

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AS A DRIVER OF EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT IN LABOUR OFFICES

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Abstract

Background. The issue of organisational culture and its impact on employees' attitudes and behaviours have aroused the interest of practitioners and theorists of management for a long time. The study of the subject literature also points to the significance of organisational culture for the enhancement of employees' commitment in public organisations.

Research aim. The paper tries to answer the following question: what orientation of organisational culture positively affects organisational commitment of labour office employees and what orientation of this culture negatively influences commitment of labour office employees?

Methodology. The survey research was carried out from the end of 2013 to the beginning of 2014. The sample consisted of 140 employees of 14 labour offices operating in the south of Poland. Descriptive statistics, t-test for equality of means, Pearson's correlation analysis, and hierarchical regression analysis were applied.

Key findings. The obtained results showed that there is a relationship between the orientation of organisational culture and employees' organisational commitment in labour offices. The comparison of the level of employees' commitment in the organisations with the clan culture and with the hierarchy culture showed that employees rated higher their commitment in the clan culture than in the hierarchy culture. Moreover, the hierarchical regression analyses showed that adhocracy orientation positively influences employees' commitment and hierarchical orientation negatively affects employees' organisational commitment.

Keywords: organisational commitment, organisational culture, labour offices.

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation processes ongoing in the Polish public sector, increasing social expectations regarding the quality of labour market services and the unstable situation on the labour market pose new challenges for labour offices and their employees. Labour offices are one of the fundamental labour market institutions and they play a critical role in the promotion of employment, vocational activation, and employability enhancement. However, to achieve these difficult aims, Labour offices need competent and committed employees who identify themselves with the organisation, its norms, and values. It requires paying special attention to the organisational culture of labour offices, which can influence their commitment and help employees face the demanding situation on the labour market simultaneously enhancing their own employability. Today, cultural norms and values of Polish public organisations are changing. The requirement of customer orientation and the values of employees' initiative and entrepreneurship are strongly stressed. Unfortunately, in practice, the process of transformation of Polish public organisation culture meets many difficulties.

The paper tries to answer the following question: what orientation of organisational culture positively affects organisational commitment of labour office employees and what orientation of this culture negatively influences commitment of labour office employees? These goals will be reached by presenting the results of empirical research, which will be discussed in the context of changes in organisational culture and its impact on the behaviours of employees and their employability in the Polish public sector.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Organisational culture: concept and typology

An unflinching interest in the subject of organisational culture has lasted since the end of the 1970s. However, the complexity of the organisational culture concept results in a variety of its conceptualisations and interpretations. This term was introduced by Jaques at the beginning

of the 1950s, who stated that culture is the traditional way of thinking and acting shared by members of an organisation, which the new members must learn and accept (Jaques, 1951, p. 251; Salama, 2011, p. 19). This approach became the basis for later conceptualisations of the organisational culture.

The diversity of organisational culture definitions also stems from a variety of paradigms of culture and management science, which link the phenomenon of culture with an organisation. From the functionalistic perspective, organisational culture can be perceived as an external or internal variable (Kostera, 1996). Organisational culture viewed as an external variable is the result of the impact of external factors on the organisation and it is independent from the organisation. Conversely, organisational culture viewed as an internal variable is the outcome of the organisation's actions, hence it can be properly shaped by the organisation. In cognitive and symbolic approaches, organisational culture is considered as the root metaphor and equated with the organisation (Deshpande & Webster, 1989; Smircich, 1983).

One of the most notable researchers of organisational culture – Schein (2004, p. 17) defines it in compliance with the functional-structuralist paradigm, i.e. as “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group has learned as it solved 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”. However, in the conditions of dynamic changes in Polish public organisations contradictions of values and norms of organisational culture may also lead to improvements and innovations. In turn, the definition proposed by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010, p. 7), presenting organisational culture as a shared set of values, norms, and rules which in its essence constitutes “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” is based visibly on a symbolic-interpretive approach to organisational culture. In this approach organisational social reality is manifested in the specific language and behaviours of employees which are characteristic of many public organisations.

