



ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE – MODELING FACTOR OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP –

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Organisational culture embodies not only a system of beliefs, values, and attitudes of the people forming the organisation, it is also a formative or shaping factor of its leadership as leadership, in its turn, shapes culture.

Leaders are responsible for creating systems on which culture develops and norms are reinforced in the workplace. Culture, in response, influences the organisational environment and the strategies built to fulfil the organisational vision and mission, the policies and processes that allow this process. An organisational culture that promotes excellence, fairness, team spirit, characteristics underlain by open, two-way communication, induces the people formed in such an environment to embrace and promote its characteristics.

Inevitably, the military organisation is subject to these functional principles, its members being shaped by the organisation specifics, and military education, as part of this organisation, can make a major contribution to the development of culture and the formation of leaders.

We will try to demonstrate these ideas based on the analysis of the specialised studies mentioned in the article, but also on personal empirical observations.

Keywords: organisational culture; leadership; education; communication; efficiency;



INTRODUCTION

In this paper we will address, based on the analysis of several specialised studies and the person empirical observations, the impact the *organisational culture* has on training and developing members of organisations, with the emphasis on the impact on leader training.

Leading an organisation means directing and motivating individuals to carry out their tasks, a process by which staff is trained, directed towards meeting the organisation's objectives. Leadership is a process through which the personnel is trained and guided towards achieving the goals of the organisation. Those who are able to make this possible through the qualities they have, not just through the authority conferred by the position they hold, can be called leaders.

The military leader is that commander who can exercise their personal qualities in any situation, who knows their subordinates, their specifics, how each person can be used in the most efficient way. A leader knows how to activate the interaction of the group so that it transforms into a team concentrating the action of the people towards the achievement of the objectives using professional expertise, charisma and soft skills like communication skills.

The concept of *organisational culture* was introduced in the specialised literature in the middle of the 20th century, by Eliot Jaques, in his book *The Changing Culture of a Factory* (Jaques, 1951), a book in which the evolution of an organisational community is presented and analysed. The concept has become very popular among academic communities and management specialists, and over time, it has been defined and analysed from several historical and disciplinary perspectives, highlighting different areas of interest (Eisenberg. M. & Goodall JR). HL, Trethwey A., 2006, pp. 20-25):

- comparative management – which is characteristic to the intercultural approach;

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Organisational culture is “a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”.

- anthropological vision – from this perspective culture is something organic, emergent and impossible to control;
- organisational symbolism – which considers that taking care of the organisational culture is important only in terms of several components: language, stories, myths, nonverbal communication and communication relationships;
- critical or postmodernist vision – which illustrates organisational culture through the numerous differences in the methods of the continuous struggle for control and power in organisations;
- cognitive vision – according to which organisational culture is “a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, E.H., 2004, pp. 13-28). This is the vision that guides most analyses, although there is no integrative definition anywhere in the specialised literature.

The definitions of the *organisational culture* can be divided into two categories: *functional* and *interpretive* (Lang R., Stegar T., Weik E., 1994, pp. 6-8):

- functional definitions see culture as part/element of the organisation;
- interpretive definitions consider organisational culture as just a mental construction.

Ott S. (1989) argues that a concept as complex as organisational culture can be defined by two methods: the inductive method, the theoretical definition will be obtained from experience and the deductive, which starts from a general theoretical framework and analyses reality all the time, by reference to theory, which is ultimately modified, adapted.

Therefore, the perspectives from which the *organisational culture* can be analysed are:

- organisational culture is similar to societal culture;

- it is composed of elements such as: values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, behavioural norms, artifacts and patterns of behaviour;
- it is socially constructed; it is the unseen force behind organisational activities;
- it is a social energy that guides the members of the organisation to action;
- it is a unifying theme that gives meaning, direction and mobilizes the members of the organisation;
- it also has the control function of the organisation because it can be used to encourage or discourage behaviours.

Unfortunately, no consensus on the description of this concept has been reached yet, and there are divergent views upon its components, the relationships among them, its attributes and the ways of analysing, administering or changing it. The fact that it is a concept and not a tangible element increases the difficulty of defining it; it can be more than a component of the organisation, it is also a process, *the culture of the organisation is not just another piece of the puzzle, it is the puzzle*. However, without taking into account a specific perspective, the organisational culture concept appears to be a particularly slippery construct when trying to define and operationalize it.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE TYPOLOGY

Taking into account the functional approach, which sees culture as a constituent element of the organisation, we can go deeper, below the surface image that organisations promote, reaching the features that characterize and differentiate organisations from each other. Culture is a much more complex element of the organisational mechanism and it can be considered the modelling and driving force that exists behind organisational activities.

