



**BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA**  
***FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS***  
***ADMINISTRATION***

## **SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

### **THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ON HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

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**KEY WORDS:**

National culture, organisational culture, human resources management practices, individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance.

**INTRODUCTION**

The analysis of cultural factors has been increasingly addressed in management literature as contributing to a better understanding of individual and group behaviour within an organization. Organisational culture is described as a complicated set of beliefs, values, behaviours and artefacts. Also very important is the fact that organizational culture can change over time under the influence of external environment, but often, this change may encounter barriers from the internal environment. Thus, we can say that organizational culture is complex, emerging and non-unitary.

If the maintenance of organizational culture is a relatively easy approach to the organizational management, changing it proves to be more difficult. A preferred way of producing change is conflict, seen as a constructive process to stimulate organizational performance. Behaviours and attitudes are difficult to change which means that the organizational culture dimensions are invariant over a long period of time.

Therefore, organizational culture may be unable to progress according to the goals required under the new economic environment, a common situation found in the firms from our country. Managerial practice shows that organizations resist change by force of rules, habits and rigid structures, leading to a strong limitation to new market conditions. What can change this situation is the management culture.

Managing human resources in organisations requires understanding of the influence of both the internal and external environments of organisations. The internal environment is represented by its internal work culture, whereas the external environment is represented by the enterprise or institutional culture as well as the socio-cultural environment. Both of these environmental forces are, in turn, influenced by the physical and the socio-political context.

Culture is defined as common patterns of beliefs, assumptions, values, and norms of behaviour of human groups. In other words, cultural variables that may influence HRM practices can manifest at three different levels.

At the most basic level, *organisational culture* or the internal work culture operating within the organisation is constructed as a pattern of shared managerial beliefs and assumptions that directly influence Human Resources Management practices. These managerial beliefs and assumptions relate to two fundamental organisational elements: the task and the employees.

*Managerial assumptions pertaining to the task* deal with the nature of the task and how it can best be accomplished; those assumptions pertaining to the employees deal with employees' nature and behaviour. Managers implement Human Resources Management practices based on their assumptions about the nature of both the task and the employees. However, these managerial assumptions are shaped by two other levels of cultural forces.

On the other hand, task-driven assumptions are influenced by *the institutional level culture* as shaped by enterprise characteristics including ownership status, industry, market competitiveness, and resource availability. For instance, ownership status has a bearing on assumptions and beliefs regarding the goal of task accomplishment: public organisations emphasise social gain, whereas private organisations emphasise profit and their goal.

Market conditions and the nature of the industry may influence beliefs regarding the way in which tasks are accomplished: in manufacturing industry, the process is more important than the results, whereas in service industry and R&D units, the emphasis is on results rather than the process. Similarly, market competitiveness forces organisations to be pragmatic rather than normative in their task orientation.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, *employee-related assumptions* are influenced by characteristics of the societal-level culture, which is conceived as shared value orientations among people in a given society.

A significant amount of research has been devoted to the identification of salient value dimensions along which cultures differ.<sup>2</sup> Managerial assumptions about what employees are like and how they are socialised to behave depend on managers' perceptions of how the society is characterised in terms of these value dimensions.

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<sup>1</sup> G.R. Hofstede, 1991. *Cultures and organisations: software of the mind*. McGraw-Hill, London.

<sup>2</sup> M.H. Bond, Finding universal dimensions of individual variation in multicultural studies of values. The Rokeach and Chinese value surveys, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 1988; Geert Hofstede, Dimensions of national cultures in fifty countries and three regions. In J. Deregowski, S. Dzuirawiec, & R. Annis (Eds.), *Explications in cross-cultural psychology*. Lisse, The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1983; H.C. Triandis, Review of culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values, *Human Organizations*, 41, 1982; F. Trompenaars, *Riding the waves of culture*, London: Brealey, 1993; S.H. Schwartz, Cultural dimensions of values: Towards an understanding of national differences. In U. Kim, H.C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S.C. Choi & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism: Theoretical and methodological issues*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994; P.B. Smith, S. Dugan, & F. Trompenaars, National culture and the values of employees: A dimensional analysis across 43 nations, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 27 (2), 1996.

The internal work culture refers to shared managerial beliefs and assumptions about employee nature and behaviour, whereas the socio-cultural environment refers to managerial perceptions of shared values among people with respect to how a society is structured and how it functions. In addition, the internal work culture consists of two sets of managerial assumptions, employee-related and task-related, each of which is influenced by different forces (i.e. the perceived socio-cultural and the enterprise environment, respectively).

Literature illustrates the impact of cultural factors on human resource management practices (Ferris et al., 1998, Ogbonna and Whipple, 1999; Brockbank, 1999, Khatri and Budhwar, 2002, Higgins & McAllaster, 2002, Chan et al., 2004; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Stone Johnson Stone-Romero and Hartman, 2006, Dianne L. Stone et. al, 2007, Kristof-Brown, 2007, Stone-Romero & Stone, 2007), which demonstrates the link between national culture, organizational culture and the selection and choice of human resource management practices. Although there are numerous studies in the international literature, both qualitative and quantitative, in Romania these studies are quite rare (C. Mereuță, *Culturi organizaționale în spațiul românesc*, București, Editura Expert, 1998; Năstase Marian, *Cultura organizațională și managerială*, Editura ASE, București, 2004; O. State, *Cultura organizației și managementul*, București, Editura ASE, 2004), and the influence of the cultural dimensions on the management practices and organizational performance especially in an increasingly turbulent economic environment is particularly high. Therefore we considered important and beneficial for Romanian companies to undertake a comparative analysis of cultural variables that may influence the provision and development of human resources in an organization.

