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Organizational Culture in the Management of Tourist Companies

 Abstract

The aim of the study is the presentation of organizational culture and its importance in the management of an enterprise in the tourism industry. Specialist literature as well as the method of observation and induction and deduction have been used in writing it.

Employees are the basis for the functioning of each enterprise and the achievement of its goals. It is they who shape its image, create the organizational culture, and reputation in the environment. Their competences, knowledge, and skills determine the effectiveness and efficiency of each enterprise. Thanks to their work, products and services that meet social needs and thus create organizational progress are created.

Organizational culture consists of a system of values, norms, principles, and methods of thinking and acting that has been accepted and adopted by a group of people. This phenomenon can be seen in organized social systems such as companies, schools, and others. It is a social phenomenon because it can be discussed and noticed only if it is accepted and practiced by a group of people. The notion of organization culture entered the theory of organization of management in the 1980s and 1990s on a wider scale, and studies on the topic flourished in the 1970s, when they were at the forefront of anthropological research. Organizational culture is an important basis for the effective functioning of each tourist enterprise and influences the effectiveness of its management. The importance of organizational culture is significant because it influences the work results of individuals, efficiency, job satisfaction and involvement, planning strategy,

task execution, and recruitment and selection of employees, as well as their acceptance by the business entity.

Keywords: organizational culture, culture, organizations, management, tourism enterprise

Słowa kluczowe: kultura organizacyjna, kultura, organizacje, zarządzanie, przedsiębiorstwo turystyczne

Introduction

The development of enterprises in the 21st century is aimed in particular at increasing their competitiveness, innovativeness and the level of entrepreneurship within the organization [Schein 2004: 25–36]. The possibility of enterprise development, reacting to changes in the environment, is based on building its organizational culture. The basis for the functioning of each enterprise and achievement of the assumed objectives is its staff/workforce. The interest in organizational culture stems from the progressive globalization of the economy, which creates the need to look for more effective ways to operate businesses in these conditions. According to many authors, it is organizational culture that influences effective management of economic entities.

Tourist companies mainly require the employment of creative workers because some of them live exclusively from seasonal work (during winter or summer). They shape the image of the company, create its organizational culture and influence its reputation in the environment. Their competences, knowledge and skills determine the effectiveness and efficiency of each economic entity [Hofstede 1980].

Thanks to their work, products and services are created that meet social needs and thus are the foundation of organizational progress. In the era of knowledge economy, achieving success requires from contemporary organizations the ability to predict and anticipate future environmental conditions. Nowadays, literature more and more often emphasizes the need for cultural change in an enterprise – from low to high tolerance for uncertainty. Johann Gottfried Herder said that "there is nothing more indefinite than the word culture" [Herder 1962]. It can also be stated that organizational culture serves to eliminate organizational ambiguity of behavior and promotes pro-effective behavior of company employees [Czainska 2013: 94–106]. The issue of organizational culture is very important because it allows to understand the conditions and processes of shaping a specific organizational order and ways of maintaining it in everyday interactions. The concept of organizational culture is also connected with many problems, which various researchers interpret in different ways. Therefore, from the researcher's point of view, it is not only extremely interesting but also very important for tourism companies.

The interest in organizational culture is related to its extensive influence on various areas of organizational life and environment. Organizational culture influences

the work results of individuals, productivity, work satisfaction and commitment, planning strategy and task execution, recruitment and selection of employees and their acceptance by the company [Kilmann et al. 1985: 123]. It also has significance for the scale of resistance to organizational changes and conflicts, socialization and the nature of interaction, innovation and new product development, marketing and sales [Serafin 2015]. Organizational culture is a concept that has many meanings and is understood as the degree of perfection, precision and efficiency achieved in a given specialization. Culture is also defined as the entirety of mankind's material and mental output, which is accumulated and then passed on from generation to generation. Organizational culture is also the whole of the fundamental assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or created, learning to adapt to the environment and integrate internally. Many authors point out that nowadays tourism companies must treat reputation management as a fundamental part of their corporate culture and value system. It must be said that culture is about common views, ideologies, values, beliefs, expectations and norms [Cameron, Quinn 2003: 28–59].

