

EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES – COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to investigate characteristics and aspects of emotional intelligence embedded in the organizational culture of various corporations. Apart from these aspects the study also proposes to establish a research base, for a more profound study, in order to discover if characteristics from ASE culture can also be found later on, in the values, assumption and beliefs of its alumni, thereby influencing the organizational culture in the companies they work. Therefore, the study will focus on ASE graduates that are currently working in Romanian corporations. Extant literature explains how individuals with emotional intelligence skills can initiate and leverage the organizational culture's climate. By using the grounds of a previous study and by applying the same method of research, namely a survey comprising 15 statements on emotional intelligence and organizational culture, this paper reveals (1) the role of emotional intelligence and organizational culture correct application in various corporative environments and (2) the similarities and differences between the essential aspects and components of emotional intelligence identified in the academic and corporative cultures. Hence, this paper stresses on emotional intelligence's relevance within any type of culture.

KEYWORDS: *academic organizational culture, corporate organizational culture, comparative analysis, emotional intelligence.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *M10, M14, O15.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Are the individuals belonging to a given organizational culture aware of their emotional intelligence impact and the way it is reflected in the shared values, assumptions and beliefs within their culture? Can we track the impact of the organizational culture of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE) into the values, assumptions and beliefs of its alumni? In order to answer such questions this paper describes and compares essential aspects and components of emotional intelligence distinguished in the organizational culture of university versus corporative environment. Extant literature shows that emotional intelligence is the best predictor in future acquisitions for children, for success, versus traditional intelligence, cognitive and technical skills. Authors such as Côté (2014) clarify the concept of "emotional intelligence" (EI) and explains it as an accumulation of capabilities related to emotions. Other scientists, like Fernandez-Berrocal (2015) pursued to investigate the Emotional Intelligence's application in Spanish educational systems by taking into consideration its potential influence through policies. Starting from the assumption that what we are taught in early ages we will transmit it further to the people we interact with, the current research proposes to inspect various organizational cultures and scout for similar aspects and references implicating emotional intelligence's role in altering people

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reactions to certain events thereby altering the organizational culture that they belong to. More precisely, this study will involve an academic institution specialized in teaching economic studies and several persons that graduated this university and are currently working in Romania's corporative environments.

2. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS PART OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The dominant thinking in these 2000 years was of such nature that "emotions distract people and prevent us from taking the right decisions in terms of work and everyday life". In the last three decades, research has proved otherwise. A growing number of scientists and experts declare people who receive exclusive school training can often be considered "unequipped" against future challenges (both as individuals and society members). Such mind, intellectual nourished, is no longer enough. We may notice how most of us neglect the emotional aspect of our intelligence, believing that academic intelligence is the one that prevails in acquiring performance, not realizing that there is an emotional intelligence (EI). Extant literature shows that emotional intelligence is the best predictor in future acquisitions for children, for success, versus traditional intelligence, cognitive and technical skills. The dynamics of contemporary social changes calls for an individual improved ability to adapt to the environment that can only be achieved if we understand the extraordinary role that it has regarding the intelligent use of emotions. Nowadays, we may notice how corporations value this new type of relationship-building focusing not only on tasks but also on human-relationships. For this reasons, today's focus concerns the aspects of EI and its influence upon the organizational culture and its employees.

Studies concerning IE are relatively recent, as they begun around the 90's. Three major directions may be identified when defining emotional intelligence, represented by: Mayer and Salovey (1997) who considered IE implies the ability to perceive as correctly as possible emotions and express them, the ability to access or generate feelings when they enable thinking and the ability to know and understand emotions as well as to channel them in order to promote emotional and intellectual development; followed by Bar-On (1996) who classified components of EI in intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects; and Goleman (1995) who classified aspects of EI, based on Mayer's model, in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Some of the most important studies elaborated, up till this moment, on the topic of „emotional intelligence” were built by the use of the original EI framework designed by Mayer and Salovey in 1997. Even though some authors such as Jordan et al. (2003) argues the validity of Mayer's and Salovey's original model regarding the EI construct, it remains one of the most adopted models up to this day.

