ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AS PART OF MANAGEMENT WORK OF THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION

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Abstract: In organisational theory, the concept of organisational culture is seen as one of the views of the organization, enabling to understand its operation. Organisational culture is often attributed responsibility for a variety of organisational ills and occasionally attributes to create positive qualities. It is necessary that the armed forces managers-leaders thoroughly researched and know the organisational culture of the military organization, as a phenomenon, which allows them to understand the behaviour of organizations and people who work there. They can then easily and better define and explain organisational problems and actions to the military units and facilities, which are happen in their organization. Detailed knowledge and awareness of organisational culture should improve the ability of commanders to analyse organisational behaviour in order to manage and lead a military team.

Keywords: organisational culture, the culture of the military organization, management of human resources.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture presents the widest scope and specific background of the activities of people in the organization.

The concept of organizational culture is ‘ubiquitous extensively operating complex of various and multi Faceted inter organizational factors and conditions that substantially influence the efficiency of operation and development of the organization as well. [1]

The culture of organization coordinates all the processes that are going on.

Virtually everything what is happening in the organization and, everything what produces and serves society, acts on its surroundings and the general public is primarily work of people.

First of all, the success of organization in achieving the objectives in the current challenging, economic and social environment depends on people in the organization who know working methods and procedures and often advanced, difficult and expensive technology; on their involvement, the quality of their work and responsibilities, on coordination of groups and teams and team management too.

These aspects are fully valid in terms of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (SAF).

Organizational culture in SAF is reflected in its entire organizational structure which comprises mainly military units and facilities of individual types of forces- it is the land forces, air forces and training and support forces.

Long-term experience suggests that even in SAF, a purposeful shaping of organisational culture is an essential mean of improving relations in the organization in its own internal environment and also relations to the external environment. It significantly contributes to the formation of a positive image and reputation of SAF.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CULTURE OF THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The issue of organizational culture has its theoretical solutions. It should be noted that ‘organizational culture is a phenomenon that is very complex, difficult to define and punishable, but which significantly affects long-term success of the organization.

On one hand, it can be a source of strength of the organization and carries a competitive advantage; on the other hand, it may be holding back the development of the organization or even be the source of its destruction. [2]

Defining organizational culture by various authors helps to understand its nature and content although the interpretation is varied. Of many definitions of organizational culture, we chose the following: ’it is a system of shared values and beliefs of the members of the organization which largely determines how they behave’. [4]

If we were to generalize the definition of the
organizational structure, we can conclude that organizational culture can be understood as the sum of the elements including:

- a set of basic assumptions, values, attitudes and norms of behavior,
- which are shared within the organization,
- which are reflected in thinking, feeling and behavior of the members of the organization and in artifacts (creations) of material (building architecture, material facilities of the organization) and immaterial character (language, stories and myths, heroes, habits, rituals and ceremonies).

All the elements of organisational culture are part of a strictly centralized organization such as SAF. On its basis, SAF organisational culture is formed and the culture of a military organization arising from it.

Within the precise operationalisation of organisational culture concept of the armed forces (culture of the military organization) it is necessary to define the term military organization.

F. Škvrnda perceives military organization ‘as a specific way of association of armed people meeting, in their business, the policy objectives of society- wide character and social relations and activities subject to the use of weapons and military equipment and the implementation of armed violence’. [5]

The specifics of the military organization as a social organization must meet a number of conditions such as:

- target and functions which are institutionally given by the mission of SAF, its social position and a social role in society,
- requirements for the control and use of weapons and military equipment, the mass execution of armed violence, and the actions and behaviour of people in these conditions,
- manner of construction and armed forces replenishment, individuals and groups, particularly their educational level, professional preparedness, cultural maturity, character of education and training of soldiers, preparation of command corps, etc. All this stands for a personal aspect of the military organization.

There are two planes of the sources of SAF organisational culture- formal and informal.

The formal plane is the frame of organisational culture.

These planes are generally complementary but can also be in conflict with each other.

In the military organization, it is embedded in the system of various legal documents from constitution, laws, rules and regulations to the direct orders issued by commanders.

It has a unifying character. The informal plane is essentially more variable and more varied. At its creation, more resources are involved.

In addition to the official documents, it is the original environment of participants, their specific social experience which in conjunction with other factors such as the type of weapon, used technology, history and traditions of the unit itself create a unique and specific organisational culture of armed forces on the threshold of the second tens of 21st century.

