

Creating an Organisational Culture in an Event Organisation

CASE: SELL Student Games 2020

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ABSTRACT

Lahti University of Applied Sciences is organising an international student sports event SELL Student Games. The event takes place 15.-17.5.2020. The main objective of the thesis is to help the commissioning company create a professional organisational culture for the future sports event organisation. Another objective is to provide more information about organisational culture in an event organisation and also what opportunities and challenges multicultural work community experience.

The thesis starts with an introduction where the research questions are introduced. Second chapter provides more information about different organisations. Theories of organisational culture are explained together with empirical data. Finally, the conclusion part answers the research questions and introduces further recommendations.

The qualitative method and deductive approach are used for the study. Data is collected by primary sources as interview and secondary sources as relevant books and articles. Interviews are carried out by semi-structured interviews with leaders in event organisations.

Based on the main finding, organisational culture is created by individuals and it is affected by all the factors that organisational culture includes. The sum of individual's, common and target values have effect on the organisational culture.

Key Words: organisational culture, multicultural work community, event organisation, project organisation

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 | Research background | 1 |
| 1.2 | Thesis objectives, research questions and limitations | 2 |
| 1.3 | Theoretical and empirical framework | 3 |
| 1.4 | Research methodology and data collection | 4 |
| 1.5 | Thesis structure | 5 |
| 2 | PROJECT ORGANISATION | 7 |
| 2.1 | Event organisation | 7 |
| 2.2 | Voluntary organisation | 9 |
| 2.3 | Teal organisation | 11 |
| 2.4 | SELL Student Games | 13 |
| 3 | ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE | 15 |
| 3.1 | Main theories | 15 |
| 3.2 | Multicultural work community | 20 |
| 3.3 | Motivation | 22 |
| 3.4 | Creating an organisational culture | 24 |
| 4 | CONCLUSION | 27 |
| 4.1 | Findings | 27 |
| 4.2 | Reliability and validity | 29 |
| 4.3 | Further research recommendations | 30 |
| 5 | SUMMARY | 32 |
| | REFERENCES | 33 |
| | APPENDICES | 37 |

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Every organisation has an organisational culture even if it is subconscious (Sinokki 2016, 191). Organisational culture is the heart of the organisation and it determines the organisation's characteristics. According to Schein (1991, 22) different organisations create their own cultures, which effect the personnel's way of thinking and acting. Leaders are the key authors in creating the organisational culture. Organisational culture unites people and has an effect on their productivity. (Manninen 2016.) The thesis focuses on understanding what is the meaning of organisational culture, how it originates and which factors affect to it. That is important before implementing any theories in practice.

The thesis was commissioned by Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK). The author's own interest about the concept of organisational culture and the commissioning company's needs brought this idea together. There are a lot of studies about organisational culture and leadership but none on how to create the culture especially in an event organisation. Event organisations' changing environment cause challenges for creating common organisational culture. The thesis is valuable for project and event organisation managers who want to develop their organisational culture.

LAMK will be the host school for SELL Student Games in May 2020. The project is planned to be fully organised by students. The event organisation which is collected for the first time, needs guidelines on how to create a professional organisational culture quickly and how a multicultural work community functions under pressure. The new organisation has to start planning the different processes for the event in beginning of 2019. The future human resource manager can use these research findings in the recruitment process. (Leppä 2018.)

The thesis process started in May 2018 by finding the relevant sources (books and articles). The writing was scheduled from August 2018 to November 2018. The scheduled return date is 13th of November.

1.2 Thesis objectives, research questions and limitations

The main objective of the thesis is to help the commissioning company create a professional organisational culture for the future sports event organisation. The second objective is to provide more information about organisational culture in an event organisation and also in multicultural work community. The thesis gives the main rules and values for a successful organisational culture. This research is important for the new event organisation in creating a professional culture between the teams.

The main research question comes from the research idea and this is followed by sub-questions. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 43.) The main research question in the thesis is:

- How to create a successful organisational culture in an event organisation?

In addition to the main question, the study has sub-questions. The sub-questions are:

- How do cultural differences shape the organisation?
- Which factors influence the organisational culture?
- How could the leaders engage and motivate employees?

The limitations of the thesis are that it focuses on the specific event organisation SELL Student Games 2020 in Lahti. The event will be held by Lahti University of Applied Sciences. Although students will be the organisers in the event, they have been excluded from the thesis, so that the research can be used in other projects and event organisations in future.

Students and volunteers work mostly from internal motivation. The thesis focuses only on intrinsic motivation, because SELL Student Games 2020 organisation wants to have people who are passionate about events and projects. Extrinsic motivation occurs when people work because they have to (Cherry 2018). In this case, external rewards would be school credits or money.

1.3 Theoretical and empirical framework

Theory answers the research question and supports the research process. Research, based on theory, causes effective results. (Saunders et al. 2012, 46-47.) The thesis is based on both theoretical and empirical research and applies the zipper model. It means that the empirical data (interview results) has been embedded to theory logically. Zipper model is reader friendly because one topic is handled at a time. (Vuorijärvi & Boedeker 2006, 7-9.)

The thesis includes the introduction of different project organisations and the basic information about the case event. The main theories of an organisational culture and how to create it in an event organisation are studied in the main theoretical part. In addition to that, multicultural work community will be introduced. The main problems are a quick creation of an organisational culture, leading multicultural work community and changing environment of an event organisation. The chosen literatures are current articles and mix of older and new theories of an organisational culture. Main theories of organisational culture are explained in more detail in Chapter 3.1.

Empirical part of the research is collected by interviews. The chosen theme interview method is semi-structured. Questions will be the same for all respondents but the order of questions and the tone of voice may vary in interviews. The audio of interviews will be recorded so that the answers stay reliable. The interview material will be deleted after the thesis process. The interviews are carried out face-to-face and, if necessary, by email, with six people who are or have been leaders in different event

organisations. (Saunders et al. 2012, 374.) The interviews are scheduled to be completed in October 2018. Interview questions are in the thesis APPENDIX 2.

1.4 Research methodology and data collection

The utilized research approach, research method and data collection methods for the thesis are shown in Figure 1.