Organizational culture is also an element of the human capital of an organization for at least two reasons. First of all, it is impossible to separate, for example, the values professed privately by the manager from what is included in the values professed in the company (i.e. organizational culture). The second reason is related to the fact that organizational culture is a permanent context in which other elements of human capital, such as, people, knowledge and skills, function. Moreover, organizational culture has a fundamental impact both on the possibility of employing and retaining valuable employees, as well as generating and using knowledge [Wyrzykowska 2008: 162].

The aim of the study is to present the importance of organizational culture in the management of a tourist company. It is also to interest scientists in the issue of organizational culture and to draw attention to its various features and manifestations, as well as the justification of the view on the significant impact of cultural phenomena on the efficiency of business entities. Specialist literature was used in the study and the method of observation and induction-deduction was implemented.

The essence of organizational culture

In the 1950s, the concept of "organizational culture" was born. Elliott Jaques, in his scientific publication *The Changing Culture of a Factory*, interpreted this concept as a conventional and standard way of thinking and acting, which a group should learn and accept in order to find and act well in an organization [Kogut 2015: 82–90]. Michael E. Porter believed that organizational culture is an indication that leads to success, but only if the right choice is made and the right path is taken. In such a situation this culture develops and allows to overcome possible obstacles

[Kogut 2015: 82–90]. Organizational culture has its roots in many scientific disciplines, such as: anthropology, social psychology, and above all organizational sociology. Thus, the culture of an organization is a set of values that help its members to understand what the organization stands for, how it works and what it considers important.

Edgar Schein [2010: 23–24] developed a model of organizational culture, dividing it into three levels (Figure 1). The first of these encompasses artefacts. They are the most noticeable element of organizational culture. These can be, for example, clothes or trademarks, but there are also linguistic (language, myths, and legends), behavioral (ceremonies, celebrations, and relations with clients) and physical (art, and interior design) artefacts. Recognized values and norms are difficult to observe, but they occupy a more permanent place than artifacts. There are declared norms and values (slogans, rules of conduct or codes of ethics) and the norms and values observed (observing rules and recommendations in the company). Basic assumptions are the last level of the organizational culture model, one which is characterized by secrecy and difficulty of interpretation. These are certainly the assumptions and beliefs that are adopted by the participants of the organization.
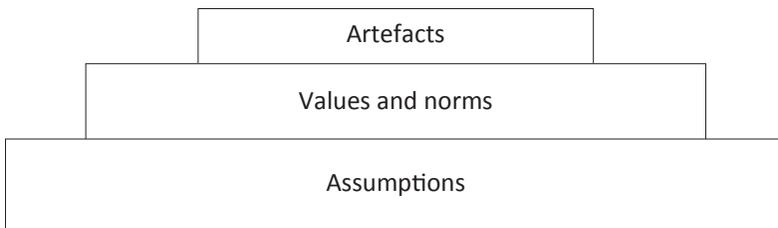

Figure 1. Three levels of organizational culture according to Edgar Schein

Source: own elaboration based on Schein [2010: 23–24].

According to Schein, it can be said that organizational culture is a model of basic assumptions that a given group has discovered, invented or developed when confronted with its internal problems or those of its environment. Organizational culture is a company-specific system of processes which combine values, social and cultural norms and principles approved by the management and employees with their positions. It also shapes organizational behavior and determines the attitudes of the entire business community [Kogut 2015: 82–90].

Studies show that the essence of an organization's culture can be reduced to the following seven basic characteristics [Kopczewski et al. 2012]:

- innovation and risk-taking – the extent to which employees are encouraged to innovate and take risks;
- attention to detail – the extent to which employees are expected to be accurate and pay attention to detail;

- performance orientation – the degree to which management focuses on results or effects rather than on the methods and processes used to achieve those results;
- human-orientation – the extent to which management decisions take into account the effects of the results obtained for members of the organization;
- team orientation – the extent to which the organization's activities involve teams rather than individuals;
- aggressiveness – the degree to which employees show aggressiveness and compete with others rather than settle for their positions;
- stability – the degree to which an organization tries to maintain the existing state of affairs by giving up any development.