The doctoral thesis aims at researching the relationships between organizational culture and human resources management practices based on a sample of hospitality organizations from Mureș County. The research will take into account the national culture and based on the study results recommendations will be outlined for the analyzed organizations.

Research objectives:

- Analyze the values of the organizational culture;
- Outline the aspects regarding employee's satisfaction;
- Research on the socio-professional climate at the workplace;
- Identify the motivational factors within an organization;
- Analyze the human resources recruitment, selection and integration;
- Research the development and training activities;
- Analysis of performance assessment activity;
- Research the payment system and reward forms;

- Outline the social relations within the organization;
- Identify the manager-subordinate relationship regarding communication and cooperation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is described in detail in Chapters 2, 3, 4. In this part, it is highlighted the theoretical contributions of this thesis and the current theoretical background.

**Chapter 2 - Culture of Organization** - captures the meanings of “culture” and the various approaches and perspectives on culture. Further on, the various definitions and content of organizational culture are analyzed. Organizational culture is a complicated set of beliefs, values, behaviours and artefacts. Organizational culture influence formal and informal expectations of individuals who are part of an organization, defines the type of persons who will adapt to the organization and affects how people interact with each other both in the internal and external environment. The rules imposed by the organizational culture establish what is desirable or undesirable, appropriate or unwanted behaviour in an organization, without all these elements the optimal functioning of the organization being seriously affected.

The factors that may influence the organizational culture are: business environment, leadership, management practices and process of socialization, formal and informal aspects, factors to be taken into account in any analysis and especially when change is needed in the organization. As Schein argues,<sup>3</sup> culture operates with an implicit set of beliefs that can not change unless they are brought to the surface and analyzed. Therefore change can come from reviewing the employee’s convictions. The role of management is to identify and manage the factors that will influence culture and motivate employees to re-examine and change their internal values and beliefs. In addition, managers are part of an organization's culture and therefore their own values and beliefs should be reconsidered (Irons, 1993).<sup>4</sup> In general, managers and their activities can only act as catalysts of change and may not be those who dictate change.

Besides all these elements and factors that may change in some way an organizational culture, we can not and must not forget that national cultural peculiarity gives the basic features of any organizational culture. The Romanian management is a “wavy” one,

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<sup>3</sup> E.H. Schein, 1991, *op. cit.*, citat de A.M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 353-367

<sup>4</sup> K. Irons, 1993, *Managing Service Companies: Strategies for Success*, EIU, Wokingham, citat de A.M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 353-367



oscillating between tradition and desire for change. In order not to create conditions of conflict, the management is forced to choose a middle path between the assault of new ideas, entrepreneurship and the desire to retain the rules, the preference for compromise and uncertainty avoidance. Regarding the characteristics of the Romanian organizational culture, there is a pattern, but as Professor Abrudan states, it "should not be declared tawdrily or promoted as an objective, but simply it should be understood and enriched with corrective and experiences gathered from everywhere".<sup>5</sup>

**Chapter 3 - Culture and Human Resource Management** - In this chapter we outline the current theoretical background, studies and research in the field of organizational culture and human resources management. Most empirical studies related to human resources management practices have been conducted using data collected from a single country and industry.<sup>6</sup> Some studies have used data collected from several industries in one country,<sup>7</sup> and some researches have been conducted on data collected from a single industry in several countries.<sup>8</sup>

However, the main concern of these studies was not to compare the systematic differences that may exist between human resource management practices from different countries and industries in which organizations operate. An empirical examination of human resource management practices within an industry and / or countries is very limited in the literature.<sup>9</sup>

Further on, it is presented the strategic human resource management from several authors' perspective, as well as the relationship and meaning of "human resources". Human resources differ from other resources, partly because individuals are gifted with different amounts of ability (including skills, abilities and knowledge), there are differences in personality traits, gender role perception and experience, and partly as a result of motivation and involvement differences. In the same chapter, we continue by explaining the nature of working relations, which are crucial for human resources management. Differences in cultural values reflect different ideas about the nature of relations between employers and employees and therefore lead to different interpretations and experiences of what constitutes the "best

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<sup>5</sup> I. Abrudan, *op. cit.*, p. 33

<sup>6</sup> J.B. Arthur, (1994) Effects of human resource systems on manufacturing performance and turnover. *Academy of Management Journal* 37 (3), 670–687.

<sup>7</sup> M.A. Huselid, (1995) The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. *Academy of Management Journal* 38 (3), 635–672.

<sup>8</sup> J.P. MacDuffie, (1995) Human resource bundles and manufacturing performance: organizational logic and flexible production systems in the World Auto Industry. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 48 (2), 197–221.

<sup>9</sup> J.P. MacDuffie, T.A. Kochan, (1995) Do US firms invest less in human resources? Training in the world auto industry. *Industrial Relations* 34 (2), 147–168.; C. Ichniowski, K. Shaw, (1999) The effects of human resource management systems on economic performance: an international comparison of US and Japanese plants. *Management Science* 45 (5), 704–721.

practice” of human resource management. Therefore, cultural differences are key factors in deciding which HR practices can be used globally and which must be adjusted locally.

In **Chapter 4 - Processes and practices in human resources management**- the human resource management practices are presented as well as the cultural factors that can influence these practices, the first element being the provisional planning of human resource: *the systematic forecasting process of future demand and supply of employees and usage of their skills in meeting the strategic objectives of the organization.*

Job analysis and design follow naturally after human resource planning, which in fact are based on the latter. Job analysis is a systematic procedure of collecting, documenting and analyzing information about content, context and job requirements. The methods of job analysis used are: observation, questionnaire, interview, functional analysis and critical incidents method.

Job design is used to establish or change work tasks in order to reduce or prevent employee dissatisfaction and routine by using repetitive or mechanistic tasks. Through job design, organizations seek to increase productivity by providing non-financial rewards such as achieving greater personal satisfaction.