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The values of the organisation must also be the values of its members since this is the only way to have an organisational system of values and only when: individuals know that a certain belief, given norm is supported; most members of the organisation are in agreement; the values of the organisation are intensely supported from within.

Organisational cultures that promote excellence, fairness, team spirit will encourage those who share these values, will shape the newcomers in this spirit and will marginalize those who do not fit. Culture creates organisational environment and influences the nature of long-term plans that lead the organisation towards its vision. Culture also dictates the policies and processes that enable the organisation to fulfil its daily mission.

Very relevant is the definition given by Johnson & Scholes (Johnson G., Scholes K., 1993, p. 96) which defines *organisational culture* as an element of influence that is composed of leadership styles, stories, myths, rituals, symbols, the type of power characteristic of the organisation, the organisational structure, the decision-making methods and the management systems. Even if this construct has so many variables within, variables whose power and importance may differ from one group to another, the dominant organisational culture will always highlight the common denominator. The most important term in this definition is *influence* because it highlights what is pursued through culture, namely, modelling or influencing the members of the organisation to the direction of fulfilling the goals of the organisation.

Following the analysis of the above, we can conclude that there is limited agreement on the elements of organisational culture and this consensus refers only to *norms, values, beliefs, rituals* and shared *meanings*, which are perceived as sufficiently stable so that, following interaction with members and the structure of the organisation, to create patterns of behaviour. The values of the organisation must also be the values of its members since this is the only way to have an organisational system of values and only when:

- individuals know that a certain belief, given norm is supported;
- most members of the organisation are in agreement;
- the values of the organisation are intensely supported from within.

The degree and manner in which these criteria are met will make culture an important and relevant element in the analysis of the organisation.

Therefore culture:

- the connection with an organised group of people;

- it is the projection of the collective mind and, thus, it must be transmitted and learned by the newcomers;
- represents a solution for internal integration and adaptation to a social group.

Therefore, there is a great diversity of elements that make up the organisational culture, some being more visible than others, more influential or more important. The determinants of each organisational culture are given by the system of common values, symbols and meanings of the group. Through culture, values, symbols, meanings are transferred into material objects and ritual practices. Under these conditions, culture shows *“what is important for a particular group and how the members of the group should think, feel and behave. By developing a common understanding of events, objects, words, and people, members of the organisation develop a common sense of experiences that facilitates their coordinated action”* (Smircich, L., 1983, pp. 339-358).

The military organisation also obeys these functional principles, its members being shaped by the specifics of the organisation, and the military education system, as part of this organisation, can make a major contribution, in an active manner and with high efficiency (due to the moment on time in which the educational process takes place the age of those involved and the duration of exposure) to the development of culture and training of members of the organisation and future leaders.

The quality of being a tool of influence mentioned above helps culture shape all new members of an organisation and the leaders are the outpost of this influence because they create and facilitate the circulation of organisational values. The military education and training system, by virtue of its basic mission, *“trains officers, military foremen and non-commissioned officers with professional and transversal competencies in accordance with the requirements and the needs of the military structures which correspond to the specific qualifications of the military occupations, having the potential to become creative, innovative personalities, determined to attain performance, to generate value and to assume their military career responsibly”* (DGMRU).





Among the skills and qualities needed by a leader, which can be structured and developed through the education system, we mention the power of concentration, trust, transparency, integrity, passion, firmness, consistency, empathy, communication, analytical and decisional thinking because learning is not just storing information also means developing and training the mind.

The quality of being a leader has two sides: the innate and the created one and both can be cultivated and developed from the first years in the military education system, be it high school, post-high school or university level of education, taking advantage of the fact that this is the first contact with this system, the newcomers do not belong to any other organisational culture and that they are at the age when the training processes are most successful. Adolescence, the age between approximately 14-18 years, and the transition to adulthood from 18 to 22 years are the main stages in the formation of personal and professional ideals, being the ages at which one prepares and outlines self-image and self-esteem and the decision for the future profession.

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Knowledge integration is a process through which learners gather different types of information and experiences, identifying and establishing relationships and extending the frameworks for connecting them. They must not only accumulate knowledge from individual episodes of experience, but also integrate the knowledge they acquire in time, location, circumstances and the different formats in which knowledge appears. In fact, this is about education which is a process of facilitating learning or acquiring knowledge and skills. Often, we do not place enough emphasis on values, beliefs, traditions, and habits that are essential to a good education. Quality education should help bring about lasting positive change in human life and behaviour, and future leaders will develop in school the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the success of their organisations. Changes in thinking and attitude can become themselves values of the organisational culture of the military education and training system. There is a huge need of transformational leaders who can earn the respect of subordinates, who are able to motivate and persuade their people by personal example and communication and not by use of hierarchical status.