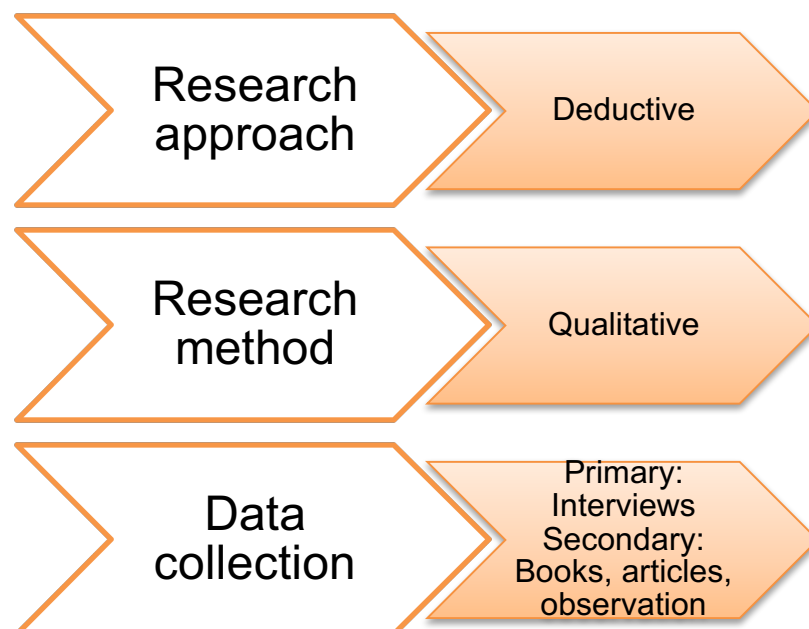


FIGURE 1. Research methodology and data collection

Research means that you have a clear purpose to find out more information about a topic and to increase knowledge for readers. Research data is collected logically and interpreted systematically. (Saunders et al. 2012, 4-5.)

There are three different research approaches: deductive, inductive and abductive. Deductive approach tests the theory (theory to data), inductive builds the theory (data to theory) and abductive combines both. (Saunders et al. 201, 144-147.) The thesis applies deductive approach and leans on existing theory.

There are also three different research methods: quantitative, qualitative and combination of both. These methods are data collection techniques, but each differs from the other in order that quantitative focuses on numerical data and the main data comes from questionnaire and statistics. Qualitative focuses on non-numerical data such as words and images which come mainly from interviews. There is a way to analyse, for example, the quantitative questionnaire in a qualitative way which means that both methods are used. (Saunders et al. 2012, 161-164.) The thesis applies qualitative method.

Data can be collected by using primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected directly for the current purpose. Secondary data have already been gathered for some other purpose by others and it can be analysed further in the current research. Primary source for quantitative method is questionnaires and for qualitative method interviews. Secondary sources are earlier published books, articles and discussions written or electronic sources. (Saunders et al. 2012, 304 & 331.) In the thesis, primary data is collected by interviews and secondary data is collected from books, articles and observation.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis consists of five parts. Empirical research has been embedded to theory in the theoretical parts of the thesis in Chapter 2 and 3. The structure of the thesis is presented in Figure 2.

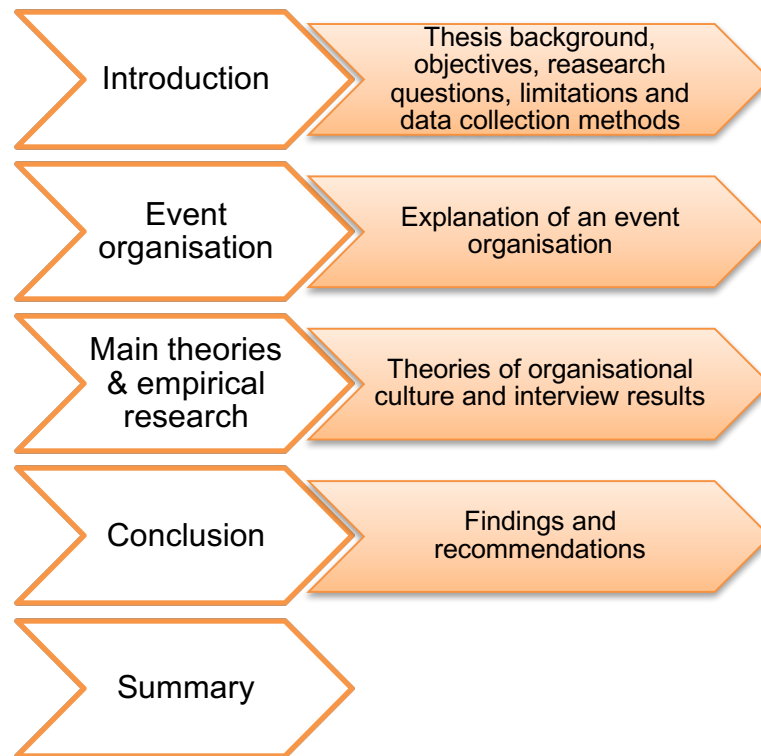


FIGURE 2. Thesis structure

The introduction part of the thesis explains the topic of the thesis and the motivation behind it. It also opens the thesis objectives, research questions and limitations. Then, theoretical and empirical framework are explained and finally the data collection methods are shown.

Chapter 2 explains the characteristics of an event organisation, voluntary organisation and teal organisation. Also, the event, hosted by the case company, and its objectives are introduced.

The theories of an organisational culture are clarified in Chapter 3. And also, how motivation effects and what are the opportunities and challenges of multicultural work community. The interview results are embedded to theory in Chapter 3 so that the reader can focus on one topic at a time.

The conclusion part pulls the thesis together and answers the research questions. Lastly, the summary is found in Chapter 5.

2 PROJECT ORGANISATION

2.1 Event organisation

Event organisations are mainly always project organisations. Project organisation is created for one project or event. The project or event and the planning process can take from days to years, depending on the size of the project or event. Projects and events always have a starting point, implementation and ending. Most of the event organisations have the same organising culture. The employees may change every time in different projects and events even if the employees are from the same organisation. (Shone & Parry 2004, 190; Leppä 2018.) All the interviewees agreed that event organisations are people-driven. The events are made by people for people. Employee turnover is huge in event organisations and it causes challenges. Interviewee 3 points out below:

“In an event organisation, the core team is small and it grows closer to the event and then after the event it becomes smaller again.”