Human resources recruitment and selection are very important processes on which depends the productivity of an organization, if we recognize human resources as the source of obtaining a competitive advantage.

Recruitment is a process of attracting those people who can contribute to an organization's performance, using various internal and external methods: employee skills inventory, internal announcement on vacancy, advertising, specialized recruitment agency, education institutions, acquaintances network, using recruitment advisers, job offices, labour exchange, direct nominations, former employees, the Internet and “head hunters”.

Selection of human resources involves a number of steps from initial scrutiny of the applicant until the final hiring of the new employee. The selection process involves completing application materials, interview administration, conducting the necessary tests, carrying out an investigation on the candidate’s knowledge and deciding to hire or not to hire. The selection of human resources uses various techniques, such as application forms, CVs, application letters, interview, testing, knowledge evaluation, medical exam, reference letters etc.

Motivation of human resources is a particularly important element in the human resource management architecture.

The theories of motivation can be divided into three broad categories. *Reinforcement theories* emphasize the means through which the process of controlling an individual's behaviour by manipulating its consequences takes place. They focus on the observable rather than what is inside an employee's head. We can mention the positive consolidation, negative reinforcing (avoidance), punishment and extinction. *Content theories* focus primarily on individual needs – the physiological or psychological deficiencies that we feel a compulsion to reduce or eliminate. These theories suggest that the manager's job is to create a work environment that responds positively to individual needs. Among these theories we mention the hierarchy of needs theory, ERG theory, acquired needs theory and the three-factor theory. *Process theories* focus on the thought or cognitive processes that take place within the minds of people and that influence their behaviour, the most common are equity theory and expectancy theory.

Performance evaluation helps both managers and subordinates to maintain organization-task-employee relationship. Performance evaluation is a process that provides an analysis of a person's capabilities and potential, enabling informed decision making for specific purposes. Performance assessment techniques are: appraisal form, comparison system, critical incident technique, expected behaviour scale, observed behaviour scale, the assessment centre, and self-evaluation, peer evaluation, assessment carried out by subordinates, performance evaluation by using management by objectives.

Reward management is the next step in human resources management. Reward refers to all those monetary, non-monetary and psychological incentives that an organization provides to its employees in exchange for the work that the employees carry on. Extrinsic and intrinsic rewards mix supplied by the employer is the *reward system*; the monetary or economic element of the system is called the *payment system*.

Last, but very important, human resources management practice addressed in this thesis is human resources development. Human resources development regards training as a strategy of the organization, and acts as a stimulus in the progress of other human resources management policies oriented towards recruiting, retaining and rewarding employees who are recognized as the competitive difference between organizations. A human resources development policy must be illustrated in structures, systems and processes which can be called *organizational learning climate*. Learning at the workplace is a relatively new concept that opens a broad perspective on learning by allowing a number of influences on human resources development, including ideas related to *learning organizations*.

Communication is part of the organizational culture and has a major impact on organizational performance and is in turn influenced by national cultural characteristics of each country. Samovar & Porter<sup>10</sup> identified eight variables in the communication process whose values are determined in some degree by culture. Each variable that influence our perceptions, in turn, influences the significance that we attribute to behaviour. Managers who want to work effectively in a multicultural context must recognize these variables and be aware of cultural peculiarities of each area in which they work at some point in time. Organizational communication - channels and directions of organizational communication as well as the communication networks that can be used or which are formed in an organization according to organizational structure are detailed at the end of chapter four.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The proposed research topic successfully integrates in the new research directions at international level in the domain of organizational management. Research methodology aimed at measuring and interpreting a set of economic, technical and social aspects present within organizations. National culture influences organizations at individual level, their structure, the internal and external way of behaviour, the type of relations promoted and the work environment. As in our study we used only companies with domestic capital we tried to catch the national cultural dimensions influence, at the organizational level, on the human resource management practices.

In research we used a semi-structured interview and questionnaire-based survey, most of the questions included in the questionnaire were closed because it was found reluctant in expanding open questions and their coding was difficult. Questionnaires were administered during the period of October 2009 - January 2010 and responses were recorded by respondents to ensure anonymity climate and increase the number of questionnaires completed in a relatively short time, 198 questionnaires being collected. The interview was used to determine respondents' perspective on the phenomenon studied and understand the causes and the means by which they came to this perspective, in addition to the questionnaires administered.

In our study we used a disproportionate stratified random sampling. The first layer of the sample is composed of the representative towns of Mureş County and the hotels operating

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<sup>10</sup> L. A.. Samovar, R. E. Porter & L. A. Stefani, 1998, *Communication Between Cultures*, Third Edition, Belmont et al.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, p. 15-48

in these areas: the city of Tîrgu Mureş, Sighişoara, Reghin and Sovata resort. The second layer consists of hotels from these areas, hotels with a large workforce in order to be representative in terms of organizational culture and human resource management practices. The study included 13 hotels: 5 in the city of Tîrgu Mureş, 3 in the town of Reghin, 2 in the town of Sighişoara and 3 from Sovata resort.

In the research on the impact of organizational culture on human resource management practices conducted in hospitality companies from Mureş County we used two types of questionnaires. The questionnaire on organizational culture had 73 items that capture aspects of organizational culture, condensed into 18 questions to give the impression of a questionnaire reduced in size. For 71 items we used 5-point Likert scale and for 2 items free option responses. The socio-demographic variables are nominal: sex, marital status and position in the organization, and ordinal: length of service, education and age.

HR manager questionnaire comprises two sections. The first section comprises aspects of human resource management practices using eight questions with 40 items - for 37 items we used closed questions with dichotomous responses and free option responses, and for 3 items we used 5-point Likert scale.

