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METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN THE RESEARCH OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

ABSTRACT: *In the thirty-years-long research of organizational culture, two mutually opposed methodological approaches have emerged: objectivistic-quantitative and subjectivistic-qualitative. These two approaches are based on opposite ontological and epistemological assumptions: they include different types of research, and use opposite, quantitative vs. qualitative, methods of research. Each of the methodological approaches has its advantages and disadvantages. For this reason a hybrid approach emerges as a legitimate choice in organizational culture research methodology. It combines elements of both subjectivistic and objectivistic methodological approaches,*

according to the goals, content, and context of the research and preferences of the researcher himself/herself. Since it is possible to combine the two principal methodological approaches in various ways, there are several possible hybrid methodologies in organizational culture research. After the review of objectivistic-quantitative and subjectivistic-qualitative methodological approaches, one of possible hybrid approaches in the research of organizational culture is presented in this paper.

KEY WORDS: *organizational culture, research methodology, organization*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Almost thirty years of systematic research of organizational culture within the organizational behaviour field has transformed it from concept to theory. ‘Borrowed’ as a concept from anthropology, organizational culture has, over years of research, been developed, structured, and associated with other concepts in the field of psychology, sociology, and management. It has managed to become one of the key tools in understanding the behaviour of people in organizations. Today, organizational culture is one of the most explored phenomena of organizational behaviour and an inevitable variable in explaining the functioning and performance of all kinds of organizations.

Maturation of a scientific concept is always accompanied by development of the methodology of its research. The methodology of organizational culture research is currently in the mature phase of its development, and its basic feature is discernable diversity (Taras, Rowney, Steel, 2009); Alvesson, 2002). This is due to a number of reasons. First, organizational culture is an interdisciplinary phenomenon, and many researchers from different scientific fields explore it by means of methodologies commonly used in their basic scientific disciplines. For example, anthropologists mainly use qualitative methods, while psychologists use quantitative methods of research. Second, organizational culture is a multilayered, multidimensional phenomenon, so different methods need to be used for exploring its various layers and dimensions. For exploring cognitive elements of culture, such as assumptions and values, quantitative methods are most often used. Qualitative methods are used for exploring symbolic elements of culture. Third, organizational culture can be understood through two scientific paradigms: the structural functionalism paradigm and the interpretative paradigm. Quantitative research methodologies are suitable for research of culture in the first paradigm, while qualitative methods are appropriate for research of culture in the second paradigm. Fourth, different researchers start with different ontological and epistemological assumptions, so consequently the methods of research they employ are different. Objectivistic assumptions lead towards the use of the quantitative method, while subjectivistic assumptions lead towards application of the qualitative method. Fifth, different researchers explore organizational culture with different goals and intentions in mind, which also implies the use of various research methods.

This diversity of methods used to explore organizational culture has both advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that such a complex and multidimensional phenomenon can be better explored when several different

methods are applied. Organizational culture, by its nature, has many facets. Some of them are better explored by qualitative and others by quantitative methods. Hence, the application of both types of method ensures better understanding of the phenomenon. In addition the application of various methods enhances the diversity and attractiveness of the field and attracts a greater number of potential authors. However the disadvantages of diverse research methodologies are also important. The main disadvantage is a diminished possibility of comparing research results, which slows down the development of the scientific field since the results cannot be compared and cannot be added to previous research results.

In the organizational culture research of the past 30 years, two basic methodological approaches have been differentiated: objectivistic-positivistic and subjectivistic-interpretive (Martin, 2002). These two approaches differ by both the ontological and epistemological assumptions on which they are based and the type of research they encompass, as well as by their data gathering and analyzing methods. However, besides these two main and clear approaches in organizational culture research methodology, it is possible to apply various hybrid approaches (Eriksson, Kovalainen, 2008; Martin, 2002). A hybrid approach combines elements of the two main organizational culture research methodological approaches in order to better adjust a specific research design to its goals, content, scope, and context. There are a number of ways to combine methodological approaches into one hybrid approach to organizational culture research. The aim of this paper is to present and clearly differentiate the objectivistic-positivistic and subjectivistic-interpretive approaches, as well as to draw attention to one of the possible hybrid approaches to organizational culture research.

2. DEFINITION AND CONTENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Since organizational culture research methodology is the main topic of this paper and not organizational culture per se, the introduction of this paper will be restricted to presenting the phenomenon's concept, content, and nature, since these are relevant to understanding the methodological dilemmas in its research.

Understanding the concept of organizational culture includes its definition. However, organizational culture still does not have a unique definition. Some of its definitions are more broadly accepted and more often quoted, but it cannot be claimed that any of the definitions is generally accepted. However, by synthesizing the experiences and elements of all the authors and their definitions, we can come to both a comprehensive and an operational definition of the organizational

culture concept. In this paper the term organizational culture denotes: the system of assumptions, values, norms, and attitudes, manifested through symbols, which members of one organization have developed and adopted through mutual experience, and which help them to determine the meaning of the world surrounding them and how to behave in it. This definition points to some relevant characteristics and elements of the content of organizational culture, which are important for the methodology of its exploration.

Organizational culture content is usually classified into two large groups of elements, which can be observed from the definition: cognitive (assumptions, values, norms, and attitudes) and symbolic elements (materialistic, semantic, and behavioural symbols).

Basic assumptions are the deepest layer of cognitive structures as elements of organizational culture. They have a descriptive function, since they do not explain to the members of an organization the reality that surrounds them. Basic assumptions emerge by long-lasting reapplication of successful solutions to the problems of external adaptation and internal integration, so that these solutions get pushed into the subconscious and transformed from rules of how the problems should be solved into explanations of what the reality of those problems is. Hence, the assumptions can also be divided into assumptions on external adaptation of an organization and assumptions on its internal integration (Schein, 2004). Values, norms, and attitudes represent the prescriptive elements of organizational culture's cognitive content. This means that they, unlike other assumptions which explain the reality of an organization, prescribe, direct, guide, and influence the behaviour of people in that specific reality. Values are certainly the central element of organizational culture's cognitive content (Hofstede, 1990). Probably the best known definition is the one by the author Rokeach (Rokeach, 1973, pp 171), who defined values as a "stable belief that a certain way of behaving or existential state is personally or socially more desirable than the opposite way of behaving or existential state". Norms are rules of conduct, most often informal, that arise from values and represent the directions for everyday behaviour of the members of an organization. Norms significantly overlap with the values from which they emerge on the one hand, as well as with the behavioural practice that they determine on the other hand, (Alavi, Kayworth, Leidner, 2005; De Long, Fahey, 2000; O'Reilly, Chatman, Caldwell, 1991). Attitudes are based on values and arise from them, and they induce a certain behaviour, just like norms do. Attitudes represent beliefs on the object of conduct, which then produce a certain behaviour towards the object (Davis, Rasool, 1995). Attitudes are mostly defined as "cognitive and affective orientations towards some objects and situations"