The variety of organisational culture paradigms is reflected in its numerous typologies and models presented in the subject literature. One of the most eminent is the model proposed by Cameron and Quinn (2006). In their model, two dimensions representing opposite orientations

of organisations determine their organisational culture i.e. flexibility (vs. control) and internal orientation (vs. external orientation). These dimensions allow for distinguishing four key types of organisational culture i.e. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, pp. 31–44):

- a) clan culture stressing the value of team work, cohesion and mutual trust as well as participation of employees in decision making processes;
- b) adhocracy culture in which the values of initiative, risk taking, creativity, and ability to adapt to changes are emphasized;
- c) market culture which characterises strong external orientation and pressure on outcomes, growth, and achieving aims;
- d) hierarchy culture emphasising the importance of standardisation, stability, order, and control.

This model has been successfully used in a lot of empirical research in Polish public organisations. It also assumes that different types of organisational culture do not exclude each other, hence the organisation may combine the elements of diverse cultures, which sometimes can even be opposing (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). Homogenous cultures are rather characteristic of small organisations. In big or transforming organisations, such as Polish public organisations, diverse groups of employees often create their own subcultures which results in heterogeneity of the organisational culture (Beyer, 1981).

In the subject literature it is often emphasised that the culture of public organisations differs from private organisations (Frączkiewicz-Wronka, 2009). Some researchers claim that hierarchy culture leads to a greater focus of employees on rules and procedures than on results. Undoubtedly, numerous regulations, characteristic of the public sector, limit employees' autonomy and flexibility. As some researchers indicate, such organisational culture may even lead to the loss of ability to make independent decisions and it stifles employees' initiative (Boyne, 2002).

The relationships between employees' commitment and organisational culture

In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in organisational commitment of employees. A precursor of research on organisational commitment was Becker at the beginning of the 1960s (Becker, 1960). Studies on organisational commitment have been continued by many researchers. Mostly they present organisational commitment as the

employees' attachment to the organisation and their identification with it. The subject of organisational commitment has also aroused great interest of Polish researchers. Juchnowicz (2010, p. 58) defines employees' organisational commitment as their identification with an organisation, willingness to be a member of the organisation, and their readiness to put a lot of effort for the advantage of the organisation. Nowadays, Allen and Meyer's model of organisational commitment has become popular in empirical research. The model includes three dimensions, i.e. (Allen & Meyer, 1990, pp. 2–3):

- a) affective commitment which concerns the employee's emotional attachment to the organisation;
- b) continuance commitment which reflects various costs perceived by an employee related with his/her leaving the organisation;
- c) normative commitment based on the employee's sense of obligation to stay in the organisation, reflecting the employee's loyalty towards the organisation.

Diverse organisational factors influence employees' organisational commitment, e.g. job characteristics, organisational structure, procedural justice, possibility of professional development, management style, rewarding and evaluation systems, etc. (Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Jans, 1989; Meyer & Smith, 2000; Darden, Hampton & Howell, 1989; Cohen, 2007). Simultaneously, these factors are related to the type of organisational culture. However, individual factors also affect organisational commitment, e.g. personality, age, life situation, maturity, level of stress, possibilities of alternative employment, job competences, values, expectations and beliefs of an employee, etc. (Cohen, 2007; Meyer & Smith, 2000; Darden, Hampton & Howell, 1989).

It should be stressed that a high level of organisational commitment is beneficial for both the employees and the organisation, e.g. it positively influences employee performance, their career success, and job satisfaction (Sager & Johnston, 1989, pp. 34–35; Riketta, 2002, pp. 261–263). It is also connected with employability of employees because employers value and look for involved, loyal employees who want to contribute to organisational success. Moreover, what seems to be particularly vital for transforming Polish organisations, research conducted in the public sector in Hong Kong proved that the low level of employees' organisational commitment may be an important barrier for changes in public organisations (Rowlinson, 2001). However,

some specific characteristics of Polish labour offices, such as extended structures, a centralised decision making process, limited autonomy or strong control, which are connected with hierarchical culture, may negatively influence employees' organisational commitment (Rowlinson, 2001; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993). Organisational culture of labour offices influences perception, interpretation, and expectations of employees regarding their work environment, indirectly affecting their motivations, attitudes, and behaviours. The previously conducted analysis showed that the culture of hierarchy dominates in the examined labour offices (Marzec, 2015, pp. 99–101). Therefore, it is reasonable to claim that employees of the examined labour offices are probably stronger orientated to procedures and rules than to opportunities. Numerous previous research studies showed that strict supervision, narrow autonomy, and numerous procedural limitations negatively influence employees' organisational commitment (e.g. Rowlinson, 2001). They are also characteristic of the culture of hierarchy, hence it may be assumed that hierarchy orientation also negatively influences employees' commitment. However, today the culture of public organisations slowly changes from hierarchical and focused on internal processes, resistant to changes and risk taking into a culture focused on the environment, promoting initiative and entrepreneurship. The research concerning employee empowerment suggests that a culture which stresses such values may positively impact employees' commitment (Marzec, 2014). Therefore, the following research hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: Hierarchical orientation of organisational culture negatively influences employees' organisational commitment.

