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THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION. CASE STUDY

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the functioning of a faculty from different insiders' perspectives on academia, based on organizational culture. 'Insiders' in this case are academic leaders, evaluators, and students. Universities are complicated social organizations with characteristic cultures. On the one hand, academic freedom, critical thinking, and autonomy are protected values and, on the other hand, changing environmental conditions exert powerful impact on the primary functions of universities. Understanding of organizational culture is not a panacea to all problems in higher education. A deep understanding of culture, for example, will not automatically increase enrollments or increase quality of teaching or decrease corruption. This case study is employed for the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEAA) within the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University (UAIC) in Iasi, Romania that faces the challenges of transition to democracy and free market economy. The findings of this paper suggests a close link between organizational culture and quality in state higher education.

Key words: organizational culture, higher education, leadership, change, ethics

1. Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive circumstances, achieving planned organizational efficiency level attracts both scholars' and practitioners' consideration much more. The determinants influencing organizational efficiency are explored with highly increasing meaning. Considering organizational culture as one of the main determinants, the impact of different organizational cultures on organizational efficiency are disputed.

One can define organizational culture as the basic assumptions about the world and the values that guide existence in organizations. In a more detailed way, organizational culture may be defined as the shared essential assumptions, values, and beliefs that characterize a setting and are taught to newcomers as the appropriate way to think and feel, communicated by the myths and stories individuals tell about how the organization came to be the way it is as it solved matters related to internal integration and external adaptation. Another definition of organizational culture could be the common perceptions that are held by the insiders of an organization integrated in a frame of common meaning.

According to the Collins English Dictionary, organizational culture is the customs, rituals, and values shared by the members of an organization that have to be accepted by new members, while Cambridge Business English Dictionary defines organizational culture as the types of attitudes and agreed ways of working shared by the employees of a company or organization.

The field of organizational culture began to explode in the early 1980s due to the fact that it seemed to capture the richness of the organizational environment in ways that previous research had not.

Two important ascertainments should be made at this point in time. First, national culture (and not only) has an influence on organizational culture. Second, the influence leaves

considerable variability in the organizational culture types possible; national culture is important but not decisive.

In this regard, Warter and Warter (2017a) show that the behavior of organizations and their leaders is largely influenced by the characteristics / dimensions of the culture to which they belong; there are a number of ways in which organizations can create a culture that promotes ethics. These include: clear expectations for what is right and what is not right, modeling and consolidating the desired behavior (especially from the leaders of the organizations), focusing on building skills and problem solving, providing the tools needed for people to act ethically and providing corrective feedback.

Scholars in this specific field have focused on two directions in their endeavors to conceptualize and comprehend organizational culture. When culture is studied as something organizations are, the focus is on their singularity and what the specific features of their “artifacts” (i.e., myths, stories, or the things even an outsider can see, such as furniture and office layout, dress norms etc..) tell us about the values and basic beliefs of the individuals there. Instead, when culture is studied as something organizations have, comparative organizational culture research offers quantitative analysis of the ways organizations display their values for and basic beliefs about people, targets, styles, and growth.

In a reflection on such aspects, Warter and Warter (2017b) show that leadership behavior can affect the environment and culture of their organization in many obvious or more refined ways. There are some primordial processes where leaders' attitudes, words and actions shape organizational culture such as how leaders react to various organizational incidents or crises, the criteria used to select, promote and reward staff, how to train and control members of the organization, and so on.

A “good” organizational culture could be a strategic asset for the organization in that it increases the adaptability of and fit between an organization and its environment or a liability in the case of a “wrong” organizational culture disrupted by various contradictions.

Due to the fact that organizational culture reflects the norms, values, and rules of conduct that are used by individuals in an organization to give meaning to the circumstances that they encounter, it can influence the management styles, and priorities.

Many practitioners and scientists question whether it is reasonable to allow each organization to define and develop their own guidelines of organizational ethics as it thinks and if it would not be necessary for society as a whole on a global scale to provide the foundations of universal ethics, on the basis of which organizations can define their own practices and policies, as Warter and Warter (2018a) contend.

True diagnosing of organization culture, the determining of strategy, politics, and good practices in accordance with organizational culture will enable the organization to reach desired organizational efficiency depending on stability or variability of internal and external environment.

Warter and Warter (2017c) conclude that as well as leaders or managers, as members of the organization, are responsible for it in a legal and moral sense, and it is essential that they operate within the limits of ethical standards. Otherwise, in the absence of a regular approach, on the basis of pre-established procedures, they will harm their job, the profession and the organization to which they belong.