(Stackman, Pinder, Connor, 2000), or as “bipolar evaluative judgment on some object” (Fishbein, Ajzen, 1975 according to Kundu, 2009), or as “statements of people who show their attitude towards some specific object and who predispose their behavior towards that object” (Luthans, 1998)

The other components of organizational culture content are symbols (Dandridge, Mitroff, Joyce, 1980). Symbols are objects, words, or movements which reflect, strengthen, and convey meanings created by the cognitive elements of a culture and which can initiate emotions or actions among the members of an organization (Kundu, 2009; Rafaeli, Worline, 2000). Symbols are everything that can be seen, heard, or touched in an organizational context. Symbols are all the words, movements, or things which reflect and carry a meaning greater and wider than the one that those words, movements, or things originally have per se. Semantic symbols are all those symbols that can be heard. They are symbols in the form of language and its creations: jargon, metaphors, stories, legends, jokes, anecdotes, and topics. Semantic symbols are language forms that carry meanings wider than the ones they originally had. Behavioural symbols are those that can be seen: different forms of conduct of the members of an organization, which have certain meanings. Behavioural symbols, as well as other types of symbols, also serve to strengthen the organizational culture and convey it to new members of the organization through the process of socialization, but they can also serve to change the existing culture. Of all behavioural symbols two types are most important: behavioural practices and rituals. Material symbols or artifacts are the most noticeable part of organizational culture. They include all the material objects which have, through the process of social interaction in which they have participated or from which they originated as products, assumed some meaning wider and greater than the one they originally had.

Besides content, the character of organizational culture is equally important for the methodology of its research. In the literature a consensus exists when it comes to certain basic characteristics of organizational culture (Alvesson, 2002, Martin, 2002). An important characteristic of culture is that it is a social category, meaning that it exists only within the boundaries of social communities, such as groups, organizations, social layers, professions, and nations, but it does not exist at the level of the individual person. Most authors agree regarding the implications that organizational culture has for a social group and its members. Organizational culture determines the way the members of an organization perceive and interpret the world around them, and thereby the way in which they behave in it. Hence, not only does the culture significantly determine the awareness of the people within an organization, it also determines their decisions, actions,

everyday behaviour, and the way in which they interact. One of the defining characteristics of organizational culture is that it is very specific and unique to the given organization. Just as there are no two identical personalities, there are no two identical organizational cultures. This is because organizational culture arises from the mutual experience of the members of the organization, which is gained over a longer period of time and is, by definition, unique. In this way organizational culture satisfies the human need for identity and distinctiveness in relation to the environment. Organizational culture also gives people a feeling of order, meaning, and consistency as they interpret the surrounding world. Finally, most authors find that organizational culture is a stable category and that it is difficult to change it.

3. METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS IN THE RESEARCH OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Methodological assumptions in the research of organizational culture differ in terms of the basis of the various assumptions the researchers have on the following: the nature of organizational culture, the nature of scientific knowledge, and the way in which it can be obtained. The various and most frequently opposed assumptions that researchers of organizational culture start from when designing their research will be briefly presented.

Organizational culture research differs primarily with respect to the ontological assumptions on which it is based (Creswell, 2009; Martin, 2002). Ontology studies the nature of the phenomena that are being explored. Different ontological assumptions in organizational culture also imply different methods of examination. In organizational culture research two ontological approaches may be observed, which start with completely opposite assumptions, objectivistic and subjectivistic. The objectivistic approach to organizational culture assumes that it exists as a discrete entity: organizational culture is one of the components of an organization, so an organization has a culture, and the culture has its purpose and function. The subjectivistic approach takes as a starting point the attitude that organizational culture is not a distinct entity, separable from reality, but that organizational culture is the reality itself. This is the reason why culture can be comprehended exclusively through a subjective interpretation of its content. It cannot be said that an organization has a culture, but rather that an organization is a culture with no specific purpose of existence.

Epistemology deals with the nature of human knowledge. In organizational culture research at least two opposite blocks may be differentiated, which start with different epistemological assumptions (Eriksson, Kovalainen, 2008; Martin, 2002). These assumptions are closely related to ontological assumptions regarding the very nature of organizational culture. One group of research starts with objectivistic ontological assumptions and includes both positivistic and quantitative research. The assumption is that organizational culture, as a discrete entity, can be positively identified, described, and measured by an objective categorial apparatus independent from it. The research is neutral and the researcher is an objective observer whose task is to describe the culture via representational method. It goes without saying that the researcher keeps his/her distance from the culture, as well as that he/she can be completely objective and neutral, since he/she is the instrument of comprehension. According to the other assumption, based on subjectivistic ontological assumptions, organizational culture cannot be positively identified and measured, but only interpreted. People keep the content of the culture in their minds and the culture does not exist outside of them. Researchers cannot know what is in people's minds, but can only interpret the products of the culture – symbols, behavioural patterns, etc. Culture is explored by understanding, and not by measurement. In order for that to be possible it is necessary for researchers to be a part of the culture, to be subjective and by no means objective observers.

The type and nature of the knowledge about a culture are based on ontological and epistemological assumptions. According to this criterion there are two types of research of culture: etic and emic (Martin, 2002). Etic research, based on the ontological assumptions of objectivism and epistemological assumptions of positivism, is external. The basis for etic research is that the researcher approaches a culture through predefined categories, which he/she will study on the basis of results from previous research. The researcher then predefines the concepts, dimensions, and variables to be studied within a culture, and afterwards develops a questionnaire and quantifies these dimensions and their relations. Emic research, based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions of subjectivism, does not have predefined categories; rather they are established during the research itself and based on input from the members of the organization or the members of the culture explored. Finally, objectivism, positivism, and etic research also include the assumption of universalism, which implies that it is possible to create general knowledge containing general principles and rules that can be applied to all other organizations and their cultures. Subjectivistic assumptions in ontology and epistemology and emic research imply that it is only possible to explore culture contextually, and that knowledge obtained from one culture cannot be

used for the understanding of other cultures. The best we can do is to learn how to interpret a culture in terms of its members' perceptions.

To summarize, there are two basic types of organizational culture research based on two opposing groups of assumptions regarding the nature of the research object, the nature of human knowledge, and the nature of obtaining that knowledge. Objectivistic research starts from objectivistic ontology, positivism in epistemology, and includes etic and universalistic research. In this type of research, sometimes called 'the normal science', the goal is to generalize the conclusions obtained from a relatively small number of cases (Martin, 2002). The scope of cultural elements is sacrificed for the sake of finding precise and replicable measurements of culture, and the research lacks depth. Questionnaires are the most often used method in this type of research. The research quality depends mostly on the knowledge of the researchers in the field of statistics and other quantitative measurement methods. Culture is explored from the outside and the researcher must be objective and keep his/her distance as much as possible. Therefore the researcher must use the passive voice, write in third person, and also 'clear the text from his/her own self', so that no trace of his/her personal imprint exists in the research (this is often done in order to strengthen the arguments laid out in the text, because such depersonalization creates an impression that the Truth itself, and not some researcher, supports these arguments). The great majority of research and papers in the field of social science, and hence also organizational culture, belong to this type of objectivistic research.

