

A REVIEW OF ORGANISATION CULTURE ASSESSING INSTRUMENTS

Abstract

More and more companies across the world consider the organisation culture vital for the performance of their employees and ultimately for their business success. To identify and assess the organisation culture a number of instruments have been developed. The purpose of this research is to investigate what are the key dimensions or areas addressed by organisational culture assessing instruments administered across organisations from different geographical regions and if companies prefer to use a standard instrument or develop a custom made questionnaire. The research was made by conducting a literature review to understand what instruments have been previously developed and standardised for profiling and assessing the organisational culture.

Keywords: Organisational culture, organisation culture assessing instruments.

JEL CODES: M10, M14, M19

O TRECERE ÎN REVISTĂ A INSTRUMENTELOR DE EVALUARE A CULTURII ORGANIZAȚIONALE

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Rezumat

Din ce în ce mai multe companii din întreaga lume consideră vitală cultura organizațională pentru performanța angajaților lor, și nu, în ultimul rând pentru succesul afacerii lor. Pentru a identifica și evalua cultura organizațiilor au fost dezvoltate o serie de instrumente. Scopul acestei cercetări este să investigheze care sunt dimensiunile cheie sau ariile abordate de instrumentele de evaluare a culturii organizațiilor din diferite regiuni geografice și dacă companiile preferă să utilizeze un instrument standard sau dezvoltă de fiecare dată un chestionar adaptat clientului. Cercetarea a fost realizată prin investigarea literaturii de specialitate pentru a înțelege ce instrumente au fost dezvoltate și standardizate anterior pentru stabili profilul și a evalua cultura organizațională.

Cuvinte cheie: cultura organizațională, instrumente de evaluare a culturii organizației.



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1. INTRODUCTION

More and more companies across the world consider the organisation culture vital for the performance of their employees and ultimately for their business success.

"The contemporary definition of Organizational Culture includes what is valued; the leadership style, the language and symbols, the procedures and routines, and the definitions of success that characterizes an organization. So, organizational culture is a specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organization and that control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organization" (Markovic, 2008).

More and more companies in the recent years have a well-defined business strategy and consider vital for their success to align the organisation culture to the company strategy. Many business leaders have been focusing on creating and fostering an organisation culture that will encourage performance and in the same time will determine employees' motivation and engagement.

Even though the organisational culture varies from one organisation to another, commonalities do exist and different authors developed models used to identify, describe and assess the organisational culture. However, many authors agree that new technologies and globalisation put pressure to change on organisations in different countries and regions. Moreover, they had a significant impact on many sectors or industry macrocultures.

The world changed significantly in the last decade. The development of the Internet and the wide availability of information and knowledge, the almost free instant communication mediated by email and other electronic aids, social networking, all other advances in IT have changed the way people think and the way companies are doing business.

Therefore, successful organisations tend to be more flexible, willing to learn and adapt quickly to new ways of working and according to recent articles, organizational culture will probably be an even more important factor in determining the success or failure of firms during the next decade when more technological changes are expected.

In the age of globalisation and rapid emergence of new technologies that allow companies to have instant access to information, the instruments available for profiling the organisational cultural have a great variety and are easily accessible to managers and HR professionals from across the world.

The purpose of this study is to review and analyse some of standardised instruments for measuring and profiling the organisational culture and also to understand why many companies who decide to investigate

the organisational culture prefer to develop their own questionnaires in order to capture aspects they consider specific for their organisation or aspects who they consider they need to focus more on in their effort to align the organisation culture to company strategy to support its vision, mission, values and strategic objectives.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was made by conducting a literature review to understand what instruments have been previously developed and standardised for profiling and measuring the organisation culture.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW OF ORGANISATION CULTURE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

In trying to understand the variety of different organisation cultures that can be encountered, the researcher can use the typologies that allow the categorisation of different organizations into types. Such typologies have the advantage of simplifying and building higher-order theoretical categories, but they have the disadvantage of being so abstract that they often fail to describe accurately a particular organization (Schein, 2004).