Each of these characteristics may be more or less intense. The evaluation of an organization on their basis gives a complex picture of its culture. This picture becomes the basis for the members of the organization to have a common view of its character, its way of acting and behavior expected of its employees. The essence of the organizational culture is also defined as [Kopczewski et al. 2012]:

- a feature that distinguishes an organization from others, because culture is a system of norms, beliefs and values built on tradition and divisions by participants of the organization;
- an important point of reference in the process of formulating objectives and strategies;
- a model for evaluation, selection and interpretation of action programs, and a factor shaping people's behavior and actions in the organization;
- an integrating element, leading to the unification of activities of individual participants of the organization;
- a factor reflecting the organization's relationship with its environment: its participants bring in their own patterns and norms of operation, and the existing cultural patterns modify their existing value systems, influencing the culture of the environment;
- a mechanism to make new members of the organization aware of how to act in a given organization culture.

Organizational culture can fulfill many functions and serve many purposes. Edgar Schein listed two of their groups [Schein 2010: 24]:

- related to external adjustment problems;
- concerning problems related to the internal functioning of the organization.

Generally speaking, the essence of the culture of an organization is its ability to organize the rules of its functioning [Barabasz 2008: 110–111]. Organizational culture is usually a reflection of the vision or mission of its founders. It is they who establish the initial culture, creating a picture of what their organization should be.

Tourist companies and organizational culture

The development of the economy, as well as enterprises in a narrow sense, is measured by the level and size of conducted business activity. There are many enterprises on the market which are referred to as tourism and recreation enterprises or enterprises organizing recreation and sport tourism, as they perform both tourism and recreation functions (e.g. accommodation facility with sports and recreation facilities) [Panasiuk 2013: 50–51]. A tourism enterprise, like any other, is an economic and market entity. It is an organizational unit conducting business activity consisting in the supply of services to tourists against payment.

A tourist company is a unit of the national economy serving the needs of society, created in order to achieve economic effects by producing goods for tourists and providing tourist services [Gołembski 1998: 9]. It is also a deliberately organized team of people, equipped with material and financial resources, established to carry out activities aimed at satisfying the needs of tourists, characterized by a specific internal organization, making independent strategic and tactical decisions, whose activity is to lead to profit and quality product [Kujala, Lillrank 2004: 44]. Many factors influence the formation of organizational culture in the company. These are both internal and external factors [Szymańska 2012: 470]. Internal factors include the personality traits of employees, managerial staff, organizational assumptions or cultural traditions. External factors are divided into:
- economic – economic system, market size;
- social – social organizations, etc.;
- technical – technical progress, innovation.

A tourist company can be defined as an organizational form of economic processes, which is a separate group of people who perform certain activities and make strategic, tactical and decisive decisions on the effectiveness of this activity [Rapacz 2001: 20–21]. We can talk about a tourist company in terms of its organizational, legal, and economic aspects.

By business activity, we divide tourism companies into [Panasiuk 2013: 47–48]:
- tourist transport companies;
- enterprises operating hotel and catering establishments;
- travel agencies, which may act as intermediaries, organizers or self-providers;
- sports and recreation services companies;
- spa companies;
- tourist information and promotion units.

By their area of activity, tourism enterprises can be divided into:
- local;
- regional;
- national;
- international.

Companies differ not only in size, structure or type of business, but also in their organizational culture. The culture constitutes their "personality", reflects the dominant views, defines the sense of identity of employees, provides unwritten and often not fully conscious rules of conduct in the workplace, and strengthens the sustainability of the social system. The culture of the organization is also one of the most important aspects of management of modern enterprises, especially strongly connected with the strategy of the organization and its human resources. Due to the forms of ownership, three entities can be distinguished, conducting business activity in tourism.

They are the following:

1. Tourist companies representing the public sector – state and municipal enterprises.
2. Tourist enterprises representing the private sector – natural persons active in tourism, tourist cooperatives, partnerships.
3. Mixed enterprises – companies with public and private capital participation.

Each economic entity has its own organizational culture. As a result, there are no same organizations as there are no same models of organizational culture [Dubas--Matela 2018]. This is due to the fact that the organizational culture is created by each unit – production, service, and trade. Culture is often coded in human minds, feelings and reactions. The most important thing is that it is the basis for success or failure of an organization. Organizational culture has the following impact on the company and its employees: it unites, unifies, stabilizes, reduces uncertainty and it is a common vision of how to react and meet needs for all employees.

There are several types of organizational culture in company management [Aniszewska 2007: 15]. For example:

- the culture of power – it is based on the leader who makes decisions related to the organizational culture, has a strong influence on the whole organization, and the quality of decisions he or she makes depends on his or her qualifications;
- role culture – cooperation of organizational units is based on given procedures and rules;
- culture of purpose – it is about performing tasks and is oriented towards teamwork;
- individual culture – it is based on the individual, who is the employee, and seeks to meet his or her professional needs.

