# BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

## PhD THESIS SUMMARY

# THE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION OF CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

**Scientific supervisor:** 

Professor Anca Borza PhD

**PhD** student:

Kálmán (Kovács) Réka

Cluj-Napoca

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#### **KEY WORDS**

Culture, cultural organisation, management of cultural organisation, organisational communication, external communication, internal communication, communication strategies, communication within cultural organisations, leadership.

#### INTRODUCTION

The thesis, entitled "The Management and Communication of Cultural Organisations", aims at an interdisciplinary perspective, presenting the characteristics of culture management on the one hand, and communication within cultural entities on the other. Starting with the literature review, the present study focuses on a quantitative research, based on a questionnaire and applied to a representative sample of 300 cultural organisations. The statistical population consists of both public and private cultural entities from the Centre Development Region of Romania.

#### Outlining and Motivating the Research Field

The management of cultural organisations is a relatively new domain, which, however, has started to gain ground nowadays, its appearance and evolution being probably determined by society's development, as well as by the expectations of an increasing public. Despite the fact that, at first glance, management and culture may not represent an interest for the economic environment, it is obvious that cultural manifestations and events, along with the growing number of organisations, both from the public and private sectors, may lead to a series of benefits not only from cultural, but also from economic standpoints.

As the literature review reveals, cultural institutions, through their offers, may highly contribute to the economic and cultural development of a region (Rauhe & Demmer, 1994: 18-25). Moreover, the touristic exploitation of the patrimony can improve and even

enhance the image of the areas with high cultural potential. To confirm these ideas, it seems enough to think about locations, the names of which are strongly associated with cultural programmes. For instance, from the region included in our study, Sighişoara and Râşnov are the towns of the medieval festival; Sibiu is famous not only for being the European Capital of Culture in 2007, but also for the international theatre festival or for the jazz festival; Alba Iulia is linked to "Dilema Veche", a cultural manifestation addressed to art lovers and readers; and Târgu-Mureş is known as the town of the Peninsula Festival. In a nutshell, as we have seen, cultural organisations, through their services, can project the image of a region. What is more, in some cases, these entities can develop or create the town brand.

Furthermore, as we all know, cultural organisations set as primary objective the promotion of artistic, aesthetic, moral and social values (Zecheru, 2002: 28-97). Therefore, we do not exaggerate if we sustain that these institutions are engaged in the education, intellectual stimulation and spiritual development of the consumers and implicitly of the population. In other words, due to cultural events, people's horizon may be enlarged, sensitiveness and empathy may be stimulated, the knowledge of the customers can be enriched, the target audience acquiring fundamental values like tolerance, respect, understanding, altruism, moral responsibility etc., aspects which may lead directly to society's development as well.

In the light of these ideas, it is quite clear why it was necessary for the science of culture management to come into being and to evolve. Moreover, in order to point out this view, we have to touch upon two main tendencies specific to our present society. First, on the economic and social scene, we can notice that a vast majority of cultural organisations are confronted with crisis situations in terms of their finances. These entities live from limited resources (Klein, 2001: 1-11) and, consequently, their day-to-day operation is becoming more and more uncertain. There is no doubt that, in order to overcome the impasse and to ensure the financial conditions, these entities need a professional managerial system, which relies on plans, objectives and strategies and which is oriented towards a clear mission. Second of all, since the creative industry is continuously

prospering (Klein, 2008: 9), cultural institutions are exposed to an even tighter competition. As a matter of fact, in this respect, we can talk about a "fight" not only for funds, but also for potential customers, aspects on which the survival of these organisations depends. By all means, this is the second reason why cultural entities require a solid management, on the one hand, and an efficient internal and external communication, on the other.

In particular, when examining the situation of cultural organisations from Romania, we can remark interesting phenomena. First of all, the local cultural entities do not present a long history as compared to the organisations from abroad. Still, the state-owned institutions can be regarded as exceptions, since these carried out activities also in communism. However, in this period, in the majority of the cases, we can rather speak about the existence of a politically engaged culture. In other words, culture in communism was a centralised domain, was controlled or even censured and served mostly the ideological interests of the society.

As far as the next stage in the evolution of the cultural organisations is concerned, we can ascertain that the changes in the 90's brought about the freedom of art and culture. Obviously, access to a free culture has had its own consequences: the number of cultural organisations has risen rapidly and the civil sector has also commenced its activities. As a result, cultural associations, foundations and federations have appeared, providing a wide-range of services and trying to fulfil the cultural needs of diverse social strata.

From these perspectives, it has become imperative that cultural organisations from Romania too should lay a special stress on the principles of management. Since neither the public nor the private entities have gained enough experience, we believe that these organisations, in order to cope with the challenges, need a solid guidance based on the rules of management and on efficient communication. At the same time, we take the view that a professional leadership in the context of cultural organisations will definitely lead to positive results, will ensure the survival of these entities, will attract the hesitant and

reluctant customers, will give an impulse to economic development, will rewrite locations on the touristic map and, hopefully, will also guarantee quality.

