

APPLICATION OF THE CORPORATE CULTURE IN THE FIELD OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

E + M

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Introduction

The Faculty of economics of WBU in Pilsen has been organising since 1996 special courses for headmasters. At the beginning we need to sort out the problem how to develop the school marketing and the school management as a new disciplines in the Czech Republic. How to create applications of marketing and of management to support schools in their development regarding the new situation after the Velvet revolution and in open Europe.

We found ideas and inspiration in the United Kingdom (study stays for our lectures, literature) and in the project Comenius and of course in co-operation with centres that are focused on school management in the Czech Republic. Especially the very important cooperation is with The Centre for Lifelong Learning of the TU in Liberec. We co-ordinate our courses for headmasters and develop some common study materials including their e-learning version since 2000.

The first course for headmasters at our faculty was called Economics and management of the school and took two terms. According to the education reform in the Czech Republic (since 1st January 2005 the Czech education system has been operating on the base of new Acts: Education Act, No 561/2004) the last course for headmasters meets the new standard and the topic school culture is included in a module Management.

Our centre is focused on marketing of education and since 1999 we have started to develop an application of corporate culture to support changes in our schools [6]. The research of this topic was a continuous part or a element of mentioned courses and also included a consultancy service at the department of marketing in our faculty.

1. School Culture - Literature Review

Organisational culture - the values, norms and beliefs which characterize organisations and are

symbolised through patterns of interaction, dress, speech and shared by all members or, as sub-cultures, by some group of members [19].

Culture is the product of the shared values, beliefs, priorities, expectations and norms that serve to inform the way in which an organisation manifests itself to the world. Culture only has meaning when it is given expression, when is expressed in tangible forms [24].

School culture includes everything in school surroundings that is made by human beings, consisting of tangible items as well as intangible concepts and values.

The basic idea of culture, including school culture, is that it consist of shared meanings and common understanding, and that this **culture is variable from school to school**.

We underline that for schools are their mission and their orientation to teaching and learning process (preparing young people for living in present and in future society) very important.

As we have mentioned above the first inspiration we received from the UK, e.g. cooperation with the Manchester Metropolitan University (1997-1999). For school management are very useful publications by Everard and Morris [11] and Everard, Morris, Wilson [12]. The authors pay attention to school mission, to aims and values, to communication in a school and with stakeholders etc. But detailed description of cultural models presents Bush [2], e.g Handy's four culture models, author stresses: "cultural models assume that beliefs, values and ideology are at the heart of organisations." [2, p. 163]

For practice use and as example for school evaluation is available textbook by Fidler [13]. Author defines school culture as: "The organizational culture describes the norms and values of an individual school or "the way we do things around here". It is these features which differentiate one school from another and which have to be taken into account in formulating a strategic plan. These features represent the "recipe" or automa-

tic assumptions about how things should be done and what is important." [13, p. 142]

The application of organisation culture to education leadership is also developed in Poland, see Elsner [10] or Dziergowska [4]. The concept of school culture is recognised as an important part of a managing change and school development including strategic planning.

Kotler pointed to culture change: "A company's organisation consist of its structures, policies, and corporate culture, all of which become dysfunctional in rapidly changing business environment. Where structures and policies can be changed (with difficulty), the company's culture is very hard to change." [15, p. 68] The same is very important for schools in a rapidly changing society environment in the last 20 years.

Consequently in the Slovak Republic experts of school management pay attention to school culture [17] and do researches focused on some parts of this topic, see Obdržálek, Polák [18]

In the Czech Republic the first model of school culture was created by Světlík [23]. This model is being used as a basic model of school culture in courses for headmasters in the Czech and Slovak Republic too. Since 1996 has been the mentioned model innovated by Jakubíková [14], Světlík [24] and published by Eger and Jakubíková [8] – textbook for course in Pilsen and Liberec and in book by Eger [6, p. 132]. The key parts of school culture are shared values, norms and negotiations in the school. School culture is described by verbal symbols, behavioural symbols and visual symbols.