The specific sources of organisational culture in SAF include: the influence of transnational organizations (NATO) the impact of international joint operations, the impact of economic and market environment (labour market, the impact of the original environment of the members of armed forces, the impact of the profession and related activities, the impact of military and nonmilitary threats, the impact of the current development of military art, the impact of the leader/ commander, the impact of size and duration of existence of the organization, the impact of technology, etc. [6]

### 3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CULTURE OF THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION

Organizational culture in terms of SAF is part of managerial work of commanders within personnel management. It is an integral part of it. The commanders assume more and more tasks at different levels of governance. It is therefore important to understand the meaning and status of organizational culture in the management and organization, in this case a military formation or an individual military unit.

As indicated, organizational culture is composed of various elements that are needed to be at least briefly defined and identified in application form with real conditions in SAF.

Basic assumptions (potential conviction) are fixed ideas about the functioning of reality that people consider fairly self- evident, true and unquestionable.

They operate completely automatically and unconsciously in humans so it is difficult to identify them. Nevertheless, in terms of SAF this belief stems from the very nature of being a professional soldier who in case of threat of integrity and sovereignty defends the homeland and in case of non- military threats helps people.

Values that reflect what is considered important, what individual or group attaches importance, are part of basic assumptions.
While the individual value system of a person determines what is important to him, organizational values are an expression of what is significant to the organization as a whole.

According to professional soldiers, in particular:
- pride in being a professional soldier,
- responsibility,
- discipline,
- personal growth- possibility of education,
- team work,
- care for people,
- opportunity to get a lifelong job
- high level of education of SAF staff etc.

Values represent the core of organizational culture and are considered to be an important indicator of cultural content and means of creating organizational culture. The key organizational values are usually expressed in mission or ethics code of the organization and are communicated to the employees of the organization. There is not any different in SAF with the Ethics Code of SAF Professional Soldier.

The problem, which we encounter with the experience, is that there is a discrepancy between the declared values and those that are actually shared.

The cause of discrepancy may be not only the fact that people do not identify with the official values of the organization, declared management, but also that the values that people declare are the result of their rationalization or just an aspiration.

Value conviction, in this case the military organization, inevitably creates in people a certain attitude. The term attitude is customary in relation to positive or negative feelings regarding certain person, thing, event or problem.

They are a product of evaluation in which the things are integrated by cognitive, emotional and conative component of psyche.

Cognitive processes bring human knowledge, the importance of experiencing emotions and attitudes are interested in evaluating the relationship to the objects- the object seems to be desirable or undesirable, good or bad. At this relationship, some conative (action) emergency is then established and the use of which in the relevant negotiations depends on situational conditions. [3]

SAF are in terms of their focus and activities highly centralized and formalized.

Nevertheless, as it is in other organizations, group norms are applied; it means norms of behavior adopted in a group, they are unwritten rules, standards of behavior in certain situations that the group as a whole accepts.

They encompass the business activities, communication in a group, etc. Group norms are essential for the organization. They define behavior which is in the organization and it is not acceptable and thereby they regulate everyday behavior of people and provide stability and predictable environment. They never occur in written form- if they were, then they would be principles or procedures.

Language, stories and myths are significant elements of SAF organizational culture as well. The language used in SAF reflects assumptions and values shared in them. It stresses the level of formality or informality of relationships, etc. and it is an important determinant of mutual understanding, coordination and integration within the organization. People in the organization may give equal importance to the terms, allowing them to increase their understanding and emotional well- being, or may not share the meanings which can be a source of misunderstanding and conflicts.

Stories, presented in SAF, especially of the various units and facilities are ’embellished’ stories that occurred in the past. Because of the fact that the members of the organization can easily remember the stories and the stories are emotionally appealing, it is not only an indicator of culture but also an important instrument of their tradition. Similarly, the myths are sort of thinking and interpretation clarifying desirable or undesirable behavior in the organization. They have no rational basis but they rather arise because people need something to believe in.

The difference between the stories and myths is that their content is fictional.

Customs, rituals and ceremonies are a daily occurrence in the life of the military organization. They present settled patterns of behaviour that are maintained and transmitted in SAF. As part of organizational culture, they contribute to the functioning of the organization, create stable and predictable environment and allow people to create their own identity. To general public, military ceremonies are mainly known.

They are carefully prepared special events held on special occasions (military oath, disposal of graduates of military academies, military parades, etc).
Their importance lie in the fact that they remind and reinforce the organizational values, appreciate achievements and celebrate the heroes of the organization.

They are basically celebrations of culture of the organization including emotional impressive speeches and activities. They often convey experiences to people and enhance their motivation and identification with the organization.

Architecture and organization equipment is another essential element of organizational culture. This aspect is important not only outwardly but also inwardly for the identity of the organization. It should be noted that architecture in terms of SAF is very austere and the equipment of the organization and technologies used are implemented mainly by specialization as well as economic potential of the sector.