These aspects have motivated us to initiate the present study. For this purpose, we set out to analyse what exactly culture management implies, how a cultural organisation should be run, and which leadership style is the most appropriate for their efficient functioning. Closely linked to these aspects, in our study we attempt to bring to light the characteristics of communication within cultural entities, together with the way this could be capitalised on in the best interest of these organisations. We consider that through the description of the above problems we shall find viable solutions which can be applied successfully by these entities. Moreover, we are convinced that, provided cultural institutions rely on an organised and planned management and communication, these will be able not only to conduct their specific activities, but also to attain superior performance.

#### Present Knowledge in the Field of Study

Concerning our theme, the management of cultural organisations, also referred to as management in culture and cultural management, we can note that there is a confusion in the usage of the terms, probably due to the novelty of the field. At first glance, in the Romanian language, the concept itself seems to provide multiple interpretation possibilities, a fact that may also cause several misunderstandings. In some cases, the notion of "cultural management" appears to be used in order to refer to the organisational (or corporate) culture of a company. However, in the English literature, the terms "arts and cultural management" or "culture management" offer a certain clarification and delimitation of this science. Yet this field of study is best defined in the German academic research, by the concepts "Kulturmanagement", as well as "Kultur- und Kunstmanagement", notions which exactly comprise the objectives of this science. Since the name of this domain may hint to different aspects of management, in this work, we have chosen to resort to the concept of "management of cultural organisations", thus avoiding the possible overlaps of the term.

When examining our theme, we can observe the lack of empirical studies both nationally and internationally. The existing research is concerned, first of all, with the explanation and presentation of the concept, pointing out the controversial and apparently incompatible relationship between management and culture. Second, the literature review investigates the modified functions of management adapted to cultural organisations, emphasising the multiple responsibilities of the leaders (managers) who stay in contact with artists, consumers and financiers of culture. Considering the representative research in the domain, we need to reflect on the studies undertaken by Bendixen (2001), Heinrichs (1993, 2006), Klein (2001, 2004, 2008), Lenders (1995), Zembylas (2004) at international, and on the investigations carried out by Zecheru (2002) at the national level.

By contrast, concerning the second subject of our analysis, organisational communication, we can underline that it plays a key role in the academic research, this field containing an impressive number of studies. Among the theoreticians of organisational communication, we could mention Abric (2002), Armstrong (1991), Beger et al. (1989), Bruhn (1995), Clampitt (2001), Cooper & Argyris (1998), Guffey & Almonte (2010), Guffey et al. (2010), Kushal & Ahuja (2009), Lacombe (2005), Mumby & Clair (2006), Olivesi (2005), Samovar et al. (2012), Schermerhorn et al. (2010), Sinha & Reddy (1991), Stuart et al. (2007), Tompkins et al. (2009), Torrington & Hall (1995), etc., who in their work add new dimensions to the typology of communication, to its functions and to the communication strategies within organisations. Likewise, the Romanian research pays close attention to the investigation of this issue. Therefore, analysts like Nicolescu & Verboncu (1999), Câmpeanu-Sonea & Sonea (2005), Cândea & Cândea (1998), Cismaru (2008), Cornescu et al. (2003), Păuş (2006), Pânișoară & Pânișoară (2005), Prutianu (2000, 2008), Ursachi (2005), are actively engaged in the study of organisational communication in general, and in the investigation of the communication process, barriers to communication, feed-back and communication functions in particular.

As far as leadership is concerned, the literature review is also very rich in diverse studies. Thus, among the most important theoreticians of the field we can refer to Barnard (1997), Belbin (2000), Borkowski (2011), Fiedler (1997), Gastil (1997), House & Mitchell (1986), Lussier & Achua (2010), Mullins (2001, 2006, 2007), Northouse (2010), Stogdill (1997), Whetten *et al.* (2000), Williams (2006). This topic is not neglected in our country either; on the contrary, Romanian analysts as Borza *et al.* (2005), Cornescu *et al.* (2003) and Zlate (2004) have contributed substantially to this domain.

Nonetheless, from our point of view, the main deficiency of the studies based on organisational communication and leadership is the fact that these are applied chiefly to corporations and not to cultural organisations, entities which represent distinct features as compared to companies. What is more, although in the literature review one can come across research in both fields of study, namely in culture management and in communication, these two subjects are treated separately.

Therefore, we believe that our research, which lies at the crossroads between management, culture, organisational communication and leadership, will offer an interdisciplinary perspective, by embracing the numerous characteristics of these fields and, ultimately, establishing connections between them.