Universities are complicated social organizations with characteristic cultures. On the one hand, academic freedom, critical thinking, and autonomy are protected values and, on the other hand, changing environmental conditions exert powerful impact on the primary functions of universities.

Unlike many other organizations, universities have certain particularities that need to be clearly understood and that dominate the organizational culture of academic institutions.

In the first place, their goals are equivocal. Different objectives, procedures, and standards in teaching, research, and other processes as well as lack of agreement on rules for goal accomplishment result in an doubtful decision-making process.

In the same direction, Warter and Warter (2018b) note that the key questions that organizations have to ask is whether their decisions should be determined by ethical criteria and whether they are perceived as ethical. Moreover, universities are to a large degree "people-oriented" organizations. Hence, agendas like the administration of regular study programs, research, continuing professional education or partnership and exchange programs with other academic and non-academic organizations add to the professional diversity and to the challenge for university staff. For institutions of higher education it is hard, if not impossible, to define segmented and routinized procedures, to develop adequate standards for delivering their services.

Consequently, it is difficult to establish a coordinated strategy for governing and managing the university. The decision-making processes in universities are often complicated and long due to different points of view and interests of academic staff. This causes conflicts between managers concentrating on processes and faculty staff focused on less important issues.

Universities are vulnerable to their environment, so changes in political, economic, and social conditions can strongly affect the position of universities and should be taken into account for strategic and operational activity planning in higher education. For instance, state systems indubitably influence the culture of a public state university in ways other than budgetary.

While many organizational culture researchers have devoted numerous articles to the nature and definitions of organizational culture in general, relatively fewer articles have contributed towards organizational culture in higher education. A comprehensive study of organizational culture in higher education will demand increased understanding of determinants such as individual and organizational use of time, space, and communication.

Organizational culture in higher education is not monolithic. Universities vary in location, size, complexity, control, and mission, each of which can have a potentially profound influence on the internal dynamics of the organization and finally affecting its strength.

The organizational culture in academia results from the internal dynamics that derive from the values, processes, and goals held by academic staff.

In conclusion, research in the field of organizational culture indicates that it is essential to promote ethical values by organizations. These organizations implement clear ethical standards, transparent procedures and openness in communication to increase accountability, promote mutual trust and support among members of the organization, along with transparent analysis of issues and ethical dilemmas that mark the existence of organizations (Warter & Warter, 2017b).

It is important to show that an understanding of organizational culture is not a panacea to all problems in higher education. A deep understanding of culture, for example, will not automatically increase enrollments or increase quality of teaching or decrease corruption.

It is interesting to emphasize that the strength of academic culture is mostly important when academic institutions face declining resources. During these periods, the academic community is under great strain. If the common academic culture has not been carefully nurtured during flourishing periods, the aftermath can be destructive conflicts between faculties, departments, and individuals, loss of professional morale, illegal acts, and personal alienation.

2. Literature review

2.1. Organizational culture

“There is no good or evil. Performance depends on the fit between strategy and culture. First you need to know where you want to go but where you want to go has to fit with your culture. Both depend on each other. You cannot generalize it”. - Geert Hofstede –

Organisational Culture is defined as the way in which members of an organisation relate to each other, their work and the outside world in comparison to other organisations. It can either enable or hinder an organisation’s strategy.

The Multi-Focus Model on Organisational Culture is a strategic tool aimed at helping organisations to become more effective by ensuring you get a detailed picture of:

1. How do employees really relate to their organisational culture – ensuring a matching picture between employee branding/recruitment texts and real life work environment.
2. How ready an organisation is for change – is there enough trust, not too much anxiety and are the relevant groups ready for change?
3. How is the actual way of working (actual culture) and the desired way of working (desired culture) aligned with the optimal culture (strategic choice on which way of working best supports the execution of a given strategy within the available resources and time)
4. How well management is able to use its behaviour to set the example (walk the talk)
5. How indirect change initiatives can assist in ensuring a better fit between the actual way of working and optimal way of working (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

This model is based on research conducted by Prof. Geert Hofstede and his research team. The Multi-Focus Model consists of six autonomous dimensions or variables (Hofstede Insights, n.d.):

Dimension 1: Means-Oriented Vs. Goal-Oriented.

This dimension is closely connected to the effectiveness of the organisation. In a means-oriented culture, the key feature is the way in which work has to be carried out; people identify with the “how”. In a goal-oriented culture, employees are primarily out to achieve specific internal goals or results, even if these involve substantial risks; people identify with the “what”. In a highly means-oriented culture people perceive themselves as avoiding risks and making only a limited effort in their jobs, while each workday is pretty much the same. However, in a very goal-oriented culture, the employees are primarily out to achieve specific internal goals or results, even if these involve substantial risks.

