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The identification of the components organizational culture in the camps from Romania

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Abstract

Culture is considered the vector that influences directly management activity, which must be carried out efficiently and in a professional manner, in order to obtain performances. Knowledge of the models of cultural analysis, elaborated by researchers such as: G. Hofstede, F. Trompenaars, Ed. Hall, etc. constitute a manager's support to understand cultural specificity and location, be this a country, a region, or an area, in which he or she operates or will operate. Training managers from a cultural point of view has become an important requirement nowadays in Romania, irrespective of whether they work in organisations abroad or in various cultural areas in Romania.

Key words: intercultural management, culture area.

Rezumat

Cultura este considerată vectorul care influențează în mod direct activitatea managerială, ce trebuie realizată în mod eficient, profesionist, pentru a obține performanțe. Cunoașterea modelelor de analiză culturală, elaborate de cercetători ca: G. Hofstede, F. Trompenaars, Ed. Hall, etc. constituie suportul pentru înțelegerea de către manager (și nu numai), a specificității culturale a locației, fie aceasta țară, regiune, zonă, în care își desfășoară sau urmează să-și desfășoare activitatea. Pregătirea managerilor din punct de vedere cultural a devenit astăzi, și în România, o cerință importantă, fie că aceștia lucrează în organizații din străinătate, fie că își desfășoară activitatea în diverse zone culturale de la noi din țară.

Ideea conform căreia societatea (la nivel global) este una de tip organizațional are platformă solidă, incontestabilă și susținută de o majoritate a populației. Esența rațiunii existenței organizațiilor a fost aceeași de-a lungul timpului: *ea constituie cel mai eficient mod pentru ca oamenii să-și atingă scopu*. În această situație, ne confruntăm cu o alternanță a rezultatelor profesionale, datorată în special influenței mediului cultural.

Cuvinte cheie: management intercultural, areal cultural.

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Introduction

The idea according to which the society (on global level) is an organizational one has a solid and incontestable basis, supported by the majority of the population. The essence of the reason for the existence of the organizations was the same during the years: *it is the most efficient way for people to achieve their goal*. Under these circumstances, we confront ourselves with an alternation of the professional results mainly due to the influence of the cultural environment. This alternation of results is presented in the below figure.

The two final aspects of performance can be structured as it follows:

- planned professional performance: the manager/teacher/coach must know the environment where he will develop his professional activity which can be an advantage in getting accustomed to the new work place and obtaining the performances for which he was selected;
- professional failure: statistics show many cases in which teachers, coaches or managers did not manage to confirm their professional value or they did not rise to the expected level due to the fact that they did not adapt themselves to the respective cultural environment.

For the analysis of this situation, we can corroborate the theory of open systems with the "congruence model". This model created by Nudler and Tushman and that became a classic one, includes: entries, processing, exits. Thus, we can say that:

- the „**entries**” specific to a certain cultural environment (human resources – children, pupils, teenagers, young people, sportsmen / teams that develop performance activities), „**processed**” or finished at a high level, are transformed into „**exits**”, and there is also a feedback: the value of the human resources and the value of the institution that accommodated them (in our case, the sports camp, fig. no.1):



Fig. no. 1. Interrelation between clients (children, pupils, young people, sportsmen, national groups) and sports camp

Identity of the institution set up as a camp through organizational culture

Today, in Romania, the new political, economic and cultural context has also a direct impact on the institutions set up as sports camp. Many of them have common grounds, such as: the interest of the manager and of his own collaborators (employed personnel) for attracting extrabudgetary funds;

- elaboration of projects;
- collaboration with similar institutions from the country and abroad.

Obviously, we cannot overlook these common grounds, but what is extremely important for such an institution can fall under the category of **customized offer**. This type of offer must present clearly the "ingredients" of its own organizational culture that will ensure the identity and will stir up the interest for the already established **target** (parents, children, gymnasium pupils, high school pupils, sportsmen, etc.). The organizational culture specific to such an institution must be supported, completed by managerial results that are an integral part of this culture.