2. Evaluation of the School Culture

The model of school culture helps us to describe and understand schools better. Headmasters need to read school culture and recognise which aspects of the culture are positive and which aspects are negative and should be changed. Cromwell [3] describes these terms as follows: a toxic school culture – blames students for lack of progress, discourages collaboration and breeds hostility among staff, a positive school culture – celebrates successes, emphasizes accomplishment and collaboration and fosters a commitment to staff and student learning.

To help heads we offer consultancy about school culture and in cooperation with management and staff of a concrete school we offer

support for self-evaluation of school culture. This process consists of an interview with a headmaster and her or his deputies, a visit of the school, a research using a questionnaire: school culture (for staff and management) school image (for staff, students, parents), marketing audit of the school (headmaster is responsible). We also give consideration to the school development plan, curriculum plan, to reports by school inspection etc.

School culture review is not a simple matter and an accountable approach for it needs time and other requirements.

Consider: "Successful leaders have learned to view their organisation's environment in a holistic way. This wide-angle view is what the concept of school culture offers." [22] Headmasters need to read managed school. [3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 20, 21, 24] They need information about aspects of school culture. They are looking for the answer to question: What aspects are positive and what are negative and should be changed?

For this purpose we decided to create a questionnaire for school management and staff in trying to recognise organisational culture as a support tool for school headmasters to receive quickly a basic review about her or his school [8].

3. Questionnaire: School Culture Review

Although it is difficult to measure school culture precisely there is a variety of techniques (methods) collecting information needed to understand school culture. For these purposes as an appropriate technique we have prepared a questionnaire, which is simple for its use in practise (this questionnaire is for staff not for students), compare with [1, 13, 20].

The main aims of gathering data by using this questionnaire are:

- to receive a review about our school culture and
- to use the results for discussion and self – evaluation process.

Each school is unique and each school has its own culture. In spite of the fact there are features common to school culture. On the base of these features we can evaluate school culture. In our case study we used the questionnaire with 16 Questions = Items = factors of school culture.

Respondents assessed each factor on the scale. From the point of view of each respondent both present situation - existing school culture and also school culture that respondent expected or that he or she wanted in his or her school was assessed.

Identification and evaluation of culture gap (Klimann-Saxton) [8] between existing culture and desired culture is very important for team discussion which follows.

Evaluated factors:

- 1 - Shared goals
- 2 - Authority of school management
- 3 - Management style concern on people
- 4 - Organisational structure and routine of school
- 5 - Management style concern on task
- 6 - Control in school
- 7 - Motivation of staff
- 8 - Communication and giving information in school
- 9 - Communication with community and parents
- 10 - Innovation of study programme
- 11 - Teacher's development
- 12 - Conditions for teaching
- 13 - Aesthetic surroundings and cleanliness
- 14 - Relationships among staff
- 15 - Relationships between teachers and students
- 16 - Expectation of education results

It is very important, that the factors presented above correspond with factors of school effectiveness. E.g. factors by Mortimore and MacBeath (2003) in [12]: professional leadership, shared vision and goals, a learning environment, concentration on learning and teaching, high expectation, positive reinforcement, monitoring process, pupil rights and responsibilities, purposeful teaching, a learning organisation, home-school partnership. The factors also meet orientation of school development by Fidler [13, p. 141]: leadership style, working together, relationship with children, attitude to innovation, school aims, communication with parents. Each point in each factor has short detailed description = Question specification [5, p. 143-144].

The currently presented questionnaire is widely used by lectures in courses for headmasters in Pilzen, Prague, Olomouc, Liberec and Ostrava.

4. Research Setting

The study was carried out in the Czech Republic. The headmaster is key person in the school and her

or his review of the managed school is an important point for needed culture change at our schools. See also the important place of management style in the McKinsey 7-S model and the key role of school management in factors of successful school.