Dimension 2: Internally Driven Vs. Externally Driven.

In a highly internally driven culture employees perceive their task towards the outside world as a given, based on the idea that business ethics and honesty matters most and that they know best what is good for the customer and the world at large. In a very externally driven culture the only emphasis is on meeting the customer’s requirements; results are most important and a pragmatic rather than an ethical attitude prevails.

Dimension 3: Easygoing Work Discipline Vs. Strict Work Discipline

This dimension refers to the amount of internal structuring, control, and discipline. A very easygoing culture reveals a fluid internal structure, a lack of predictability, and little control and discipline; there is a lot of improvisation and surprises. A very strict work discipline reveals the reverse. People are very cost-conscious, punctual and serious.

Dimension 4: Local Vs. Professional

In a local company, employees identify with the boss and/or the unit in which one works. In a professional organisation, the identity of an employee is determined by his profession and/or the content of the job. In a very local culture, employees are very short-term

directed, they are internally focused and there is strong social control to be like everybody else. In a very professional culture, it is the reverse.

Dimension 5: Open System Vs. Closed System

This dimension relates to the accessibility of an organisation. In a very open culture newcomers are made immediately welcome, one is open both to insiders and outsiders, and it is believed that almost anyone would fit in the organisation. In a very closed organisation it is the reverse.

Dimension 6: Employee-Oriented Vs. Work-Oriented

This aspect of organisational culture is most related to the management philosophy. In very employee-oriented organisations, members of staff feel that personal problems are taken into account and that the organisation takes responsibility for the welfare of its employees, even if this is at the expense of the work. In very work-oriented organisations, there is heavy pressure to perform the task even if this is at the expense of employees.

Lupascu-Pruna (2018) argues that there are 6 Signs of a Dysfunctional Organisational Culture:

Sign No. 1 - We Have Always Done It This Way

As your company evolves, the organisational culture that used to work may no longer be suitable. The issue here is often that management doesn't know how to (or want to) challenge the "status quo". The functional thing to do is to find out what are the accepted practices already supporting your strategy and focus on them while changing the ones that are not useful or hindering your goals.

Sign No. 2 - Internal Sabotaging

The main departments "sabotage" each other. This happens when the goals of each department take priority over the goals of the whole organisation.... The root cause is a lack of alignment of the goals of the two departments coming from the top management. The functional thing to do would be to focus on the overall goal of the company and harmonize the practices in the two departments according to that goal.

Sign No. 3 - Old Rules And Outdated Regulations Lead To Paralysed Organisations.

Sometimes there are so many conflicting rules and regulations that people get "paralyzed" in doing their work. Management confuses employees with opposing rules, which leads to a situation in which the employees spend more time covering themselves than delivering the task. The functional thing to do is to follow Michael Porter's famous wise words, "The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do" and to communicate that clearly.

Sign No. 4 - The General Manager Almighty

The General Manager micromanages the process of initiative taking, the creativity of people or them being more innovative, all oxymorons intended! The functional thing to do is to provide coaching to the General Manager to make them realise how their habits hinder the greater purpose.

Sign No. 5 - The "Steve Jobs" Culture

Sometimes, managers adopt a foreign management style which they interpret through the lens of their own (national) culture. A good example of that would be Steve Jobs' famous management style, which could be strict and even harsh, but also had an inspiring and visionary side, which was less obvious to the public at large. In a high achievement-oriented culture with low hierarchy, such as the USA, this type of approach can work and motivate people. However, if you apply the "Jobs" management approach to the Nordics, you will get the opposite result (demotivation and demission). The functional thing to do is to ensure you adopt a management style that fits the local cultural environment and adapt your management practices to the audience you have in front of you.

Sign No. 6 - Start With The Actual Culture

Senior management has tried several organisational transformations in the past without measuring the actual culture. This resulted in management systems that work partially and that are either unnatural for the employees to follow or have considerable gaps in addressing various new situations. If you do not measure your actual culture and thus do not know where you are now, you cannot realistically determine what you have to do in order to reach where you want to go. The functional thing to do is to measure the actual organisational culture as a starting point in the transformation and build transformation journeys that are consistent and precise.

The above points are just a few of the reasons why wise leaders do a “check up” on their organisational culture regularly (at least once every 1.5 years). This way they are able to understand what culture their company actually has versus what they think their company has, what is blocking the organisation from succeeding, and what needs to be removed. Most importantly, they can focus on the things that will bring the most benefits in the future while ensuring a coherent long-term development of the organisational culture.