The creation of an image as clear as possible for such an institution supposes the knowledge and the exact analysis of its own structure and activity. We can achieve such knowledge through a **S.W.O.T.** type analysis:

- ▶ Strengths;
- ▶ Weaknesses;
- ▶ Opportunities;
- ▶ Threats.

We must mention that regarding the strengths and the weaknesses, the analysis must be done within the internal environment of the camp while the opportunities and the threats must relate to the external environment.

Elasticity and articulation of the component elements of an organizational culture: values, norms, beliefs, traditions, heroes, ceremonies etc. are an important factor in ensuring the long term success.

The process of identifying the values can be developed as it follows:

- obtaining the approval regarding the Management through Values process (MVP);
- the executive manager expresses his opinion about the values;
- the managerial team expresses its opinions in the absence of the executive manager;
- the executive manager and the managerial team share and compare their opinions;
- groups of employees express their opinions;

f. there are discussions with the clients and other significant groups;

Synthesizing all the received information and presenting the recommended goal/values to the board of directors/owners for the final approval.

The interrelation between values in a camp, company or organization is very much similar (concerning the stages) to that from the sports/physical training, more precisely, the “small steps principle” (fig. no. 2).

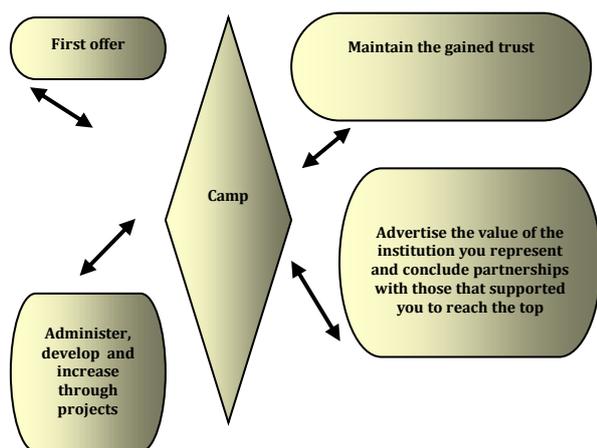


Fig. no. 2. Interrelation between the values in the management of a sports camp

Usually considered by children and teenagers the most exciting and attractive space, *the camp* attracts people every year, thus “producing” the most beautiful and intense memories. The camp is the place where the clients look for sports activity, relaxation, entertainment, and rest. At the same time, it becomes, for a shorter or longer period, a special institution, a community. For any client, the camp means emotion, surprise, knowledge, meeting expectations. The client also has the possibility of developing practical (sports) and communicational skills, of getting used to the spirit of teamwork, of expressing and developing new creative skills, of getting in contact with the customs, traditions, and culture of the area.

A camp is a source of experience that demands, to the same extent, the involvement of the managerial team and that of the clients, in order to unfold properly. The camp-specific activities offer to the clients the possibility of practicing various sports branches, of discovering the culture, traditions, and customs of the geographic area. Furthermore, these activities provide experiences that converge towards developing practical skills, self-knowledge and self-confidence, thus leading to a better

understanding of two fundamental objectives: teamwork and individual development.

Each camp has functioning autonomy on the managerial level; this autonomy is framed within a system of rules and directions flexibly adjusted to the market offer and demand. In the context of the growing globalization, the sports camp can rely precisely on the tradition and the regional specific to attract its clients; at the same time, it has to keep up with the internationally promoted trends. The globalization trend within sports has had a powerful impact upon the managerial activity in the camp domain, which led to the need for an internationalized curriculum.

The consequences of globalization on the level of sports camp are more and more diverse:

- opportunities emerge for camps regarding the better valorisation of the advantages of interacting with the traditions and customs brought by the clients.

- the differences between cultures are reduced, which facilitates the communication between their members;
- a global culture emerges which demands, besides respect, an open, pertinent approach of the traditions, cultures, and customs specific to certain countries.
- the sports camp is submitted to a cultural “shooting” from the outside, which may result in the improvement of the programs, of the service offers for its clients.