MILITARY ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE – FUNCTIONAL PRINCIPLES

The knowledge and acceptance of the organisational culture by all members is decisive for its functioning, the cultural factor having a strong impact on the management functions and on the actions of the leader. The stronger a culture, the easier it is for employees to accept and trust the values of the organisation. A strong culture is a culture that attracts and retains talents, it is also the one that makes people get involved, which gives energy to its members, in fact it is the one that supports the success of the organisation.

When we analyse the culture of several organisations, we notice that no two are identical. Over time, several types of organisational culture have been identified, but, as Charles Handy (Handy CB, 1995) said, there is no organisation that has a *pure organisational culture*, which is usually a mixture of traits belonging to the types presented by Hardy (1995) (culture of power, culture of role, culture of tasks and culture of people) and other types identified later by other scholars (culture of academia, baseball team, club and fortress or macho culture, work hard culture, play hard, bet your company culture and process culture, distance from power, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, long-term orientation), with the mention that some are more prominent than others. As can be seen from the facts mentioned above, there is a multitude of types of cultures this leading to countless possibilities to combine their characteristics.

In reality, there is no organisation that has a unitary organisational culture, within the dominant culture there will always be subcultures developed based on the specifics of the different groups that make up the organisation, which will be formed in the shadow and after the establishment of the main culture and can share, to a lesser or greater extent, the characteristics of the dominant culture. Here we can talk about the small groups formed by the staff in a certain office, department, workshop, laboratory, etc. which constitute relatively small groups, in which several people work and which positively or negatively influence the whole. Several researchers have been concerned with the analysis of organisational cultures trying to fit



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- the activities and the rhythm in which they are carried out require both certain skills and knowledge, as well as positive relationships between the participants, especially of special mutual trust.

These specific characteristics result in the fact that in the military organisation the results are based more than in other organisations on the quality of its members and the relations formed between them, which emphasizes the importance of training its members from the first moments, i.e. the schooling period.

In order for the tasks and missions to be performed in the best possible conditions, it is necessary for those involved to:

- be able to act in special conditions (high degree of difficulty, high risk, physical difficulty, etc.);
- accepts the risks arising from this type of activity;
- be able to act efficiently in the complex conditions mentioned above;
- be formed in such a way that they can maintain a relationship of mutual trust.

Analysing the military organisation in terms of the constituent elements of an organisational culture we can say that it is a centralised organisation, characterised by a great distance from power, depersonalisation and objectification of authority. Communication is done from top to bottom, there are strict regulations, and formalism and bureaucracy predominate. As a result, the organisational culture of the armed forces is based on a strictly structural leadership, from top to bottom, with a very well-defined chain of command. The relevant information for the action is transmitted from top to bottom, the competence to initiate the action is strongly limited at the base of the hierarchical structure, the important decisions being always taken by those at the top of the hierarchy.

We can probably find most of these elements in other bureaucratic organisations where hierarchy and formality are the key elements.

Therefore, military culture has in itself a duality that makes it a special example in organisational cultures. Military culture has two sides: during peacetime it tends towards routine and bureaucracy, and in case of emergencies it has to face the greatest turbulence.



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THE NEED FOR COMMUNICATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE MILITARY LEADERS

The art of leadership is the way in which leaders influence, persuade and direct their subordinates to carry out an activity that will effectively lead to the achievement of objectives. At the same time, the science of leadership means the elaboration of several action strategies, but the choice of the most appropriate one also depends on the experience, inventiveness, courage of the military leader. Science without art is not enough as art without scientific knowledge means only empirical guidance.

The military leader, as an exponent of culture, must be formed in the spirit of these values. Their activity focuses on planning, organising, coordinating, controlling and motivating individuals to carry out their work tasks in order to achieve their goals. However, for this activity the leader cannot rely only on inspiration, vocation, devotion, because leadership does not only mean solving problems when they arise, but also anticipating them. Under such conditions, experience must not turn into conservatism but become a positive factor. The art of leadership is the way in which leaders influence, persuade and direct their subordinates to carry out an activity that will effectively lead to the achievement of objectives. At the same time, the science of leadership means the elaboration of several action strategies, but the choice of the most appropriate one also depends on the experience, inventiveness, courage of the military leader. Science without art is not enough as art without scientific knowledge means only empirical guidance.

A large part of the motivation activity, but also of the other functions of management is based on communication. Communication is present at all organisational levels and is necessary for all activities. As early as the second half of the last century, a study found that managers or leaders are largely busy communicating with members of the organisation, occupying 70 to 90 percent of their daily time with team or group interactions (Mintzberg, 1973; Eccles & Nohria, 1991).