Stensaker, Välimaa, and Sarrico (2015) state that since the 1980s studies of culture in organizations have often been divided into two basic camps: on the one side, those seeing culture as something an organization has, that is, culture as a potentially identifiable and manipulative factor; on the other side, those seeing culture as something an organization is, that is, culture as an integrated product of social interaction and organizational life, impossible to differentiate from other factors.

As Yorke (2000) observes, organisational life - and particularly that in higher education - tends to be 'untidy', and attempts to manage change in organisations need to recognise this. Sometimes people do not behave 'reasonably', even when to do so seems incontrovertibly to be in their best interest. Human systems do not always cohere particularly well with a technical-rational approach to change - not least because change tends to move people out of their individual and organisational 'comfort zones'. One of the most difficult things is to unlearn the behaviours that led to past success.

According to Šedžiuvienė and Tamutienė (2016), considering quality culture as a part of organisational culture, much focus in the research is dedicated to the specificity and expression of the organisational culture in the processes of quality management. It might be stated that unawareness of the role of organisational culture is one of the failures in introducing quality management.

The key point here is that organisational culture is not a fixed and immutable phenomenon, as it is constantly in a state of flux as the organisational members engage with internally and externally derived quality initiatives in ways that either confirm their dominant position or resist it in ways that minimise the impact of those initiatives on their preferred way of doing things as Naidoo (2013) point out.

2.2. Organizational culture in higher education

Higher education institutions have distinct features as organizations that set them apart from other types of organizations. Higher education is clearly divided into different sectors within the organization; the faculty who are responsible for the curriculum and teaching, and the administration and staff who tend to the operations of the “business” side of the organization. (Paulson, 2016).

I agree with Tierney and Lanford (2017) when they argue that higher education is undergoing a period of unprecedented turbulence, with institutions engaging in a multitude of partnerships, initiatives, and new programs to maintain relevance in the twenty-first century.

Eggs (2014) too reflects upon this phenomenon and claims that the modern university, in its current transformation, diminishes the importance of the academic community and increases the importance of the academic institution. Trust – a basic value of

the academic community – is replaced by accountability and transparency of the academic institution, making its external control quite possible.

Three main challenges that the higher education sector faces across the globe and that are also driving innovation in this sector have been identified: (i) pressures from globalisation; (ii) changing supply of and demand for higher education; and (iii) changes in higher education funding (Brennan et al., 2014).

Turner (2011) asserts that higher education cannot be managed and controlled as though it were a production process and attempts to do so can only distract people from the real quality issues.

Certainly, as the trend to mass HE has continued the culture of academic organizations has been viewed as much more complex than that of other organizations, though the area of organizational culture has been neglected in discussions of academic management until very recently.

Systems of belief, or ideologies, enter academic institutions at three different levels: (1) The culture of the academic enterprise; (2) The culture of the academic profession at large; (3) The culture or distinctive ideologies of the academic disciplines (Herguner & Reeves, 2000).

A quite similar approach (Braica, 2014) consider that the powerful cultures often have a certain grade of rigidity and inflexibility and are often threatened with the loss of sensibility to internal or external changes fact that creates a danger for the “health” of the educational institution.

In the same vein, Bok (2003) notes that setting clear guidelines is essential to protect academic values from excessive commercialization. But guidelines alone, however thoughtfully devised, will not be enough. Cases will inevitably arise in which the rules are ambiguous, the circumstances novel, or the deviations arguably minor.

Other organisational points on which deans focus include the lack of strictness in selecting new entrants and the weakness of the relationship between universities and pre-university education levels. This is a problem by which university administrators and head teachers and guidance departments at pre-university establishments are equally concerned (Olaskoaga-Larrauri, Barrenetxea-Ayesta, Cardona-Rodríguez, Campo, & Barandiaran-Galdós, 2016).

HEI possess several organisational culture types. These ‘subcultures’ within the organisation emerge as a consequence of staff being active in a variety of disciplines and departments. Quality culture coincides and overlaps with other organisational subcultures. An important implication of research on the relationship between culture types and various HEI effectiveness criteria is that culture types have a diverse influence on effectiveness criteria. (Bendermacher, Egbrink, Wolfhagen, & Dolmans, 2017).

In their study, Imam, Abbasi, Muneer, and Qadri (2013) observe that statistical results indicated that individual readiness for change has the major role in effecting the organizational performance, it is therefore recommended that educationists develop a better understanding of capability of change.

Ehlers and Schneckenberg’s (2014) comprehensive study suggests that changing organizational cultures will be at the heart of universities’ attempts and strategies to respond to challenges. The changes will rest on three pillars: (1) Strategies for change; (2) Competences for change; (3) Quality and Innovation as basis for change.