#### Defining the research objectives

The objective of this paper is to conduct both a theoretical and empirical research into the management and communication of cultural organisations. Starting with a conceptual framework, focusing on the management and communication of cultural organisations and on their leadership, we aim at a methodological approach which, first, confirms the theoretical information and, second, validates the research hypotheses from a statistical point of view.

For this purpose, we have set a series of theoretical and empirical goals, which constitute the main reference points of our thesis.

#### I. Theoretical objectives

- 1. To highlight the aspects which characterise the management of cultural organisations, with special emphasis on presenting the functions of culture management, interpreting the concept of "culture", as well as on classifying cultural entities.
- 2. To study organisational communication by reviewing its functions, typology, and by presenting the communication strategies, along with the description of the characteristics of communication within cultural entities.
- 3. To emphasise leadership and observe the relationship between leadership and management, leadership and organisational communication, as well as to investigate the different leadership styles in order to identify the most appropriate one for cultural organisations.

#### II. Empirical objectives

- 1. To analyse how cultural organisations make use of their external and internal communication in order to promote their activities and, consequently, artistic and aesthetic values.
- To study how those cultural organisations that adopt internal communication strategies can achieve a better performance compared to the entities which do not apply such strategies and also to identify the factors by which performance can be measured.
- 3. To investigate how the cultural organisations that pay a special attention to the planning and controlling functions of management can attain superior performance as opposed to the entities where these aspects are neglected.
- 4. To examine how external and internal communication can contribute to the performance of cultural organisations.
- 5. To consider the democratic style of management in order to discover its effects on external communication within cultural organisations.

In view of these objectives, the present study seeks answers to the above mentioned problems, attempts to establish connections between the different fields and, consequently, offers solutions for the improvement of performance within cultural organisations.

#### PART I: LITERATURE REVIEW

The thesis is structured in four distinct chapters, the first three of which are of a conceptual nature, dedicated to the literature review, whereas the fourth one attempts to highlight how the theoretical considerations will confirm in the context of Romanian cultural organisations.

In the **first chapter** we focus on the notion of "culture", underlining the anthropological and economic interpretations of culture at social level in general and at organisational level in particular. We also approach cultural organisations and observe their classification from the judicial point of view. Afterwards, we deal with the management of cultural organisations, explaining the concept and the specific activities characteristic of this field. In fact, by analysing the functions of culture management, we indicate how the techniques of general management can be tailored in the interests of culture. Finally, this chapter speaks about the dilemmas of culture management, generated by the economic dimension of culture, as well as by the cultural dimension of economy.

The second chapter explores the characteristics of organisational communication, with reference to the communication process, the context of communication and its determining factors. At the same time, this section brings to light the functions and typology of communication within organisations. Hand in hand with these aspects, the present chapter defines and classifies the communication strategies, with an emphasis on their functions. What is more, starting with the description of the external and internal environments of cultural organisations, this section will highlight the characteristics of internal and external communication within cultural entities. By outlining these topics,

we shall also enumerate the communication media which can be best used in relation with the target audience.

The third chapter looks at approaches to leadership, the relation between leadership and management and between leadership and organisational communication, as well as at the different categories of leadership styles.

### PART II: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON THE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION OF CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

The fourth chapter, dedicated to our empirical research, draws up the hypotheses of the study, explains how the sample was determined and describes the methods used for data processing. In this respect, for an accurate interpretation of the research data, we conduct a descriptive analysis and then, based on the conclusions, we carry out a comparative study that validates our research hypotheses.

Concerning the methodology, the present study is based on a quantitative research. For this purpose, a questionnaire was compiled and applied to a representative sample of 300 cultural organisations of the public and private sectors in the Centre Development Region of Romania. The size of the sample was calculated with Taro Yamane's formula and the statistical processing of the raw data was performed with the SPSS 11.0 application.

#### FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Throughout our research we aimed to approach our subject "The Management and Communication of Cultural Organisations" from an interdisciplinary perspective, presenting the characteristics of culture management, on the one hand, and investigating communication within cultural entities, on the other hand.

With regard to the formulated hypotheses, both through the literature review and the quantitative research, we were able to observe a series of connections between the above mentioned phenomena:

- the relation between internal and external communication;
- the correlation between the planning and controlling functions (of management)
   and the performance of cultural organisations;
- the correlation between internal and external communication and the performance of cultural organisations;
- the relation between external communication and the democratic management style.

Based on these ideas, the final conclusions of our study reveal that there exists an important link between performance and management style, as well as between performance and communication within cultural organisations. In other words, as long as cultural entities rely on a professional managerial system and apply the scientific principles of management, they can obtain higher results. Moreover, provided cultural organisations focus on developing a planned, organised and efficient internal and external communication, they can achieve high performance. Last but not least, the findings of our research lead to the conclusion that the democratic manager is the one who can work closely with culture people, by building up a work climate that is favourable to the creation process, thus guiding the cultural organisation to success.

