
***La cultura organizacional en el perfeccionamiento del
proceso de dirección de las instituciones de educación
superior***
***The organizational culture in the improvement of the
management process of higher education institutions***

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Resumen: El siglo xxi está siendo identificado por un vertiginoso desarrollo de las ciencias, lo que requiere de una nueva mirada en la formación de los profesionales, dirigida hacia el desarrollo de la cultura organizacional de las instituciones de Educación Superior. La unificación de criterios a nivel global sobre el desarrollo de las instituciones universitarias hace que el proceso de dirección se perfeccione y requiere que la universidad trabaje para conformar una cultura organizacional sustentada en sólidos valores compartidos. Se presenta la cultura organizacional como tipo particular de la cultura de la sociedad.

Palabras clave: Proceso de dirección; Cultura Organizacional; Educación Superior; Dirección educacional

Abstract: The 21st century is being identified by a vertiginous development of science, which requires a new look at the training of professionals, directed towards the development of the university's organization culture. The unification of criteria at a global level on the development of university institutions makes the direction process perfect and requires the university to work to achieve an organizational culture based on strong shared values, that which allows to achieve the desired results. The organizational culture is presented as a particular type of society's culture.

Keywords: Management process; Organizational Culture; Higher Education; Educational direction

Introduction

The training of competent professionals demanded by society in Cuba requires increasing the effectiveness of Higher Education Institutions (IES). This requires, among other conditions, the development of the organizational culture in these educational institutions, which serves as a favorable context, through an appropriate performance of the directors, to the optimal development of the substantive and support processes that take place in them.

The development of the organizational culture is a phenomenon of social nature that concerns the activity of the human factor within the organizations. It is also transcendent to highlight the role of the directors in the conduction of the role of the people in the processes that concern this development in the IES, if we take into consideration that the more developed the organization's culture (carrier of positive attributes that favor organizational development), the greater the commitment of its members to the values that identify it and, consequently, the more difficult to change.

Cultural change suggests, among other conditions, that: managers must assume positive roles that set the tone of their behavior, create new stories, symbols, and rituals to replace the current ones, select, promote, and support people who adopt new values, redesign socialization processes, and align them with the new values.

Organizational culture has been a widely studied object in the literature on management, especially in the management of business organizations. In one way or another, organizational culture has been conceptualized and elements related to its development in this type of organization have been studied.

The study of organizational culture in educational institutions, especially in universities, has not had the same level of development where significant contributions have been made to identify the cultural elements that prevail in this type of institution, such as: symbols, rites, beliefs, norms, ceremonies, artifacts, values: freedom, equality, democracy, integrity, honesty, growth, justice and tolerance, it is also declared that the organizational culture allows the educational organizations to survive and adapt to the environment that surrounds it and promotes and guarantees the necessary changes for these institutions, in the case of the Cuban higher education institutions, it is proposed in a general way so that these have a

process of continuous improvement in the strengthening of their organizational culture, it is necessary to outline institutional strategies that promote their development.

These strategies, where the possible scenarios of action are described, identify the policies and strategic objectives, must take into consideration, the changes that are produced in the world with the accelerated development of the globalization of society and how the institutions of higher education are inserted in them, in this sense Martinez, (2014), proposes that:

The main idea of the new educational policies is related to the adaptation of university education to the demands and needs of the new society that is shown in the horizon towards which we are heading. There is also the need to reflect on the internal systems of operation of Higher Education, with the aim of adapting them to the coming circumstances. (p. 19)

The Universities must adapt their culture to the changes that are experienced in society, where the managers in these institutions must play a preponderant role. In this sense, Robbins (2001) proposes, "the scholars of the organizational culture, agree in recognizing the existence of a relation of dependency between the development and consolidation of the organizational culture, as "institutionalized way of thinking and acting of an organization" (p. 38).

However, the presence in the specialized literature, particularly that which focuses on the study of organizational culture in educational organizations, of theoretical and methodological proposals that explain and model how to deploy effective management as a function of the development and consolidation of organizational culture is insufficient, especially in higher level organizations dedicated to the training of professionals committed to society.

Considering higher education institutions as organizations that change and develop systematically in search of perfecting their social object, leads us to propose the purpose of this article, which is to systematize the theoretical foundations of the concept of organizational culture, which is basic to the development of the theoretical framework for research on the management process of higher education institutions.

Development

The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have presented man with changes that are materialized in all spheres of life: economic, social, political, cultural, in lifestyles and coexistence, in conceptions of the world, in psychology, in short, in every human sphere. Considering that the human being, in his social character, has developed from interaction, discovering in the coordinated work the possibility of satisfying his needs, guaranteeing his subsistence, he has gradually built a world of organizations, and historically they have had diverse forms: to think about human relations, social activities, daily life in general, is to think about organizations, because they are the fundamental link of maintenance and development of any society.

A starting point in the work in the part that corresponds to the systematization of the concept are the references and general conceptions about culture, which has to do with the fact that organizational culture, is a limited concept of the concept culture.

Let us analyze in the concept culture its components, which will be useful to identify the constituent elements of organizational culture.