The changes many institutions face have accelerated beyond tinkering; more campuses each year attempt to create comprehensive (or transformational) change. Yet, change strategies have not been exceedingly helpful in their capacity to guide institutions, and we know even less about how to facilitate major, institutionwide change (Kezar & Eckel, 2002).

Although it looks like HEIs facing change are facing an almost impossible task, methods have been discovered to manage resistance to change. The following could be considered as a means of reducing resistance to change in Higher Education (Chandler, 2013): (1) Education and Communication; (2) Participation and Involvement; (3) Facilitation and Support; (4) Negotiation and Agreement.

A college or university that is interested in making changes should first examine its academic departments. Once this problem is solved, it will be much easier to fix the other problems. When an organization becomes too large it becomes inflexible and it becomes extremely difficult to change course (Friedman & Friedman, 2018).

Accordingly, decisions tend to be made in a bottom-up process where binding decisions are made by the basic organisational units (departments and centres) and aggregated at the division (faculty) and institution level. The implication is that major decisions by academic institutions tend to be the aggregate outcome of the preferences of its basic units. Leaders thus represent the preferences of their organisation members (Bleiklie, Enders, & Lepori, 2017).

Another interesting aspect is offered by Cahn (2011). He argues that also to be avoided is a rarely mentioned yet equally unacceptable form of bias: favouritism toward friends of departmental members. The tendency is to overrate one's professional pals, then become angry if colleagues do not share this inflated view. To avoid the problem, all departmental members ought to agree before the search begins that no one is under any obligation to be favorably disposed toward anyone else's friend. All subsequent consideration of candidates should be untarnished by any reference to personal attachments.

Goos and Salomons (2017) claim that student evaluations of teaching (SETs) are widely used to measure teaching quality in higher education and compare it across different courses, teachers, departments and institutions. Indeed, SETs are of increasing importance for teacher promotion decisions, student course selection, as well as for auditing practices demonstrating institutional performance. However, survey response is typically low.

Students quickly learn that there are certain hoops to jump through, such as the completion of assignments by a specified date, or the regurgitation of lecture notes in written examinations, which demand rule-following behaviour and an acceptance of the academic authority of teaching staff. Finally, the assessment of individual rather than collective work is sacrosanct. To work collectively in groups is to invite the charge of cheating rather than acceptance as a sign of mature interpersonal collaboration and co-operation as Brown and Scase (2003) point out.

In his comprehensive study, Zavala (2015) observes that what was observed in students' culture indicates that the academic personnel are not doing their job. Their teaching practice is below minimal ethicity, given that the scarce development of ethical qualities among their students is a sample of noncompliance of their duties as a labor and moral subject.

In a recently developed area, such as that of public administration, there will naturally tend to be a larger degree of uncertainty and divergence. The mandatory minimum standards are also associated with the risk of inducing gaming patterns of behaviour. An example of gaming is acting on the incentive to accelerate the production of doctorates to comply with the requirements for staff accreditation standards; this behaviour would then raise legitimate questions about their quality (Sarrico & Alves, 2016).

According to Macfarlane (2004), a study 'about' higher education invokes issues less likely to be confined to the immediate environment of the lecture hall or the seminar room but equally as important to professional life. Studying the aims of a higher education, the reasons and consequences of restructuring, system and global change, organizational issues connected with the management of institutions, the meanings of 'quality' and quality

enhancement, disciplinary and community values, such as academic freedom, and the responsibilities of the sector in terms of social justice are all examples of issues that might play a more prominent role in any rounded professional education of university staff.

Regarding quality assurance, the FUN MOOC (French Massive Open Online Courses) Operational committee on content and use is in charge of the overall contents available on the FUN platform. Course providers have to comply with a quality assurance charter, which highlights three main principles as Souto-Otero et al. (2016) remark: (1) Setting up of a collaborative team, overseen by the main (teacher) in charge of the MOOC; (2) Producing pedagogical tools in compliance with key pedagogical objectives and the terms of the MOOC project; (3) Offering services and activities adapted to a large number of participants.

In a recent study Cheng (2016) states that if quality evaluation increases doubts in academics as professionals, and sacrifices high standards of subject knowledge to increase student satisfaction, and if quality evaluation appears as a never-ending administrative task, it is perhaps because there is nothing to be measured or too much has been measured.

The mere legalistic adherence to academic honor codes and academic integrity policies do not reduce unethical behavior (i.e., academic cheating). Rather, honor codes and ethics training programs reduce academic cheating not only by students being aware of them, but also by internalizing those honor codes and organization-based ethical values and beliefs. (Popoola, et al., 2017).

