. The informal status is expressing in fact the perception that the other employees have over the individual values of that person. The personal status can intensify or on the contrary reduce the other two statuses, according to their content.

In an organization those three types of determination interpenetrate so that they generate a global status or overview, which in fact is perceived by the employees and it presents a functional importance. The status of managers is represented through certain concrete elements: separated offices, superior furniture, personal secretary, etc. The pragmatic expression of the status of a person is represented by the roles on which they actually exercise, regardless the nature of the work progress that is carried out. From here derives the importance for establishing of strong status, which ensures their manifestation as authentic leaders. Within the organizational culture, in firm, the status units two major functions: the achievement of effective communication in an organization and providing incentives in order to encourage the employees. Just their simple listing is sufficient to underline the multiple and major implications of the status, both for the configuration of the

organizational culture as well as for the functionality and performance of the company as an economic entity. It is however necessary to avoid an over evaluation of the status. In management systems, it is generated sometimes a state of organizational discomfort, known as the “pathology of the statutes”

5. *The histories and organizational myths* are having a specific importance, especially in companies with a certain tradition and high performance. The organizational histories are those stories that relate a sequence of events carried on in an organization, which presents a symbolic way of approaching and solving human cases with major implications for employees and/or for the organization. They highlight certain common expectations, shared to all or to a large part of the employees in the form of events that happened in the company. The little histories are narrated repeatedly, the latest version adding details more or less fictitious, hence contributing to implementing the employees’ memory the expectations that they encompass. The little organizational histories contribute shape up certain features of organizational culture and the celebration of “business heroes”. Frequently the little histories are structured to highlight the existing tension between the opposing values (equality/inequality, security/ insecurity, etc.) by presenting both sides of the conflict situation and the way of settlement.

Typically, the organizational history is presenting an organizational situation which involves tension and/ or uncertainty, and solving problems represent a way of strengthening the organization and developing some organizational behaviour.

A particular form of organizational histories represents the myths.

The myth that highlights how the organization was born and puts in foreground the essential role played by the founder, that through his exceptional qualities, labour force and its beliefs contributed to the establishment of financing the enterprise

In firm the myths represent the equivalent of the most popular fairy tales ever told. In general, histories and organizational myths represent the “folklore” of the firm, intended to provide pattern of behaviour for its employees. They frequently refer to “heroes” with major roles in the evolution of the company, around which it was portrayed a certain “aura”.

As Peters and Waterman specifies in the paper “In search of excellence”, written in 1982, myths have certain characteristics:

- They have an imperative feature, and they are composed of expressions which are more defined by intent than by content;
- Is reflecting an innocent vision, natural reality and ignores the complexity of the encountered situations;

- The fact that the myth is both a tradition and an ending, it is not far from arbitrary or false;
- The relationship between “consumers” and the myth itself is settled more in real terms;
- The myth turns the historical personalities in archetypes and makes permanent use of tautological formulas;

After some authors, all these components of the organizational cultures which are contributing in establishing the organization’s identity are expressed through different ways of manifestation of the organizational cultures, being in intense relation of interpenetration. In practice, the identification and the examination prove to be a very complex and difficult process, but necessary because of multiples and extensive influences over the activity and performance of the company.

3. CLASSIFICATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Most of the attempts to define culture relate to what is characteristic for certain culture, such as power, people, tasks, etc., depending on these aspects, there are more scientific classifications.

The authors Williams, Dobson and Walters have defined four main categories of organizational culture:

- The organizational culture oriented to power (Guideline to power). Such organizations seek to dominate their environment and those who exercise power striving to maintain an absolute control over their subordinates.
- The organizational culture oriented to role (Guideline to Role). Such organizations focus on legality, legitimacy and accountability. The hierarchy and status are also important.
- The organizational culture task-oriented (Guideline to Target). Such organizations are focusing on fulfilling the tasks. The authority is based on knowledge and on appropriate skills.
- The organizational culture oriented to people (Guideline to people). Such organizations exist primarily to serve the needs of its members. The individuals are expected to influence each other through personal example and solicitude.