Usually the core organisation stays the same and starts the planning process. The core team is responsible of organising and supervising the employees and volunteers who come to work to the event. (Shone & Parry 2004, 191.)

There are similar management processes between projects and events (Shone & Parry 2004, 165). Figure 3 presents the activities of event and project management.



FIGURE 3. Event and project activities (Shone & Parry 2004, 165)

Event and project management activities include five levels, Figure 3. First, it is important to get the project started. The objectives of the event or project should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Second level is the planning and defining the critical tasks that are important for the success of the event or project. For example, finding a venue that the preparation can start. Risk management is part of the planning process. Third level contains preparation and production. That includes, for example, venue decoration and construction work. In fourth level, everything should be ready and the event or project is carried out. And lastly, the end of the event or project is divestment. Feedback and results are collected at this point. There is an ending to every event and project but sometimes the same event or project can be implemented again with same personnel. Then, the planning starts from the beginning. (Shone & Parry 2004, 165-166.)

Every event organisation is different. The organisational structure, personnel, procedures and organisational culture vary in every event organisation. There are usually five main departments in every event organisation: administration, finance, marketing and operations which is divided to visitor and support services. Administration department helps with personnel matters, it is the human resource back office. Finance department deals with budgets, invoices and accounts. Marketing department is in charge of the visibility of the event and in some cases sales activity. Operations departments are responsible of visitors and their support, for example, entry services and catering. (Shone & Parry 2004, 190-191.)

Event and project organisations may sometimes be complex because of the number of employees and outsourced companies (Shone & Parry 2004, 191-192). Interviewee 2 and 3 point out below:

“Some kind of hierarchy is good in event organisations that employees know their own areas.”

“Hierarchy should be light and flat in event organisations, but own areas have to be known.”

Usually the event organisations have organisational structure that includes positions and roles for employees and volunteers, the nearest cooperation teams and reporting directions. It does not mean that the decision making happens only at the top. Depending on the structure, usually the responsibilities are divided in all areas of organisation. (Mallen & Adams 2008, 36.) Leadership skills are very important in event organisations because of the various changes and hectic working environment.

2.2 Voluntary organisation

Voluntary organisation is one form of organisations. Voluntary work means that employees do not get any salary or other external rewards. If the organisation gives material incentives, they are small-scale for example t-shirts. Voluntary work is almost always open for everyone meaning that

recruitment process is different to other organisations' recruiting process. The vision of voluntary organisation is to create the feeling that people do things and work together that leads to meaningful goals. (Kuuluvainen 2015, 9.) Interviewee 3 point out below:

“Volunteers come to work on their leisure time because they want to and then they meet same minded people.”

The planning of voluntary work includes the specification of goals, understanding the motives of volunteers, creating a common vision, communication style and identity, sharing of tasks and the support of development and know-how of volunteers. The planning can be done together with all employees that everyone will understand the vision of the organisation. (Kuuluvainen 2015, 10.)

According to Mallen and Adams (2008, 56) there are four levels of volunteers. Figure 4 shows the levels of volunteers in sport event organisation.

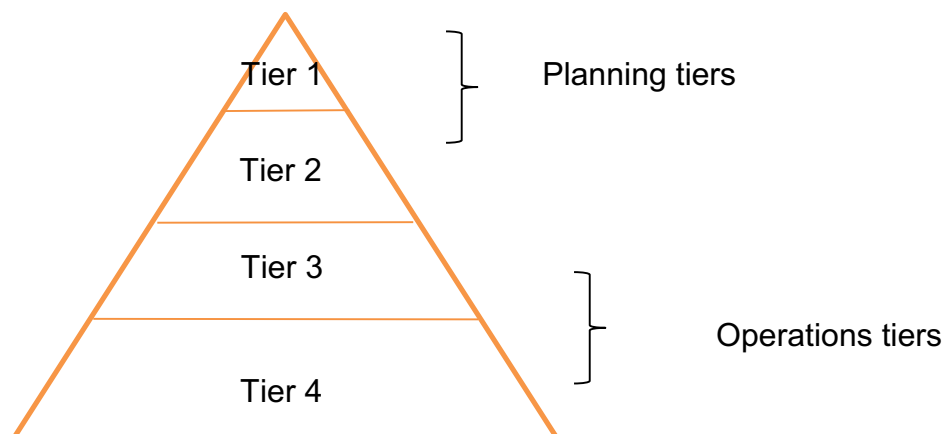


FIGURE 4. Volunteer tiers within a sport event organisation (Mallen & Adams 2008, 56)

In Figure 4, the planning tier is for executive and managerial volunteers. Tier one includes executive volunteers who are responsible of leadership and develop vision and mission. Tier two includes managerial volunteers who are in charge of the major parts. Team leaders are managerial part of the event organisation. In some projects, executive and managerial volunteers are permanent employees. They are the core organisation for the project and maintain the project from year to year. (Mallen & Adams 2008, 55.)

The operation tier is for staging and games-time volunteers. Tier three includes staging volunteers who are responsible for the short-term preparations before the event and operations in the event. Tier four includes games-time volunteers who work only in the event. They are called event employees and they are the visible tier in the event. (Mallen & Adams 2008, 56.)

Professionally managed volunteering is the closest form to event organisation. There is paid employees and volunteers working. Everyone is treated equally and they know their own areas and what to do. Employees may have a leader or they are a self-guided team. The goals of the group and the whole organisation are clear and systematic. Rules and procedures are important but hierarchy can be light. The risk management and open communication are criteria for the progression of the organisation. External rewards are for example training or other small-scale awards but usually internal pleasure from the work is enough. (Kuuluvainen 2015, 24.) Volunteering is a group work. It helps to decrease loneliness and generates social skills. (James 2018.)

2.3 Teal organisation

Organisations should adapt new things all the time if they want to stay on the market. Laloux introduces the new organisational structure, teal organisation. There are no leaders, no hierarchy and no strategy. Working processes are led by self-organised teams and organisational purpose. The teams themselves make an agreement of the assignments and goals.

