

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, BELIEFS AND SYMBOLS

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Abstract

The present analysis aims to identify the features that the study on management administrative organizations develops in a context of the knowledge-based society. From this point of view, the present article aims to identify the research variables at this level, variables that - in our opinion - can be found at the confluence of the concept of management, in general, with the term of management of administrative organizations (with specific models enabled with the study variables: decision making process and decision, typology and construction of the organization, management of the financial, human, information resources, etc.) and with the type of organizational culture (which enables new variables such as: beliefs, values, symbols, rituals, founders, etc.).

Keywords: management of organizations, administrative organization, organizational culture, beliefs, values

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Aknowledgement: This paper is supported by the Sector Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/159/1.5/133675.

1. Introduction: The concept of management of organizations at the administrative level

The management of the organizations in the administrative area is a specific domain of the organizational management based on the dimensions of public management with its own principles, concepts, theories, which facilitate the knowledge process, understanding and appropriate use of the approaches, of the methods, of the tools and of the techniques.

In a general context of continuous social changes, of transition, of the implementation of the market economy, or of resizing the public-administrative sector, it was put and it is put the question about the content of the management of administrative organizations, as theoretical support, but also with extensions to the practice and applied scientific research in the administrative-type organizations.

From this point of view, it is necessary to analyze the concept of the management of organizations at public administration level, the dimensions of the concept becoming analytical lines for their knowledge.

The term management comes from the Latin term *manus* and refers to the coaching, so that the manager becomes the actor that plays this role of coaching. From the Latin term, we have in French “manège” from where it had been taken in English and transformed in *manager* and *management*.

The management of administrative organizations represents “all processes and management relations, well determined, between the components of the administrative system, whereby, under State authority, have to comply with laws and/or plans, organizes, coordinates, manages and controls the activities involved in implementing services that satisfy the public interest”¹. Another definition says that “the management of the organization lies in the study of processes and of the management relationships, with the view to discover the regularities and principles that govern the design of the new systems, methods, techniques and of the management, ensuring obtaining, maintaining and increasing competitiveness”². William Newman defines management as “targeting, leadership and control of the efforts of a group of individuals in order to achieve a common goal. A good leader is the one who makes the group achieve its goals with a minimal expenditure of resources”³. Macknesie says that management is “the process in which the manager

¹ Androniceanu, A., *Management public*, Ed. Economică, București, 1999.

² Nicolescu, O, Verboncu, I., *Management și eficiență*, Ed. NORA, București, 1994.

³ Alexandru, I., *Structuri, mecanisme și instituții administrative*, Ed. Sylvi, București, 1996.

operates with three main elements: ideas, materials and human resources while achieving the objective through others”⁴ (Holland, Rue, 1986).

According to Jean Gerbier, management “means the art of organizing, leading, managing”⁵. Johns defines management as “the art or science to direct, manage and administer the work of others in order to achieve the proposed objectives, the process of decision-making and leadership”⁶. With a greater degree of generality, Moldoveanu defines management as “a complex of actions undertaken with the aim of providing both normal functioning, efficient human collectivities (enterprises, public institutions, political organizations, educational facilities) in their entirety, as well as of each structural component”⁷.

In our opinion, the management of the administrative organizations refers to the study of the relationships which are established both vertically and horizontally, formally or informally, at the individual, group or institutional level, and based on the decision making process (with all its stages) which adopts and implements public policies (as the results of solving the public interest problems).

Defining the term in this way, we have to identify next the variables of study to which the management of administrative organizations appeals in the context of a knowledge-based approach.

2. The management of administrative organizations: working variables

The variables that the management of administrative organizations takes into account at the epistemic level reside both in data definitions of the term, but also in the way we define the administrative organizations of the general theory of decision-making, management principles that enable them, in general.

In the literature, the study of management of the organizations appeals to a multitude of variables that differ from one author to another. Armenia Androniceanu considers that the variables that must be enabled refers to: the processes and management relationships, the principles and regulations, the organization and functioning of the institutions, the economic, political, social (beliefs), cultural (symbols), the public interest⁸ (see **Figure 1**).