Further, the role of emotional intelligence within the organizations drew the attention of researchers who tried to prove its role and define it. Discussions were sketched regarding the role of emotional intelligence in organizational cultures and debates were held on employee's reaction to certain cultures. Since the culture of an organization comprises a series of patterns, values and believes (Handy, 1986) it is also invisible which is why it can dictate the behavior of employees and influence the results of their work (Saffold, 1998). It is clearly that organizational cultures varies from one corporation to another and the source of this variation is due to the cultural environment where that corporation operating. In his study, Hermalin (2001) claims the organizational differences that a regional culture utterly induce can appear to be as consequences of different organizational cultures. In 2004 Caruso and Salovey explain how the use of emotional knowledge in certain work scenarios can improve decision making process and lead to actions that solve conflict problems, thus EI becoming an advantage for a good work performance. By being aware and recognize the effects of an individual's EI and expand it to organizational levels, corporations learned to build and design their culture by using activities in all levels of an organization (Lahghorn, 2004). Authors such as Tolmats and Reino desired to find interconnections between types of organizational cultures and EI competences by focusing their study in 2006 on two

business sectors from Estonia. Putthiwani (2015) elaborated a qualitative research that proved employees from different multinational enterprises show interest for innovation and when working in a collective organizational culture, there is a regular interaction between those employees who are different one from another.

In today's context of society, the complex and dynamic integrative personalities must permanently adapt to the socio-cultural pace, to its inevitable changes and challenges that arise in educational field that must take into consideration the force of "emotions" in problem solving.

According to Christophe (2008) the professor is "designed" as a vivacious and stimulating voice of culture that shapes personalities according to society's requirements. Thus, the professor becomes an exponent of the emotional culture, meaning he integrates the spectrum of emotional feelings in the area of academic intelligence. Hence, the teaching profession stands out, unlike other professions, through its social importance namely the permanent transfer of culture, knowledge and experiences to new generations. Still, for the effectiveness of this transfer, a complex approach is required to organize and integrate "emotional culture" in educational processes that promote such a culture. This paper is channeling the main ideas and matters related to emotional intelligence in academic culture, in order to build a society conscious, responsible and emotional intelligence by focusing and identifying these issues in contemporary society.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Material and methods

In order to conduct the current investigation, corporative representatives were invited to give voice to their opinions and beliefs regarding the linkage between emotional intelligence and organizational culture. Thus, the objectives of the study aspired/ intended to disclose the perception towards emotional intelligence development, its relevance in a certain environment (organizational culture), distinguish how certain members from a culture can enrich it by appealing to their developed emotional intelligence skills and compare essential aspects as well as components of emotional intelligence distinguished in different organizational cultures, namely between Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE) and its alumni, currently activating in corporative environments.

Data collection comprised two study samples, one involving academic members while the second comprised corporative members. The data involving the academic members was retrieved from a previous research study entitled „Emotional Intelligence in Organizational Culture – Case Study on ASE” (Tudor & Ghenu, 2016). In the same manner the survey was distributed, this time among corporative members that graduated, at least 5 years ago, from different departments of ASE. The survey was adapted to properly address corporative members consisting of 5 statements regarding personal information of members and 15 statements regarding knowledge, opinions towards emotional intelligence, towards organizational culture and the symbiosis of the two. The previous base rules were kept in terms of statements structures and answers, respondents were asked to encircle all the answers that described their thoughts in a given situation or avoid the answer if not comfortable by encircling „will not respond”.

The research lot comprised the same number of respondents as in the research paper elaborated by Tudor and Ghenu (2016), namely 23 ASE graduates currently working in several corporations such as: Honeywell, Hewlett Packard, Oracle and KRUK Romania. In order to be able to make an appropriate comparative analysis the study pursued to obtain responses from graduates of each department in ASE such as: Accounting and Management Information Systems Faculty (AMIS), Economic Cybernetics Statistics and Informatics (CISIE), Business Administration in English (FABIZ), International Business and Economics (REI), Marketing (MK), Management (MAN), Agri.-food and Environmental Economics (EAM), Finance Insurance Banking and Stock Exchange Faculty (FABBV) and the last one, Theoretical and Applied Economics Faculty (FAETA).

3.2 Data analysis of corporative lot

The first step of the research focused on what corporative members know and understand through the concept of "intelligence". According to our survey data, 17 members consider "intelligence" is a born aptitude that requires a little stimulation and 6 believe such skills can only be obtained, maintained and developed through continuous intellectual stimulation.