4. MODELS OF ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES

The components of organizational culture can be observed and interpreted through specific analysis techniques developed by experts in this field. We will present three models for the analysis of organizational cultures, developed by Hofstede, Quinn and Sonnenfeld. The identification of cultural organizations specifications assumes exploitation of collective representations which expresses the social links and determines the identity of the group.

The organizational culture thus appears like a system of representation and shared values by the members of the organizations, it is considered an integrating factor, promoting connection groups. At the same time, intervenes as an instrument of social control, generating various form of resistance from those who do not join to the values shared in their organizations.

The model proposed by Hofstede

G. Hofstede has been a model of analysis of the organizational cultures based on the information gathered as a part of an impressive research, conducted among the 116000 employees of multinational companies. The criteria on which is based the model of organizations' classifications is:

- The degree of power centralization;
- The degree of standardization, specialization and the formalization of roles

These two key elements correspond to some cultural dimensions, namely: the distance and hierarchical control of the uncertainty. The distance versus hierarchical power supplies the answer to the centralized decisions which are introduced in an organization: the longer the distance, the greater the hierarchical power becomes, and the centralised power is more obvious. Avoiding uncertainty and control indicates the degree of tolerance towards assuming risks. In an organizational culture that represents a strong avoidance of uncertainty, there are rules, increasing trend and valorisation of social comfort; so behaviours that aim the value system are considered unacceptable. Instead, in a tolerant culture that concerns the control of uncertainty, the behaviour of individual employees is less tolerated and the personal initiatives are encouraged. Based on these two cultural dimensions, Hofstede suggested four types of organizations:

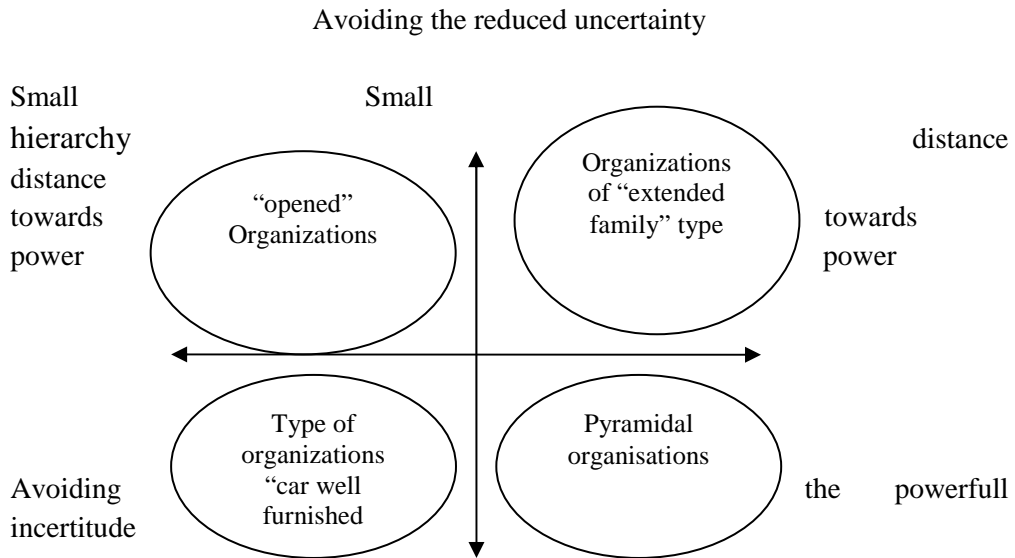


Figure1: Typology organizations form the perspective of cultural **dimensions** (Hofstede's model)

“Open” Organizations are built on values that are characterized by a low degree of uncertainty of avoiding small distance over power, they are not formalized, neither centralized. The manager is responsible for achieving the objectives and tasks for subordinates and they receive tasks for developing effectively by carrying out their activities.