The other type of research starts from assumption of subjectivism in ontology and epistemology, and includes emic and contextual research. The idiosyncratic approach is most often used in this type of research, and the purpose of the research is acquiring knowledge about the culture rather than about changing it. Qualitative methods are mostly used – observation, discourse analysis, etc. Culture is explored 'from within', so the researcher must become a part of the culture in order to understand it. The researcher becomes a very important instrument of the research, and reflection becomes a significant part of the process. The quality of the research largely depends on how much the researcher knows himself/herself and on his/her observation skills. The researcher must write the findings in the first person, and introduce the reader to his/her own limitations and explain in which way the results carry his/her personal imprint. The researcher must demonstrate that he/she understands the dynamics between himself/herself and the culture he/she is exploring (Martin, 2002). It is very difficult to publish articles in academic journals (especially in the USA) in which results of this type of research are presented. These journals' editors and reviewers

are educated within the framework of objectivistic scientific assumptions and do not consider anything that cannot be measured and quantified to be scientific. After all, the format and structure of a standard scientific article (literature review, hypotheses, research method, results and discussion, conclusion, limitations, and implications for theory and practice) are more suited to objectivistic than to subjectivistic research.

4. TYPES OF RESEARCH OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Besides ontological and epistemological assumptions, methodological approaches in organizational culture research also differ according to: the content of the organizational culture in focus, the attitude of the researcher toward the object of research, the purpose of the research, the type of research, the possibility for generalization of knowledge, and the attitude of the researcher toward the organization he/she is exploring.

In organizational culture research, two methodological approaches to the part of its content on which they are focused have clearly emerged. According to one methodological approach, the key elements of organizational culture's content are the cognitive categories and they are the focus of research (Alvesson, 2002). On the basis of this approach the organizational culture's cognitive content is essential to the understanding of people's behaviour in organizations. Assumptions, values, norms, and attitudes in organizational culture show how the members of an organization understand the world around them and, more importantly, define their behaviour. According to this approach symbols are just manifestations of cognitive elements and are less important for the understanding of organizational culture. Research that focuses on the cognitive elements of organizational culture is mostly carried out on the basis of objectivistic ontological and epistemological assumptions, by means of quantitative methods and techniques, as well as by application of the universalistic approach. According to the other methodological approach to organizational culture content, organizational culture is meaningful only if it is understood from the perspective of the members of an organization, and that is only possible by means of interpretation of symbols. Research that focuses on symbols is most often based on subjectivistic ontological and epistemological assumptions, and it applies qualitative methods and techniques and both idiosyncratic and ethnographic approaches.

Organizational culture research also differs according to its purpose, i.e. according to the reason why the research is being conducted. According to the

criterion of purpose, there are two types of research. The first type of research is the one conducted with the purpose of acquiring scientific knowledge, also called formative research (Jung et al., 2009). The purpose is an understanding of organizational culture as an intersubjectivistic phenomenon. There is no intention of achieving any practical goals, changing the culture, or managing it for the purpose of accomplishing some interest. The only goal is to find scientific truths about organizational culture, as well as to present these truths in the form of scientific articles in academic journals or in books. The second type of organizational culture research is focused on organizational culture changes and their management, and is called diagnostic research (Jung et al., 2009). This research includes a smaller number of a culture's components, mainly those which belong to superficial cognitive elements (values, norms, and attitudes), as well as less complex symbols (behavioural practices). This is only natural, since changing behavioural practices and norms is more realistic than changing basic assumptions in culture. Also, this research is restricted to only some of the dimensions of behavioural practices and norms. Simplification is a natural consequence of research into a culture with the intention of managing it.

According to the knowledge generalization criterion, organizational culture research may be universalistic or idiosyncratic (Creswell, 2009; Martin, 2002). Universalistic research is conducted on the assumption of possibility, and also realizes the usefulness of the generalization of knowledge about organizational culture. The basic assumption is that the main dimensions of culture are the same in all organizations, that knowledge of them is universal in character, and that it can be generalized and transferred not only from one organization to another, but also from one national context or sector to another. Universalistic research aspires to build a general model of organizational culture: its dimensions, structure, and relation to other variables in organization (leadership, knowledge management), and especially to performance. This model is then applied to other organizations, under the assumption that the characteristics and nature of organizational culture are the same in all organizations. A typical example of universalistic research is the one by which the dimensions of the content are identified and a model of organizational culture content is created. As a rule the research method is quantitative, and the research technique is a questionnaire. By examining a greater number of organizations a model of organizational culture dimensions is created, and based on that model a questionnaire is designed, i.e. an instrument for organizational culture diagnosis. This instrument is then used in all other organizations for exploration (analysis and evaluation) of the cultures within them. In this way, once created, universal knowledge about the dimensions of organizational culture is used to simply determine cultural diagnosis in all other

organizations. The uniqueness and specificity of the organizational culture and its context are disregarded.

There are two basic types of or approaches to universalistic research present in literature: dimensional and typological (Jung et al., 2009; Taras, Roney, Steel, 2009; Ashkanasy, Broadfoot, Falkus, 2000). The dimensional approach to universalistic research focuses on identifying the dimensions of the organizational culture content and their use in identifying the organizational culture profile. This is accomplished based on research conducted on a great number of organizations, by first identifying the typical dimensions of organizational culture content, in order to then develop and validate a standard questionnaire (instrument). Usually behavioural values, norms, or practices are identified as dimensions of a culture and they represent the content of a standard questionnaire. This questionnaire is then used to evaluate other organizational cultures and identify their profiles. A typical example of such research and questionnaire is the Organizational Culture Profile – OCP, developed by O'Reilly and associates (O'Reilly, Chatman, Caldwell, 1991). The other type of universalistic research goes one step further when compared to the dimensional approach. In the typological approach, not only standard organizational culture dimensions but also their types are being determined. Again, this approach is based on establishing, via exploration of a large number of organizations, typical sets of dimensions that make general, universal types of organizational culture. Based on the identified organizational culture dimensions and types, a standard questionnaire (instrument) is also designed. The organizational culture is then explored by categorizing, by means of polling the members of organizations using a standard questionnaire, the type or kind of organizational culture to which the culture of a specific organization belongs. Examples of typological instruments in organizational culture research are Hendy's questionnaire diagnosing organizational culture (Hendy, 1996), the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument, developed as part of the Competing Values Framework (Cameron, Quinn, 2006), and the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI), developed and statistically standardized and validated by the consulting company Human Synergetics (Balthazard, Cooke, Potter, 2006; Cooke, Lafferty, 1987). Each of these questionnaires is based on one typology of organizational culture and classifies a specific organizational culture in one of its types.