The development and popularization of technology in the last 20 years has accentuated this situation, new communication technologies such as mobile phones, e-mail, video conferencing, social sites, etc. which apparently facilitate communication also lead

to an increase in the time used by this activity. This vast percentage of time spent by managers and leaders in communicating important issues highlights the importance of communication skills for leaders who want to strengthen their leadership positions. Studies have been done since the middle of the last century to demonstrate the importance of communication for leadership. It was highlighted that a person who can communicate well and has a good decision-making capacity and team coordination is more likely to reach a senior management position (Bowman, Jones, Peterson, Gronouski, & Mahoney, 1964, pp. 6-18). Communication skills help create a better understanding of organisational needs and goals, facilitate team building and trust in the organisation. Thus, the development of communication skills should be a priority for managers who want to achieve leadership excellence and career development. A leader should ensure that the communication process is continuous and also ensure the appropriate use of both informal and formal approaches.

Communication at the leadership level is a complex process that starts from the development of a communication strategy through which to obtain the knowledge of the organisation's objectives by all its members, staff motivation and control of difficult situations. This type of communication includes three major aspects: the basic, the managerial and the systemic. The basic one includes elements of verbal or written communication necessary for the management of medium and large groups. The managerial one includes cultural, motivational, planning and control elements, establishing and maintaining the relations with the team members, and the systemic one refers to the communication with the stakeholders, crisis communication, image creation.

An organisation that encourages the idea of leaders ready to communicate proactively and openly will win in two ways: it will achieve its goals and have staff involved who trust the organisation's mission.

Communication training should be part of the school curriculum during high school. One must understand the complex purpose of communication that goes beyond the simple level of information transmission, now aiming to create meaning in the mind of the receiver.





Effective managerial communication means the transfer of the message taking into account the understanding and capacity of the receiver. Unfortunately, there are many situations in which the insecurity and obtuseness of people having leadership positions has led to the failure of planned objectives because they have not been clearly or sufficiently explained or because no feedback has been requested or accepted from those involved.

Effective managerial communication means the transfer of the message taking into account the understanding and capacity of the receiver. Unfortunately, there are many situations in which the insecurity and obtuseness of people having leadership positions has led to the failure of planned objectives because they have not been clearly or sufficiently explained or because no feedback has been requested or accepted from those involved. We must give up the type of manager who has no communication skills or no interest in this field, that type of manager who does not accept feed-back from subordinates, who sees communication as a waste of time and who prefers to lead using only an arrogant tone, though and from a position of power. This faulty kind of communication can lead to demotivation of staff and to conflicts. However, through the education system communication skills for future leaders can be systematised and developed, pupils and students can be taught the value of communication, what a communication plan is, what the right techniques and tools for communication are depending on the environment, public and purpose.

Future leaders need to learn that before starting communicating, they need to be clear about their goal. They need to be confident in the message they are communicating and the members of the organisation, the target audience, need to trust what they are being told. If the speaker does not seem to believe the message they are sending, if they have a negative or disconnected attitude, the team will not be motivated to perform their tasks. Leaders' communication must be clear, concise, containing the essential elements of the activity, but attentive to the thoughts, ideas and feelings of others.

A leader may not have the time to communicate with all members of the individual team, so they must develop the ability to interact with those who make up the organisation, even if they are in groups, as if addressing each individual.

CONCLUSIONS

Organisational culture, through its components, acts upon military leadership, the latter internalizes the organisational culture and forms and adapts the leadership style, individual and collective behaviours, attitudes in full consensus with it. In conclusion, we can say that no

leader can be truly competent unless they generate individual and group attitudes and behaviours through their activity, tailored to specific situations and they further organisational values. Similarly, organisational culture through the promoted values, using rigor and constancy, leads to the formation of an individual and collective behaviour fully adapted to the specifics of the military organisation. The impact of culture on organisations should not be overestimated, but it should be borne in mind that cultural paradigms specific to the training and living environment of individuals (here we include the time spent in military education and training) are highly restraining and strongly affect the functioning of the organisation.

Therefore, ensuring the compatibility between the individual culture of the members of the organisation and the organisational culture becomes a functional necessity for the organisation. Compatibility must be formed or cultivated in the activity of managing the processes that support the functioning of the organisation or earlier, within the education system.

Finally, a commander who is not able to communicate and understand the value of communication and use it in accordance with organisational values and goals, will not be a true leader. Communication has the value of soft power, but it can bring even better results than a hard and strong approach. If all these elements and techniques of communication were introduced in military education from the first years of high school, the benefits could be seen from the first generations of graduates, which benefits the entire system. Effective communication is a characteristic of effective leadership no leader can perform activities effectively unless they are an excellent communicator who know how to use their ability to coordinate, influence, and motivate their organisation.



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