Let us start by the meaning of culture that appears in the encyclopedic dictionary color Compact Ocean, which indicates that culture is:

Intellectual or artistic development. Civilization. A set of elements of a material or spiritual nature, organized logically and coherently, which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and all the habits and aptitudes acquired by men as members of society. All the creative productions of man that transform the environment and this in turn affects modifying it. Intellectual or material production created by the popular layers of a society. It includes folklore, myth, legend, fable, songs and popular music, crafts and clothing. (p. 272)

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- The definition of organizational culture as a particular type of society's culture
- The constituent elements (components) of the organizational culture.
- The types of organizational culture.
- The importance of organizational culture for the development of the organization: its role, its function
- Training and development of organizational culture
- The factors that contribute to the development of the organizational culture

In this sense, it is paradigmatic the theoretical-methodological conception that supports Schein, (2009, p. 25), who explains the organizational culture as:

The set of basic assumptions that a group creates, discovers and develops in the process of learning how to deal with external and internal adaptation problems and that work at least well enough to be considered valid and taught to members as a correct way of perceiving, thinking and feeling in relation to those problems.

It recognizes different levels, which it defines as: level of visible artifacts, level of values and level of basic underlying assumptions.

These levels are hierarchical and closely articulated, so that by modifying one of them, changes must progressively occur in the others: when changes in the artifacts appear, the values are modified and, in the longer term, the assumptions can be modified. This process can also be generated in the opposite direction, although, in general, it is the more "superficial" ones that are more dynamic.

For Schein, (2009), it is the less visible components of the company, the beliefs and fundamental values present in the organization, which define the most visible manifestations, such as management practices, public communications or the selection of the products that the company offers.

In fact, beliefs, which are at the highest level of abstraction and which are usually organized in symbolic universes in society, in organizations are the common sense meanings that are taken for granted without further reflection. They are made explicit in the tactical assumptions, feelings, and attitudes that members of the organization hold unconsciously about the nature of the world around them.

For the study of organizational culture it is necessary to measure the essential, but not visible, aspects constituted by the values, beliefs, basic assumptions, which are made concrete in the manifestations in the organizations through procedures, organizational charts, technology, information, rites, behaviors, habits, behaviors, form of oral, gestural, written expression, climate, speed, group cohesion, motivation, as well as: logo, forms of dress, buildings, cleanliness, organization. Some are easier to measure as the instrument to use for this purpose, not being so in those that are related to the socio-psychological aspect at the individual and group level.

Organizations have a purpose, survival objectives; they go through life cycles and face growth problems. They have a personality, a need, a character and are considered as micro-societies that have their own socialization processes, their own norms and their own history. All this is related to culture.

In the national context, Leyva, (2008), elaborates a concept of organizational culture that integrates in it the essential character of culture for the organization, its symbolic character and the possibilities it offers to bring the organizational project closer to reality:

Culture is the essence of the organization, a symbolic system of beliefs, values and behaviors built, learned and shared by the members of the organization that brings coherence and cohesion to both internal activity and interaction with the surrounding environment. (p. 27)

In the definitions presented above, are taken as paradigms of organizational culture: beliefs, values, attitudes, behavior, rituals, rules, regulations, among others, of people in the organization, which suggests that only is limited to the interior of these, but the organizational culture goes beyond the limits of an organization, reaches the environment

and makes the environment part of the organization, is the adaptability of the organization to the environment.

On the other hand:

The organizational culture is a set of paradigms that are formed throughout the life of the organization as a result of the interactions between its members, of these with the structures, strategies, systems, skills, styles and processes and of the organization with its environment, from which a set of references are formed, which will be valid to the extent that they guarantee the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization (...).

These definitions are aimed at strengthening the meaning of the interaction between the members of the organization and the environment, as well as the link between the organizational culture and the rest of the internal processes and their strategic projection.

The work and research epistemology of these authors, due to their scientific value and flexibility in their application, serve to a great extent as foundations and references for the study of organizational culture in our socialist system and its humanist character as a paradigm.

In general, an analysis of the definitions addressed reinforces the idea of identifying the importance of shared values and beliefs and their effect on organizational behavior, although some authors do so from a general vision to understand the behavior of organizations, while others prefer to go deeper into leadership, the roles and power of managers as messengers of organizational culture, although today everyone recognizes the need for external adaptation and internal integration so that a given group learns to deal with its problems and the solution to them, which will be part of the organization's own history and development.

From what has been proposed up to this point, it is assumed a definition of organizational culture, which characterizes Cuban institutions:

As the set of beliefs and values shared by the members of an organization or by subgroups within it, which inspire the basic lines of organizational behavior and have a significant role in the interaction between its members, to be learned, to evolve with new experiences and

the possibility of being changed if the dynamics of its formation and development process is understood, given from within the organization and in its interaction with the environment. (Bauzá et al., 2005, p. 6)

Like social systems, organizations develop their own culture, which inculcates in individuals the models of behavior relevant to living in society. The function of the organization's culture is to guide behavior towards the modes of action that suit the organization and its objectives. Seen in this way, the culture of the organization is not abstract, but real and important for the achievement of objectives, and, more over, from its knowledge, it can be perfected, knowing the elements intrinsic to the behavior of people and the functions they perform and how they perform them.