The main advantages of universalistic organizational culture research using standard questionnaires are: 1.) research time, i.e. research speed; 2.) comparability of results or organizational culture profile or type with the profile or type of other organizational cultures; 3.) quantification and visualization of

organizational culture characteristics; 4.) implications of organizational culture profile or type on other variables or performances of an organization. The main disadvantages of universalistic research using standard questionnaires are: 1.) the neglect of one of the essential characteristics of organizational culture – its uniqueness and specificity – and of its context and history; 2.) the simplification of organizational culture by categorizing it into predetermined profiles or types, with the possible result of overemphasizing some dimension of the culture that is irrelevant to the specific organization in question and overlooking other very important dimensions. In other words, the universalistic approach offers speed, convenience, and simplicity in organizational culture research at the cost of an accurate, complete, and real picture of the culture in question.

Idiosyncratic organizational culture research starts with the basic assumption that every organizational culture is unique and that it must be explored as such (Creswell, 2009; Martin, 2002). This is the reason why in this research approach there are no generalizations and no drawing of universal conclusions regarding the nature and dimensions of organizational culture. There are no standard questionnaires and no typical profiles or types of organizational culture. Each organizational culture is explored individually, as a separate entity with its own characteristics, history, and context. The research is more profound and complex than the universalistic approach, and encompasses more elements of organizational culture, especially the deeper elements of a culture (presumptions, beliefs). Idiosyncratic research often includes the examination of the history of an organization and its national, sectorial, and institutional context. This research usually includes symbols, which is not the case in universalistic research. However, this research is conducted in a small number of cases (case study) and their results have almost no capacity for generalization. The advantages of this research are precisely the same characteristics which are a disadvantage in universalistic research, and vice versa. The idiosyncratic approach to research offers a comprehensive, real, and accurate picture of organizational culture with all its complexities. It does not, however, offer generalization and comparability of conclusions, and it rarely offers quantification of a culture and implications for other elements of management and performance (although it is not out of the question).

According to the criterion of researchers' attitude toward the organization being explored, we may distinguish two types of research: classical and clinical (Schein, 2004). Classical research is when the researcher keeps his/her distance and is excluded as much as possible from the organization which he/she is exploring. The researcher seeks to ensure his/her neutrality and objectivity with regard to

the object of research, by making sure that he/she has no interest whatsoever in the organization he/she is exploring. The researcher's only interest is scientific understanding. This is why classical research is always formative. Classical research is almost always based on objectivistic ontological and epistemological assumptions, and they explore cognitive elements of culture more often than symbolic elements.

Clinical research was introduced to the science by Schein, who established two basic assumptions of the clinical approach based on his consulting experience: 1.) a social system cannot be explored without interventions being made in it; 2.) social systems are best understood while trying to change them (Schein, 2004). These two assumptions are acknowledged in research conducted by a consultant when trying to help an organization to resolve a problem: clinical research is actually diagnostic research by a consultant attempting to change the organization/client. Schein also asserts that there are two reasons that the most efficient way to obtain knowledge regarding an organization is to try and change it. First, it is only during the implementation of changes that previously hidden presumptions and values of people, as well as their relationships and emotions, surface and reveal themselves. Second, for the success of the research it is far better if the researcher is interested in the success and well being of the organization he/she is exploring, than if he/she is an uninterested objective observer keeping his/her distance. Clinical research is therefore always a diagnostic analysis of the case, and may be objectivistic and subjectivistic, focused on cognitive and symbolic elements of a culture. In this research a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is most often used.

According to the type, research is divided into two groups: comparative analysis and the case study (Creswell, 2009). Comparative analysis involves a larger number of organizations and their members. The sample of organizations being explored and/or the sample of members of the organization being included in the research is determined by following strict rules in order to ensure its representative quality, and thereby both the validity and reliability of the research. Comparative analysis is always based on objectivistic ontological and epistemological assumptions, and it is always quantitative. It almost always focuses on the exploration of the cognitive rather than the symbolic elements of a culture. Obtaining scientific knowledge is always the goal of comparative analysis and it is always universalistic and ethnographic. The outcome of comparative analysis is the testing of previously set hypotheses on the object of research. The hypotheses most often serve to examine assumptions about the existence and nature of relations in the organizational culture. The advantage of comparative

analysis is the possibility of generalizing its conclusions: since the hypotheses are confirmed based on a valid sample of organizations, it can be argued that the relations to which the hypotheses apply also exist in all other organizations in the population. This analysis can also be replicated, i.e. repeated, and thereby the reliability of its conclusions can be tested. The disadvantage of comparative analysis is its relatively small scope and depth of exploration. Because it includes a large number of organizations and of people in them, this research cannot include all elements and layers of the culture, and so it only focuses on some elements and, as a rule, those elements are superficial. In addition, comparative analysis cannot encompass both the context and the history of the organization.

The case study involves researching the organizational culture of just one or a few organizations. In this case both qualitative and quantitative methods are applied to the organizations, and objectivistic and subjectivistic approaches may be combined in the research. The research may have a formative and diagnostic objective or it may be classical and clinical, but it is always idiosyncratic. The goal of research using the case study is not the testing of hypotheses, since this is impossible to do on a small number of organizations. Instead the goal is to explore a specific problem and to generate hypotheses which may later be tested by applying the comparative method of analysis. As a rule this research is profound and comprehensive, since more elements and more layers of the organizational culture in one organization may be explored, and it includes both the history and the context of the organizational culture. The main advantage of the case study over comparative analysis is therefore the depth and scope of the research and the extent of the knowledge obtained. However the disadvantages of the case study are very significant, the main one being the inability to generalize conclusions.

5. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN THE RESEARCH OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Aside from methodological assumptions, research into organizational culture also differs according to the methods and techniques that the researchers use. There are two basic types of research method that researchers use while exploring organizational culture: quantitative and qualitative. These methods are based on different techniques of data gathering and data analysis, although some overlapping may occur (Creswell, 2009; Taras, Rowney, Steel, 2009; Eriksson, Kovalainen, 2008).

Quantitative research uses measurement to obtain knowledge, while qualitative research uses description. Therefore data which may be quantified (expressed by numbers) are gathered by quantitative research methods, and these data can be operated on by quantitative methods of analysis (computation). Quantitative methods are based on a questionnaire for data gathering and on statistical methods of processing. Data which may not be quantified is gathered by qualitative methods and is processed by qualitative methods of analysis. The analysis always focuses on revealing relationship patterns in the research field. In quantitative analysis these patterns are revealed by relations between numbers and in qualitative analysis by relations between the meanings of concepts. Qualitative methods are based on data gathering by means of interviews and observations and on qualitative methods of data analysis: content analysis, discourse analysis, etc.

The advantages of qualitative research methods are: 1.) High degree of flexibility, since feedback information regarding the adequacy of certain questions is easily and quickly obtained, and therefore the questions can be easily adjusted and changed; 2.) Extensiveness and diversity of the data gathered; 3.) Scope and depth of exploration – it encompasses very different elements of a culture in all its layers; 4.) The possibility of performing historical analysis, which is very important for exploration of a culture (Hofstede et al., 1990); 5.) The picture of a culture is based on interpretations by members of the organization.