There may be actions to the detriment of the company – various types of behavior aimed at deliberately or unconsciously weakening the company, including interacting with competitors, disclosing business secrets, destroying property, falsifying financial results, reports, using company equipment for private purposes, working for competitors, improper behavior towards the company's customers and contractors. Other examples include disseminating bad opinions and information

about the company, abusing labor law privileges (taking leave on demand) or violating labor laws (simulating illness). As a result of the organizational culture, basic activities such as planning, organizing, motivating and controlling can be supported. Thus, it can be concluded that such supporting activities are a basic function of the organizational culture.

In order to meet the needs of tourists from different regions, tourism companies must take cultural aspects into account. Their organizational culture must be based on values such as tolerance, hospitality, flexibility, innovation and the ability to combine tradition with modernity.

Organizational culture in management

Organizational culture is an extremely important factor of good functioning in any management system. The very selection of staff and managers, the establishment and observance of the adopted rules, have a great influence on how employees feel in the workplace and to what extent they have a sense of stability and confidence that their behavior and the way they perform their duties are approved and appreciated. You can manage not only the company or people, but finances, services, areas, culture, real estate, time, environment and other activities. Therefore, organizational culture is very important when managing different activities. It is more and more often regarded as a significant success factor because it shapes identity and image, creates the organization's symbolism, influences the formation of relations within the organization, sets the direction of most of its important activities. Properly introduced and maintained organizational culture can have a significant impact on lower staff turnover, greater involvement and success through the implementation of the objectives of the company.

The most important factors shaping the organizational culture in management are considered to be: meeting the needs of employees, flow of information between people, system of applied rules, penalties and rewards, and the evaluation system [Czainska 2013: 118–120]. The obligation to wear a stamp or dress characteristic of the company or institution, or a system of training, are considered less important.

On the basis of the literature on the subject and the author's own observations and experiences, it can be concluded that organizational culture has many functions at business, individual and team levels. The basic functions of culture are [Żbikowski 2008]:

- integration function – it is realized by exposing and emphasizing elements common and valuable from the point of view of the whole organization. This gives employees a sense of identity, unity and satisfies an extremely important human need for belonging. This function can be realized when members of the organization fully accept the norms and values it professes;

- perceptual function – thanks to conscious and accepted systemic norms and values, an individual understands the purposefulness and legitimacy of his actions (he or she knows how to link the action with the goal). Thanks to this function, members of the organization can verify their own actions, referring to the behavior of other employees;
- adaptive function – it consists in providing employees with a sense of security by explaining the phenomena and providing ready-made patterns of behavior, developed methods, so-called good practices, which enable quick, flawless decision making;
- developmental function – educating the individual in the development of interpersonal competences, such as: interpersonal communication, ability to work in a team, broadening the individual's thought horizons, and creating opportunities for self-development and self-fulfillment.

In any management system, the human factor is the most important one, and therefore, when hiring employees, special attention should be paid to creativity and skills, as this is particularly important in the tourism industry when buying and selling a tourism product. There may be an identical product in any tourism company, but the ability to persuade the customer to buy is a basis in the day-to-day operations of a given business entity.

Expert studies of numerous authors confirm the particular importance in the organizational culture of such factors as: cooperation, individualization of new and creative abilities, self-determination, trust and acceptance of diversity. These factors reflect the need of project and implementation teams involved in innovative activities to improve organizational culture [Pachura 2017: 390]. It is also desirable to strive to ensure compliance at the level of personal values and goals with the organization's system of values and goals, to develop a sense of belonging and agility and to strengthen autonomy.

The organizational culture, as already mentioned, is very important for business management. It is irreplaceable in the mobilization of behaviors and attitudes or actions conducive to the achievement of all the objectives set by the organization. It influences primarily the value of the company through the shape, appearance and functioning of the organization and the behavior of the staff. Organizational culture largely supports the implementation of the company's strategy, but also the effectiveness of its functioning, structure and competitiveness on the market. It is sometimes called "an autonomous nervous system of the organization" [Kilmann et al. 1985: 123].