Employees do not have different roles for work and leisure. Organisation allows also the sensitive feelings that effects the individual's work. (Tammilehto 2015.)

In teal organisations, coordinating does not need executive meetings because teams have open communication style in everyday life. The management is simplified, employees place themselves to the different work assignments. (Laloux 2014, 327.) Team members have changeable roles, they do not have job titles. For example, recruitment interviews are carried out by the teams, the applicant gets to know the future colleagues already in the interview. The criteria for applicants are that they are suitable for the organisation; the job description does not need to fit but the purpose of the organisation. (Laloux 2014, 328.)

Team performance and collective training are common factors in teal organisations. Peer pressure makes sure that everyone reaches the goals. Employees help each other and the atmosphere gives space also for mistakes. Employees can safely say, if they are not reaching the goals on time. Flexibility in working hours and ways of doing motivates and encourages the employees to do the work. (Laloux 2014, 328.)

The decisions are decentralised. Everyone in the organisation is responsible for the decision-making process. There are some meetings where employees check that everyone is on the same page and everyone's voice is heard. Information is available for all, transparency leads the values. Values and vision are clear for all the employees because they are discussed often. (Laloux 2014, 329.)

There are similarities between teal and event organisations; purpose of the work and passion for it. Decision-making in event organisations can be divided in all areas as in teal organisation. The core organisation in event organisation could be also part of the recruitment process, not only the human resource department. Usually the roles for work and leisure are the same also in event organisations, mostly because volunteers work in events in their leisure time. The biggest difference is that teal

organisations do not have any hierarchy but event organisations usually have some structure. Teal organisation model could be used in event organisations.

2.4 SELL Student Games

SELL Student Games is an international student sports event. The name of the event, SELL comes from the organising countries in their own language: Finland (Suomi), Estonia (Eesti), Latvia (Latvija), Lithuania (Lietuva). Each organising country takes turns in arranging the games every fourth year. The Finnish student sports federation selects the organising school from applicants. University students all around the world can take part in the games. There are no level requirements so it will be a mix of amateurs and champions. (Opiskelijoiden Liikuntaliitto 2018.)

Lahti University of Applied Sciences will be the organiser for the first time in the event which takes place in May 2020. The slogan for the 2020 event is Light the Fire. The project starts in 2019 and the organisation will be created, expanded and resourced during the year. The future event organisation will be created by students and it is three-level organisation. The top level will include three different project managers, the second level will be the team leaders and the third level will be the team members in different tasks. (Leppä 2018.)

The initial sports will include: athletics, martial art (judo, wrestling, boxing), physical strength sports (weightlifting, kettlebell, cross training), ball games (volleyball, football), winter sports (ski jumping, roller ski), forest sports (orienteering, trail running), throwing sports (frisbeegolf, mölkky), electronic sport and demonstration sports (Finnish baseball, roller derby, lacrosse) (Lahden Ammattikorkeakoulu 2017).

The objectives for 2020 event are: multidisciplinary cooperation between Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Lahti City, sport associations and businesses, international sports event implementation, customer oriented experience for target groups (athletes, spectators, agents, guests) and to

familiarise student sports and local sport clubs. The project focuses on multidisciplinary student learning and developing the know-how in different fields. (Lahden Ammattikorkeakoulu 2018.)

SELL Student Games 2020 event will have both international and multicultural activity because the organisation will gather Lahti UAS students and participants from different countries. The working language will be English. (Leppä 2018.)

3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

3.1 Main theories

The main characteristics of national and organisational culture are important to understand before implementing any theories in practice. Chosen theories for the thesis are mix of older and new theories.

Culture in general is specified as a must for efficient human interaction. Even a few people together develop some common behaviour and language. (Mäkilouko 2003, 17.) National culture consists of models of thinking, feeling and acting and this is experienced individually (Hofstede 1992, 19). Hofstede (1992, 21-22) divides culture into three different levels, with each linking to the other (Figure 5).

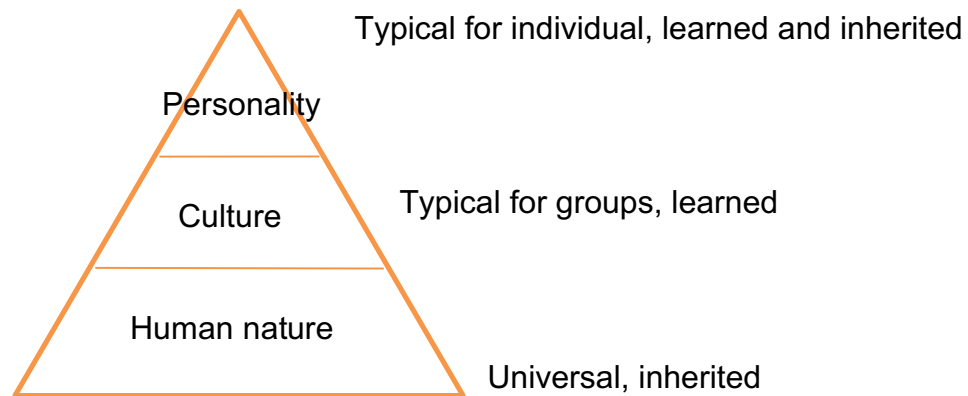


FIGURE 5. Three levels of mental programming (Hofstede 1992, 22)

Human nature is at the bottom of the pyramid, in Figure 5, and it is the same for everyone. It is the ability to feel love, fear, anger, happiness and to observe the environment. Culture in the middle of the pyramid is learned. Culture regulates how to express the feelings and what to do with them. Personality at the top of the pyramid is genetic and it is based on individual's personal traits. Culture should be separated from individual's

personality but individual's culture still has effect on the group behaviour and organisational culture. (Hofstede 1992, 21-22.) Figure 6 shows the differences between national and organisational culture.