Section Two describes aspects of organizational culture from the human resource manager perspective, using eight questions with 37 items - for 33 items we used 5-point Likert scale, 1 item with dichotomous response and 3 items with free option responses where the respondent had to choose either one option or more options depending on their preferences and opinions. The socio-demographic variables are ordinal: age, education and length of service, nominal: sex, position, and field of activity, metric: number of employees.

As ordinal data processing method we employed for the central tendency: median, the frequencies and percentages of responses for each item, and from the non-parametric tests, to test the significance of variables, we used chi-square analysis and for the degree of association of two ordinal variables, the Spearman test. For nominal data we employed the modal value (mode), absolute and relative frequency (percentage) of responses for each item, the chi-square analysis, method of comparing frequencies and checking whether the differences between them are accidental or, on the contrary, non-random.

On the basis of these methods there are a series of questions prepared in order to highlight within the organizations the following aspects:

- Analyze the values of the organizational culture;
- Outline the aspects regarding employee's satisfaction;
- Research on the socio-professional climate at the workplace;

- Identify the motivational factors within an organization;
- Analyze the human resources recruitment, selection and integration;
- Research the development and training activities;
- Analysis of performance assessment activity;
- Research the payment system and reward forms;
- Outline the social relations within the organization;
- Identify the manager-subordinate relationship regarding communication and cooperation.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS INTERPRETATION**

The importance of studying organizational culture is determined by its practical valences, this variable being used increasingly in maximizing the performance of an organization. Diagnosing the organizational culture dimensions allows the observation of human behaviour in organizations and highlights the realities of an organization relevant for its operation. Culture can contribute both to the adaptation to the external environment, but also to the need for internal integration through the adherence of all staff to the strategic objectives of the organization, the work group cohesion being vital for the effective functioning of the organization.

The main research of our thesis has focused on studying the connections and influences that may arise between national culture, organizational culture and HR practices. The study (described in detail in Chapter 5 of the thesis) is based on the Hofstede's five cultural dimensions that define both nations and organizations in a given country, relying on the values provided by Hofstede for Romania and studies undertaken by Ioan Mihuț and Dan Lungescu and Interact - Gallup Romania. As the analyzed organizations have only domestic capital, we tried to capture the influence of the national cultural dimensions on human resource management practices and to sketch a cultural profile of the studied firms. The questionnaires used (one addressed to human resource managers and the second to the employee, regardless of their position within the organisation) were adapted based on the questionnaires used by Olimpia State and Adrian Petelean<sup>11</sup> in various researches as well as based on international literature.

Responses were processed with SPSS for Windows 13 - *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* and we focused on the relative frequencies and modal value of the responses

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<sup>11</sup> Olimpia State (2004) *Cultura organizației și managementul*, Editura ASE, București; Adrian Petelean (2003) *Managementul resurselor umane*, curs IFRD, ediția a II-a, Universitatea „Petru Maior”, Tg.-Mureș.

of respondents and the statistical verification by chi-square analysis and the degree of association of two ordinal variables, using Spearman test.

Based on the cultural dimensions, Romania is characterized by the following features:

- **Power Distance** - that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.

Romania has Power Distance (PDI) as the highest Hofstede Dimension, with a ranking of 90 compared to a world average of 56.5. This Power Distance score for Romania indicates a high level of inequality of power and wealth within the society. This condition is not necessarily subverted upon the populace, but rather accepted by the population as a cultural norm.

- **Collectivism** - Communication within the group is strong, the relationship is more important than the task. Emphasis is placed on affiliation to organizations, awaiting help from the community, the lack of initiative, counterproductive vision on private property as well as the primacy of group interests.

Romania has a low Individualism (IDV) rank (30), as do most Latin countries (average 21). The score on this Dimension indicates the society is Collectivist as compared to Individualist. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

- **Masculinity to femininity** – The Romanian culture is not homogeneous, as it comprises a set of very masculine tendencies (pronounced distinction between the behaviour of both sexes) and a set of very feminine tendencies - egalitarianism, negative vision on the wealthy persons, indolence, etc.

Romania ranks rather low on masculinity (42) with the world average at 51 which indicates a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders. In this culture, females are treated more equally to males in all aspects of society. This low Masculinity ranking may also be displayed as a more openly nurturing society. Although the Romanian society is governed by gallantry and courtesy, sometimes exaggerated, oriented towards women, they are still seen as the “weak sex”, helpless, unable to perform work that requires prolonged exercise. Because of perpetuating an image of fragility and helplessness, women tend to appropriate this image, so the women’s public performance is weaker than men’s.

- **Average uncertainty avoidance** - this dimension is characterized by contrary tendencies: on the one hand, elements of strong avoidance (social impact of religion,

the need of greater control over citizens), on the other hand, evidence of acceptance of uncertainty (neglect, carelessness, lack of rigor).

The Geert Hofstede analysis for Romania has a very high Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) of 90, compared to the average European countries' score of 74. High Uncertainty Avoidance indicates the society's low level of tolerance for uncertainty. In an effort to minimize or reduce this level of uncertainty, strict rules, laws, policies, and regulations are adopted and implemented. The ultimate goal of this population is to control everything in order to eliminate or avoid the unexpected. As a result of this high Uncertainty Avoidance characteristic, the society does not readily accept change and is very risk adverse.

- **The average long-term orientation** - a consequence of traditionalism that exists at the deepest levels of culture as well as the ease of change at superficial level.

The first part of the research focused on the analysis of human resource management practices and was based on a questionnaire addressed to human resources managers. The questions of the questionnaire pursue to identify specific aspects of human resource management, which fall within the general objectives of the research: identifying the motivational factors within the organization, analyze the process of recruitment, selection and integration of human resource, research the development and training activities, analysis of appraisal and performance management, and research of the payment system and reward forms.