A number of such typologies have been proposed by many authors and a number of assessment instruments have been created to measure or decipher the content of the organisational culture from a researcher or consultant point of view. The review of the culture assessment instruments studied how the organisation culture is currently profiled and measured.

Balthazard and Cooke (2004) consider that “traditionally, culture has been assessed by qualitative methods. However, quantitative approaches such as culture surveys offer important advantages for both cross-sectional organisational research and knowledge-based cultural change initiatives” therefore the qualitative and quantitative methods for the assessment of organisational processes and attributes are complementary.

Yauch and Steudel (2003) in their research of organizational cultures of two manufacturers, analysed the use of qualitative and quantitative assessment methods and identified strengths and weaknesses of both methods.

TABLE 1. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF QUALITATIVE/QUANTITATIVE CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
Qualitative approach	<p>Ability to probe for underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions</p> <p>Broad, open-ended inquiry; participants can raise issues that matter most to them</p>	<p>Time-consuming process</p> <p>An important issue could be overlooked; observations and results depend on interpretation(s) of a positioned subject(s)</p> <p>An important issue could be overlooked; participants have more control over the process</p>
Quantitative approach	<p>Rapid data collection and analysis</p> <p>Facilitates comparison</p>	<p>Some respondents may not be able to read/understand the questions</p> <p>Interpretation is not discussed; it is left to the respondent's discretion</p> <p>An important issue could be overlooked; focuses only on preconceived issues and concepts</p> <p>Assumptions must be made about the appropriate group or groups to sample, depending on the view of culture (integration, differentiation, or fragmentation; Martin, 1992)</p>

Source: Yauch and Steudel, 2003

Apart from possibility of benchmarking with other organisations, quantitative methods "offer an important practical advantage of being less onerous to use than qualitative methods. They tend to be more resource efficient in terms of time taken for both data collection and data analysis." (Reichers and Schneider, 1990)

Well-known quantitative instruments of assessing organization culture include the Organizational Culture Inventory (Cooke and Lafferty, 1989), the Organizational Culture Profile (O' Reilly III, Chatman and Caldwell, 1981), the Six-Dimensional Model (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders, 1990) and the Competing Values Model (CVM), also known as competing Values Framework (Cameron and Quinn, 1999).

The main differences between these quantitative instruments are that "Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI) measures behavioural norms and expectations in organizations, while Competing Values Model (CVM) and Organisational Culture Profile (OCP) measure values that impact on behaviour. The Six

Dimensional Model of Organisation Culture is an instrument that assesses culture from perceived practice of members of an organization" (Reiny and Buttle, 2006, p.140).

Organizational Culture Inventory, developed in 1983, by Cooke and Lafferty, is a self-report paper and pencil diagnostic instrument designed to measure twelve sets of normative beliefs or shared behavioural expectations associated with three general type of cultures, Constructive, Passive-Defensive and Aggressive-Defensive (Cooke and Szumal,1993). Different researchers that used OCI have shown a positive relationship between the Constructive culture and outcomes. In the same way, at the societal level, other scholars revealed the importance of the Constructive styles and demonstrates a negative relationship between the Defensive culture styles and World Competitiveness.

Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) is an instrument that uses a set of value statements to assess individual and organisational values. It was developed to measure person-organization fit, by correlating the profile of organizational values with the profile of the individual's preferences. The extent that person-organization fit is related with work-outcomes was measured by using the following variables: person-organization fit, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intent to leave, turnover, control variables as tenure, genre and age. (O' Reilly III, Chatman and Caldwell, 1981)

The Hofstede model of the organisation culture is based on the research conducted by Geert Hofstede. Between 1969 and 1973 he conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. He analysed a large database of employee value scores collected within IBM in 53 countries. Subsequent studies validated the earlier results and included groups of respondents from a more diverse range of industries. In his study, Hofstede demonstrated that there are national and regional characteristics that affect the behaviour of organisations and identified five dimensions of national cultures: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity and long-term orientation.

