ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
AND LEARNING CULTURE
IN ORGANIZATION

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Abstract: The learning culture is the culture that helps the organization and its members to adapt to the extremely complex and constantly dynamic social environment following the emergence of Industry 5.0. To be successful in an organization, the learning culture must be appropriate to the organizational culture's manifestations and the organization's members must be motivated to accept the learning culture. A strong organizational culture that incorporates the culture of learning becomes a flexible organizational culture, and the organization can constantly adapt to changes in the external environment.

Keywords: organizational culture, learning culture, human resources,

JEL Classification: M10, M14, M19.

1. Introduction

In today's society, although well-trained labor is easier to find, we are witnessing a paradox: on the one hand, organizations cannot retain their employees in the long term, and on the other hand, some of the employees are not found in the organizations in who carry out their activity, which causes them to change their place of work frequently. In general, these are employees who want to find a job where professional

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development takes place in relation to their own aspirations and interests.

In modern management, the success of an organization is the result of the professional and personal development of the workforce. In order to develop, remain competitive and fulfill their organizational objectives, organizations must adapt to the new social realities and the highly competitive and complex environment, promoting within them the culture of learning and recruiting a well-trained workforce. Organizations that want to be successful and play an important role in a dynamic, ever-changing labor market "need to think strategically about how they invest in and develop human capital: the knowledge, skills and abilities of their workforce" (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2020).

Organizational culture plays a very important role in determining the strategies used by the organization to invest in qualified, professionally trained human resources that are able to help the organization achieve its goals.

2. Research purpose and methodology

The purpose of our article is to highlight the role that organizational culture plays in the implementation of learning culture in the organization.

To achieve the goal, we set as a specific objective of our research the understanding of the concept of "learning culture" and to identify how the learning culture is influenced by the organizational culture. Therefore, the hypothesis we start from is that in an organization, in order to implement the culture of learning, the organizational culture plays a particularly important role.

In the article, the concepts of "organizational culture", "learning culture" and the role that organizational culture plays when the learning culture is to be implemented in the organization are presented and analyzed, based on the study of specialized works and own empirical observations .

3. Organizational culture and its role in implementing learning culture in the organization

The culture of an organization is influenced by the national culture of the country in which it operates, it being "a particularization of the culture in relation to what happens in an organization" (Hoffman, 2004, p. 99) and considered as "a key factor" of the organization's success.

Until now, there is no unified definition of the concept of "organizational culture" because experts from different fields contributed to its definition: anthropology, economics, management, psychology, sociology, etc. For management specialists, the understanding of organizational culture has been done mainly through the lens of business, organizational culture being the one that can determine the increased efficiency of an organization by influencing the members of the organization to think, feel and act in the same way. The result of this approach led to the study of organizational culture as a management tool.

Most of the definitions given to the concept of "organizational culture", regardless of the field of origin (management, sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc.) present a series of common characteristics (Iancu & Halmaghi, 2015):

– have in mind a set of meanings and values that belong to the individuals in the organization;

– the elements of the organizational culture need a relatively long period of time to form;

– the meanings and values that constitute the basis of organizational culture are a synthesis of individual and national ones;

– values and beliefs are reflected in symbols, attitudes, behaviors;

– the organizational culture constitutes a frame of reference for the members of the organization;

– the forms of manifestation of organizational culture significantly influence the evolution and performance of the organization.

In general, we can define organizational culture as representing "the basic pattern of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that govern how employees in an organization think about and act on problems and opportunities" (Bratton, 2021, p. 15).

Organizational employees' understanding of organizational culture is important because it is represented by the shared values, beliefs, and practices of an organization. A strong and healthy organizational culture can provide an organization with numerous benefits, including: increased productivity; satisfied customers; increased levels of innovation; employee health and well-being; increased employee engagement rates; employee retention; reduced rates of absenteeism; decreasing the rate of leaving the organization by dissatisfied employees; improved communication within and outside the organization.

An organization's organizational culture is the key to business success: organizations with a strong and healthy organizational culture thrive and remain competitive, while organizations with a weak organizational culture fail.

Organizational culture is created, among other things, by the behavior of the organization's members. That's why an organizational culture, no matter how strong and healthy it is, is in danger of losing its power when the self-sufficiency and mental exhaustion of employees intervenes in the organization, as well as non-compliance with organizational norms and values by employees (new or old). In order not to end up in a situation where the organizational culture becomes weak, and the organization ends up being dissolved, it is necessary to adapt the organizational culture to the realities of contemporary society. One way is to consider learning culture as part of organizational culture. For this, to begin with, the learning strategies will be adapted both to the objectives of the organization and to its values and norms. Over time, the learning culture can also be found in certain ways of manifesting the organizational culture (symbols, language) or, thanks to the human resource, it can become an internal factor that influences the organizational culture.

4. Learning culture – organizational success culture

As society develops, organizations discover that, in order to remain competitive, they must invest in the professional development of employees so that they are constantly able to cope with new organizational demands. That is why learning is becoming increasingly important, and "learning at work is a key part of this, driven by the impact of changes in demographics, skills demands, technologies, relationships and people's roles within different organizations" (Movahhed, 2023). More and more organizations are "embracing the concept of a 'learning culture'" (Leonard, 2019), which means that organizations place increased emphasis on the continuous learning needs of employees and "encourage individual and organizational learning, where both the acquisition and sharing of knowledge they are prioritized, appreciated and rewarded" (Trovas, 2022).