⁴ Holland, Ph., Rue, L., *Strategic Management*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1986.

⁵ Coates, Ch., *Management total*, Ed. Teora, București, 1997.

⁶ Johns, G., *Comportament organizațional*, Ed. Economică, București, 1998.

⁷ Moldoveanu, G., *Analiză organizațională*, Ed. Economică, București, 1999.

⁸ Androniceanu, A., *op. cit.*

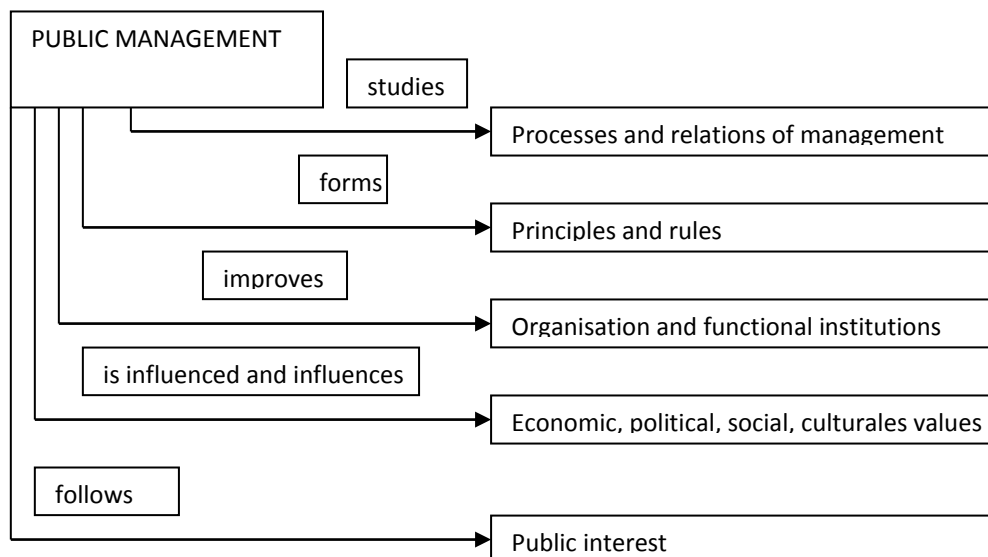


Figure 1: Variables for study - the Androniceanu Model

The processes and the management relationships arise between the components of the administrative system and may be for management or execution. The principles of administrative organizations management refers to the following typologies: the principle of unitary leadership, the principle of autonomous rules, the principle of flexibility, the principle of restructuring, the principle of continuous improvement and the principle of legality. With regard to institutional functioning, it is based on the following functions: motivation, co-ordination, control and evaluation and administration. In terms of values, they have a specific character both at the national and at the local levels, but also at the institutional, individual, being influenced by each other, and the public interest refers to results which are of interest to the entire community to which the organization belongs.

Another model developed by Nicolescu and Verboncu takes into account the following variables: identification of resources (human, material, financial, informational resources), outlining according to these the organizational variables (the ownership of the organization, the type of organization, organization size, complexity of production, characteristics of technological process, the level of technical equipment, the degree of specialization and cooperation in production, the total dispersion of the subdivisions of the organization, the continuity of the manufacturing process, the characteristics of the materials used, the characteristics

of the supply process, the degree of automation of information, human potential, the parameters of the non-formal organization, the organization managers concept on organizational management, the legislation) and, hence, the way they influence the management relations (hierarchical, functional, of cooperation, control, of representation), the way in which it outlines the characteristics of management system according to the previously mentioned variables (including: the organizational structure and organizational culture, the decision-making system, the information system, the management and methodological system or other elements of management)⁹ (see Figure 2).

No matter what are the models developed in the literature, and no matter what are the approaches (the political approach, the legal, managerial or bureaucratic approach, the scientific management, the rational model) that we will take into consideration when we study the aspects of organizational management at the administrative level, a careful study of the aspects of organizational culture, beliefs and symbols will be essential in the context of an actual organizational management.