The sports activity within a camp is closely connected to the managerial capacity, which is considered a part of the multidisciplinary sphere. Its elements (knowledge, techniques, and capabilities) go beyond the specific ones, as they focus on organizing the activity, on the ability to establish information and relational flows, and – especially – on the ability to valorize the resources of the organization (of the camp) by making correct decisions.

The managerial capacity involves a complex of traits, qualities, and skills which – together with the training, authority, and responsibility of the manager – generate managerial competence. The managerial capacity concerns all management levels and areas. It is based on the managerial competence and culture existing in the organization called camp and it is influenced by the managerial culture specific to this domain, as well as by the macro-level culture (local, regional, national systems), all of them with an influence upon the activity of the organization.

The manager of an organization such as the sports camp is the person who runs the specific activities within the organization, coordinates effectively the unit's resources or the respective resources. The following can represent a manager's strengths:

- a solid background of general and specialized knowledge within interdisciplinary fields: economy, psychology, sociology, law, computer science, etc;
- specific managerial skills;
- competences and capabilities;
- authority and responsibility.

The marketing of the activities within a camp is or it should be a part of the managerial activity specific to such an institution. The orientation of the camps in Romania by the Western models used to achieve performance and to respect the objectives of quality management involves using a set of policies and instruments offered by marketing intelligence. The organization of a championship on a certain sports branch or on several sports disciplines, within a well-determined schedule, involves the use of a set of actions that ensure the fluency and success of the event, for both the participants and the spectators. We refer here to making the equipments, choosing the logos for the teams, and elaborating a sports-artistic program me, which turn such an action into a veritable marketing event.

Making the equipment, choosing the logos for the teams, and elaborating a sports-artistic program me turn such an action into a veritable marketing event. This product is materialized in specific programmes, offer of services or goods meant to satisfy the aesthetic, artistic, cultural-sports demands. Also called the camp *output*, it is elaborated and offered as something unique, as strength, as end product, which requires a collective effort of the managerial staff. The professionalization of the education offer regarding the practice of school sport can only be done by understanding the real importance of the effects of such an approach.

By studying the specialized materials, through the information obtained directly from direct the camp managers in Europe and the United States of America, by collaborating with the students and colleagues who attended such organizations and, not least, by our personal experience in such camps, we can pinpoint that the cultural specific of the area has a direct influence upon the activity of the camp. In other words, the camp extracts its cultural sap from its own location, from the environment, and by using the human, informational, and material resources. In exchange, it offers its products and

services as end product in order to be valorized, thus used as a source of personal development.

The existence of the exchanges, rapports, and transactions between the camps and other types of organizations was found in the camps that we have analyzed, such as: Zaoztrog (Croatia), Village camp – York (England), Camp Waziyatah (USA), Mizar – summer camp (Portugal). In these cases, the camp becomes the setting where cultures and religions mingle. The clients of the afore-mentioned camps, who come from Italy, France, England, the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and USA, provide an eloquent example in this sense. Furthermore, they belong to various religious cults, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islamism, and Buddhism.

By collecting and processing the information obtained directly from the camp managers in the Moldavian area, by collaborating with the students and colleagues who attended such organizations and, not least, by our personal experience in such camps, we have selected three such organizations that we have considered representative from the perspective of the activity and services offer. We have chosen them in order to study the interference of management with the regional cultural specificity (Oglinzi Târgu Neamț, Arted Durău, and Muncel Pașcani-Iași).

The main study and comparison subject was represented by the Oglinzi Târgu Neamț camp, situated 4 km from the town of Târgu Neamț and 49 km from the city of Piatra Neamț. It is surrounded by forests on three sides and it provides space for rest, walking, practicing orientation sports, athletics, and training camps. The total surface measures around 1.8 ha. It offers the possibility of renting spaces for various events, as well the possibility of getting to know the geographic area and the traditions of the region, by taking part in trips, journeys, visits to various cultural locations. It is worth mentioning that the touristic offer is highly diverse: trips, journeys, touristic orientation for the monasteries, monuments, and natural reservations of the marginal areas.