H2: Entrepreneurial orientation of organisational culture positively influences employees' organisational commitment.

RESEARCH METHOD

The survey research was carried out from the end of 2013 to the beginning of 2014. The sample consisted of 140 employees of 14 labour offices operating in the south of Poland. Due to organisational limitations in each organisation, 10 randomly selected employees participated in the survey (i.e. 1 representative of management and 9 executive employees).

Due to the specificity of the kind of activity of the examined organisations most of the respondents were women, i.e. 87.9%. The structure of the sample according to educational attainment of the respondents can be presented as follows: 80% of the participants held Master's degrees, 10% Bachelor's degrees, and 10% of the participants had secondary education. Regarding seniority in the organisation the sample's structure can be presented as follows: 1 to 3 years – 3.6%, 3 to 5 years – 5.7%, 5 to 10 years – 28.6%, above 10 years – 62.1%.

The organisational culture was assessed by Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) because its reliability and validity was verified in the previous research conducted in the Polish public sector (e.g. Leśniewski, 2010). The highest rating acquired by a given type of culture determined the dominant type of organisational culture. It was measured by the mean score of the six examined features of organisational culture (i.e. dominant characteristic of the organisation, leadership style, employees' management style, basic "organisational glue", strategic emphases, and criteria of the organisation's success).

Organisational commitment was measured using Allen and Meyer's (1990) scale including subscales of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment which were scored on a 7-point rating scale (ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 7 – strongly agree). Three key demographic pieces of information about the respondents were used as control variables, i.e. gender (coded: 1 – male, 2 – female), seniority in the organisation, and educational attainment (coded: 1 – Primary education, 2 – High school, 3 – Bachelor's degree or recognised equivalent, 4 – Master's degree, 5 – Doctorate or PhD). This information was obtained with single items. Many previous studies indicated that these individual-level variables are significantly related to the organisational commitment of employees, hence they can also moderate the examined relationships. The data was processed by means of SPSS 20.0. In order to test the constructed hypothesis, descriptive statistics, t-test for equality of means, Pearson's correlation analysis, and hierarchical regression analysis were applied.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

In the examined labour offices two types of dominant culture were found, i.e. the hierarchy culture and the clan culture. Hierarchy culture dominated in 9 of the labour offices and the clan culture dominated in 5 of the Labour offices (Marzec, 2015, pp. 99–101). The features characteristic of adhocracy and market cultures were rated significantly lower. Next, the conducted analysis of organisational commitment revealed that the employees highly rated their commitment. The mean score of overall organisational commitment was 4.49 points on the 7-point scale and the ratings were not very diverse (standard deviation 0.77). The dimension of affective commitment received the highest mean rating of 4.71. The normative commitment was the lowest rated by employees, i.e. mean score was 4.34. The comparison of the level of employees' organisational commitment in the organisations with the clan culture and with the hierarchy culture showed that employees rated higher their commitment in the clan culture than in the hierarchy culture (Table 1).

Table 1. Group statistics of organisational commitment

	Dominant culture	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Organisational commitment	Clan	50	4.72	0.69	0.10
	Hierarchy	90	4.36	0.79	0.08

Source: own developed based on research data.

Next, the conducted t-test for equity of means confirmed that this difference was significant (Table 2).

Subsequently, in order to receive a more complete picture of the relationships between the organisational culture's orientation and its employees' commitment, Pearson's correlation analysis was applied (Table 3). Despite the fact that the adhocracy culture was not dominant, the analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between employees' organisational commitment and the adhocracy orientation of organisational culture in the examined labour offices. Simultaneously, significant negative correlation was observed between organisational commitment and hierarchical orientation of organisational culture.

Table 2. The t-test for equality of means in the examined groups

Organisational commitment	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error differ.	95% Confidence Interval of the differ.	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	0.445	0.506	2.708	138	0.008	0.360	0.133	0.097	0.622

Source: own developed based on research data.