I. The organizations “extended family” types are based on cultural values which are characterized by a weak avoidance of uncertainty and a great distance against hierarchical power, but are not centralized or formalized. The relations between employees are provided strictly, being an appreciable margin of initiative regarding employment procedures. The shared cultural values in such organizations are loyalty and respect for traditions.

II. The organizations pyramid is characterized in terms of cultural specifications by a great hierarchical distance beside of power and a strong avoidance of the uncertainties. The structure of such organizations is centralized and formalized. Both procedures of work and the relationships between individuals are provided in a rigid manner, either trough formal rules or by customs and traditions

III. The “car well furnished” is specific to the cultures characterized by a small distance over power and a strong avoidance of uncertainty. Their structures are

decentralized but formulated; working procedures are strictly laid down, but not the relations between the members of the organization outside their duties. The manager is regarded by subordinates as an expert who respects and applies the taken decisions.

The main critic brought to this model is consisting through the fact that it does not establish a clear distinction between the concept of hierarchy and power.

The model proposed by Quinn

This model for interpretation of the organizational cultures was developed in order to describe the relationships that affect the criteria of efficiency within organizations. In its view, the cultural values represent the foundations of the managerial system of a company.

The values that characterize the organization	The loyalty of employees	Orientations towards development	Formalism	Guidance towards results
Who leads	A "family" member	An entrepreneur	A manager	An expert
Values which are at the base of its members cohesion	The membership at the system of values	Innovation, creativity	Respecting the rules	Exemplary fulfillment of tasks
Values that motivate the employees	Social cohesion, moral	The expansion of business	Establishment of job seats	Competitiveness

Figure 2: Discrimination values in the model interpretations of the organizational cultures proposed by Quinn

The Quinn's model focuses over the tensions and the inherent conflicts in the life of an organization. The dimensions on which are based the model are:

- The control axis – flexibility, which highlights the contradictory expectations between control, stability, order, and flexibility, initiative and adaptability to change.
- The oriented axis to the intern environment - oriented to extern environment, which illustrates the contradictory expectations, while maintaining the management system and company's organization and its orientation towards competition, adaptation and interaction with the company's external environment.

The interactions between these two dimensions lead to the identifications of four types of organizational cultures: the culture-type group, innovating culture, rational culture and hierarchical culture.