To clearly define academic honesty and integrity, Rujoiu and Rujoiu (2014) remark that promoting academic honesty and integrity must be one of the objectives of any university. There are three basic principles when we talk about honesty in academic culture: 1) when you say you did the work yourself, you actually did it, 2) when you rely on someone else's work, you cite it, 3) when you present research materials, you present them fairly and truthfully.

Predatory publishing undoubtedly represents a clear and present danger to the integrity of academic publishing. To date, little has been done to curb the excesses in this field, although some recent action by the US government has been noted. (Houghton, 2017).

Coman and Bonciu (2016), for example, consider that the mission of the UB is focused rather on the institution itself. There is no specific reference to students as the main beneficiaries of what the university has to offer, as if the academic programs and research facilities have one single, central and important objective: to serve the university so as to become a forefront of research and teaching.

We might have to ask ourselves whether the call for justice for all students might in a particular instance trump the call for fidelity to university benefactors. We might prudently have to decide whether fidelity to a department chair might be more or less valid in the face of accusations of injustice against the same chair (Keenan, 2011).

In the same direction, Cardoso, Rosa, and Stensaker (2016) note that, in general, many academics have far less knowledge about the context surrounding the specific teaching and learning environment, such as rules, regulations and decision-making structures.

Flexibility of recruitment is considered by reform-oriented policy-makers and university executives to enhance adaptability, competition and attractiveness, given the increasingly internationalised academic job market. Recruiting faculty on the external job market and attracting foreign scholars are even used as quality indicators. (Paradeise & Thoenig, 2015).

In his study, McGhee (2011) posits that in terms of management culture the shift from democratic academic management structures to line management systems coupled with a focus on costs and revenues has militated against the devolution of authority and empowerment which TQM-type initiatives entail. In terms of academic culture, the

complexity and ambiguity of the student as customer allied to academic commitment to the discipline rather than the institution makes any simple focus on customer service problematic.

It is probable that many faculty members do not even consider blowing the whistle, not only because of fear of retaliation, but also because of fear of losing their relationships at work and outside work. Because the majority of cases are very low-profile and receive little or no media attention and because whistleblowers who do report significant misconduct are usually put in some form of danger or persecution, the idea of seeking fame and glory may be much less than commonly believed, as Speight (2016) remarks.

On the basis of a brief analysis of the situation in higher education in Kazakhstan, Feoktistova (2014) presents the following measures that could be taken by the government to deal with corruption somehow and try to prevent it and finally liquidate it. They are: accrediting universities by independent agencies and authorities; faculty examination and assessment by independent examiners; the use of educational portal by the university; designing the system of the portal so that it is activated by different departments and specialists that will exclude their cooperation and possibility of giving a grade; enforcing strict penalties for corrupted faculty and administrative personnel; introducing control system of students' attendance. The same author mentions that there are cases when students never come to the university but they are given grades and finally they graduate from the university and even receive a diploma. This is true not only for part-time students but also full-time ones; creating conditions for faculty research and development.

Regarding the corruption in HEI, Heyneman (2014) asserts that perception is all-important. It is common to deny wrongdoing. "Where is the evidence?" one might ask. This is the wrong approach. When an institution is perceived to be corrupt, the damage is already done. Perception is the only evidence needed for harmful effects to occur. This is one reason why all worldclass universities post anticorruption efforts on their Web sites. The author concludes that this implies that any university, in any culture, that has ambitions to become world class is required to erect a similar ethical infrastructure.

Uncontrolled corruption refers to the situation when corruption is not controlled by the state or HEIs themselves. Uncontrolled corruption is not a characteristic of the high level of corruption. Low level petty corruption can be uncontrolled while a highly corrupt higher education sector may follow clearly determined informal rules within a certain organizational structure. (Osipian, 2009).

In their comprehensive study, Chapman and Lindner (2016) reveal that universities need to operate with sufficient transparency for stakeholders to be able to see that responsibilities and benefits are fairly and appropriately distributed. Wider transparency is also necessary as efforts to reduce corruption in higher education require actions that go well beyond the university itself. An important tool is a free press that can question actions and publicize inappropriate behavior at a level of visibility that can mobilize a critical mass of public concern.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to uncover the fundamental matters of organizational culture mainly concerning the management and the ethics. It aims to reveal both the determinants and the effects of organizational culture.

An interpretive case study design was used to get a full image of organizational culture in a definite context. This study fits in qualitative research. The interpretive case study is a very helpful instrument for illustrating the importance of developments, actions, and settings. It supports the investigation of organizational culture (including determinants and effects) within a particular setting and the recognition of relevant themes or patterns. It is

employed for a business school within a Romanian university that faces the challenges of transition to democracy and free market economy.