The disadvantages of qualitative research methods are: 1.) They are time-consuming; 2.) Researchers are always subjective and can seriously affect the results; 3.) Subjectivity of the participants – qualitative methods are sensitive to false statements by the participants, whether given consciously or unconsciously; 4.) The choice of the participants is often limited to those available or to those preferred by the researchers (because they are somehow alike); 5.) Research is an intervention that changes precisely what it examines; 6.) Possibilities for generalization of conclusions and comparison and use of the results in other organizations are limited; 7.) There is no quantification of the conclusions; 8.) Research conclusions are often too complicated and abstract and they have no practical value for the organization. It is particularly unclear how the culture relates to performance; 9.) A capacity for self-reflection and a high level of social skills (listening, communicative skills) are required in the researcher.

The advantages of quantitative research methods are: 1.) They provide quick results; 2.) The methodology exists as pre-prepared (off-the-shelf product) and is easy to use (ready to use, user friendly); 3.) Research methodology is suitable for

commercialization (it can be easily sold); 4.) It is possible to compare, generalize, and transfer conclusions to other organizations; 5.) Results may be quantified, which reinforces their credibility with users (managers and journal editors); 6.) They provide practical recommendations for changing the culture, and the results can be more easily related to organizational performance; 7.) They allow managers to feel that they are the ones who control the culture; 8.) Researchers require less methodological knowledge; 9.) It is possible to replicate and appraise the validity and reliability of the analysis.

The disadvantages of quantitative research methods are: 1.) Rigidity – culture is being classified in previously determined categories, whether these are individual dimensions or types, whereby diversity of detail is lost and the real picture of the culture deformed. There is no possibility of question modification. The research reveals only what is assumed and looked for in advance and the really important questions in culture are lost, while standard, maybe less important, questions are emphasized; 2.) It is not possible to explore different interpretations of the same question because the research is superficial and it is not possible to explore the background of an attitude; 3.) Participants could misunderstand the questions or answer them in accordance with social expectations (socially desirable answers); 4.) The narrow scope and superficiality of research which only focuses on a small number of simple elements in a culture; 5.) There are no possibilities for historical analysis – it is a snapshot of a culture at one moment in time. This tends to give the erroneous impression that culture is static; 6.) There is a problem of validity when used in different contexts - national, sectorial, or time.

Hence, the advantage of qualitative research is the depth and breadth of analysis, and the advantage of quantitative research is the size of the sample and generalization and quantification of results (Martin, 2002). In order to utilize the advantages of both methods, it is possible to combine them and create a hybrid method. A hybrid method would first include completing qualitative research via interviews, observations, and qualitative data analysis. This research would result in a broad, profound, and detailed picture of a small number of organizational cultures, which would also contain their historical evolution and context. Then, based on these results a suitable questionnaire would be chosen or a new, special one designed. This would enable gathering of the data needed for quantitative research and analysis. The final analysis would use both qualitative descriptions of organizational culture and their quantitative measurements. Of course the hybrid method also has its flaws because it combines not only the advantages but also the disadvantages of the qualitative and quantitative methods.

Research techniques include specific research procedures aimed at gathering and processing data about organizational culture. Data gathering techniques are: interviews, observations, questionnaires, and secondary data gathering. Questionnaires are mostly used in quantitative research, and, somewhat less often, in secondary data gathering as well. In qualitative research, observations, interviews, and also secondary data gathering are mainly used (Jung, et al., 2009).

Observations are used for gathering data on the symbols which are analyzed by the qualitative analysis methods. Observations include mostly behavioural material, but also semantic symbols. Observations of behavioural symbols include monitoring and recording the organizational rituals, such as, for example, the celebration of company day as a ritual of integration. When it comes to observations of behavioural symbols it is important that the researcher accurately and completely records the course, roles, and details of a ritual or practice, while not influencing them. When it comes to observation of material symbols, the most prominent problem is their identification, since they are not as apparent as rituals. An especially prominent problem that Martin (2002) points out is the fact that some things are symbols precisely because they have a meaning for a member of organization, but not for an outsider. Data on semantic symbols cannot be gathered through observation, since it also includes listening to stories, myths, anecdotes, and jargon in the organization. Observations are mainly used in combination with other data gathering techniques, and almost never independently. Observations may be made throughout the entire research: before, during, and after interviews and questionnaires.

The interview is a qualitative technique for gathering data on organizational culture. It consists of a conversation between the researcher and the members of an organization. It is, together with the questionnaire, the most often used technique in qualitative research. The interview is a very complex and sensitive technique, which requires high capabilities and skills in the researcher, especially in fields in which researchers traditionally are lacking: social skills, communication skills, self-reflection skills, etc. Interviews are used in organizational culture research for gathering of qualitative data on cognitive elements of a culture, such as presumptions, values, norms, and attitudes. However, interviews may also serve for identification of semantic symbols, because expressions, stories, anecdotes and the like may be recorded through conversation. To successfully utilize interviews in organizational culture research it is important to appropriately determine who will be interviewed, when, where, and how the interview will take place, what will be talked about, and how the conversation will be recorded.

Interviews may be unstructured, structured, and semi-structured, and they may be group or individual.

Secondary data are all those data and documents intended for other purposes, but which may also be used in drawing conclusions regarding the organizational culture. This may be quantitative data which researchers will use in order to draw conclusions regarding organizational culture content and, even more, relations between organizational culture and other variables in an organization. Secondary data, i.e. documents in which they are located, may also be treated as cultural artifacts per se, and may undergo content and other types of analysis. Hence it is often the case that the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) address to a company's shareholders is treated as a symbol and is used for content analysis, based on which conclusions on presumptions and values in organizational culture will be drawn.

Questionnaires are, along with interviews, the most often used technique and also the main quantitative technique for data gathering in organizational culture research. Questionnaires are used within the framework of objectivistic research for the analysis of the cognitive elements of a culture. Questionnaires as a basic technique of quantitative research have all the above-stated advantages and disadvantages of that particular research method. Its key advantages are: coverage of a large number of people and organizations, speed and ease of data gathering, quantification of elements of a culture, simpler establishing of the relations between the culture and other components and performances of an organization, enabling of greater reliability and validity of the research instruments, enabling comparability of results, etc. The main disadvantages are: rigidity and inability of adjusting the questions to the topic and poll participants, sensitivity to question quality (socially desirable answers and other possible deformations), superficiality of the obtained results, inability of performing historical and context analysis. Questionnaires are, like interviews, a demanding form of data gathering. They require the researchers to have significant skills in formulating questions and designing questionnaires, but also a substantial knowledge of quantitative methods of questionnaire processing. Finally, the technical and organizational problems of distribution, filling out, and collecting the questionnaires are by no means insignificant.