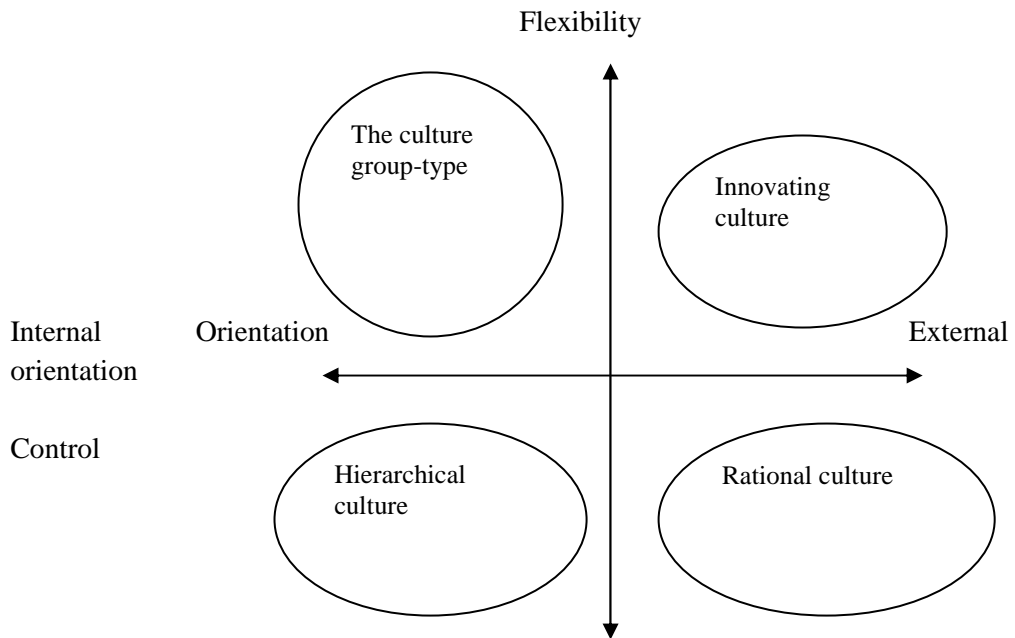


Figure 3: The typology of organizational cultures in Quinn's vision

I. The culture-type group

- strategic vision: the orientation of the development potential of human resources;
- basic values: participation, confidence, sense of belonging to a "family";
- the main factors of motivation: social cohesion, moral, tradition;
- style of management: participatory management style, encouraging interaction between members of the organization and promoting teamwork;
- efficient criteria: loyalty of employees, human resource, development skills;

II. Cultural innovation

- strategic vision: orientation towards innovation, expansion, attracting new resources;
- basic values: dynamism and adaptability, creativity, enterprising spirit;
- the main motivation factors: to assume risks, creativity, appreciating the spirit of initiative;

- style of management: the manager is an entrepreneur who is willing to take risks in order to develop business;
- efficiency criteria: the expansion of activities on new market segments, diversification object of activity, etc.;

III. Rational culture

- strategic vision: the movement towards obtaining competitive advantage and market superiority;
- basic values: competitiveness, involving all employees for obtaining performance;
- the main motivation factors: competition, fulfilling the imposed performance standards;
- style of management: the manager is an expert in all fields, appreciated for his qualities by all the subordinates;
- efficiency criteria: effectiveness of investment, rate of profitability;

IV. Hierarchical culture

- strategic vision: orientation to stability, continuity, applications of rules and procedures
- basic values: order, discipline, continuous assessment of activities;
- the main motivation factors: job security, continuity of activities;
- leadership style: the manager is a administrator of all the activities, aiming to minimize any risk;
- efficiency criteria: ensuring stability by obtaining of a minimum and constant profit.

The model proposed by Sonnenfeld

This model for the interpretation of organizational cultures is built on the basis of two dimensions:

- stability/instability of extern environment with which the organizations come into contact and define the director lines of the strategies;
- contribution expected from employees, which can be individual or collective.