Based on the survey results, the analysed organizations have an almost nonexistent provisional planning of human resources and they must also consider the fact that staff believes that promotions are not always justified.

We can consider the job design as being carried out rigorously, because the respondents stated that the duties and responsibilities are clearly defined, each employee knows what to do, and their direct boss gives clear instructions.

In recruiting and selecting candidates the organizations used traditional methods. Therefore, in the selection of candidates, in addition to matching the candidates' knowledge, skills and abilities with the job requirements, an ideal process might be trying to combine the individual values of candidates with the organizational culture. Selection based on combining the individual values of the organization improves efficiency because employees who feel that belong to the organization accomplish their tasks, are planning to stay longer in the company and are willing to recommend their organizations to others. This can be achieved by using innovative methods as well as through exploration in schools and universities. In addition to



this selection procedure, hospitality companies can develop social programs to improve the integration of new employees.

Since employees and managers equally focus on working conditions and working environment, management should take this into account and improve protection equipment, working and sanitary materials, only 30.8% of managers consider them good. Being a security and affiliation oriented organization, the preferred rewards should be used too: bonuses, free time or access to spa, health insurance. Because rewards become motivation at the workplace, the methods used should be innovative, in addition to the traditional ones – the salary, which provides security for both the employee and family.

The analyzed organizations tend to have an autocratic management style based on rules and regulations that should not be violated, so the management should try to be more flexible, to enable employees to be involved in decisions making process because they like the change and the individuals' recognition and their successes are particularly important.

Both employees and managers appreciate the same values of an ideal employee - sociable, responsible, helpful and conscientious. Management needs to consider these values when designing jobs and then in the selection and recruitment processes. The fact that *honesty* is not among the qualities valued by both the managers and employees is a negative aspect to be addressed by management through a better upward communication.

However, communication seems to be good both from employees and managers perspective. What should be remediated is the relationship between bosses and subordinates. A "suggestion box" or less formal meetings in which employees are listened to are methods in improving communication which can be used by the studied organizations.

The research on the organizational culture of the studied hospitality companies pursues to analyze the following issues: analysis of the organizational culture values, outline the aspects regarding employee satisfaction, research of the socio-professional climate at the workplace, outline social relations within the organization and identify manager-subordinate relationships regarding communication and cooperation. The study was based on a questionnaire addressed to employees (regardless of their position within the company) and the second section of the questionnaire addressed to human resources managers.

Based on the international literature and the empirical studies we have elaborated eight propositions, which were confirmed or invalidated through the research carried out within 13 hospitality companies from Mureş County, being questioned about 198 employees from these companies and 13 human resources managers.

*The first hypothesis* - short-term orientation and average uncertainty avoidance - which entails respect for tradition, social obligations, but also lack of rigor, neglect, will lead to a less rigorous human resource planning and on a short term. – it is confirmed, and the management should consider the way they carry out promotions as they belong to a careful human resources planning.

*Hypothesis Two* - In a culture oriented towards collective values, with a high power distance and a tendency towards femininity, the ideal candidate will be sociable, helpful, honest, competent and conscientious - it is confirmed almost entirely, except honesty, all other values were assessed by respondents as important at a great extend.

It is interesting to note that the *ability to adapt* is a feature taken into account by both the employees and managers, with a percentage above 50%, which means that change and adaptation to the new conditions is a characteristic that can not be ignored in a changing economic environment.

*Hypothesis Three* - In a culture oriented towards collective values and with a high power distance, the performance assessment will be subjective, personal, less formal, the feedback is provided verbally, the behaviour being more important than the results of the employee – it is confirmed as the results show that the focus is placed on the employee's behaviour who must comply with the rules and regulations imposed by the organization and one of the values considered by managers is the *duty accomplishment*. Also, the feedback of the performance assessment is provided verbally, through a discussion, which shows a lack of declared formality.

*Hypothesis Four* - A culture oriented towards feminine values and relative high uncertainty avoidance make staff value security, affiliation, quality of life and relationships between people, so the motivational methods must be innovative – it is partly confirmed, because there are masculine characteristics, too.

The most important aspects related to work for the employees of the surveyed organizations are: cooperating with peers (96%), good working conditions (94.5%) and obtaining a higher salary (93.9%). These results characterize a feminine culture that is oriented towards security and affiliation.

Managers focus on *work autonomy* and the *interest* it may awaken and less on team-work satisfaction. They also consider competition among employees as a positive aspect of an organization, and from the cherished values, performance, duties accomplishment and responsibilities undertaking are characteristic more to a masculine culture.

The results of the *fifth hypothesis* - People with collective values prefer the benefits and rewards that offer safety, security, social status, recognition within the organization and a better quality of life - show that incentives preferred by the employees are those which focus on the safety of employees and their families. Managers considered be primarily challenging the salary, recognition and working conditions, elements that highlight security and affiliation, values characteristic to a collective organization.

Organizations offering non-financial incentives such as holidays, spa and wellness services are in a small number (38.5%) and only 23.1% of the organizations provide private insurance, from the organization's funds.

*Hypothesis Six* - In an organization with a high power distance and collective mentality, the management style will be an autocratic one to the detriment of personal initiative and trust are not granted to employees – it is only partially confirmed.

When asked *whether their direct boss insists that everything is done according to the established rules*, 68.3% of the respondents felt that he always has this claim, which suggests an autocratic management style. More than 50% of the employees say that new ideas are welcomed, and management trust personnel, and 53.3% believe that the rules of an organization should not be violated, even if an employee thinks it's for the good of the organisation.

Managers say that employees may request a higher salary if they think they deserve, the organizational structure should increase the satisfaction and freedom of action, and employees respect a boss who asks for opinions before taking a decision, but at the same time believe that the rules of an organization should not be violated and the hierarchical levels have to be followed.

