

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

Organizational trust is an essential element of organizational behaviour and in a broader context of human resources management. It is an essential component of organizational culture, reflecting values, psychological needs and problems, leadership and decision making processes, level of commitment and employee motivation. The application of individual components of the theoretical concept of organizational trust within the human resources management in the public administration is an appropriate management tool for upgrading various policies - at local and national level as well as to seek solutions and realize conceptual projects in order to enhance the overall efficiency of the public administration.

Key words: Public administration, organizational trust, organizational culture, employee motivation

INTRODUCTION

In ‘Trust Works!’, Kenneth Blanchard and his colleagues brilliantly introduce the concept of trust in the contemporary organizational and interpersonal relations¹. According to them ‘...trust is a delicate thing...nowadays trust is discussed increasingly and even more of its absence...²’. Organizational trust is an essential element of organizational behaviour and in a broader context of human resource management. It is a substantial component of organizational culture, reflecting values, psychological needs and problems, leadership and the decision making processes. And something more – trust itself is a fundamental value in the value system of the organization. It makes set goals understandable and encourages motivation for their implementation. Trust builds a culture of shared values and attitude towards the development and success of an organization. Organizational trust is also a fundamental component in effective groups and teams in an organization, since without it there wouldn’t be any groups, teams and collectives, but just a crowd of people. Furthermore, it is a part of ‘all those aspects of human relations that optimize activity...³’.

STRATEGIC COMPONENTS OF APPLICATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

With the accepted in the beginning of 2014 ‘Public administration development strategy 2014-2020’ efforts were made in recuperation of tempo of administrative changes. The previous strategic document in public administration reform – actualized Strategy for modernization of the public administration – completed its operation in 2006. Then adopted a series of individual

¹ Blanchard, K. H., Olmstead, C., & Lawrence, M. C., (2013). *Trust works!: Four keys to building lasting relationships*. New York: William Morrow. Translated and edited in Bulgarian, published in 2015, Classic and Style Pub.

² Blanchard, K. H., Olmstead, C., & Lawrence, M. C., (2013). *Trust works!: Four keys to building lasting relationships*. New York: William Morrow. Translated and edited in Bulgarian, published in 2015, Classic and Style Pub.

³ Panayotov, D., Organizational behaviour, NBU, S., p. 147

strategic documents – Strategy for human resources development in the public administration 2006-2013, Strategy for civil servants training, actualized in 2006, Programme for better regulation 2010-2013. In 2002 a Concept for improvement of administrative services in the context of the principle ‘one stop shop’ was adopted, which isn’t actualized. The increased expectations of citizens and the business impose the development of a new integrated strategy for development of civil servants in the public administration, including and with regard to the development of human resources management and motivation.

As a fundament stands the issue of better performance by officials. It is in collaboration with the activities for personnel motivation and building good work relations⁴. The issue of trust in the organization cannot be seen outside the context of the good organizational culture for achieving desired results. Therefore employee motivation as a set of instruments for increasing productivity includes foundation of trust and application of acceptable values from all members of an organization⁵.

Human resources policies, which allow measuring and increasing the degree of engagement or of employee motivation, nevertheless remain vaguely expressed, except for what concern the employees whose competencies are of strategic character, rare and attributable to great potential.⁶ We sincerely believe in the words of Covey (2009, 51):

*It is important to focus on what seems easy.... Do those few things in which you are strikingly better than the rest and which you most love.... To love your career is as important as using your talents, which leads me to the category of passion.... Never underestimate passion. It is what fills you with satisfaction.*⁷

According to the analysis of the Science institute of the Ministry of Budget, Public Accounts and Civil Administration of France and the state reform ‘there is a direct link between citizens’ satisfaction and that of civil servants. According to the Canadian scientists Heintzman and Marson (2005), there is a clear ‘value chain’ between consumer satisfaction and citizen trust, as well as between employee satisfaction and consumer satisfaction. The latter link is apropos is so strong in management literature that it is called mirror satisfaction. Consequently employee motivation researches have increased (‘European Employees index’, ‘Workforce Commitment index’). It turns out employee satisfaction at work, drives them to surpass themselves, to make an effort, to make the additional step in order to better respond to the users’ needs”. In this way the quality of processes related to human resources management contribute to users’ satisfaction. According to us, the role of organizational trust in these processes is enormous⁸.