In a follow up study of organizational culture differences, conducted by Geert's institute IRIC across 20 organisations in Denmark and the Netherlands in the 1980s, identified six independent dimensions of organisational culture: process-oriented versus results-oriented, job-oriented versus employee-oriented, professional versus parochial, open systems versus closed systems, tightly versus loosely controlled, and pragmatic versus normative.

The Hofstede Multi-Focus Model was further developed by ITIM International founder, Bob Waisfisz, and now it consists of eight dimensions (six autonomous dimensions or variables and two semi-autonomous dimensions):

Means-oriented vs. Goal-oriented	Autonomous dimensions
Internally driven vs. Externally driven	
Easygoing work discipline vs. Strict work discipline	
Local vs. Professional	
Open system vs. Closed system	
Employee-oriented vs. Work-oriented	
Degree of acceptance of leadership style	Semi-autonomous dimensions
Degree of identification with your organisation	

Source: adapted from Waisfisz, 2015

The Values Survey Module 2013 (VSM 2013) is a 30-item paper-and-pencil questionnaire developed for comparing culturally influenced values and sentiments of similar respondents from two or more countries, or sometimes regions within countries. It allows scores to be computed on six dimensions of national culture, on the basis of four questions per dimension. The six dimensions measured were developed in the work of Hofstede and Minkov (2013) and they deal with key issues in national societies, known from social anthropology and cross-cultural research.

„The Competing Values Framework (CVF) has claimed its origins in the work of Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) who developed the framework based on their analysis of 39 organisational effectiveness indicators, initially created by Cambel et al. (1974). Cameron and Quinn (1999) reworked the CVF and renamed it the OCAI, (Reiny and Buttle, 2006 p.140).

The Organizational Cultural Assessment Instrument (OCAI) is a psychometric tool developed to help organizations identify their current and preferred culture. Through the use of a simple survey, participants identify their perceptions of both existing culture and their desired future culture. Organizations can then use these results to assess both the current cultural state and also to identify gaps between current and desired futures. For example, Suderman Jeff (2012, p.52), a practitioner, has tried to check the effectiveness of this tool, by using it in an organization that changed its leader. OCAI was applied at the beginning and the end of first year job of new leader and has served as a tool for leadership development.

Also, many authors and scholars made extensive researches and comparisons between culture assessment instruments.

R. Mannion (2008) have developed a comprehensive review of the ideas and themes raised by the organisational culturists and also have presented the result of a thorough study of 24 organisational culture assessment tools. He identified that even though the instruments vary greatly in terms of

theoretical approach, level of culture they tap into and pragmatism, there is a little practical application of these tools.

N. Delobbe, R.R. Haccoun and C. Vandenberghe (2005) have presented the comparative study of 20 organisation culture instruments. In their research, they started from the idea that to date, there is no consensus on a finite set of key dimensions able to describe and compare organisational culture across a large range of organisations and tried to fill this gap. Therefore, they analysed the dimensions measured by current questionnaires and synthesized them into four core dimensions that are common: people orientation, innovation, control and outcome orientation.

Some scholars (Davies, Nutley and Mannion 2000; Shortell & al .2001) were interested in quantitative measurement of organizational culture in order to determine its relationship with performance and products and services quality.

Scott et al. (2003, p.924) consider that the option for the best assessment instrument depends on how the “culture”, “measurement,” and “organization” are defined, on the purpose of the investigation, on the intended use of the results, and the availability of resources. Scott & al (2003) concluded in their study that the choice of the instruments used is depended of context of cultural assessment and recommended a multimethod approach.

4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Different concepts of culture, stemming from anthropology and sociology, have been applied to organisational studies and there is no consensus on a determined set of dimensions that can describe the organisational culture across a large range of organisations.

In choosing the instruments for measuring and profiling the organisation culture, there are a variety of instruments in the market that offer standardisation and the opportunity of benchmarking with other organisations. However, a multimethod approach that combines qualitative with quantitative approaches might be more useful in understanding the underlying elements of the culture by putting the culture investigated into context.

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