To define the concept of "learning culture" there is no clear definition, some definitions referring to close concepts such as "learning climate" or "learning organization". In general, in all definitions referring to learning culture we encounter several "key themes" (Leonard, 2019; Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2020):

– the learning culture involves learning how to solve tasks, regardless of the level we are referring to (individual, team, organizational, industrial);

– for the inclusion of the learning culture in the organization's strategy, strong leaders are needed who follow a strategic learning model, who dialogue with employees openly, motivating them to accept the learning culture, but also to look for autonomous learning opportunities;

– for the assessment of knowledge and skills acquired and applied at work, the principles of adult learning theory should be used;

– the learning environment, made up of the factors that are the basis of the learning culture, allow employees to link the activity carried out at the workplace to tangible practices and behaviors;

– implementing a multitude of tools, techniques, processes and resources that encourage employees to improve themselves through continuous learning;

– supports the desire of an organization to improve, adapt and remain relevant in contemporary society, a society based on competences.

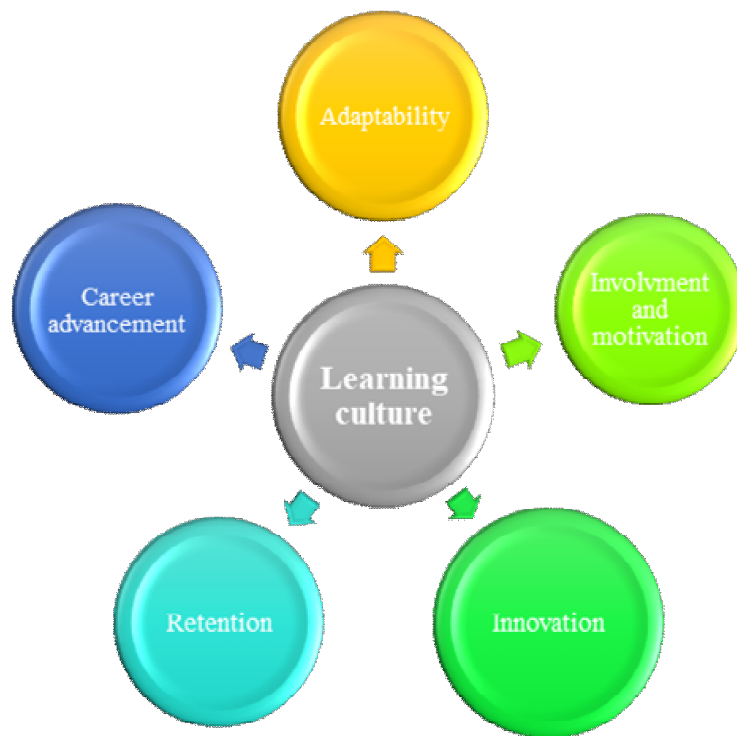In an organization, learning culture is particularly important for the following reasons (www.skillscaravan.com):

Figure nr. 1. The importance of learning culture in the organization
Source: Contribution of the author

– Adaptability. The workplace, like society, is in constant change. The learning culture helps employees to be permanently trained professionally and to adapt to the changes in the area of processes, techniques and technologies used in the organization.

– Employee involvement and motivation. Because of the opportunities that arise from adopting a learning culture, employees are motivated

and stimulated to acquire new skills and knowledge. Thus, employees will be more involved in what they do, and the results obtained as a result of involvement will increase their professional satisfaction.

– Innovation. Continuous learning enables employees to bring new and innovative ideas and perspectives to the workplace.

– Retention. Organizations that adopt a culture of learning show employees that they are concerned about their professional and personal growth and development. This leads to increased employee retention, as employees are more likely to stay with organizations that support their continued development.

– Career advancement. By acquiring new skills, knowledge and expertise, the learning culture offers employees the opportunity for career advancement. Employees who adopt the learning culture are considered valuable to the organization and, in order not to leave the organization, are given the opportunity for promotion or other career-related opportunities.

Although there are many articles and books that discuss learning culture from a theoretical point of view, little research demonstrates the practical impact that learning culture has on organizational performance. However, we believe that for an organization and its employees, a culture of learning is particularly important. We also appreciate that organizational culture plays an important role in the implementation of learning culture and its acceptance by organizational members.

5. Conclusions

Even though there is little research to attest to the impact that learning culture has in practice, we believe that in an organization it is necessary to have a learning culture. This is because through learning, employees can contribute to the achievement of the organization's objectives. Employee professional development is important to organizational success because it helps attract, retain, and motivate talent, fosters a

culture of continuous learning, and improves employee engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction.

To create a culture of learning, an organization must:

– carry out an assessment of the current organizational culture;

– define clear learning objectives, consistent with organizational objectives;

– develop a learning strategy;

– provide employees with access to learning resources;

– encourage and promote continuous learning among employees;

– give recognition to employees involved in the learning culture;

– measures the impact of learning culture on performance.

A strong learning culture also means a strong organizational culture. Attracting employees who prioritize learning and development opportunities means employees who will respect the organization's values and norms, honor the organization's heroes, and behave and speak in line with the organization's ethos. Also, the influence of the human resource on the organizational culture will be a positive one, with effects both on the stability of values and conceptions, as well as on the organization's mission, vision and objectives.

A strong organizational culture together with a strong learning culture means an organization that can constantly adapt and face the dynamic external environment.

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