CONCEPTUAL FUNDAMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST

In order to understand the nature of organizational trust, a definition of ‘trust’ has to be given. In broad terms it is also treated as faith in the integrity, qualities, skills, competency, loyalty, openness and consistency in the actions of the other. It also includes the willingness to risk trusting other people, often complete strangers. The emergence of trust is made possible on the basis of knowledge (information) about the possibilities of others⁹. Viewed on a personal level, trust is a specific mental construction which in order to be felt and further built, it is required no only and not as much experience as the quality of spirit, moral potential, will and

⁴ Bloisi, W., (2007). *An introduction of Human Resource management*, McGraw-Hill,

⁵ Perry, J., Honddeghem, A., (2008). *Motivation in Public Management - The Call of Public Service*, Oxford University Press

⁶ Public strategic management, Twinning project, Council of Ministers, 2009, page 98

⁷ Covey, S. R., & Colosimo, J., (2009). *Great work, great career.*, page 51, Translated in Bulgarian and published in 2011, Kibea Pub.

⁸ Bernardin, J., (2007). *Human Resource Management*, McGraw Hill, Boston

⁹ Bernardin, J., (2007). *Human Resource Management*, McGraw Hill, Boston

faith i.e. wisdom of personality for it to blossom even in the most devastated human souls. In this regard reflection on trust is particularly important in the context of functionality of the various social systems – business organizations and the different government structures (institutions).

Trust is such a fundamental concept that everyone states he/she understands, but it is difficult to be explained or precisely define. An evidence of this is the long list in the literature of definitions about trust. The dictionaries define it as guaranteed security in the character, ability, power or truth about someone or something, to have faith in something a future or unpredictable.

In social aspect trust is understood as the awaited behaviour from a particular individual or group of individuals, which is pro-social and altruistic, useful and favourable for him/her. As noted by Förster and Kreuz (2011, 79), ‘By complex linking of life worldview and created by common interests communities, more and more values are born, productivity occurs, rises the level of knowledge and fortifies relations’¹⁰.

From a personal aspect trust is a general expectation that one can count on the words, promises, verbal or written statement of another person. To give a detailed and comprehensive definition of ‘trust’, of which to summarize all or most of its ideas in the literature, it is necessary to indicate that confidence:

- Means counting on and/or confidence in any event, process or person;
- Reflects the expectation of a positive result
- Assumes support in the name of common values;
- Still contains some level of uncertainty in the final result.

Therefore, trust as is defined above, could mean rather different things, according to the context in which it is used¹¹.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST FOR THE ORGANIZATION

Trust is in the foundation of human relations in the organization. Through it entirely different parts ‘stick up’; it is like a catalyst, facilitating interaction. Trust has no substitute in the organizational behaviour of individuals. Through it bridges for personal acceptance between staff members are built. Trust plays a key role in sharing values and in achieving dedication to the organization.

We assume that organizational trust exists in teams, where organisational culture is at a high level. Organisational culture is based on the values shared by the members of the organization and the managers’ leadership style. This combination suggests or rejects the existence of organisational trust. Hardly any trust thrives in organisations that have no clearly communicated and shared ethical framework and organizational values. The leadership style on the other hand encourages or derogates the values in teams. In this context, organizational trust has a manifestation in organisations in which the organizational culture is in synergy with established ethical standards. Besides values and ethics, organizational trust has a number of pragmatic dimensions, determined by the successes or failures in organizations.