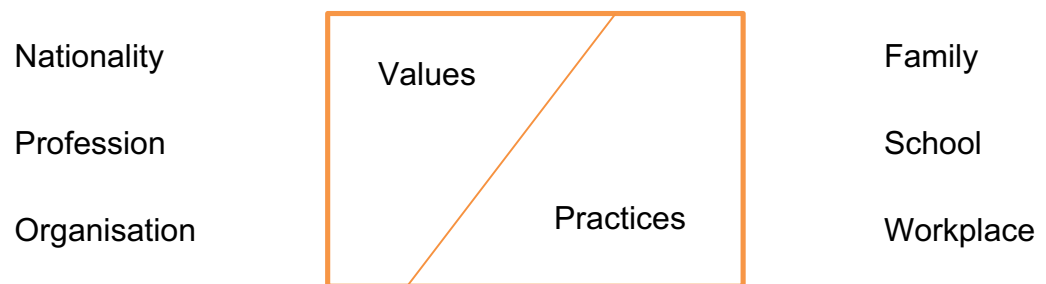


FIGURE 6. The characteristics of cultural differences (Hofstede 1992, 261)

On the left side, in Figure 6, are the levels of cultures. There are many different nationalities and national cultures in the world. National cultural differences between people are more in the area of values and less in practices. National features decrease, when individual moves towards professional level. Individual's need to accept organisation's culture in organisational level. In that level, the differences occur in practices and less in values. Different organisations usually have more similar values than procedures. Profession is between the nationality and organisation because values and practices must be adopted in that level. (Hofstede 1992, 261.)

On the right side, in Figure 6, are the places where learning happens. Values are adopted in childhood with family and later in school. Professional values and practices are being adopted in school environment between childhood and adulthood. Organisation's practices are learned in the workplace through socialization. (Hofstede 1992, 261.)

Figure 6 can also be read from left to right, to understand that nationality and family create the values and organisation and workplace create the practices. Both values and practices should be adopted in professional level in schools. National culture has effect on organisational culture because group of individuals form the organisational culture.

The general meanings of organisational culture are behaviour and language, norms that develop in groups, the dominant values, philosophy that guides the working process, rules that everybody should learn in the organisation and the atmosphere that comes across between employees and clients. (Schein 1991, 23-24.) Organisational culture has an influence on dressing, what employees talk and how they talk. (Jabe 2017, 261.)

The interviewees defined the organisational culture below:

“Organisation creates the organisational culture with guidelines, but it depends on the people and their behaviour what kind of organisational culture will be in practice.”

“Organisational culture is shown in the way of doing.”

“It is what our values are.”

“Organisational culture is something that exists but it is not actively thought. It is also tacit information that employees know but it is not necessarily discussed or written anywhere.”

“Organisational culture support the values.”

“Organisation’s way of acting; the implementation of its specified values, leadership, some kind of hierarchy and how organisation communicates internally and externally.”

Schein (1991, 32) separates the organisational culture to three different levels, Figure 7. The relationship between these levels goes both directions. Assumptions and values are shown in artifacts level.

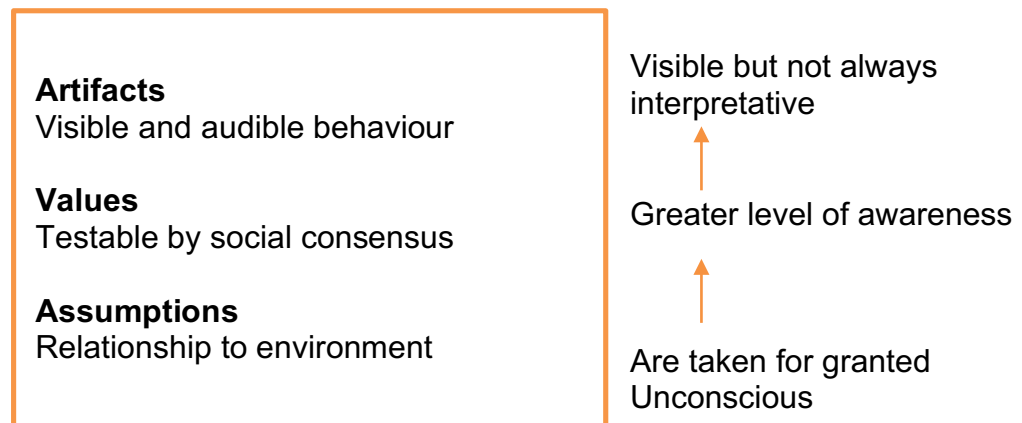


FIGURE 7. Cultural levels (Schein 1991,32)

Assumptions, in Figure 7, are the individual's own feelings to the surroundings. They are usually unconscious, but still guide the behaviour. When, for example, a solution to a problem turns out to be working continuously, people assume that things happen the same way every time. Assumptions should be brought up and acknowledged for making the cultural structure evident. (Schein 1991, 35-36.)

Values are conscious and clearly expressed and they guide the behaviour. When a group faces a new task, the first suggestions for problem solving have only symbolic meaning because the group does not have a common ground for understanding what are the facts. The group has to solve the problems together, to learn from each other and start the common culture. When values are taken for granted, they change from conscious level to assumptions. (Schein 1991, 33-34.)

Artifacts are the most visible level of organisational culture. Human has built the physical and social environment. The results of the group in this level can be seen as spoken language and behaviour. (Schein 1991, 32.) The power of culture can be huge. The new language, behaviours, sounds and smells of new group are substantial and may sometimes feel overwhelming. (Schein 1991, 42.) People notice organisations' cultures when they walk in and listen how employees talk (Jabe 2017, 262).

Organisational culture equals organisation's heroes, values, symbols, rituals, stories and norms. The organisation's buildings and working spaces have effect on the organisational culture. It tells a lot if the leaders are working from the top floors or if they are working in the same space as everyone else. The genuine values appear from the employees' stories. (Jabe 2017, 262.) If group work is the aim then rewards should be for groups, not for individuals (Jabe 2017, 267). Or if transparency is the key, then doors should be open, not closed (Jabe 2017, 268). Values should support the doing. Teal organisations have very open and transparent organisational culture because employees work in self-guided teams and they have to communicate clearly to reach the goals.

Interviewees agreed that organisational culture and procedures should be clearly expressed to every employee already in the recruitment process. The core organisation, which work together year-round, have common organisational culture. The core organisation face cultural challenges when organisation grows closer to the event. The core organisation is responsible of supervising and familiarising the organisational culture to the new employees (Shone & Parry 2004, 191). There can be hundreds of employees in an event organisation working at the same time so it is important that everyone goes towards the same goal. Some of the interviewees highlighted below:

“If values are told in couple of words in white board, they feel very disconnected.”