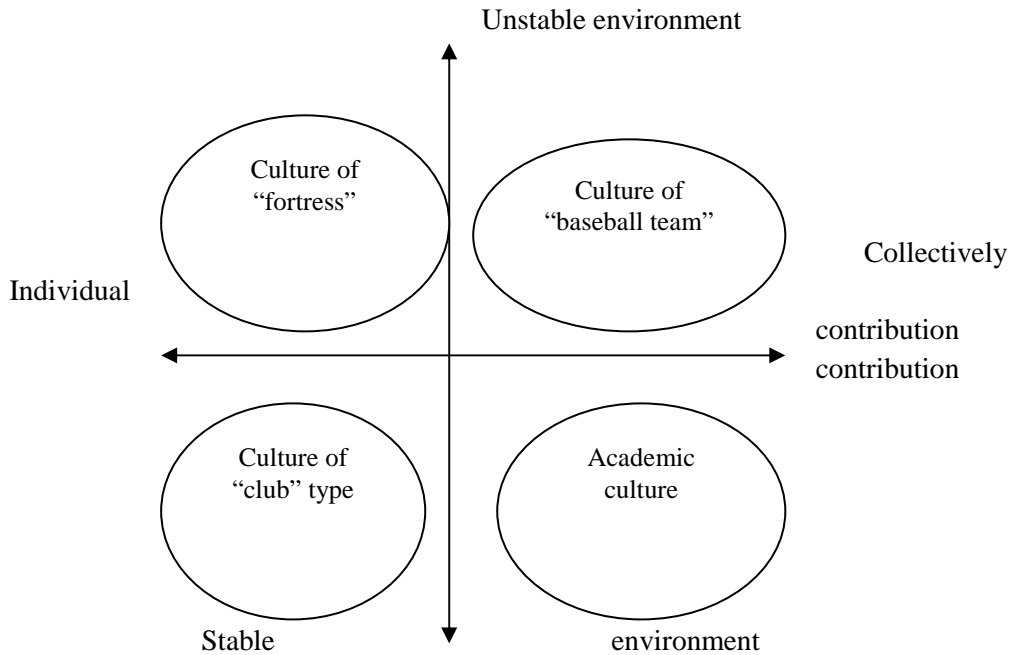


Figure 4: Typology of organizational cultures according to the model Sonnenfeld

- I. *The organizational culture of "fortress" type* is represented in a business environment characterized by a high degree of uncertainty in which the survival of companies is precipitated. The requirements for restructure does not offer any guarantee of employment security and career development. The adoption of such cultures allows highlighting the confident peoples in continuity and development business, but assumes the risks and leads a team, ready to "fight" for ensuring the success.
- II. *The organizational culture of "baseball team"* corresponds to organizations that acts in an unstable business environment, but which is fructifying the creativity, initiatives and individual performances of their members, concerning the rapid adjustments to the changes of the environment.
- III. *The organizational "academic" culture* is characterized by stability, valorising the loyalty towards the company. Under this type of organizational culture, it is the greatest appreciation enjoyed by specialized skills and level of expertise of each employee.
- IV. *The culture of "club" type* is specific to the organizations that carries out their activities in a stable environment and in which the team spirit prevails. The

system values focuses on the loyalty of employees and combined experiences in the organizations.

Conclusions

The manager has a crucial role in reviving the organizational culture of a company.

To do this, it can follow these steps:

- Establishing values, symbols, credible standards so that the employees see them applied;
- Building self-confidence through positive feedback and offering numerous rewards of appreciations for the employees' effort and performances;
- The transmission of direct and sincere messages, regarding its interest for the employees;
- Demonstration of care and attachment for the organization and its components;

Leaders by their acquired indigenous qualities can create real obstacles between members of the organization. The individual objectives and overall business contribute to the harmonization of interests of various categories of stakeholders and satisfy in a high degree their needs and their interests.

REFERENCES:

1. Androniceanu, A., *Noțiuni în managementul public*, București, Editura Universitară, 2005;
2. Bordean, I., *Managementul resurselor umane*, Galați, Editura Fundației Academice Danubius, 2000;
3. Deaconu, A., Podgoreanu, S., *Factorul uman și performanțele organizației*, București, Editura ASE, 2004;
4. Deal, T. E., Kennedz, A. A., *Corporate Culture: The Rites and Ritual of Corporate Life*, Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1982;
5. Hofstede, G., Bollinger, D., *Les différences culturelles dans le management*, Les éditions d'organisation, 1986;
6. Hofstede, G., *Cultures and Organization: Software of the Mind*, New York, Mc. Graw Hill Publishing, 1994;
7. Hutu, C. A., *Cultura organizațională și transfer de tehnologie: premise pentru transformarea competitivă a organizațiilor românești*, București Editura Economică, 1999;

8. Larcon, J. P., Rutter, R., *Structures de pouvoir et identité de l'entreprise*, Paris, Nothan, 1979;
9. Moldovanu, G., *Analiză și comportament organizațional*, București, Editura Economică, 2005;
10. Năstase, M., *Cultura organizațională și managerială*, București, Editura ASE, 2004;
11. Năstase, M.; Nicolescu, O., (coord. st.), *Interdependențe dintre cultura organizațională și managementul firmei*, București, Editura ASE, 2006;
12. Nicolescu, O., (coord.), *Sistemul organizatoric al firmei*, București, Editura Economică, 2003;
13. Olaru, A., *Cultura Organizațională*, Galați, Editura Fundației Academice Danubius, 2003;
14. Quinn, R., *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Compating Values Framework*, Addison Wesley, US, 1993;
15. Wiliams, A., Dobson, P., Walters, M., *Changing Culture: New organizational approaches*, London, IPA, 1989.