*Hypothesis seven* - An organization with a high power distance and relatively high uncertainty avoidance will have a pyramid, bureaucratic structure, which will influence the working procedures and relationships between individuals - they being rigid, formal, and the rules and regulations prevail - it is confirmed.

Since only 17.5% of respondents feel nervous at work constantly and the percentage of those who believe that staff is afraid to express disagreement with the managers do not exceed 50%, we conclude that the atmosphere at work is a pleasant and relaxed one.

53.3% of the employees of an organization believe that rules should not be violated, even if an employee believes that it is for the good of the organisation and their direct boss insists that everything is done according to the rules (68.3%), so we can state that the analysed organizations are rigid and formal rules and standards prevail. Rather a big number of

managers consider that the rules of an organization should not be violated, employees may not have the flexibility to contact different levels, irrespective of formal rules and conflict contribute to the decreased performance of an organization. One of the managers' concerns is non-complaining with the terms and from the considered values, the *duty accomplishment* is placed on the second place.

*Hypothesis Eight* – in an organization that is characterised by a high power-distance, communication within the organization will be unsatisfactory - it is invalidated.

Communication between leaders and subordinates is satisfactory (51.5%), the modal value is 3, otherwise the communication is good, with a modal value of 4, and the highest frequency being recorded by the communication between colleagues - 75.4%. In terms of management, information is communicated regularly (76.9%), even the employees' counselling is practiced (61.5%), but the upward communication was less practiced, respectively the flow of information coming from the employees, only 46.2% of organizations use means of upward communication. That is why, maybe, cooperation and communication between leaders and subordinates recorded the lowest percentage.

If we characterize the organizational culture of the studied hospitality companies, in terms of national cultural dimensions (Trompenaars's classification), the organizations have a more family-type culture, although there are other influences and interference. In this culture the relations between employees are scattered and individuals are considered family members. People's satisfaction comes from the inside, they want more to be respected and loved, both by superiors and colleagues (most of the employees interviewed considered disregard from colleagues and leaders, as well as employees' ignoring as a person and their performance are the factors that lead most to a decreased performance at work). Thinking and training is intuitive, comprehensive, lateral and in successive stages, and resolving conflicts and criticism is done by bridging disagreements and attempt to maintain the authority and face at any price. Authority is held by figures symbolizing the "father" (they are those who guide every move), people with strong character and are close to employees.

The national cultural dimensions of collectivism, high power distance, masculinity to femininity which characterize Romania can be found in all these features of organizational culture. The high uncertainty avoidance is less represented, but trying to settle conflicts, they being regarded more negatively than positively, may express a desire to maintain the present situation and the approach to avoid the unpredictability and uncertainty.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Our research has implications for researchers in the field of hospitality management and hospitality companies' managers. The study results indicate that organizational culture is a significant predictor of organizational performance, as a satisfied employee will be more efficient, and of the methods and techniques used in human resources management.

In practice, the study has several potential contributions relevant to managers in the hospitality field. First, the results can be used by hospitality companies to gather information about its organizational culture and generate a profile of the ideal organizational culture. Once the "real" and "ideal" cultural profiles are specified, they can be compared to see where there are discrepancies and similarities. Then, managers can decide how the profile of the organizational culture should look like and take specific actions to achieve this profile.

The main research of our thesis aimed to study the connections and influences that may arise between national culture, organizational culture and human resources practices.

The secondary research of our thesis focused on finding and analyzing the most significant studies and researches in the field of national culture, organizational culture and human resource management and the influence these dimensions can exert on human resource management practices.

Hofstede<sup>12</sup> believes that national cultural dimension is based more on values and beliefs common to a geographical area and organizational culture is based on work practices learned in the organization. The latter have more explicit connections with a number of specific organizational functions and there are some influences between national and organizational culture, but they are weak.

However, the researchers of the organizational cultural dimensions<sup>13</sup> have tried to demonstrate the extremely complicated influence of national culture on organizational culture. Trompenaars proposed four types of organizational culture based on national culture by interfering four dimensions: equality, hierarchy, person orientation and task orientation.<sup>14</sup> These dimensions generate four types of organizational culture: family, rocket, Eiffel Tower and incubator. Each type of culture corresponds to a particular country and is approaching one of the dimensions above. Spain, for example, is more likely to have family-type organization,

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<sup>12</sup> G. Hofstede, B. Neuijen, D. Ohayv și G. Sanders (1990) Measuring Organizational Cultures: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study across Twenty Cases, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35, 286-316.

<sup>13</sup> B. E. F. Beck, L. F. Moore (1985) *Linking the host culture to organizational variables*, Beverly Hills; D. Meyerson, J. Martin (1987) Cultural change: an integration of three different views, *Journal of Management Studies*, 623-647.

<sup>14</sup> F. Trompenaars, (1993) *Riding the waves of culture: understanding cultural diversity in business*, London: Brealey, pp. 138-163.

while Germany may prefer the Eiffel Tower type. Although the causal links between different cultural levels are quite vague in Trompenaars's interpretation, there is still some empirical support for their existence.

Another possible link between national and organizational culture could be suggested by the founders and leaders influence on the organisational culture. Because they are integrated into a national framework, their influence on organizational culture demonstrates the influence of national cultural dimensions on organizations. Also, individuals working in an organization influence and contribute to organizational culture change through values, beliefs and habits acquired in the family, educational and social environment, all these environments are influenced by the national dimensions of the space in which a person lives and operates. So, we can not divide the two dimensions and treat them separately, because there are complex and delicate links, sometimes very difficult to be explained, between national culture of a country and organizational culture and management practices used by organizations operating in that national framework.