As all 23 respondents agree there are several types of "intelligence" which is why the second step of the research focused on the main elements and characteristics of the "emotional intelligence" (EI) concept. For this reason, respondents were asked to encircle all the statements they assign to EI concept. 16 believe EI has an important role in a person's life being able to influence one's development but also believe the lifestyle of a person can be improved by developing EI skills and applying them in everyday life. 12 persons affirm EI is acquired and anyone can develop it and only 5 corporative members think EI is a "born" skill that cannot be held by everyone. Concerning the influence EI can have upon one's career, out of 23 respondents, 21 consider one can acquire knowledge and skills that enables a "healthy" interaction with surrounding persons (such as: intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, adaptability and stress management) while 14 consider EI could help one to identify and manage emotions that could impact the professional image. It seems 21 members agree the EI can influence a company's organizational culture and only two persons disagree. Out of these 21, 7 and 12 members consider EI can influence a company's organizational culture in a very large extent namely in great extent, while 2 respondents consider the influence is rather small.

The third step of the research moved its point of application in the members' organization, particularly in the organizational culture, focusing on the evolution, development and employees contribution to a certain type of culture. Half of our respondents identify their company's culture as task oriented - where task performance and teamwork are essential and the power is based on the abilities recognized by others; 6 respondents declare their culture is people oriented - where members influence themselves through personal example and solitude while the institution serves the member's interests; 4 individuals describe their culture as role oriented - where roles are clearly defined and delimited in a hierarchy which emphasizes on status, responsibility, legitimacy and legality; and 1 respondent identified his company's culture as being power oriented - where the power is in the hands of a small number of individuals who control the subordinates. It appears 7 persons declared material/financial as well as human resources have contributed in equal share to the evolution of their culture. Also 6 people recount human resources were the ones who had a significant contribution while 6 others "blame" the evolution of their culture on the material/financial and especially human resources. There are only 4 persons who explain only material/financial resources contributed significantly to their culture's development. As recorded by our survey, the most relevant factors that contributed to the culture's development, as 11 members agree, were the internal ones - represented by history, organizational dimensions, leaders, values and concepts, followed by both internal and external factors (6 members) and, on the last place, external factors - represented by colleagues members from the same corporation or others, juridical, technological and technical factors. According to the survey data, 15 people consider the people from their organization have an increased level of EI and while 3 persons disagree with this statement, 5 would rather not answer. 12 respondents declare they are able to identify the level of IE, more or less, by using their own knowledge about EI, 6 would be able by comparing the EI level of others with their own, while 4 persons would compare to other people known for being emotional intelligent. An interesting aspect is how all 23 corporative members agree the impact of EI is reflected upon the organization in its daily activity and contact with employees. This explains how 21 consider their coworkers have a significant contribution in altering the company's organizational culture but also agree that the company's organizational culture can leave a mark upon the general behavior of its employees. The other 2 members prefer not to express their thoughts in this matter. Commenting on the analysis regarding the interaction between "employer"

and "employee" in the last 5 years 12 corporative members declare the interaction was visibly improved due to increased levels of employees' EI level and 10 respondents declare this interaction varies yearly depending on employees. One person considers nothing has changed in the last 5 years.

The current study involved 23 members (13 female and 10 male), out of which 19 persons were under 30 years old and 3 persons were in the age range 31- 40 years old. As the study specifies the members were selected precisely to be graduates from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies that are currently employed in various corporations in Romania as it follows: 10 persons from KRUK Romania, 7 from Oracle, 3 from Hewlett Packard and 2 from Honeywell. 9 respondents were working in those companies for less than one year, 8 registered their length of service for 1-3 years, 2 persons between 3-5 years and one person between 5-7, 7-10 and more than 10 years. Respondents came from various departments such as Operations, Field, Coordination, Human Resources, Renewals, Business, It, Logistics, Productions, Sales and occupying positions such as staff, consultant, managers, responsible, specialist IT, team leader and executive director.

3.3 Comparative analysis of the academic and corporative lot

By analyzing the results obtained from the corporative lot and comparing them with the ones obtained in the study elaborated by Tudor & Ghenu (2016) we can identify 16 resemblances in answers, regarding their perceptions towards emotional intelligence, organizational culture and their impact upon each other. In other words, 16 similarities means at each statement about emotional intelligence or organizational culture there is an equal number of respondents who agreed in both cases with at least one variant offered for selection. Because in both groups, the same survey with the same utterances was applied, we are able to illustrate the similarities in Table 1.