Table 1. Instruments for organizational culture research
whose psychometric value is known

Assessing Learning Culture Scale	Competing Values Framework (ipsative) / (Likert scale)
Corporate Culture Questionnaire	(CAOC Approach)
Culture Survey	The Cultural Audit
Cultural Assessment Survey	Cultural Consensus Analysis
Denison Organizational Culture Survey	FOCUS Questionnaire
General Practice Learning Organization Diagnostic Tool	GLOBE Culture Scales
Group Practice Culture Questionnaire	Hofstede's Culture Measure of Organizational Culture
Values Survey Module	Hospital Culture Questionnaire
Hospital Culture Scales	Hospitality Industry Culture Profile
Inventory of Polychronic Values	Japanese Organizational Culture Scale
Norms Diagnostic Index	Nurse Medication Questionnaire
Nurse Self-Description Form	Nursing Unit Cultural Assessment Tool
Nursing Work Index/Nursing Work Index-Revised	Organizational Assessment Survey (MetriTech)
Organizational Assessment Survey (OPM)	Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument
Organizational Culture Inventory	Organizational Culture Profile (Ashkanasy)
Organizational Culture Profile (O'Reilly)	Organizational and Team Indicator
Organizational Culture Survey	Organizational Development Questionnaire
Perceived Cultural Compatibility Index	Perceived Organizational Culture
Personal, Customer Orientation, Organizational and Cultural Issues Model	Questionnaire of Organizational Culture
School Quality Management Culture Survey	School Values Inventory
School Work Culture Profile	Thomas' Questionnaire on Organizational Culture
Time Dimension Scales	Twenty Statements Test
Van der Post Questionnaire	Wallach's Organizational Culture Index
Ward Organizational Feature Scales (Nurses' Opinion Questionnaire)	Women Workplace Culture Questionnaire

Source: Jung, T. et al. (2009), 'Instruments for Exploring Organizational Culture: A Review of the Literature', *Public Administration Review*, November / December.

There are several types of questionnaire, which can be classified into standard and special or custom-made. Standard questionnaires are used in universalistic and comparative research, while custom-made questionnaires are used in idiosyncratic and case study research. Standard questionnaires are mainly developed based on previous research conducted on a greater number of organizations, and then they are checked by means of psychometric methods, after which their validity and reliability is inspected in order for them to be used in all further organizational culture research in other organizations.

The majority of standard questionnaires were developed during the 1990s, since it was then that the organizational culture concept progressed from its first to its second phase of development and matured enough for the instruments for its quantification to be designed. In one piece of research over 120 questionnaires were identified (Taras, Rowney, Steel, 2009), while in another 70 instruments were identified and 48 of them contained psychometric data (validity, reliability) (Jung et al, 2009). Out of these 48 questionnaires internal consistency was proved for 22 of them, 15 of them were unclear, and there was no data for the rest of them. Eight out of those 48 questionnaires had passed the test-retest control, and only 5 showed adequate results. Nine questionnaires provided data based on which it was possible to conform their validity, while for 22 questionnaires it remained unclear whether or not they were valid.

Standard questionnaires most often measure the presence and strength of behavioural values, norms, attitudes, and especially practices in an organization. The reasons for this are numerous, both theoretical and practical. The theoretical reasons come down to Hofstede's finding that organizational cultures differ in their practices, and that national cultures differ in their values (Hofstede, et al., 1990). The practical reasons are numerous: attitudes, norms, and practices are superficial elements of culture and they are appropriate for exploration via questionnaire (especially standard questionnaires), they are appropriate for quantification, they have a direct causal relationship with other organizational elements (style of leadership, motivation), they directly influence the organization's performance, they are easy to change and therefore of great interest to the management. Values, practices, and norms that are the subject of standard questionnaires are usually identified on the basis of extensive earlier research (for example, Hofstede's or O'Reilly's Questionnaire), or on the basis of the experience of the authors of questionnaires (for example, Hendy's Questionnaire), or on the basis of the basic theoretical model that the questionnaire is founded on (for example, the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument by Quinn and Cameron). Some values, practices, norms, and attitudes are repeated in many questionnaires, so

they can be characterized as generally accepted (Jung et al, 2009; Taras, Rowney, Steel, 2009).

Special or custom-made questionnaires are used only in idiosyncratic research and almost always in case studies. Unlike standard questionnaires, these questionnaires are for one-time use only. They are constructed and designed to examine the culture of only one organization and cannot be used for exploration and evaluation of cultures in other organizations. Custom-made questionnaires focus on measuring the presence and strength of those behavioural values, norms, attitudes, and practices that appear only in the organizational culture being explored. These questionnaires are designed based on the assumption that each organizational culture is special, unique, and idiosyncratic, and that it is not possible to understand it by measuring the presence of standard values, norms, or practices identified by research of other organizations. Since we know that organizational culture content consists of its values, norms, and attitudes, the key question in organizational culture research is: which values, norms and attitudes? Standard questionnaires give a simple and quick answer to this question: the standard values and norms identified in earlier research.

Custom-made questionnaires are based on the idea that each organization faces its own, specific issues of external adaptation and internal integration, to which it must find its own answers. In order to develop a special, idiosyncratic questionnaire, the questions or topics must first be identified, and then the answers that the organization gives through its culture to those questions must be revealed. Identifying the topics or questions in an organization which are answered by the content of its culture is mostly performed by qualitative research methods: interviews and observation. This is why a special questionnaire is always preceded by qualitative research, which is not usually the case with standard questionnaires.

The procedure of designing a special questionnaire is repeated from one organization to another, and it is therefore used only once: its content is completely adapted to the specificities, context, and history of one culture, and it cannot be used for analysis and evaluation of another culture. The main advantage of special questionnaires is in the depth and accuracy of the picture of the organizational culture explored. The main disadvantage and limitation of this kind of questionnaire is the impossibility of comparing results, of repetition (replicability), and of evaluating the psychometric features of the questionnaire (validity, reliability). For these reasons custom-made questionnaires are more

often used in clinical research and consulting, as well as in research conducted through case studies.

Techniques of data analysis in organizational culture research may be divided into quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative techniques of analysis consist of processing quantitative data obtained via questionnaire or, somewhat more rarely, obtained via processing of secondary data. Quantitative data processing is most often completed via various methods of statistical analysis, from the simplest to the most complex. In organizational culture research the following statistical methods are most often used: descriptive statistics, variance analysis, regression and correlation, and multivariate analysis method (factor analysis and cluster analysis).