The national culture of a country can influence the structure of human resources management. The organisational structures can be classified based on power centralization and degree of standardization, planning and formalization of roles. These two important elements are actually two cultural dimensions - power distance and uncertainty avoidance. The hierarchical distance gives the degree of decisions centralization which are set in a country and the uncertainty control explains the degree of roles formalization in organizations, namely job descriptions, rules and procedures standardization.

Taking into account these cultural dimensions, Romania fits into the group of countries with a high index of uncertainty avoidance and a high hierarchical distance, leading to a pyramidal bureaucratic organizational model.

The *pyramid, bureaucratic organization* is formalized and centralized; the hierarchical structure is based on control and regulation unit, the decisions being centralized by the head of the organization. Working procedures and relations between individuals are provided in a rigid manner, either through formal rules or laws or by custom and tradition. However, in the Romanian organizations often the relations between individuals are strictly set, but not the working procedures, the authority being represented by the main character - a kind of "father-leader" who holds power. Therefore rules and regulations are not always respected or are most often unclear and confusing.

From the regional cultural dimensions perspective, we can not include Romania in a particular regional group as Romania belongs to the ex-communist countries which, in recent

years, have continuously experienced in this area, trying to take over and implement different management models.

Romania ranks high at hierarchical distance, uncertainty avoidance, has a collectivist culture with individualistic accents and feminine traits with many masculine orientations. The influence of these cultural dimensions on human resource management in Romania is presented as follows.

In a feminine culture the “tough” human resource management practices are not easily accepted and group affiliation and solidarity are important, even in relation to personal welfare. In such an organization it is often accepted and even expected the recruitment of members of the same family, so, in Romania recruitment based on family relationships is very developed, especially in public organizations. In Romania, in recent years there have been considerable changes in terms of national cultural characteristics, being recorded an increasing number of masculine traits, that is why the individual performance is valued, taking the form of material and individual achievements.

A high uncertainty avoidance affects motivation, which are aimed at personal safety through membership and the support of the group they belong to (in a feminine culture) or by acquiring wealth through hard work (in a masculine culture).

In general, countries that record a high hierarchical distance are those that have retained a collective mentality. Both dimensions, although they are different concepts, express a lower or a higher dependence of individuals on people who have power (in the case of the hierarchical distance) and on groups, communities or organizations they belong to (in the case of individualism / collectivism).

Romania records a high hierarchical distance, indicating the need for strict authority from superiors, but our mentality is a collective one with more individualistic accents, which makes us say that Romanians are moderate individualistic, dependent on authority and community. These features are contradictory because the authority is still present within organizations, but many employees want to remove the direct relationship of dependency. This conflict can be resolved by a bureaucratic system which promotes centralization and impersonalized rules.

Regarding the management style that will be attracted by these two cultural dimensions, we can say that Romania is characterized by an autocratic management style acceptable to subordinates, through clan and family support, but also a paternalistic management style with many individual initiatives of employees.

With a high hierarchical distance, high uncertainty avoidance and a mostly collectivist and feminine orientation, Romanian organizations will prefer employees who respect and fulfil orders, hierarchical levels and tasks, even if they disagree with them, and the flow of information and documents is contained in the job description in detail, although most times, it is not effective. The ideal candidate will place group interest before the private one, being sociable, cooperative and helpful.

To avoid ambiguity and uncertainty, organizations rely on rules and regulations, the tasks and jobs being stipulated, but due to a high hierarchical distance, they are not often observed or not taken into account, the employees being disrupted by an “avalanche” of new tasks which they were not aware of. Short-term orientation and high uncertainty avoidance make Romanian organizations respond more slowly to change, that is why the job analysis is done only if it is necessary, using more often job specialization and widening than job enrichment and rotation.

Of all human resource management practices, performance appraisal is the most susceptible to cultural influence, highlighting the desire to involve employees in this process. In this case, also, we can not include Romania in a specific group. There are clear trends among employees to be increasingly involved in decisions making or performance and quality evaluation processes. But there is a lack of commitment and slack mentality, employee “homogeneity” within the group, thereby wishing a reduced visibility of the employee as a person. In Romania, the evaluation results are often used to determine the salary levels and helps in its administration.

In a feminine culture with a high power distance, the staff promotion is not always based on results and performance or competence, but on relations that have been established within the group and respect for authority. In this case, also, there have occurred changes, more and more promotions are made based on performance assessment and competence, especially for those managers who understand that human resource is a competitive advantage.

In terms of context, Romania has a culture based more on a high context communication in which most of the information is contained in the physical context or internalized by the individual, only a small part of information is contained in the explicit part, codified mostly by language, the message is transmitted using more knowledge and common rules. However, it would be more effective to have a “low context” culture (most information is transmitted through an explicit code, which is verbalize in detail) in Romanian organizations to make communication and the flow of information more efficient.



In our opinion, in Romania the employees still prefer benefits that offer certainty and security, both for individuals and families, seen as a community (in addition to the organizational one) that need to be looked after. Also, due to a high hierarchical distance, a subordinate will not accept a reward greater than that offered to his/her boss, being perceived negatively and somewhat threatening.

In our opinion, the Romanian employees generally prefer a group-oriented training in an informal setting to allow experimentation and active practice. Unlike Americans, Romanians have not developed a teamwork spirit, tasks being undertaken individually, both at work and in an educational framework.

If we consider the legislative framework and the influence it can have on human resource management practices, in Romania there are no legal constraints regarding labour practices but there is no consistency and coherence in this direction, so many deviations occur from the legislative framework but also a certain freedom for human resources managers.

The analyzed organizations fall within the national and organizational framework described above, being characterized by a high hierarchical distance, a feminine culture with masculine accents (though there is not a great differentiation of roles based on gender), they have a predominantly collectivist mentality but there are also individualistic orientations among employees and an average uncertainty avoidance. The changes that should be made in the management system of the studied organizations refer to changing the management style from an autocratic style to a participatory-consultative one, increasing thus the confidence in people and empowering them to participate in making decisions process.