Table 3. Pearson's correlations between organisational commitment and ratings of the organisational culture's orientation

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7	8.
1. Clan	–							
2. Adhocracy	–0.101	–						
3. Market	–0.432**	0.060	–					
4. Hierarchy	–0.607**	–0.499**	–0.253**	–				
5. Affective commitment	0.117	0.382**	0.087	–0.375**	–			
6. Continuance commitment	0.043	0.177*	0.186*	–0.254**	0.301**	–		
7. Normative commitment	0.135	0.336**	–0.014	–0.304**	0.676**	0.366**	–	
8. Organisational commitment (overall)	0.125	0.377**	0.105	–0.391**	0.833**	0.685**	0.866**	–

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Source: own developed based on research data.

However, these relationships should be tested over and above the contribution of control variables, hence they were also examined with the hierarchical regressions (Bozionelos, 2003, p. 56). The control variables including seniority, educational attainment, and gender were entered as one block in the first step into the regression model because they can affect employees' commitment. Seniority and educational attainment made a significant contribution to the total amount of variance of the criterion variable. In the second step scores on adhocracy culture's orientation were entered into the model. The results showed that adhocracy orientation made a significant addition to the total amount of variance accounted for in scores on organisational commitment

(Table 4). The same procedure was used regarding the hierarchical orientation of the organisational culture. The analyses revealed that adhocracy orientation positively affects employees' organisational commitment and hierarchical orientation negatively influences their commitment (Table 4). Simultaneously, these results confirmed the formulated hypothesis.

Table 4. Summary of hierarchical regression models testing the relationship between the organisational commitment and organisational culture orientation

Predictors	Beta/Beta In	Predictors	Beta/Beta In
Step 1		Step 1	
Gender	-0.010	Gender	-0.010
Education	-0.189*	Education	-0.189*
Seniority	0.187*	Seniority	0.187*
Step 2		Step 2	
Adhocracy orientation	0.337**	Hierarchy orientation	-0.380**
T	4.272	T	-4.836
R	0.433	R	0.462
R2	0.188	R2	0.214
ΔR2	0.110	ΔR2	0.136
Adj. R2	0.163	Adj. R2	0.191
	F (4, 135) = 7.788**		F (4, 135) = 9.181**

Dependent Variable: organisational commitment

*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Source: own developed based on research data.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The obtained results showed that regardless of the necessity to change the norms and values of Polish public organisations the hierarchy culture still dominates in most of the examined labour offices. Despite this fact, the employees of labour offices were generally highly committed to their organisations. However, in organisations with the hierarchy culture, employees were characterised by a significantly lower level

of commitment than in organisations with the clan culture. Next, Pearson's correlation and regression analyses showed that there was a significant negative relationship between the hierarchy orientation and organisational commitment as well as there was a positive relationship between the adhocracy orientation and organisational commitment of employees. These facts suggest that differences in the level of organisational commitment in organisations with clan culture and hierarchy culture result from the negative impact of hierarchy orientation on employee commitment, not from positive influence of clan culture orientation. Generally, the carried out analyses confirmed the formulated hypotheses, i.e. the entrepreneurial orientation of organisational culture positively influences employees' commitment (H1) and the hierarchy orientation of organisational culture negatively affects employees' commitment in the labour offices (H2). Simultaneously, it needs to be noticed that significant relationships between employees' commitment and clan orientation as well as employees' commitment and market orientation were not found.

Because significant relationships between seniority as well as educational attainment and organisational commitment of employees were found, the moderating impact of these control variables should be deeper examined in the future research. Moreover, only basic control variables were used in the study, i.e. seniority, gender, and educational attainment because they appeared to be key demographic factors influencing the examined relationships, but the analysed relationships may also be moderated by other personal characteristics (e.g. position). It also needs to be noted that organisational culture has been mostly examined in the context of commercial organisations (Ferreira & Hill, 2008, p. 638). This research is one of the first attempts to find a link between organisational culture and employees' commitment in the transforming Polish public sector. The empirical research in this area contributes to filling of the existing knowledge gap regarding the organisational culture of public organisations. It should be noticed that simultaneously the obtained results also showed that cultural changes in public organisations are complex and long-term processes and that they indirectly confirmed the necessity of further cultural changes in public organisations. They revealed that public organisations striving to enhance organisational commitment of their employees need to abandon the hierarchy culture and should focus on creating an organisational culture which encourages employees'

entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, this research created the basis for further research on the differences between organisational culture of business and public organisations. It should also be noticed that the obtained results are against a relatively popular opinion that in the public sector clan culture positively affects employees' commitment in contrast to employees of the private sector, whose organisational commitment is enhanced by adhocracy culture (e.g. Kim, 2013; Padma & Sumitha Nair, 2009). The results of the presented research undermine this view because no significant relationships between clan orientation and organisational commitment of employees were found, but the positive impact of adhocracy orientation of the organisational culture on employees' commitment was observed in the examined labour offices.

In summary, the concern for employees' commitment needs to be considered in a broader context of changes in the public sector, where human capital is the fundamental driver of the success of public organisations. Moreover, today many Polish public organisations are going through transformation processes, which not only leads to changes in their culture but also in employment, often involving the necessity to make some employees redundant. Organisational culture, such as adhocracy, which emphasises the value of independence, flexibility, creativity, and initiative not only positively influences employees' commitment but also enhances their employability. On the other hand, organisational support in employability enhancement may increase the pace of cultural transformation of public organisations, simultaneously positively influencing employees' commitment in the situation when public organisations do not offer employees security of employment. Today, employees of the labour offices who are aware of the situation on the labour market expect a possibility of employability enhancement provided by their organisations. According to the Social Exchange Theory, in return for such support they will respond with a higher level of organisational commitment. Additionally, employers mostly value employees for their organisational commitment, hence they are characterised by a higher level of employability. Consequently, future research should focus on investigation of the relationships between organisational culture and employability and organisational commitment of employees. However, also other effects of organisational culture, e.g. its impact on performance of public organisations need to be examined.

Nowadays, a culture that stresses the importance of stability, control, predictability, specialisation, and impersonality fits neither the needs of public organisations nor the expectations of employees. In order to encourage employees' commitment, a culture which emphasises the value of flexibility, experimenting, innovativeness, and learning should be created in Polish public organisations. Particularly, the value of learning and employees' employability enhancement must be strongly emphasised. Changes in public organisations influence requirements regarding employees who must continually learn to stay employable and to be able to contribute to organisational success.

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KULTURA ORGANIZACYJNA JAKO CZYNNIK WZMACNIAJĄCY ZAANGAŻOWANIE PRACOWNIKÓW W URZĘDACH PRACY

Abstrakt

Tło badań. Kultura organizacyjna oraz jej wpływ na postawy i zachowania pracowników od dawna są przedmiotem zainteresowania praktyków i badaczy zarządzania. Studia literatury przedmiotu wskazują również na znaczenie kultury organizacyjnej dla wzmacniania zaangażowania pracowników w organizacjach publicznych.

Cel badań. W artykule podjęto próbę odpowiedzi na pytanie: jaka orientacja kultury organizacyjnej wpływa dodatnio na zaangażowaniem organizacyjne pracowników oraz jaka orientacja kultury organizacyjnej oddziałuje negatywnie na zaangażowanie pracowników urzędów pracy?

Metodologia. Badania ankietowe prowadzono w ostatniej dekadzie 2013 roku i na początku roku 2014. Badania objęły 140 pracowników 14 urzędów pracy działających na terenie południowej Polski. W analizie wykorzystano statystyki opisowe, t-test różności średnich, analizę korelacji Pearsona i analizę regresji hierarchicznej.

Kluczowe wnioski. Otrzymane wyniki wykazały, że istnieje związek pomiędzy orientacją kultury organizacyjnej a zaangażowaniem organizacyjnym pracowników w urzędach pracy. Porównanie poziomu zaangażowania pracowników w organizacjach o kulturze klanu i hierarchii ujawniło, że pracownicy wyżej oceniali swoje zaangażowanie w organizacjach o kulturze klanu niż hierarchii. Analizy korelacji Pearsona i regresji hierarchicznej wykazały występowanie pozytywnego związku pomiędzy zaangażowaniem pracowników a orientacją na kulturę adhokracji oraz negatywnego związku pomiędzy zaangażowaniem pracowników a orientacją kultury organizacyjnej na hierarchię.

Słowa kluczowe: zaangażowanie organizacyjne, kultura organizacyjna, urzędy pracy.

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