The importance of organizational trust is mainly due to the following:

- Organizations are hampered to provide stability of work, regular salary increase and higher pensions for their employees. As a result, loyalty and dedication at work of employees are undermined and require improvement by reformulating the objectives so that everyone believes in them by building up relationships of trust based on honesty, integrity and genuine concern for others;

¹⁰ Förster, A., and Kreuz, P., (2011). *Only the dead don't change*, page 79

¹¹ Interesting ideas could be found in Torrington, D., Hall, L., (1991). *Personnel Management*, London, Molander, G., (1987). *Personel Management*, Chartwell-Bratt, Byars, L., Rue, L., (1987). *Human Resource Management*, Irwin

- Employees are more educated, more knowledgeable and more independent, thus more distressful and more critical;
- Ethnic composition of the workforce has become more diverse and the number of women in positions, previously occupied by men has increased;
- Increasing role of networks/clusters of small and medium enterprises, where it appears that confidence plays a particularly important role in co-existence. These are voluntary formations that build up relationships not always on clear mechanisms and written rules. In the public sector this is expressed by the interdependency of processes and resources to achieve a unified state politics – one of the principles in the activity of the administration. Coherence of policies enables citizens to understand them better, which is based on trust in institutions. Conversely, the lack of trust and the tension between government institutions weakens statehood and makes incomprehensible and unacceptable the actions of public administration.

That noted, shows that trust cannot be accepted as granted by an organization, as we look at the organization in the broader concept of commitment within a community of interdependent organizations, as it should be built and developed over time, i.e. to be managed wisely.

Good governance imposes careful and precise approach, particularly manifested in the study of the relation motivation-employee-manager, which includes the component ‘trust’¹². This precise approach, in our opinion is in regard to public administration to develop and strengthen their work at a number of ‘European’ practices and achievements¹³. Such development is preceded by hard work, a new approach to employee motivation, individuality of working with them¹⁴.

Tom Peters defines trust as the first of the six key ideas that transform business nowadays, along with total quality management, new discoveries, knowledge management programmes, virtual organizations and project management. A number of studies concluded that the optimal organization cannot exist without trust¹⁵.

Organizations with low trust are characterized by the following components:

- The atmosphere there is quiet; low energy and commitment;
- If someone has their own opinion or complain he/she gets punished or fired;
- Any change is met with suspicion;
- The formal leader is at the top; status is very important; decisions are made on top and are descended down the entire chain through commands and orders;
- People feel like irremovable in their work.

Individual researchers found several variables clarified theoretically and empirically confirmed that correlate with the dynamics of trust in the organization¹⁶. These are the variables:

- Participation in decision making;
- Degree of autonomy/delegation;
- Feedback;
- Encouraging behaviour of superiors to employees;

¹² Perry, J., Honddeghem, A., (2008). *Motivation in Public Management - The Call of Public Service*, pages 56-66, Oxford University Press

¹³ Mladenov, M., *The existential dilemmas of civil servants*, website of the Professional union of civil servants, 29.01.2016, <http://pods-bg.org/?p=2143#comment-42517>

¹⁴ Vasilev, V., *Contemporary motivational techniques and their application in the public administration*, page 2 and further

¹⁵ Vachkova, E., (2007). *Human resources management – Bulgarian and worldwide experience*, RAABE; Vachkova, E., & collective, (2005). *Effective human resources management – a practical guidebook*, RAABE

¹⁶ Menken, I., (2009). *Organizational Behavior and Leadership Management Essentials*

- Communications.

New realities require extending those variables with – innovation as an opportunity for organizational development, based on new technologies, solutions, scientific discoveries, and this is a high level of trust and support to be able to go the path from idea to realization. Changing any of these variables in one way or another reflects on the trust in the organization. We support the idea of Förster and Kreuz (2011) and that:

...the less the control over own activities and the less the space for decision-making, the greater the stress and the more significant the consequences on health there are. Opposite conclusion states: Freedom is not stressful! One who unfolds their true potential is not feeling worse, but better!¹⁷ (2011, 145 and further)

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING TRUST

Trust is one thing you need to win and build, after which develop, which undoubtedly requires time. A possible approach in the realization is the implementation of ‘stepper rhythm’ of approbation, which may include for example the following steps:

Step One – Establishment of an Appropriate Organizational Culture.