Even if the firms are based on strict rules and regulations, they should be set out more clearly and promotions to meet the criteria of performance and competence. Human resource planning should be considered more carefully and, even if found to be important, the results highlight that it is almost inexistent. It should therefore be left to specialists.

As observed in the survey, most employees of the analyzed hospitality companies have only high-school education, higher education being not required by most professions in this field, and cultures have certain specific features:

- The values of these organizations are focused on customer needs and desires;
- Since the hospitality service workers are in direct contact with customers, their behaviour must follow certain rules and regulations;
- The work of hospitality companies must follow certain standards, procedures and rules;

- Because, in general, salaries are relatively small, motivational factors must compensate for this, they can be innovative: working conditions improvement, work highlighting and recognition, care programs, working atmosphere etc.;

- Because there is a difference of perception between front-desk workers and back-desk workers from technical, administrative, commercial, legal departments, they should be organized in such a way to make communication fast and efficient;

- Monitoring employees is done directly by the chiefs and teamwork increases efficiency and facilitates the provision of services;

- In Romania, hospitality companies do not have a history and a tradition linked to their founder or managers, so the most important aspects are the elements which distinguish them from other hotels in the same category. Human resources can make a difference, so we recommend regular training and refresher courses, even though they bring with them certain costs, the interviewed managers considering the employees training an investment.

In addition to structural and organizational changes, the studied hospitality companies should work more in the mentality area, to form a customer culture, as most are oriented towards profits maximizing and attracting customers, but do not realize that a customer-oriented organizational culture, meeting his/her desires and needs becomes a competitive advantage.

We can not form a “perfect” culture, but an increase of flexibility and adaptation to national cultural realities may improve the cultural “existence” of organizations. Organizational culture directly affects all employees, the results not being always quantifiable, but creates a framework that contributes to the improvement of the organizational productivity.

Our study investigated the influence of organizational culture on human resource management practices and the results suggest a number of additional questions that may shape the future research directions.

We selected for this study hospitality companies because, due to the type of activity, they are in direct contact with people and are considered more open to this kind of research. But a limitation of our research is the use of a relatively homogeneous sample. While the homogeneity of the sample provides a better correlation between perceived and preferred culture, it can reduce income variation. A sample that includes several counties would provide a complete picture of the cultural profile of the Romanian hospitality companies.

Finally, while sampling strategy provided a wide range of hotels from many cities in Mureş County, it did not ensure that managers had chosen employees at random and they

could have given questionnaires to more willing employees. Although the data collection procedure guaranteed anonymity, it did not ensure that employees had not answered as to comply with certain expectations from both the operator and the managers who could see the results.

The study should be extended to other types of organizations that can provide a wide range of results. Joint ventures organizations should be considered, in which national cultures specific to “mother” company interfere with the local ones. The study also would gain in representation if we analyze different areas of activity, which can provide similar or different results, because literature has shown the influence of industry on the organizational culture.

Another issue to be solved is the most suitable method chosen in measuring values. Because there were more non-responses to certain items, they must be modified to reduce fear of respondents and in the questionnaire should be placed certain control questions to test the sincerity and objectivity of subjects.

In a future study it should be, also, considered other research methods such as document analysis and observation, as well as focus groups with managers and employees. These methods require a longer period of research and higher costs, so it is advisable to use field operators.

By using document analysis and focus groups we can explore more organizational aspects as well as the cultural values of an organization that can not be captured by using questionnaires or they can be detailed and verified by interviewing employees and managers.

From the cultural values of an organization, which may be included in a future study, we note:

- Mission and image of the organization;
- Importance of the various positions and management positions;
- How people are treated;
- Role of women in leadership and other positions;
- Selection criteria for the management and supervisory positions;
- Work organization and discipline;
- Decision-making processes;
- Flow of information and its accessibility;
- Communication patterns;
- Social contact;
- Conflict approach;
- Identification with organization.

Many of these issues were included in the present research, but can be deepened by further research methods mentioned above.

All activities of an organization take place in a specific cultural framework, therefore the management practices fall within this context. Thus, the introduction of certain practices must consider not only their intrinsic qualities or objectives, but compliance with organizational culture, many of which may be rejected by the employees if not adapted to the existing organizational culture. Therefore organizational culture may require specific criteria to assess the management practices.

Culture also may positively influence the local culture that exists in an organization. By increasing employee accountability and involvement in work processes, the organizational culture can provide a solid foundation for improved services and strategic development of the entire organization.

All these considerations make us deepen our research by widening the sample to the whole country, using various research methods that can capture more aspects of organizational culture and its relationship with management practices existing in an organization.

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**LIST OF PUBLISHED PAPERS BASED ON THE RESEARCH CARRIED OUT  
DURING THE PH.D. STUDENT'S PERIOD**

1. Daniela Ștefănescu, Manuela Rozalia Gabor, **Lia Codrina Conțiu**, *A Comparative study regarding students' entrepreneurial skills*, în volumul Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Seminar on the Quality Management in Higher Education, Tulcea, Romania, 8-9 July, 2010, Technical University of Iasi, UT Press – Cluj-Napoca, ISBN: 978-973-662-566-4, ISBN Volume 1: 978-973-662-567-1, pag. 703-706, ISI Proceedings
2. *Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 3, Gyula Fülöp (coord.), **Lia Codrina Conțiu** – Chapter 6 – *Entrepreneurial Culture*, pag. 176-206, Series: “European Entrepreneurship Education” – EEE – Editor: Faculty of Economics, Technical University of Kosice, Slovakia, ISBN 978-80-553-0224-9
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