Organizations in the 21st century are looking for more and more effective ways to achieve their goals, to generate innovations that improve their functioning at different levels of activity and thus stimulate development. The development of organizations today is not possible without the initiative of employees at every level. In a dynamically changing environment, the success of tourist entities is a result of

human capital, knowledge, experience and skills of employees [Pierzchawka 2005: 263]. The possibility of managing the organization's culture through possible control of norms and values in order to create the desired attitudes and behaviors remains a debatable issue. It is difficult to disagree with the fact that the norms and values may be difficult to change.

A separate issue is the role of management in the long-term development of this culture. Organizational capital and intellectual capital are often the basis of the organization's values. In the process of forming human resources, an increasing role is played by the organizational culture, which is a set of norms and values, shaping specific thinking and action patterns and organizational behavior of employees [Nogalski 1998: 105]. The image of organizational culture of a given institution or organization is also significantly influenced by the history of its activity. The culture of an organization is also influenced by the culture of the country in which it operates, as well as the culture of its headquarters. Thus, when analyzing the organizational culture of an institution or organization, it is necessary to learn about its history, as well as the evolution of the economic, political and social environment. In the case of Polish tourist enterprises this is of particular importance. The organizational culture was shaped differently before the transformation of the social and economic system, and its different form can be observed in the 21st century. There is a more and more mature market economy in Poland, the conditions of the business environment are different, while the globalization progress and the idea of building a knowledge-based economy determine further changes in this environment.

Summary

Every economic entity has its own organizational culture and more and more employers are recognizing its importance, because it is where they see the source of success. There are no two identical organizations in business and there are no two same models of organizational culture. When analyzing the organizational culture of tourist enterprises and other entities and at the same time answering the question of whether there are similarities in management between them, it should be stated that there are some notable differences. Some tourism companies work in the seasons (summer, winter) and have to organize their work in such a way that the activity is profitable, and this involves skillfully encouraging customers to buy the offered product, which requires an appropriate approach and organizational culture from the service provider. It is worth adding that tourism companies are mainly service companies and not production companies, where the organizational culture is particularly important and desirable.

Modern companies, as specialists claim, cannot imagine their functioning today without an organizational culture. Each organizational culture is shaped through

relations with the environment (country, region, city, and social group) in which it operates, and depends on the values, prevailing worldview and other social, economic, political and religious factors.

The research of numerous authors confirms the particular importance in the organizational culture of such factors as: cooperation, individualization of new and creative abilities, self-determination, trust and acceptance of diversity. These factors reflect the need to engage in innovative activities to improve organizational culture. It is also advisable to strive to ensure compliance at the level of personal values and goals with the organization system, and developing a sense of belonging and influence.

Organizational culture is shaped by people's views, ways of thinking, behavior, and it has a turning point in the thinking and behavior of employees of a given organization. Quite often the culture is closely related to the region in which tourist companies operate (traditions, customs, thinking). It is a non-objective concept that escapes objective definition or observation, but nevertheless plays an important role in shaping the behaviors of individual employees, as a basis for the internal environment of the organization. It creates expectations and motivates the organization's employees to take effective actions.

Organizational culture is an extremely important element of the functioning of tourism companies. Some specialists in this field say that it is a phenomenon that is difficult to study, measure and directly observe. It is definitely the biggest, although not the only element, and it influences the formation of specific cultural patterns in a given organization, such as greetings, acknowledgements, the way of establishing cooperation. It is a specific way of functioning of enterprises, based on the community of values, norms and ideas. A particularly important role is played by the management staff, occupying different levels of power, because it depends on their competence, approach, way of perceiving the strategy and objectives of the organization and the management methods and techniques used, determining whether the created organizational culture will be pro-innovative or rather defensive of the status quo. Organizational culture should be the core element stimulating behaviors conducive to the achievement of its objectives. Culture influences the shape of the company and the behavior of its staff. It supports the implementation of the strategy and the effectiveness of the entity's functioning. It should always be taken into account when managing a tourist enterprise, as it is confirmed by the authors of various publications.

Culture gives direction to actions in the area of people management, and the instruments used in this area allow to shape a specific organizational culture. Organizational culture creates expectations and motivates employees of enterprises to undertake specific actions, which are the basis for the assessment of their attitudes and behaviors. It also allows for the consolidation of all features and values desirable for the company, in order to facilitate the activities of the managerial staff and remove the barriers resulting from stereotypical thinking.

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