Descriptive statistics methods are the simplest. They consist of determining the arithmetic mean, median, or mode, response frequency and standard deviation in answers to a questionnaire. Variance analysis methods (ANOVA, MANOVA) may be used for testing the hypotheses on the existence of subcultures in organizational culture. Regression and correlation analyses are methods often used for determining the existence and measurement of organizational culture's influence on organizational variables or performance (O'Reilly, Chatman, Caldwell, 1991). Factor analysis consists of determining a hidden pattern underpinning the regularities in data variations. It includes identifying the variables that oscillate together, based on which it may be assumed that the cause of their variations (variances) is one and the same factor. While factor analysis groups the variables into factors, cluster analysis groups participants into groups, or clusters. By revealing mutual characteristics of the participants in one cluster, the reason or criterion for their grouping may be determined. This kind of analysis is an excellent method for determining the existence of and identifying subcultures. All these statistical methods, as well as many others, are relatively simple to perform today with the help of statistical software packages, such as SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Qualitative analysis techniques are also numerous and various, but they require different types of skill and knowledge than quantitative methods (Creswell, 2009; Eriksson, Kovalainen, 2008, Mitchell, 2007). Ethnographic analysis refers to analysis of data obtained by means of observation and interviews. Ethnographic analysis is a systematization of researchers' experiences obtained on the basis of interviews and the observation of the people in an organization, in which data are also being reduced, grouped, and interpreted. The researcher can and should add his/her own reflections and observations and extract something from the

behaviour, words, expressions, decisions, gestures, and motions that not even the members of the organization are aware of. This analysis is the basic way to identify the topics and issues around which the culture of the entire organization is built.

Narratives are all kinds of stories told in an organization and which convey some message: stories, legends, myths, jokes, managers' biographies, formal descriptions and documents of the organization, the organization's history, etc. (Lynch, 2007). Analysis of narratives in the organization may reveal meanings that members of the organization assign to certain people, events, or occurrences in and around the organization. Therefore, analysis of narratives may, just like ethnographic analysis, serve to identify important topics in the life of the organization, as well as the meanings assigned to those topics by its members. These topics may then be used to create a picture of the organizational culture content, and also to design questionnaires for the hybrid research method.

Discourse analysis is the analysis of meaning which stories and other semantic symbols convey, as well as the analysis of social action which emerges from those stories (Lynch, 2007). All definitions of discourse are focused on the connection, order, and pattern of meaning contained in narratives and other semantic symbols. Hence, discourse analysis is focused on revealing the pattern in many different semantic symbols in different time and space. This time and space scope is what differentiates discourse analysis from narrative analysis, which is limited to only one time and one space. Discourse analysis reveals meanings that make the content of organizational culture by connecting a number of individual meanings with more semantic symbols, which then appear in different places, different forms, and different time.

The goal of historical analysis is to reveal the historical context of the development of the organization and its culture. Many authors indicate the importance of revealing the historical sequence of events for understanding the culture (Schein, 2004; Alvesson, 2002). After all, the emergence and development of organizational culture always includes gaining experiences and learning in specific time. Historical analysis by itself cannot identify meanings in organizational culture, but it can help a great deal in putting the meanings identified by other methods into a historical context and so help them to be understood in the right way.

6. TWO PRINCIPAL METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN THE RESEARCH OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

By summarizing the overview of the basic research assumptions, types, and methods, it can be concluded that two general approaches in the research of organizational culture have so far been differentiated: objectivistic-quantitative and subjectivistic-interpretative. The main characteristics and differences between the two approaches may be observed in the Table 2.

The objectivistic and quantitative research approach is based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions of objectivism and positivism, and results in classical, comparative, universalistic, and quantitative research of the cognitive elements of organizational culture. It is assumed that organizational culture is, as a social category, an ‘object’ existing independently of people, which has some function in an organization and may undergo changes and management. Culture is treated as a discrete entity and in most cases as a collective cognitive structure of the members of an organization. Through research and comparison of a larger number of organizations, an effort is made to reveal the universal regularities and principles according to which the culture functions, in order to direct it to positively influence the achievement of the organization’s goals. The researcher must keep his/her distance, and be neutral and objective towards the object of research. Culture is researched mostly in order to gain general knowledge which is applicable in a number of cases, and not in order to help a specific organization. The principal research method is quantitative, and it relies on polling by means of questionnaires and processing the questionnaire results by statistical methods.

Table 2: Principal methodological approaches in the research of organizational culture

Approaches Criteria	Objectivistic-quantitative	Subjectivistic-qualitative
Ontological and epistemological assumptions	Objectivistic, positivistic, etc	Subjectivistic, emic
Object of research	Cognitive structures	Symbols
Generalization of research	Universalistic	Idiosyncratic
Purpose of research	Formative	Diagnostic
Involvement of researchers	Classical	Clinical
Time of research	Comparative analysis	Case study
Method of research	Quantitative	Qualitative
Data gathering techniques	Questionnaires, secondary data	Observations, interviews
Analysis technique	Statistical methods	Ethnographic analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, historical analysis

The subjectivistic and qualitative approach is based on subjectivistic, ontological, and epistemological assumptions, and it results in subjectivistic and idiosyncratic research, case studies, and clinical and qualitative research. Culture is treated as an inseparable feature of the social entity, which researchers cannot observe and study from a distance. Consequently the research of the culture is only possible by revealing its meaning for its members, and this is done through symbols. The purpose of research is not to provide a positive influence of culture on performance, since culture cannot be changed and managed at the will of the organization's managers. The researcher must be deeply involved in the culture in order to be able to explore it, and research is always done only on individual cases. Since the knowledge of the culture is deeply contextual it cannot be transferred from one organization to another, and therefore there is no comparison or generalization of research results. Research is based on qualitative methods, mostly observation and interviews, as well as on qualitative methods of analysis.

7. THE HYBRID APPROACH IN THE RESEARCH OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Both general methodological approaches in the research of organizational culture identified in the previous discussion have their advantages and disadvantages, and they are rarely, in their pure form, suitable for the goals and object of research in a specific research design. This is why in organizational culture research it is often the case that hybrid research methods are applied. The hybrid approach combines characteristics and features of the previously described basic methodological approaches to organizational culture research. The aim of hybridization in methodology is not only to use the advantages and avoid the disadvantages of the pure methods, but also to adjust specific research design to the object of the research and the style of the researcher (Creswell, 2009; Martin, 2002).

Objectivistic and subjectivistic research approaches may be combined in different ways, which means that a number of different hybrid methods in organizational culture research can be identified. When specific research is being designed the researcher is relatively free to combine in different ways the assumptions, types, and methods of the objectivistic and subjectivistic approaches. The researcher may combine qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques, comparative research and case studies, formative and diagnostic research, as well as research of the cognitive and symbolic elements of a culture. However some dimensions of the two principal methodological approaches are mutually exclusive. The researcher cannot start with both objectivistic and subjectivistic epistemological assumptions. Also, it is not possible for the research to have

universalistic and idiosyncratic characteristics and distinctive features of both clinical and classical research at the same time. In the following text one of the possible hybrid designs of organizational culture research will be briefly presented. Its basic characteristics are summarized in Table 3.