In the next step, we shall outline our contribution to the improvement of knowledge in the field, both at the theoretical and the empirical levels.

#### I. At the theoretical level

- Defining and classifying some of the key concepts regarding culture, management of cultural organisations, communication and leadership within organisations;
- Presenting the main dilemmas of culture adapted to management;

- Classifying cultural entities;
- Studying the organisational communication and the communication strategies;
- Analysing the characteristics of communication within cultural organisations;
- Examining leadership theories

#### II. At the empirical level

Our contribution to the improvement of knowledge in the field is represented by:

Conducting a descriptive analysis into: 1) external communication, 2) planning and controlling (as management functions), 3) internal communication, 3) performance and 5) management style in cultural organisations.

For this purpose, we analysed 1) external communication in cultural organisations with special emphasis on: a) the collaboration of cultural entities with other institutions, b) the promotion of the organisation and its activities, c) the promotion of corporate identity, d) the communication activities performed within these institutions. For the investigation of planning and controlling (as management functions) we took into account: a) the activity plan, b) the communication plan and c) the activity report. Regarding 3) internal communication we took into consideration the following issues: a) internal communication instruments, b) formal and informal networks and c) the existence of internal communication strategies. Similarly, we measured 4) the performance of cultural entities according to: a) the awards, scholarships, prizes, projects and nominations granted, b) the number of participants in cultural events and programmes and c) the number of invitations received to national and international conferences / tournaments etc. Finally, in this section we identified 5) the style of management preferred by cultural organisations, considering: a) the importance of feed-back, b) the employee initiatives, c) the staff's contribution to organisational success, and d) the correlation between internal communication and leadership style.

Conducting comparative studies between: 1) internal and external communication; 2) internal and external communication within public and private entities; 3) formal and informal internal communication; 4) internal communication strategies and performance; 5) planning and controlling (as management functions) and performance; 6) internal and external communication and performance; 7) democratic management style and external communication.

With this comparative analysis we set out to identify 1) which type of communication, the external or the internal one, is most pronounced within cultural organisations. Closely related to this subject, we investigated 2) which type of communication, the external or the internal one, is stronger within public and private entities. We also examined 3) which networks, the informal or the formal ones, are more developed in internal communication. In addition, through the correlation between 4) internal communication strategies and performance we concluded that those cultural organisations that elaborated a communication plan, developed and applied internal communication strategies could achieve better performance than those entities which lacked such strategies. Furthermore, we presented the correlation between the activity plan (as a tool for forecasting and planning) and performance, as well as the relation between the activity report (as a tool for controlling) and performance, noting that there was a direct link between 5) planning and controlling (as functions of management) and performance. Hence, we drew the conclusion that cultural organisations which paid greater attention to planning and controlling obtained superior results compared to other organisations, where these aspects were neglected. In fact, after comparing 6) external communication and performance, as well as internal communication and performance, we reached the same conclusion: a good internal and external communication contributed significantly to the performance of cultural organisations. Finally, when referring to 7) the relation between the democratic management style and internal and external communication, we noticed that cultural organisations run in a democratic style had a better internal and external communication than those led by authoritarian managers.

#### RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

In order to expand the research horizon, we make the following suggestions for further investigations:

- Carrying out a comparative analysis between cultural organisations and companies. The answers to: "Can cultural organisation communicate internally and externally as efficiently and professionally as corporations?" or "What exactly do cultural organisations need to learn from companies regarding management?" could offer essential information both for companies and for cultural entities.
- Analysing cultural organisations through qualitative research methods (e.g. case studies, interviews) to more accurately evaluate and determine the management and communication of cultural entities. Through the close observation of these phenomena, we could obtain more complex results as to what functions or does not function well in these entities.
- Examining the positive models could lead to their adaptation by other organisations. Moreover, we could discover if a successful model from an urban area could be adopted by rural organisations as well, which as our study shows lag behind cultural entities from urban districts.
- Assessing cultural organisations, their management and communication from the standpoint of their services could demonstrate whether the cultural expectations of the target audience are met or not. In this respect, there are two important questions worth answering: "To what extent is the quality of cultural services affected by the growing number of private entities?" and "How can the cultural organisations of the private sector improve the quality of their services as compared to the state-owned (public) institutions?"

- Since our study describes a process, we take the view that it would be interesting to foresee what will happen on the Romanian cultural scene in the near future. Key issues to be discussed could be: "How will cultural organisations evolve in 10 years?", "Will these become more efficient in terms of management and communication?"

To conclude, we hope that the present research has managed to provide new and useful insights into the communication and management of cultural entities from the Centre Development Region of Romania and believe that its findings could be capitalised on successfully by cultural organisations and by researchers in answering the questions above.

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