Such awareness exists, that the establishment and maintenance of trust in the organization starts with creating its culture, based on certain values in which people actually believe. Mutual trust can be developed only when shared values, honesty and integrity are the foundation of trust between individuals. Regular statements of the organization’s mission, objectives and deadlines are symbols of organizational culture. But this culture is essentially revealed only when words are put to into action. And as noted above, it is a question of leadership.

Step Two – Leadership

Leadership is used in the context of mutual trust, on the basis of shared values and honesty between people. If they are absent, leaders must convince their employees or their co-workers to be followed by imposition of external control, restrictions, detailed instructions and supervision of the work performed. If an organizational culture is established based on shared values, employees will be more engaged and committed to the organization, because they will believe the set goals are achievable. In this case management will be done not through control, but through effective leadership – with navigation, delegation, support and guidance.

Step Three – Finding a ‘Catalyst’ of Trust

As Gostick and Elton (2012, 67), note in their magnificent book ‘The carrot principle’: *The acknowledgment has an effect as it satisfies a universal human necessity. All strive to gain weight in the eyes of those we work with. Communication combined with acknowledgement of strategically important forms of behaviour put out of the window notions and values to move them in the minds and hearts of your subordinates, and it is just where you want to be..... at the moment when you publicly acknowledge someone for his/her contribution, the ‘mercury pole’ of trust hits the ceiling.....¹⁸*

It is necessary the organization to approbate and realize appropriate programmes for acknowledgement/recognition of contributions of employees and to ‘cultivate’ them in his/hers human resource management practices. The recognition builds confidence that achievements are visible and supported, that teams achieve their success together with individual contribution of each of its members.

¹⁷ Förster, A., and Kreuz, P., (2011). *Only the dead don’t change*, page 145 and further

¹⁸ Gostick, A., Elton, C., (2012). *The carrot principle*, page 67, Classic and style,

Fourth Step – Establishment of Emotional Bonds in the Organization

To develop spontaneous trust in the organization, members must feel safe and have open communication between management and employees. Moreover, the development of such trust between people in the organization is vital to have a full understanding (vertical and horizontal) of what to expect from each other and also their duties and responsibilities for its establishment. Factors that are the basis for the establishment, development and maintenance of interpersonal trust are:

- Sincerity, defined as honesty and loyalty;
- Competence, defined as expertise and interpersonal skills and abilities required for a working position;
- Perseverance, defined as reliability, predictability and excellent solutions in the management of certain situations;
- Loyalty, defined as benevolent motives; desire, desire to protect and maintain relations with someone;
- Openness, as an internal attitude and willingness to share ideas and information freely.

Dale Carnegie on the other hand, defines trust as ‘fourth factor’ in the effective management, placing it next to cooperation, collaboration and collegiality¹⁹.

Maintenance or management of trust requires in turn:

- Existence of an incentives system that encourages high levels of trust by rewarding behaviour related to trust and punishing distrust;
- Organizational structure, supporting an environment of trust. For example, if the formal structure of the organization does not allow two-way communication, or other reason hindering trust, then the organization will not be able to significantly increase the current level of trust;
- Career development programmes and systems for assessing work performance should be complete and meaningful. Provided that senior management is concerned about personal growth and employee development, then this leads to presence of effective feedback and in turn increases trust.

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL OF TRUST IN THE ORGANIZATION

Trust is a prerequisite for people to want to cooperate and help each other, to build up their efforts. The more timely actions are to create an atmosphere of trust, the better. The more intense people communicate with each other and have the opportunity to tell about themselves and hear the opinion of others, the more likely it is for trust to occur between them. These postulates are imposed on the nature of the ‘social self’ incurred by researchers of social psychology as well as by leading scientists in the field of organizational behaviour²⁰.