3. Actual organizational management in the knowledge society: from the models to the organizational culture

The term “culture” comes from the Latin verb *colere*, which means “to cultivate, to beautify”. Cicero linked it to the *animus*, so that *cultura animi* became “the garden of the soul”, “culture of the spirit”. There are many definitions for the organizational culture, every author summarizing the components of the term. Geert Hofstede considers culture as “a collective mental programming that makes us accept something together, as members of the group or of the nation to which we belong”¹⁰. Edgar Schein defines culture as “the method by which a group of people solves facing permanent problems”, understanding that it is about human relationships in the daily work of an organization¹¹. At the organizational level, Marvin Bower defines culture as simply as possible: “the way things are done here in our organization”¹².

⁹ Nicolescu, O., Verboncu, I., *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Hofstede, G., *Culture's Consequences*, Sage Publishers, London, 1980.

¹¹ Schein, E., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, John Wiley and Sons, San Francisco, 2010.

¹² Deal, T.E., Kennedy, A.E., *Corporate Culture – The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*, Addison Wesley, New York, 1992.

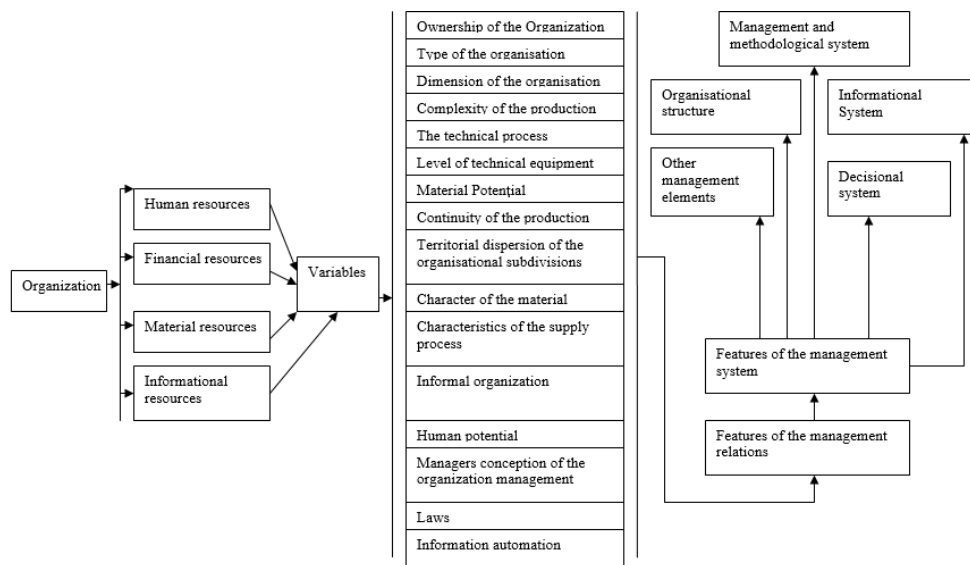


Figure 2: The variables of the Nicolescu and Verboncu model of organizational management

For Linda Smircich, “the culture is a set of values, beliefs, concepts and ways of thinking, shared by all members of an organization to the new members, which will be presented as being correct”¹³.

However, Hofstede is one of those authors who find a new definition of the concept of culture, starting from its features. Organizational culture is: holistic, referring to a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts; historically determined, showing the organizational movements in time; linked to the rituals and symbols; social founded: created and maintained by a group of people who form together an organization; hard to change, although there is extensive discussion on this issue in the literature¹⁴. “The lifestyle of an organization”¹⁵, as the organizational culture has been defined, it is distinguished by the conscious and unconscious behaviors, through the human relations and attitudes, the values, the beliefs, which are part of the organization, determining its success or its failure.

¹³ Smircich, L., “Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis”, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 28, Issue 3, 1983.

¹⁴ Hofstede, G., *Managementul structurilor multiculturale – software-ul gândirii*, Ed. Economică, București, 2006.

¹⁵ State, O., *Cultura organizației și managementul*, Ed. ASE, București, 2005.