Organizational culture in higher education is processual and relational. Consequently, the qualitative approach fits to investigate how practices are organized and authorized and how their various elements relate to each other.

This study brings forth emblematic items that together explain the overall matters regarding organizational culture.

The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEAA) within the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University in Iasi, Romania experienced the difficulties of transition to democracy and free market economy. Therefore, it is a significant object of study.

This case study uses as a basis multiple sources of data in order to bring to light the intricacy of the organizational culture. Informal observation and document review (such as internal regulations, reports available to the public) are the foremost data provenance.

The methods for data collection include participant observation of teaching and learning activities in the courses, and the collection of course documents, assessments, knowledge resources and other materials. These data sources deliver organizational culture details.

Some very significant processes were picked out for comprehensive and thorough analysis.

Informal observations allowed gaining a broader understanding of the case. This study is also based on public websites of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University in Iasi (UAIC), Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEAA), and The Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (ARACIS).

In order to cover most of the aspects regarding management and ethics, the following public documents were used:

1. Institutional Development Operational Plan UAIC 2019;
2. Code of Ethics and professional deontology;
3. Ethics Committee Reports for 2018;
4. Regulation of the Ethics Committee;
5. Decisions of the Ethics Committee from 2016-2018;
6. Assessment report ARACIS 2015;
7. Students’ report ARACIS 2015;
8. ARACIS foreign assessor report 2015;
9. Decision Nr. 583/2016 of 10 August 2016 on the approval of the national anti-corruption strategy for the period 2016-2020;
10. Internal quality assessment reports 2017-2018;
11. Reports on the state of the university in the years 2017-2018;
12. Self-assessment Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration (SDEAA) 2016;
13. FEAA Operational Plans 2017 - 2019;
14. Regulation on Recruitment, Evaluation and Promotion of Teaching and Research Staff.

Although they are public too, it was impossible to get from the University and from the faculty other relevant documents like:

1. Statistics on taught courses updating
2. Statistical data on the employment of graduates in recent years
3. Statistical data on abandoning and interruption of studies by students
4. Statistical data on the quality of the teaching and research process
5. Data on collaboration with the business environment

6. Academic positions of the Department of Management, Marketing and Business Administration

7. Structure of teaching staff at the Department of Management, Marketing and Business Administration (hourly payment, assistants, lecturers, associate professors, professors)

Topics and matters from informal observation were analysed and set side by side with documents to spot the main issues of organizational culture.

University staff may benefit from the findings of this study. It is up to the University's leadership to choose to share the findings with the academic community.

In line with the resources of this study, I decided to include a number of issues selected on the following criteria:

- Resistance to change
- Critical thinking supporting
- Students motivating
- Transparency
- Ethics regulations
- Feedback importance
- Academic staff evaluation
- Openness to academic community members and to general public
- Benchmarks and performance indicators
- Ethics and relevance of research
- General Regulations

4. FEAA Presentation and History

Founded on the 26th of October 1860, shortly after the formation of the United Principalities, the University of Iasi, as it was originally called, is the first modern university in Romania. In 1942, the institution's name changed to "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University.

The total number of students in the academic year 2018-2019 is shown in the table below:

Bachelor studies (full time and distance learning)	16 604
Master studies (full time and distance learning)	5 240
Doctoral studies (full time and distance learning)	772
Total	22 616

The structure of the staff is presented in the following table:

Total number of tenured teaching staff	732
Total number of associated teaching staff	715
Total number of research staff	95
Total number of auxiliary teaching staff	479
Total number of non-teaching staff	550

The Faculty of Economics was established on the 19th of July 1962. During the academic year 1998-1999, the name changed to "The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration". Since 2005, the Faculty has been implementing the Bologna system of education: 3 years (180 credits) for BA studies; 2 years (120 credits) for MA studies, and 3 years for PhD studies.

5. Organizational culture at FEAA

This model is based on research conducted by Prof. Geert Hofstede and his research team. The Multi-Focus Model consists of six autonomous dimensions or variables (Hofstede Insights, n.d.):

Dimension 1: Means-Oriented Vs. Goal-Oriented.

The culture in FEAA is most likely to be a means-oriented culture since people identify with the “how”. People are not primarily out to achieve specific internal goals or results. The employees tend to avoid risks and make only a limited effort in their jobs. Each workday is pretty much the same and this happens in some cases for decades.

Dimension 2: Internally Driven Vs. Externally Driven.