Out of 23 participants, of each lot, 17 corporative members as well as 16 academic members agreed intelligence is a born aptitude that requires a little stimulation, whereas, on the other side, 6 corporative members and 7 academic members considered intelligence can only be obtained, maintained and developed through the continuous stimulation of one's intellectual capital (mind). As the data from Table 1 shows, both categories of respondents consider the existence of several types of intelligence.

Focusing on the characteristics and aspects of emotional intelligence, another similarity can be observed for 18 academic and 16 corporative members perceive emotional intelligence to play a significant role in a persons' evolution while 10 academic and 12 corporative consider Ei is acquired and anyone can develop it. Most of the respondents, such as 21 from each group, consider emotional intelligence can positively influence career through knowledge and skills that enable a "healthy" interaction with other people and only 9 academic members as well as 14 corporative members consider this positive influence EI can have upon the career is related to managing the emotions that in the end impact one's professional image.

Regarding the impact of emotional intelligence upon organizational culture, an equal number of 7, from each group, consider EI can influence the organizational culture in a very large extent, while as the rest of 14 academic and 12 corporative members perceive EI can influence the organizational culture in great extent. It seems 14 academics and 15 corporative members perceive their coworkers as being highly emotional intelligent, the majority (12) being able to identify the EI level with the help of their own knowledge about EI while 4 from each category are able to identify EI level by comparing to people known for their high EI level. It is very interesting how 22 from each category agree EI impact upon the organization is visible in employees' daily activity and interactions. This similarity is followed by the 21 agreements, from each category, that the company's organizational culture can leave a mark upon the general behavior of its employees and 20 members from each category who say coworkers also have a significant contribution in altering the company's organizational culture.

Table 1. Similarities in respondent's perception on EI and organizational culture

	Variants offered for selection	Number of respondents	
		Academic	Corporative
	Number of respondents in case of:		
1	Intelligence is a born aptitude that requires stimulation	16	17
2	Intelligence can only be obtained, maintained and developed through continuous intellectual stimulation	7	6
3	Consider several types of intelligence	23	23
4	EI has an important role in one's evolution	18	16
5	EI is acquired and anyone can develop it	10	12
6	One's lifestyle can be improved by developing and practicing EI skills	15	16
7	EI can positively influence career through knowledge and skills that enable a "healthy" interaction with other people	21	21
8	EI can positively influence career through managing emotions that impact professional image	9	14
9	EI can influence the organizational culture in a very large extent	7	7
10	EI can influence the organizational culture in great extent	14	12
11	Consider members from organization/institution have a high EI level	14	15
12	Able to identify EI level by own knowledge about EI	14	12
13	Able to identify EI level by comparing to people known for their high EI level	4	4
14	EI impact upon the organization is visible in employees' daily activity and interactions	22	22
15	Coworkers have a significant contribution in altering the company's organizational culture	20	21
16	The company's organizational culture can leave a mark upon the general behavior of its employees	21	21

Source: adapted from Tudor (2016), p.4

4. OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Perceptions on EI and organizational culture

It was proven in a previous research (Tudor & Ghenu, 2016) that most academic members, such as 47.8 %, identified their culture as being role oriented and 13% identified it as power oriented. With a share of 95.7% professors consider that organizational culture is influenced by the emotional intelligence. Also, 63.6 % of the respondents confirmed that an important contributor to their culture was the financial resource but even more the human capital, while 18.2% stated that financial and human capital contributed with an equal share. Still, 9.1% believed human resources had the biggest contribution and 9.1% considered financial resources contributed the most. The daily activity of the professors and the contacts they had with students were influenced by the presence of emotional intelligence, according to 95.7% of the respondents and the contribution of

students is considered important in changing the organizational culture, as declared by 87% of the respondents. Thinking this in reverse, student's behavior is considered to be influenced by the organizational culture of a certain department. Some of the cultures promote a high interaction between the teacher and the student but it seems that not all the members involved in this research think that ASE's organizational culture is valuable for the students.

However, in a multinational environment it was proven that more than half of the employees identified themselves as being part of a task oriented organizational culture, 26% of the corporate employees state that the company's organizational culture is people oriented and 15% individuals think of a role oriented culture. These results prove a totally different perspective and approach compared to the academic environment where number were at the opposite. In addition to this result, the research of Iljinsa et al. (2015) confirm that for a healthy organizational culture stability, compensation, job satisfaction and team orientation are factors with a great impact that must be kept as higher as possible.