We began our study of this camp by applying the SWOT analysis, in order to contribute to establishing and planning new objectives and strategies. The adjacent idea is to take advantage of the combination between assets and opportunities, thus avoiding or mitigating the combination between weaknesses and threats.

STRENGTHS

- geographic location
- usable surface (facilities, outdoor spaces, development possibilities)

- treatment possibilities (mineral waters)
- possibilities of organizing sports competitions (basketball, volleyball, judo, martial arts, football, table tennis)
- depositing capacity for various companies: deposits, outdoor spaces
- access by car –the European road E85
- access by train – the Târgu Neamț train station
- various possibilities for tourism
- possibilities of practicing sports specific to the mountainous area: in the summer–kayaking on the Ozana River, horse riding courses, extreme sports; in the winter - sleighing, ski courses, etc;
- play spaces / surfaces that can be homologated to the standards required by the specialized federations
- the diversified cultural offer of the area: festivals, theatre shows, concerts, exhibits, customs and traditions

WEAKNESSES

- insufficiently developed activities of touristic management and marketing for the destination
- the lack of promoting networks for the camp in order to attract clients
- the lack of an acronym, of a logo, or of a motto
- the lack of specialized personnel (administration and execution) at the level of the departments in order to elaborate the specific programmers for the camp
- reduced surface for the construction of certain terra in specific to outdoor sports activities
- the lack of co-operation with various structures and organizations in Romania or in Europe.

OPPORTUNITIES

- o the interrelation between the values of organizational culture – tradition – the mentalities that act in the favour of the activity within the camp
- o the summative and complementary potential for financial, organizational, and material support of the public and private elements in Tg. Neamț, Piatra Neamț
- o the malleable, permissive juridical-normative framework, necessary to close various partnerships with companies, organizations from the Moldavian and Bukovinian area.

THREATS

The greatest threats that of not applying a new managerial thinking, meant to determine the change and valorization of the local potential, within a systemic and strategic vision.

- reducing the subventions from the State budget and from the local budget for the managerial activity of the Oglinzi Târgu Neamț camp
- fluctuations of clients (children, students, young people, and athletes), especially in 2009 and 2010
- other camps in the area (Arted Durău and Muncel Pașcani) create opportunities by offering programmers and modernizing the sports base.

The SWOT analysis – in the Oglinzi Târgu Neamț camp –initially unfolded at the scale of this organization as a whole. In a second phase, for an insight into the investigation and for outlining detailed conclusions, we studied the functional domains within the company: offer of services, sports and cultural programmers. The diagnosis following the SWOT analysis may be seen as a research of the technical, sociological, juridical, and managerial aspects that characterize the activity of the Oglinzi Târgu Neamț camp. This research identified the strengths, the weaknesses; the opportunities, the threats, and the causes that generate and/or will generate them. Recommendations are formulated to eliminate or reduce the negative aspects and/or to valorize the positive ones.

Conclusions

- the statistic study elaborated by applying the questionnaire method underlines that there are differences in the administration methods of the three camps analyzed, expressed by differences in valorizing the cultural dimensions researched (depending on the cultural specificity of the area)
- the statistic study elaborated by applying the questionnaire method underlines that there are differences in the way the clients perceive the three camps studied, expressed by differences in valorizing the cultural dimensions researched (depending on the cultural specificities promoted at the level of each sports camp)
- a part of the aspects underlined by the exploratory analysis were also assessed quantitatively through a statistical analysis
- the cause-effect type of interpretations contributed to a better understanding of the cultural influences up on the management at the level of a sports camp
- the two statistical analyses were partially confirmed by the outcomes obtained and expressed quantitatively

- the methodology proposed served satisfactorily to accomplishing the research objectives
- we found arguments to motivate the fact that the management of the sports camp needs to understand the cultural specific of the area where it activates; we also motivate the necessity of valorizing the cultural differences at the organizational level
- the purpose and objectives of the research were reached.

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