5. Data Collection

Data were collected from headmasters of basic schools, participants of a course for school ma-

	Very poor	Average	Excellent	
1 - Shared goals	1	2	3	4
2 - Authority of school management	1	2	3	4
3 - Management style concern on people	1	2	3	4
4 - Organisational structure and routine of school	1	2	3	4
5 - Management style concern on task	1	2	3	4
6 - Control in school	1	2	3	4
7 - Motivation of staff	1	2	3	4
8 - Communication and giving information in school	1	2	3	4
9 - Communication with community and parents	1	2	3	4
10 - Innovation of study programme	1	2	3	4
11 - Teacher's development	1	2	3	4
12 - Conditions for teaching	1	2	3	4
13 - Aesthetic surroundings and cleanliness	1	2	3	4
14 - Relationships among staff	1	2	3	4
15 - Relationships between teachers and students	1	2	3	4
16 - Expectation of education results	1	2	3	4

nagement or participants of a two-day workshop about school culture. To evaluate school culture of managed school respondents needed to understand basic information about the concept of organisational culture and of course also purpose of questioning. The respondents received the questionnaire in the end of workshop, researcher communicated to them the purpose of the survey (to create a study for school management) and a needed basic comment. Questioning was anonymous.

First results (2002) present headmasters' reviews on school culture before the curriculum reform and the new Education Act (2004), 49 respondents = headmasters of basic schools.

Second results (2007) present time of implementation new Education Act at schools and a period of creation first version of the so called school curriculum plan at the schools. (84 respondents)

Third results (2009) present headmasters' views of school culture after the start of learning

and teaching process under school curriculum plan. (48 respondents)

6. Analysis and Findings

As we underline above, school culture is variable from school to school. But for our purpose the results of the survey present culture gap in the way, how a group of headmasters apprehends the gap of our schools in the described periods of school development in the Czech Republic. Of course it is always only a "group report" but a report by important or key actors.

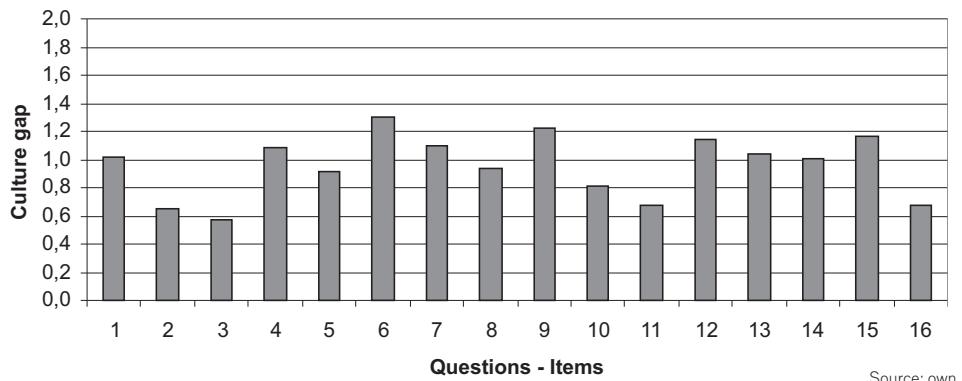
The main culture gaps are recognised in: Control in school (1,3), Communication with commu-

nity and parents (1,2), Relationships between teachers and students (1,2), Organisational structure and routine of school, Motivation of staff, Conditions for teaching, (1,1).

The main culture gaps are recognised in: Shared goals and Control in school (1,4), Communication with community and parents and Conditions for teaching (1,3), Motivation of staff, Relationships among staff and Relationships between teachers and students (1,2), Organisational structure and routine of school (1,1).

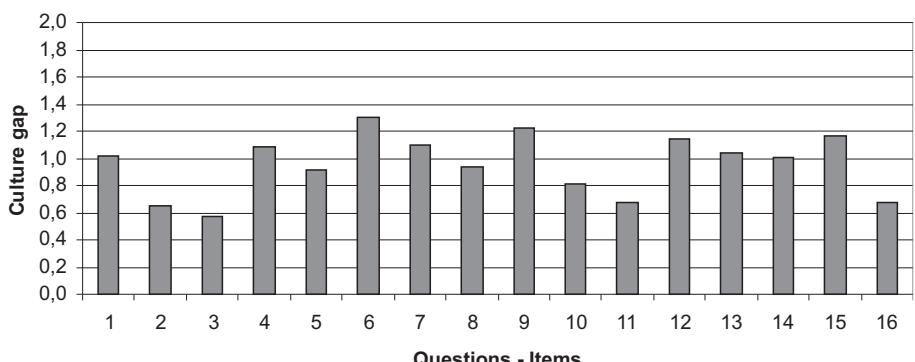
The main culture gaps are recognised in: Control in school (1,8), Shared goals and Relationships among staff (1,5), Motivation of staff and Communication with community and parents