For the analysis of the concept of organizational culture, it is necessary to specify that it is conditioned by the management activity in the organizations, and that it is not a spontaneous process, it is well defined by what is transmitted by those who manage the organization at each of its structural levels, regardless of the spontaneous processes that occur in the organization and in the environment where it is located and other organizational forms of structures, human, material and financial resources.

When analyzing the behavior of the formation and development of organizational culture in higher education institutions, it can be seen that this phenomenon acquires singularity, due to the understanding of its members of the formative function that these institutions have and their role in the preservation, development and diffusion of culture to society.

This assessment is evident in what Cano and Bauzá (2010) have expressed when the process of formation and development of organizational culture achieves an understanding of the cultural traits that are manifested in an institution, its dynamics can occur as a natural and spontaneous process to the extent that its members are integrated and in turn adapted to the environment; However, it is necessary to analyze this process from the perspective of its management, to make it consistent from the perspective of the organization's functioning and to establish deeper considerations about its strategic development, its permanent factors or its basic logics that ensure the group's permanence through time and space.

In a general sense, educational organizations have been characterized (regardless of the level of education in which they specialize) by acting as scenarios that ensure order and reproduction of the social systems in which they are immersed. Although every type of organization in a society reproduces to a great extent the culture to which it belongs: the socially shared norms, values, and presumptions; education has historically had this activity as its fundamental mission, its social task, the object that justifies its existence.

Higher education organizations, universities, share the mission that is distinctive of educational organizations; they must: "Preserve, develop and promote, through their substantive processes and in close connection with society, the culture of humanity" (Horruitiner, 2006, p. 5). The universities are creating and assuming certain particularities in order to fulfill their mission in the different historical periods, and in the distinct societies in which they are immersed, reflected in the basic activity of education, which constitutes the primary objective of their mission; so that, although the universities have never stopped educating, the forms, procedures -including those of a formal and informal nature- that they generate for it.

But, at the same time, they have suffered modifications: For example, the organizational structures that are formed for this activity, the means that are prioritized for teaching - at present, audiovisuales are prioritized and more recently the so-called information and communication technology ICTs -, the contents to be taught and the forms of organization of these also change - which is reflected in the curricula, the way of conceiving the interactions that are established in the educational process - the student-teacher relationship has been and is currently the object of analysis, suffering in fact modifications and encouraging the appearance of figures with new conceptions, such as the case of the tutor in higher education.

Horruitiner (2006, p. 4), maintains that several elements that have suffered changes in universities, with respect to the traditional forms of structuring and functioning of these, and that typify them at present, stand out.

1. Massification.

2. Loss of exclusivity as institutions generating superior knowledge (the so-called Corporative Universities).

3. Decrease in autonomy: they have had to strengthen their relationships (social, economic, cultural) with society, making their social responsibility more concrete, which have manifested itself in the appearance of instruments that validate their work, that are accountable to society. The most frequent forms of this are the processes of institutional evaluation and accreditation.

4. Comprehensive training: universities are increasingly moving towards the formation of values and skills, of creative professionals, capable of assuming their self-education, independent, and also capable of working in professional teams.

5. It is increasingly supported on new technological (ICT) scenarios. In this way, the universities are introducing sensitive changes, mainly in the manner of thinking of the teachers, in order to fully assume the new technologies.

- These elements illustrate that higher education institutions, although they have maintained the mission with which they emerged as organizations and many of their distinctive characteristics, have suffered and continue and are suffering significant changes, determined by the close relationship they have with society, and the demands that society imposes on them, as an important part of their social mission is precisely to guarantee the training of competent professionals, and competence implies adaptation to the historical and social context in which they operate. It is not only necessary to accept the internal dynamics of the system, but also to recognize that the context in which it develops is an integral part of the organism.

- Taking into consideration the previous assessments, the author of this research assumes the criteria of several authors, for example, Cano and Bauzá (2010, p. 35), stating that in educational institutions, regardless of the level of education (initial, middle, high and university), an organizational process is developed that is characterized by elements of its culture, among them:

They act as scenarios that ensure order and reproduction of the social systems in which they are immersed.

- It is the space of socialization that works with the knowledge that society requires to consolidate itself in time.
- It is a historical construction aimed at solving the problem of cultural transmission to new generations.
- It is both a reproducer and a producer of culture, forming by excellence the members of any society.
- It is its relationship with knowledge: the social recognition of the school (the most widespread meaning for educational organizations) as the most legitimate institution for the transmission of knowledge

These characteristics show that what has been stated for the school as an organization, and in particular for the university as responsible for the higher stage of education, is valid for the other organizations that society has at a given historical-social moment.

Conclusions

The elements that make up the definition of organizational culture as a particular type of society's culture were systematized, namely: the constituent components, the types, the importance for the development of the organization - its role, its function, the training and development and the factors that contribute to the development of organizational culture.

The development of organizational culture is associated with improving the management process of higher education institutions by promoting change and the pursuit of excellence in these institutions.

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