Starting from these definitions, we can identify organizational culture traits that become new variables in the study of models of the organizational management. An organizational culture requires the following components:

The founding and the founder refer to the first moments of culture within the organization. The strong personality of the founder, the principles laid down will determine the characteristics of the organization and its management.

The history of the organization determines its course, influencing her future. History may be social or economic, but also political, or having cultural aspects.

The slogans are an idea that reflects the current activity of the organization, which plays in both a promoting role and motivating the employees. They have to express briefly the organization itself and are the product of the symbols or of the beliefs of the actors.

The symbols, also called the logos, whether or not registered as trade marks, are a sign that suggests one of the organization's goals. The symbols of an organization level may have an administrative character (one can identify with the symbol of the manager, of the institution leader, recognizing the organization's visual identity), a political character (the symbol of a politician in touch with the organization, „local” heroes, local or national personalities from different fields), a social character (the type of society or institutional-organizational construction with which actors identify themselves: fortress type, symbols of the savior-leader).

The artifacts (furniture, clothing, tools, etc.) and the design of buildings that make up the infrastructure of the organization, through which the company wishes to refer to the mental of the public opinion, of the employees and of the citizens, play the role of simplified images easy to remember.

The language used in the organization, including a certain “technical vocabulary”, as well as various phrases used in the dealings with the employees, with the customers, and with other groups of interest comes from the legislative and methodological tools used in the organization.

The beliefs are expressed by general sentences on the functioning of the environment in which the organization or group develops, that is on relationships that are established between objects, concepts and events. They shall appoint in action certain rituals that are present on a regular basis in the work of the organization, in certain contexts, through which the management aiming to incorporate elements of organizational culture in the thinking and behavior of employees; such rituals take the form of ceremonies of receiving new employees,

formal meetings at the beginning of the work day, sporting or cultural activities, etc.

The values are the essential component of organizational culture, through them enclosing the concepts/standards established for members of the organization of which they are not allowed to stray; in other words, we discuss about certain values and beliefs which are decisive for the organization as a whole. The values in which the organization believes are related one with each other and “they put their mark on the organization’s conception of ethics activities”¹⁶. This values system, viewed as a component of organizational culture, includes issues such as: the interest for the employees and customers/citizens; moral integrity and ethical standards applied; the honesty and respect for the law; also the honesty of marketing, auctions or subcontracting, etc.

We might say that the values represent the major component that differentiates a culture of an organization from another, their foundation being given by the religious, social and moral norms accumulated by the employees since the first year of life.

Peters and Waterman propose the so-called McKinsey 7-S Network (*Shared values, Structure, Systems, Style, Staff, Strategy, Skills*), as an element that defines successful organizations. From this point of view, the role of the values is primordial, supporting the others 6 S¹⁷.

So, as we can see, the study of organizations includes the centering, along with the models of management, on the size of the organizational culture. This fact is important because at the epistemic level are enabled new variables that must be taken into account and that influence those one that we had referred to above.

Much more, the organizational culture can activate variables that pass through the formal dimensions of the organizational management on the individual area. In this way, these variables can create a different shape for the decision making process and for the action process, for the construction of the hierarchy, for the power relations, for the institutional values that refers to the public interest and to the administrative efficiency (as we saw from the definitions given to the organizational management at the administrative level), but that pass over through the individual beliefs, symbols and motivations (that belong from a cultural, social or a political sphere).

¹⁶ Năstase M., *Cultura organizațională și managerială*, Editura ASE, București, 2004.

¹⁷ Huczynski, A., Buchanan, J., *Organizational Behavior – An Introductory Text*, Prentice Hall, Harlow, 2001.

4. Conclusions

The study of organizational management at the administrative level is a complex approach that activates a lot of variables that come from different dimensions: formal/non-formal ones, administrative/political/cultural/economical, that are part of the management's models, even we talk about of scientific management, legislative models or political ones.

Thus, the study of organizational management at this level requires a complex analysis through the large number of the variables activated, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, becomes a necessary approach in the context in which the administrative organizations are always supporting the public evaluation through their actions and their results – public services and public policies.

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