Fig. 1: School culture review by group of headmasters (2002)
School culture and culture gap 2002



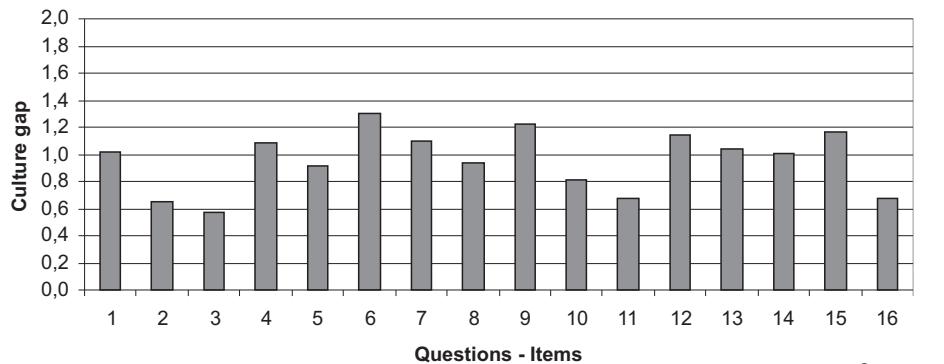
Source: own

Fig. 2: School culture review by group of headmasters (2007)
School culture and culture gap 2002



Source: own

Fig. 3: School culture review by group of headmasters (2007)
School culture and culture gap 2002



Source: own

(1,4), Organisational structure and routine of school and Relationships between teachers and students (1,3), Communication and giving information in school (1,2).

The results show the change in culture gap from the view of school headmasters groups from Control in school and Communication with community and parents and Relationships between teachers and students (2002) to Shared goals and Control in school, Communication with community and parents and Conditions for teaching and Motivation of staff in the period of creation of school development and curriculum plans (2007) and to Control in school, Shared goals and Relationships among staff, Motivation of staff and Communication with community and parents, Organisational structure and routine of school and Relationships between teachers and students in the period of implementation (2009) new development plans and school programmes.

The lowest gaps were appointed by the headmasters in the following questionnaire items: Management style concern on people and Teacher's development. A very small difference was between existing culture and desired culture in Expectation of education results. But we need to consider that the respondents were headmasters of basic schools and the detailed description of the question no 16, point 3 was: It is expected standard (that means in education) achievement.

Conclusion

The school management in the Czech Republic is a new discipline in a progress. The paper

and the presented survey make both a theoretical application of the concept of corporate culture to education sphere and the actual review of school culture change from the view of school managers as key actors and responsible persons for needed change according to the Education Act.

Finally, we present a survey which represents the new tool for school self-evaluation, one of the new present tasks for school management [6, 20]. To develop school management we need more applications from marketing and management which will be focused on the school improving process and effectiveness.

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ABSTRACT

APPLICATION OF THE CORPORATE CULTURE IN THE FIELD OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

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The paper presents an application of concept of corporate culture. The school management is in the Czech Republic a new discipline in a progress. Our faculty has been offering special courses for headmasters since 1997. We began to create an application of marketing and management to education in co-operation with colleagues abroad and with other institutions which are focused on school management in the Czech Republic. We find the topic school culture highly important especially in the period of the education change.

The paper presents a survey of school culture. Identification and evaluation of culture gap between existing culture and desired culture is a very important part of school self-evaluation process. The headmasters are key actors and responsible persons to culture change according to the Educational Act. Concept of organisational culture helps them to see the managed school in holistic approach.

The survey of the school culture is focused on headmaster's view of managed school. We show results of questioning groups of headmasters in 2002, 2007 and 2009. We can see changes in their evaluation of culture gap. Actually headmasters underline problems in: Control in school, Shared goals and Relationships among staff, Motivation of staff and Communication with community and parents, Organisational structure and routine of school and Relationships between teachers and students. Very small difference is between existing culture and desired culture in Expectation of education results.

The similar applications and surveys are needed for development of special disciplines of the management and marketing especially for non-profit sphere.

Key Words: organisational culture, school management, school culture survey.

JEL Classification: M31.