“The ideal situation is when everyone knows what they are doing and how their work effects on other areas.”

“The ideal organisational culture is that supports the values and they actualise the way wanted.”

Organisational culture is all that happens in the organisation (Jabe 2017, 273). Values and behaviour together have effect on the organisational culture. There will be purpose for work when there are common assumptions and understanding of objectives and values. Organisational

culture is also a learning process where the organisation solves internal and external challenges. (Jabe 2017, 268.) For example, in SELL Student Games 2020 organisation a big challenge is the leading of multicultural organisational culture.

3.2 Multicultural work community

Multicultural work community is a group of people that have different cultural backgrounds. Multicultural teams go through the same processes as other groups; developing the common norms between the group. It can take longer because of the amount of differences. (Mäkilouko 2003, 89.)

Multicultural work community brings a lot of opportunities. Interviewees agreed that different cultural backgrounds give new perspective to work and teach new ways of thinking and acting. Event organisations are somewhat always multicultural because employees and clients are from different fields, nationalities and backgrounds. Interviewee 1 points out below:

“People from international event organisations have more similar mind set than people who are from different fields.”

International connections are usual in event organisations. World is changing from hierarchies to worldwide connections. (Jabe 2017, 105.)

Interviewee 3 mentioned below:

“The world is here, everything is nearby, everything is moving, events are made in Finland and abroad.”

In multicultural work community, it is important to notice team members' talents and attitudes and how communication works. Even though people have their own way of working, best leaders can combine the good qualities of employees. (Jabe 2017, 105.) Leaders should create we-spirit and make everyone feel that they belong to the group, not because they have different cultural backgrounds, but because they are talented. Communality is very important in multicultural teams. (Koskinen 2016.)

Event organisations have powerful communality. Event employees can be from different nationalities, not only from different fields. Being present is a big step toward communality. Everyone should be treated equally and the work community should be open to new ideas and ways of working. People could learn from each other. Interviewees 2 and 3 pointed out below:

“Organisation should be functional, differences should be taken into account but equivalence is the key.”

“The most important thing in event organisations is that everyone oars the boat in the same direction. It is not important what is the speed but the same direction.”

Different cultures bring their own challenges to the team. Usually multicultural team members lack a shared culture and it causes conflicts. (Mäkilouko 2003, 18.) People assimilate their own cultures so well that they sometimes forget that others may act differently. Misunderstandings are obvious in international connections (Schein 1991, 47). Interview results support the theory that the communication in a multicultural team is a challenge, if the common language is not fluent, because some messages will be misunderstood. One challenge is also that not everyone is open to differences. Lacking communication affects professional skills in situations where employee's skills are placed in wrong tasks (Jabe 2017, 107).

That is why communication should be clear and open so that misunderstandings can be avoided. The author's own observation in different events show that open communication in every situation will guarantee a success. Employees should say if they have something in mind and leaders should explain every time why the group is doing some particular task. One solution is to have empathy for individuals and not assume that everyone will understand in the same way (Moran 2016).

Multicultural work community requires the knowledge of different languages, good self-esteem and openness. Rules are needed to go

through orally and in written, what is accepted and what are the consequences if one acts against rules. (Jabe 2017, 106-107). Being open and receptive for different cultures is a major factor. It is important firstly to ask the name of the employee because sometimes the real name and calling name may be different. That reduces discrimination when everyone knows how to call others. Also, getting to know the employees, asking about the employee's home country and manners are important for creating the trust. Familiarising the organisation's procedures and making sure that they are understood, is one of the most important part of the starting process. (Jabe 2017, 111.)

3.3 Motivation

Motivation is a system that guides the behaviour and it is caused by motives. Motivated behaviour is voluntary and controlled. Motivation deals with how behaviour generates, upholds and stops and also where it focuses on. (Juuti 2006, 37.)

Two theories about motivation point out that the inspection of motivation is essential for successful organisation and organisational culture. Motivation improves the performance and organisation's productivity is determined by how motivated employees are. (Mäkilouko 2003, 79; Juuti 2006, 38.) Motivation is seen as human's resource. It is a human's quality that is related to wellbeing. (Tiensuu, Partanen & Aaltonen 2004, 68.)

People are very sensitive and receptive for external rewards (Peters & Waterman 2007, 92). Extrinsic motivation occurs when people do something because they have to or because they will get external benefits. Intrinsic motivation on the contrary occurs when employees enjoy working or see an opportunity to learn more and implement their potentials. (Cherry 2018.) Intrinsic motivation is related to work's content, diversity and meaningfulness. Curiosity increase the intrinsic motivation and motivates better than external benefits. (Sinokki 2016, 98.) Most of the interviewed leaders agreed that it is not long-lasting if event employees come to work only because of money or other external rewards. The intrinsic motivation

is the most important in event organisations. Interviewee 1 highlights below:

“Event field is passion for its employees and that is why they have chosen it.”

The ideal situation is when employees are working from intrinsic motivation and they do not have to force themselves to work. Intrinsic motivation is proactive and employees gravitate into exciting tasks. New tasks expand the individual’s perspective and skills. (James 2018.) People who work from intrinsic motivation feel the work energising and it does not stress at all because the desire of working towards the goals feels giving much more than external rewards. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 14.)

The author’s own observation and interview results showed that organisational culture has effect on employees’ motivation. Employees are interested in why they work towards the goals and what are the values behind it. The organisation’s atmosphere and philosophy guide the working process. Inspiring atmosphere motivates to do better. Event producer mentioned below:

“Supportive atmosphere for challenges and development are the source of motivation.” (Leppä 2018.)

Motivating others creates the positive culture. Leaders and managers are responsible for employees’ motivation level. The goal of motivating is the wellbeing of employees and as a result organisation’s productivity increase. (Tiensuu et al. 2004, 68.) Positive strengthening guides the employee in the right direction. The feedback and awards from good work are important also for self-esteem. (Peters & Waterman 2007, 105.) People who succeed in work or tests, are more likely to succeed in other fields of life too, because success feeds success (Peters & Waterman 2007, 95). Interviewees stated that motivation shows in everyday life as common goals and moments. Interviewee 3 points out below:

“Motivation is shown in tight situations, for example, are we here at night (before the event) finishing things off and helping others.”