The hybrid approach to organizational culture research would include objectivistic, positivistic, and etic research, which would start from the assumption of a culture as a discrete social entity having a specific function in an organization and which cannot be comprehended objectively. Culture is explored as an entity made of cognitive and symbolic elements that are equally important for its understanding. The hybrid approach includes idiosyncratic research, which starts with the assumption that culture is unique and that knowledge about the culture is contextual. Hence every organizational culture must be explored as unique and the knowledge about one culture cannot be used for generalization and typification of other cultures. This hybrid approach to organizational culture research always includes clinical research which is focused on helping a specific organization and not on general acquisition of knowledge. The researcher is in close relationship with the organization and he/she is trying to solve some of its problems, whereby organizational culture is a part of the problem and/or a part of the solution. This kind of hybrid research is always conducted as a case study and not as comparative analysis of a larger number of organizations. The key feature of the hybrid approach to organizational culture research is the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Thus all the available resources are used as methods of data gathering: questionnaires, observation, interviews, and secondary data. It is very important to note that in this research design only custom-made, and not standard, questionnaires will be used. Also, in data analysis both quantitative (statistic) and qualitative methods are used.

Table 3. A hybrid methodological approach to organizational culture research.

Criteria	Hybrid approach
Ontological and epistemological assumptions	Objectivistic, positivistic, etic
Object of research	Cognitive structures and symbols
Generalization of research	Idiosyncratic
Purpose of research	Formative and diagnostic
Involvement of researcher	Clinical
Time of research	Case study
Method of research	Quantitative and qualitative
Data gathering techniques	Questionnaires, secondary data, observations, interviews
Analysis technique	Statistical methods, Ethnographic analysis, narratives analysis, discourse analysis, historical analysis

The application of this kind of hybrid research design includes the following steps:

1. Entry into the organization. In the first step the researcher gets acquainted with the organization, obtains the permit to enter it and diagnose the organizational culture, and makes the research plan. Organizational culture research may be the only content of a research or consulting project, but it may also be a part of a bigger project in which culture is just one of the components being explored and/or improved.
2. Interviewing, observation. The first step in data gathering is interviewing the managers and employees in an organization. Interviews should include managers and employees at all hierarchical levels, of different ages, sex, educational degree, and fields of education. The choice of people to be interviewed is conducted in cooperation with the client (CEO, Human Resources Manager and the like). During interviews the researcher takes notes, which he/she then systemizes, processes, and enters into a computer. During the interview the researcher makes observations which he/she also notes in his/her notebook, and then systemizes and processes. At the end of this step in the research the researcher systemizes the knowledge obtained from interviews, and thus prepares it for analysis.
3. Qualitative analysis and questionnaire design. The suggested hybrid research design includes designing and using special, custom-made questionnaires, created for the purpose of research of only one organizational culture. The custom made questionnaire is designed based on the results obtained from the interviews and observations made in the organization which is being explored. By qualitative methods of analysis, such as content analysis and narrative or historical analysis, the researcher identifies issues which significantly define the organizational culture of the company. The questionnaire is designed by transforming the issues identified in the interviews and observations into questions, which serve to investigate the attitudes of the members of the organization on given topics. In this step, the sample and the organization of distribution, filling out, and collecting of the questionnaires are planned.
4. Distribution and collecting of the questionnaires, data entering, and data processing. The best way of filling out a questionnaire is to have all the employees fill it out at the same time and in the same place, under the supervision of the researcher himself/herself, and then returned directly to the researcher. Another option is to distribute the questionnaires to the employees and instruct them to fill them out within a specific deadline, and then return them directly to the researcher. In an organizational sense this is the simplest method, but the degree of filling out the questionnaires and returning them, as well as the quality of the filling out itself, is significantly lower. Managers need to be

excluded from the process of handing out and collecting the questionnaires, in order to provide a perception of discretion and confidentiality of data among the employees. The responses in the questionnaires are then coded and entered into the computer.

5. Quantitative analysis of the results of questionnaires. In the next step, quantitative processing of the answers from the questionnaires is done by means of using the following statistical methods: descriptive statistics, variance analysis, factor analysis, and cluster analysis. It is possible to use different software packages to process the results; for example, SPSS.
6. Final analysis and drawing conclusions. At the end the findings of the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the organizational culture are summarized. If necessary analyses are repeated,, and conclusions are made on the content, structure, and characteristics of the organizational culture. In these conclusions the values, norms, and attitudes which comprise the content of the organizational culture are identified and defined. If subcultures exist in the organization they are also identified, together with their content and differences. The relations and implications that the organizational culture may have on the other variables of organization (leadership, conflicts, motivation, communication) as well as on organizational performance, are also identified. The analysis very often reveals the causes of existing cultural values and norms.
7. Designing the plan for changing the organizational culture. If the research was part of a consulting project, the final analysis and conclusions regarding the organizational culture content and characteristics are not themselves the goal, but are a means of developing suggestions for necessary management action to improve the organizational culture. Recommendations include necessary changes to values, norms, and attitudes of employees, how the changes should be conducted, who should be the carriers of the changes, and the means and time frames of the changes. Therefore the recommendations for changes in the organizational culture have all the features of an action plan. The organizational culture analysis and the plans for change are presented in the form of a report containing qualitative marks and quantitative data and all figures and graphics. This report is then presented to the organization's management and, with their approval, to other members of the organization.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Organizational culture research is characterized by the remarkable complexity and diversity of the methodology applied in the course of the research. The reason for this is the multidimensionality and complexity of organizational culture

itself. In previous research of organizational culture, two general but mutually opposed methodological approaches have emerged: objectivistic-quantitative and subjectivistic-qualitative. These two approaches are based on opposite ontological and epistemological assumptions; they include different types of research and use opposite, quantitative vs. qualitative, methods of research. Each of the methodological approaches has its advantages and disadvantages. The main advantages of the objectivistic methodological approach are generalization, comparability, and the practical application of the conclusions that result. In addition these methods can be tested for reliability and validity. On the other hand the objectivistic methodology of organizational culture research reduces and simplifies the picture of organizational culture, looks at it out of the context and time in which it has emerged and changed, and does not recognize it as unique. The subjectivistic methodological approach ensures that organizational culture is treated in all its uniqueness, complexity, and depth, that it is observed in time and context and from the angle of those to whom it is the most important: the members of the organization. However these research methods generate knowledge of organizational culture which cannot be generalized and compared and which is difficult to apply in practice. Also, these methods cannot be easily tested and evaluated by the criteria of reliability and validity. The choice between the objectivistic and subjectivistic methodological approaches to organizational culture research is not an easy one, because it involves significant sacrifices on the part of the researchers. By choosing just one methodological approach all the advantages of the other approach are lost. Therefore a hybrid approach emerges as a legitimate choice in organizational culture research methodology. It combines elements of both subjectivistic and objectivistic methodological approaches according to the goals, content, and context of the research and preferences of the researcher himself/herself. Since it is possible to combine the two principal methodological approaches in various ways there are several possible hybrid methodologies in organizational culture research. Each of them is legitimate as long as the researcher is not making unallowed combinations of methods, is aware of all the characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of his/her research design, and makes this public to interested readers.

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