3.1 Possibility of the commander to influence the culture of the military organization (unit). The commanders of the formations and facilities, as well as lower levels of command, have a considerable opportunity to influence the culture of the military organization. Life of the military unit is prescriptive in the military laws, rules, regulations, instructions, commands of superiors. In spite of this, in the activity of the commander, there is a quite ample scope to influence organizational culture in them.

Based on the experience, the commander may affect the culture of his unit mainly by his own positive example. As a positive example, the subordinates can see him in several areas, such as:
- the area of military behavior meeting preparation, his behavior when dealing with the superiors,
- the area of military skills: knowledge applicable within the basic combat skills, in military tactics, military exercises,
- the area of physical fitness- annual testing of physical performance, morning physical exercises,
- the area of interpersonal relationships- creating a positive working atmosphere where mutual trust, respect and support is applied.

The commander, during his tenure in the military formation, brings his own vision of its functioning, his way of communicating with subordinates and superiors, the way of creating professional and interpersonal relationships.

His subordinates formally respect these values as in the military environment respect for the commander is paramount. If the subordinates adopt the commander’s vision, it means the operation of the unit; his aims and values, then we can say that they respect him and share the culture of the military organization formed by him.

The commander, who in this way creates organizational culture of the military unit, also becomes a symbol, bearer of the image, hence its external image for the subordinates. For the commander, influencing the culture of the military organization is also important in adapting new professional soldiers. The position of the commander is crucial here. If the commander is respected as a leader, he may help the new members to integrate into the unit.

The new members are taught the values of the unit, familiarized with the individual members of the unit and presented the objectives of the unit. In practice, it can be seen that if a new member of the unit is accepted and adopted by the commander, also the other members accept him better. Conversely, if a new member has a problem with the commander, he gets on worse with the other members of the unit too.

When creating the culture of the unit, the way of communication between the commander and members is important as well.

3.2 Possibility of the commander to influence the culture of the military organization through the elements of organizational culture. The elements of organizational culture were defined in a theoretical introduction. The elements of organizational culture, through which the commander influences the culture of his unit, can include: values, attitude, material and immaterial artifacts. The commander, on the basis of values, creates his system of values in the unit.

The values that are carried by the commander and that influence organizational culture of the military unit contain:
- quality and flexibility in carrying out the tasks- for successful existence of the military unit, it is important value influencing the unit name at superiors,
- communication in the unit- which should be open, direct and within the good manners,
- team work support and development- it makes work during carrying out the tasks easier and improves the process of adaptation of new members of the unit, teams,
The experience from practice: the commander of the military unit can e.g. arrange the car pool expansion, request a vehicle and extend the workshop equipment or car pools through order forms respectively reports to the commander of the formation.

This method of material-technical support expansion of the unit tends to increase work output of the unit members, more flexible task solving and makes unit to be more independent. The values of the unit are strengthened and belong to the elements of organizational culture.

Professional soldiers respond well to so called information boards of the unit, where basic information on important tasks are available. They keep an eye on them and in spite of the numerous tasks and responsibilities, the tasks are not forgotten. It also simplifies communication between the commander and the subordinates.

The notice board with their photos and organizational structure of a platoon is a very good example of creating solidarity and belonging to the unit.

The artifacts of immaterial nature in the military environment include not only customs, ceremonies and symbols of the military formation but according to the experience, among the customs kept by the units belong: collective meetings after carrying out a difficult task, joint planning of services, help to the individual members of the unit also out of service hours, fulfilling the tasks beyond their duties etc.

3.3 Organizational subculture in the military unit. In the military environment, there are the specific units in which the organizational subcultures occur.

In this environment, the source of the organizational subculture within the formation can be:

- the age of the members of the unit- younger members form their own organizational subculture that differs on e.g. language or interests of the members....
- education of the members of the unit- university education, secondary education....
- the rank of the members of the unit- officers have their own language, differences in communication, different ways of tasks solving, noncommissioned officers (NCO), warrant officers and crew,
- different functional duties of the members of the unit- e.g. drivers, gunners, operators....
Knowledge of organizational culture of the organization, in which the manager works, should be a fundamental assumption of his successful operating. Just understanding and developing of organizational culture is a prerequisite for successful operating of the organization as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to this issue. Organizational culture has the same meaning for the practice of a manager working in a civilian sector and also for a military manager, who with respect to the particular operating of the military units, has partially limited initiative of his influence over the unit. Despite of this, it is possible to identify the possibilities of his influence which were outlined in this work as motivation for subsequent study of the given issue and defining the other opportunities of the commander to influence the culture of the unit.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**