The head of an organization, group or a team can help a lot in creating a sustainable trust atmosphere. It is necessary that he/she organizes successive workshops devoted to mutual understanding in which participants get acquainted with their roles, share their views and seek an answer to the question ‘Who am I and with what am I useful to the organization.’

In this case the fun element can be successfully implemented. A game is something very interesting and could provoke participants in an informal way to give and seek information for each other openly and voluntarily. Another way to stimulate the processes of self-disclosure and

¹⁹ Carnegie, D., & Associates, (2012). *How to build meaningful relationships*, page 60-61, Colibri

²⁰ Schermerhorn, J. R. Jr., Osborn, R. N., Uhl-Bien, M., (2010). *Organizational Behavior*, 11-th edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

feedback are self-evaluation questionnaires and opinion of colleagues, entertaining and enlightening tests and educational concepts²¹.

It is necessary to follow the following basic steps:

- Provocation towards processes of self-disclosure and feedback between the people in the team. This could be done with a few successive workshops;
- An explanation about the purpose of the meeting – creating trust, what exactly is trust and how important its role is in the work process;
- Help people get rid of their fears and tension regarding the conduction of these workshops. Nobody expects them to tell personal stories, discuss family life, achievements and failures. It will suffice to highlight their qualities, abilities, typical actions that would contribute to their team's results in front of their colleagues, aiming for acquaintance with each other;
- Defining the objectives of the organization – if they are boring, too easy or elementary to achieve, there is no sense of employee provocation with the aim of self-disclosure, feedback, mutual trust.

CHALLENGES

To improve performance due to human resource management is undoubtedly a challenging task for the public administration²². The implementation and logic of results are incorporated across the governments' programmes for public administration development. The results of human resource management are measured by contribution to strategic reforms and by optimization of expenses for processes of human resources management²³.

The modernization of the administration is a priority for each EU Member State. The common between them is that government institutions in any modern society have one and the same task: they work for the people. They work for every particular individual with one final goal: respect, protection and guaranteeing the rights of each individual citizen, his welfare and social security.

The implementation of individual components of theoretical concept of organizational trust in the framework of human resource management in the public administration, according to us, is a suitable management tool on which to build up various policies – on local and national level, to seek solutions, to implement conceptual projects, to bring dynamics in the organizational culture²⁴... and last but not least – 'to be born, to stand up, to walk and to run' a young and with an innovative mind-set administrative machine, in which the establishment and development of organizational trust is a priority.

²¹ Exceptionally popular instrument in Japan and USA is the **concept 'Kokology'**, Kokology is an entertaining, Japanese game with tests from the popular psychology which reveals your true Self. It, as one of the areas of psychology is developed by two Japanese – Isamu Saito and Tadahiko Nagao. Kokology is the study of kokoro ('mind' or 'spirit' in Japanese). Based on sound psychological principles, it requires you provide answers to seemingly innocent questions then shows you what they reveal about you. Kokology offers a unique approach towards self-knowledge, and when played with more people, it might turn out a fun way for insight into your essence, unknown to others. The other so popular concept is **that of the so-called emotional intelligence**; see more at Merlevede, P. E., Bridoux, D., Vandamme, R., (2005). *7 steps to emotional intelligence*, Classic and style; Wood, R., Toley, H., (2007). *Professional tests for emotional intelligence*, Locust, C.

²² Holzer, M., & Schwester, Richard W., (2011). *Public Administration: An Introduction*, M.E.Sharpe, Inc.

²³ Holzer, M., & Schwester, Richard W., (2011). *Public Administration: An Introduction*, M.E.Sharpe, Inc., p. 99

²⁴ More about the organizational culture - Schein, E., (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Third Edition; Schein, E. H., (1990). *Organizational culture*, (Vol. 45, No. 2, p. 109). American Psychological Association; Schein, E. H., (1990). *Organizational culture*, Vol 45(2), pages 109-119, American Psychologist; Schein, E. H., (2006). *Organizational culture and leadership* (Vol. 356), John Wiley & Sons; Sotirova, D., & Davidkov, Ts., (2004). *The administrative culture*

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