We-spirit helps to motivate others (Kuuluvainen 2015, 9). Good team spirit benefits and advances the learning process between the team (Kupias, Peltola & Pirinen 2014, 167). We-spirit born when people work physically together and get to know each other. We-spirit and communality engage employees and create trust between employees and leaders. Trust is very important especially in event organisations where employees and volunteers need to make decisions. Tasks and feedback are easier to share when trust is present. (Kuuluvainen 2015, 62.)

One common motivator for all employees is to feel him-/herself as a good person, valuable and capable. Motivation includes the aim for good life and happiness. People search things from their lives that produce satisfaction and joy. Motivating others should be daily routine at work. The aim is that organisational culture is such that it inspires the employees year-round. (Tiensuu et al. 2004, 67-68.)

3.4 Creating an organisational culture

New cultures form when team members act and think similarly. It means that the team should have a common understanding about the norms of the team. (Mäkilouko 2003, 19.) The creating process of organisational culture is comparable to formation of group. Group assimilates common norms, behaviour models and values and calls it culture. (Schein 1991, 66.) Organisational culture born almost by itself when subconscious level leads the reactions (Schein 1991, 24). Interview results support the theory, showing that organisational culture has created almost by itself when group with same mind set work together. Also, the history of the event is the premier maker for organisational culture. Interviewees 1 and 2 highlighted below:

“Organisational culture is born purely by practice during the years.”

“It has become through people. This is based on people’s values and when they meet with organisation’s values.”

Managers are the premier authors by creating the organisational culture and leading it (Schein 1991, 19). Leaders should define target organisational culture that it supports the vision and values (MindAvenue 2015). Meaning what slogans, behaviour, style of language and values they want to focus on now and in future. Because it helps to reach the goals. Everyone will work towards the same goal, when employees have assimilated the organisation’s culture. (Manninen 2016.)

Leading cannot be separated from the creation of an organisational culture. Individually assimilated values have effect on the leading and therefore on organisational culture. Leaders may become blind for the created culture. (Schein 1991, 182.) Organisational culture must be led that it goes to the wanted direction. Interviewees 1 and 2 state below:

“If the organisational culture is going to a wrong direction, it has to be discussed actively that it is not so sensitive topic.”

“Organisational culture can be led by small group of people. Undergo the values together.”

Organisational culture is learned and it is from social environment (Hofstede 1992, 21). Organisational culture is seen as a social power. When leaders show the example, employees will follow. (Manninen 2016.) It shows the employees that the working environment is safe and everyone is in the same level. Interviewee 2 and 3 highlight below:

“We are humans. People do the work here. The power of examples is huge.”

“The best results come when leading happens from the front, not from above.”

Clear organisational culture helps to create trust between the work community. Differences in practices between different people in organisations are bigger than differences in values (Hofstede 1992, 260). It is easier to work together and trust each other when everyone understands the same rules and procedures and act towards the same goal. (Kuuluvainen 2015, 63.) Interviewees pointed out that organisational culture should be clear for every employee and it should be discussed more often that everyone understand what is important and where to focus on.

Creating an organisational culture requires openness, trust and open attitude for improvement. People must tell each other how the things in organisation really are. Only the said critics and questions have effect on the conversation that lead to conclusions. Everyone's ideas should be heard and trust must be present every day. Safe environment is where employee can say the real thoughts and trust that everybody there is for each other. Open attitude for improvement means that the organisation has sensitivity to try new things and openness to question the older models of doing. Organisation has to make bigger and smaller decisions together to be successful. (Martela 2018.) Successful organisational culture needs decisions and testing.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1 Findings

The findings are analysed based on the research questions presented in Chapter 1.2. The research questions are answered in logical order, first the sub-questions and then the main question.

The three sub-questions were:

- How do cultural differences shape the organisation?

Based on the theory and interview results, cultural differences give new ideas and point of views to the work community. They shape the organisation to be a multicultural work community. Different cultural backgrounds should be taken into account and respect the differences. Equal behaviour towards everyone is the key. Leading the multicultural work community is sometimes challenging because of the amount of differences. Transparent communication helps to open the objectives and reasons of the organisation.

- Which factors influence the organisational culture?

Based on the theory, organisational culture includes the organisation's values, vision, procedures, language, atmosphere, norms and stories. All of these have influence on what kind of organisational culture will be. Leading the organisational culture requires deep understanding of what is wanted. All the mentioned factors should be considered, if the change of direction is wanted. Organisational culture is created by individuals so people have a huge effect on it. The sum of individual's, common and target values influence the organisational culture.

- How could the leaders engage and motivate employees?

Leaders could engage the employees by being open. Telling what are the objectives and how they want to accomplish them. We-spirit, communality and being present create trust which engages employees.

Motivating increases the wellbeing of employees and motivated employees increase the productivity of organisation. Positive strengthening creates a successful organisational culture. Motivating can start from the small things, for example, saying thank you or wishing good luck.

And the main question was:

- How to create a successful organisational culture in an event organisation?

Figure 8 presents the factors that has effect on the organisational culture. These factors are useful for creating a successful organisational culture.

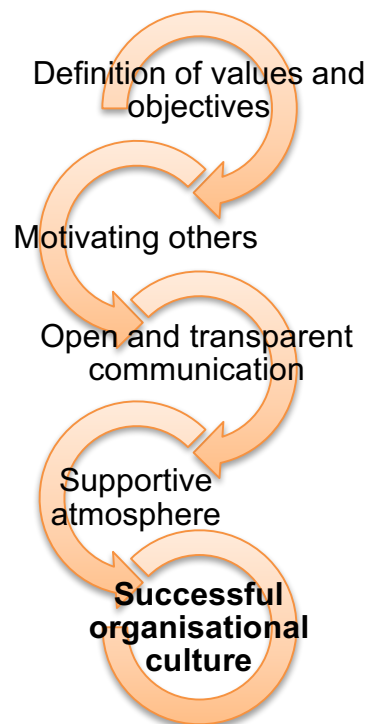


FIGURE 8. Creating an organisational culture

Creating an organisational culture requires open and transparent communication style. Project manager and human resource manager are the key players who start planning the values and objectives which leads to creating an organisational culture. Leaders should define target organisational culture that it is easier to lead. How they want to communicate, what are the important factors for reaching the goals and what stories they want people to talk about. In event organisations, it helps that people are passionate about the field and they want to work without external benefits. When leaders pay attention to the organisational culture, it is easier to create and lead it to the wanted direction.