4.2 Hofstede dimensions in Romania

As explained in a research by Tudor and Ghenu (2016) and based on the Interact-Gallup Romanian study (2005), applying Hofstede dimensions (1996) on Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE's) organizational culture, some general characteristics of Romanian culture can be identified. It will register a relatively high value in the power distance index due to perpetuated power and wealth differences. In an institutional relation or a family there is compliance to a higher status which stands for a powerful social conformism and this can describe the relation that subordinates have with the heads of the university. Also, the university is focused on developing collective interests rather than individual ones which is why a low degree of individualism can be registered in the second dimension. The quality of life and cheerful working conditions, valuable for the organization's members, identified aspects of a culture inspired by a female presence with compromise and harmony, but also adding a masculinity influence (age and gender are determinants for these habits). Through their research, the Interact-Gallup Romanian study (2005) proved a weakness for short-term orientation concerning the last Hofstede's dimension, the long-term orientation. Within the Bucharest University of Economic studies such thing is remarked through competitive spirit and the will for change and improvement. It is most certain that these overall values registered in 2005 by Interact-Gallup Romanian study have altered presently and some indexes may have increased or decreased their values. However, since the study at that time focused on Romania as a country, and not only a certain area or city most of the indexes remain close to their initial values. It is most important to specify that schools and universities are the center places from where such values arises, for the values and characteristics taught to us in early years, will later result in the attitudes, values and believes of an entire culture and its societies. For this main reason the study desired to analyze the perceptions of corporative societies regarding aspects of emotional intelligence that impact an organizational culture, but also compare them with their "starting point" perceptions, which in this case, was the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. Therefore, it is clearly that a corporate culture is significantly altered by the society to which it belongs. For this particular reason, the effectiveness of a company's management concepts, or institution for that matter, must always take into consideration the cultural framework, where they were designed. The idea is to be able to transfer such concepts to societies and their enterprises. Still, it is not easy since one society is enough to create several corporate cultures but similar, one corporate culture can comprise several societies, with the condition they are equivalent functioning.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Intending to investigate characteristics, aspects and perceptions regarding the presence of emotional intelligence in corporation and its influence on a company's organizational culture, this study has successfully managed to establish two aspects: (1) all respondents perceive emotional intelligence as an attribute in "job performance" and "career" thereby, having a positive influence on one's career; (2) over 85% of respondents declare the emotional intelligence of the company's members has the capacity to alter the company's organizational culture. Considering the data used for this study came from two different group categories, academic and corporative, the study was able to identify similarities between them. The most important ones were that EI has an important role in one's evolution and anyone can develop it by intellect stimulation, ultimately, EI can positively influence one's career at individual level and a company's/ institute's organizational culture at society level. Stressing on the relevance of emotional intelligence's in any culture, the fact that coworkers have a significant contribution in altering the company's organizational culture and the idea that the company's organizational culture can leave a mark upon the general behavior of its employees is rather promiscuous. The reason for this assertion is that the only visible parts of a company's culture are expressed through symbols such as: logos, posters, clothes and certain rituals. Still the basis of a culture is formed by the employees' attitude (values and norms) towards the inside and outside business environment. If the management would desire to alter the attitudes of their employees they would first have to alter the symbols that represent the base of their attitude. However, there is another factor that can have a greater impact upon a company's culture that this study intended to identify such as society. As this study assumed graduates from ASE would share, more or less the same beliefs regarding EI and organizational culture, several similar features can also appear from other interactions between that institute /company and society. In these cases, the influences will come from coworkers, Romanian students, foreign students, other universities, other companies (clients, suppliers or competition), etc. Thus, as much as an institute or a company would want to change their culture, in some limits, the society will always generate distinct elements in that company that will be in line with their basic values. For this reason it is possible to identify similarities in the two categories of respondents (academics and corporative), and it is possible that some beliefs were built within the walls of Bucharest University of Economic Studies. In spite of this assumption, in the end, two relative different cultures (academic, corporative) can have similar outcomes in a certain society (in this case opinions about emotional intelligence impact on organizational culture), the connection being something bigger than "culture of educational base", for a human being is indeed created by nature but educated and developed by society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to the academic members and corporative members who dedicated part of their time in order to make this research possible, for offering their support and guidance.

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