4.2 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are important factors in measuring the accuracy and quality of qualitative research method. Reliability occurs when the same techniques used in this research, would be used by another researcher to another research and the findings would be identical. (Saunders et al. 2012, 192.)

Interviews were carried out with six event organisation employees who are or have been leaders in event organisations. Six interviews are enough for this level of thesis. Interviewees had time to go through the interview questions before the interview. Interviews were arranged in a small meeting room to ensure privacy. Interviewees' experience of event organisations brought relevant information for the research. The research with same limitations, theories of an organisational culture and interviews with event organisation leaders, would cause the same findings if done by a different researcher. The consistency between theory and interviews can be found in modern organisational culture theories.

Validity means how competent and feasible the research is (Leung 2015). The original problem is researched with theoretical and empirical part. Findings are concluded with author's own opinions. The used data collection methods and research techniques are valid for the research. The research can be used for different project and event organisations.

The thesis is easy to read because theory and interview results go hand in hand. The transfer of interview results stayed compact and valid because almost all of the interview results were the same. Most of the event organisations have the same organising culture. Larger qualitative and quantitative researches are recommended but still the hypothesis is that the findings are the same.

4.3 Further research recommendations

The further research recommendations are discussed in this part of the thesis. The thesis included limitations; students and external motivation were excluded from the thesis. Figure 9 introduces the recommended factors that further researches could include.



FIGURE 9. Further research recommendations

Further studies about organisational cultures in projects and events could include students and open their point of views. Students are often working as volunteers in event organisations. It would be interesting to study how

they see the organisational culture effecting the motivation or working processes. Student and volunteers see the processes outside and they may have different point of views. It could be also interesting to study what are the differences between event organisation leaders' and students' opinions.

Results in the thesis showed that internal motivation is the most important in event organisations. It inspires the working process and develop new skills. Further research could include also external motivation, what are the key factors and how they effect on the working process. And also, how internal and external motivations link to each other.

Although some of the interviewed leaders said that event organisations are multicultural, multicultural work communities could be researched in more detail in international event organisations. Organisational cultures vary also in different countries. The thesis focused on the creation of an organisational culture but further research could go deeper in leading the organisational culture or leading a multicultural organisational culture.

5 SUMMARY

The aim of the thesis was to give the main rules and values for a successful organisational culture in an event organisation. The future project manager and human resource manager in SELL Student Games 2020 organisation can use these guidelines for creating an organisational culture in their organisation.

The first part of the thesis introduced the research background. The different project organisation models were introduced in Chapter 2. The main theories of an organisational culture were explained in theoretical part of the thesis in Chapter 3. Empirical part of the thesis was embedded to theory in the main chapters. Finally, the conclusion part recapitulated the thesis and answered the research questions.

Qualitative method was used as a research method. Interviews were used as a primary source of data. Results from interviews were used to show the thoughts of different event organisation leaders. All the six interviews provided supplementary perspectives to the theories. Relevant books and articles and author's own observation were used as secondary sources of data. The different organisational models, theories of national and organisational culture and factors that affect them were explained in the theoretical parts of the thesis.

The objectives of the research were met and the findings are useful. The main findings of the research were that organisational culture is affected by all the factors that organisational culture includes. The sum of individual's, common and target values have effect on the organisational culture. The creation of an organisational culture depends on people and their behaviour. It is important to find event employees who have intrinsic motivation toward event field. Every event organisation leader can use the thesis for creating or developing the organisational culture.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Interview Invitation

INVITATION

I am writing my thesis about Organisational Culture in an Event Organisation in Lahti University of Applied Sciences and I would like to interview You during October 2018.

The interviews will be audio-recorded that the material stays reliable. The answers are anonymous. The material will be deleted when the thesis is completed.

Please contact me that we can schedule the meeting. I would also like to send the questions beforehand.

Hope to hear from you soon!

With best regards, Johanna Kuusrainen

APPENDIX 2: Interview Questions

Interview: Organisational Culture in an Event Organisation

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind about organisational culture?
 - What is the ideal organisational culture in your opinion?
2. Do you have experiences from different organisational cultures?
 - What kind of experiences you have?
3. How would you describe your organisational culture in your organisation?
 - How could you develop your culture towards the ideal culture?
4. What kind of meaning the organisational culture has in your organisation?
 - How does the trust shows in your organisation?
 - How could you improve the meaning of organisational culture?
5. How vision and values are considered in your organisation?
 - How could you improve the visibility of vision and values?
 - How do you pay attention to vision and values in the recruitment process?
7. How organisational culture has born in your organisation?
 - Have you created the organisational culture consciously?
 - Have you specifically paid attention to organisational culture?
 - Is the organisational culture led?
8. Do you have something else to add about organisational culture in your organisation or generally?

MULTICULTURAL WORK COMMUNITY

1. How does the multicultural work community looks like to you?
2. Have you worked in a multicultural work community?
 - What kind of experiences do you have from multicultural work community?

- How does your organisation look like? (multicultural or not)
3. How do you take different cultures into account in your organisation?
 - How could you pay more attention to the cultures?
 - How organisational culture could be more multicultural?
 4. What kind of opportunities the multicultural work community gives?
 - What about challenges?
 5. Do you have something else to add about multicultural work community in your organisation or generally?

MOTIVATION

1. What is the first thing that comes to your mind about motivation?
2. Have you worked in very motivated work community?
 - What about in a place, where motivation is minimal?
3. How would you describe your work motivation?
 - What motivates you in your work?
 - Where your motivation comes from?
4. How does the motivation shows in your organisation?
5. How do you motivate your employees?
6. What kind of successful moments have you experienced in raising others motivation?
 - What about challenges?
7. What kind of meaning the organisational culture has on motivation?
 - And vice versa – the motivation on organisational culture?
8. Do you have something else to add about motivation in your organisation or generally?