The culture in FEAA is most likely to be externally driven since the emphasis is on attracting large numbers of students. Financial results are most important and a pragmatic rather than an ethical attitude prevails.

Dimension 3: Easygoing Work Discipline Vs. Strict Work Discipline

The culture in FEAA is most likely to be a very easygoing culture due to the lack of predictability and little control and discipline. There is a lot of improvisation and surprises.

Dimension 4: Local Vs. Professional

The culture in FEAA is most likely to be a very local culture, employees are very short-term directed, they are internally focused and there is strong social control to be like everybody else.

Dimension 5: Open System Vs. Closed System

The culture in FEAA is most likely to be specific to a Closed System. Newcomers are not immediately welcome, management staff and many employees are not open to outsiders. It is not believed that almost anyone would fit in the organisation.

Dimension 6: Employee-Oriented Vs. Work-Oriented

The culture in FEAA is most likely to be very employee-oriented. Members of staff feel that personal problems are taken into account and that the organisation takes responsibility for the welfare of its employees, even if this is at the expense of the work. For example, hiring members of the families is a current practice in FEAA.

Lupascu-Pruna (2018) argues that there are six Signs of a Dysfunctional Organisational Culture:

Sign No. 1 - We Have Always Done It This Way

The organisational culture that used to work may no longer be suitable. The issue here is often that management does not know how to (or want to) challenge the “status quo”.

The change is almost impossible as long as the critical thinking is not stimulated but it is even repressed.

Sign No. 2 - Internal Sabotaging

The main departments “sabotage” each other. Due to a lack of alignment of the goals of the departments coming from the top management.

It is a constant struggle for funding sometimes with unethical aspects. Funding for personal purposes is too often much more important than the goal of the faculty.

Sign No. 3 - Old Rules And Outdated Regulations Lead To Paralysed Organisations.

Sometimes there are so many conflicting rules and regulations that people are “paralyzed” in doing their work. Management confuses employees with opposing rules, which leads to a situation in which the employees spend more time covering themselves than delivering the task. Sometimes the regulations of the faculty and of the university are not only conflicting among them but are conflicting with the Romanian laws. The most obvious example is the code of ethics and the University Charter.

Sign No. 4 - The General Manager Almighty

The Dean does not encourage the initiative taking, the creativity of people or innovation. When one does this for more than a decade, do not expect high performance or excellence from the employees.

Sign No. 5 - The “Steve Jobs” Culture

Sometimes, managers adopt a foreign management style that they interpret through the lens of their own (national) culture. A good example is adopting from the Bologna recommendations only what is convenient for some people from the management.

Sign No. 6 - Start With The Actual Culture

Senior management has tried several organisational transformations in the past without measuring the actual culture. This resulted in management systems that work partially and that are either unnatural for the employees to follow or have considerable gaps in addressing various new situations. A good example is the misunderstanding of the academic autonomy concept.

6. Organizational Culture Determinants at FEAA

6.1. Management

The UAIC structure is inefficient, as foreign assessor Professor Dr. Winfried Müller says: “UAIC is a big university and the organisational structure of UAIC is quite complex. The number of faculties is big and several faculties consist only of an academic department and a corresponding research department. The benefits of separating research from academic activities are not clear” (ARACIS, n.d.b.). (see UAIC, n.d.s.). For example, the UAIC reports state: "Eliminating master programs or running less than 25 students ... Decreasing the number of students as a result of dropping out of studies Insufficient staff compared to the number of projects " (UAIC, n.d.a.; n.d.b.);

UAIC has a high resilience to any change, although it faces many challenges and opportunities due to a changing environment. Foreign assessor Prof.Dr.Winfried Müller notes: “University will certainly survive also the next 50 years without considerable changes. Hence the majority of its members does not feel a strong pressure to change anything. This makes it difficult for the university management to respond to new challenges and changing contexts” (ARACIS, n.d.b.). This happens in circumstances where some UAIC documents, (UAIC, n.d.f.) shows that: "The UAIC Strategic and Operational Plan includes action lines and specific quality assurance measures such as: Periodic monitoring and evaluation of programs to ensure that they meet their objectives and respond to the needs of students and of society,"

The "tradition" of voting decisions of the rector or the dean, in order to dilute responsibility, may be unethical or even illegal (for example, the approval of problematic teaching staff appointments). The foreign assessor Prof. Dr. Winfried Müller suggests: “Try to avoid huge collective decision boards and exempt as many academic teachers as possible from administrative and bureaucratic work in order to give them time for teaching and research” (ARACIS, n.d.b.). This is in the context of a poor number of tenured staff, most vacancies are never in competition, as shown by UAIC (n.d.c.): " Compared with the academic year 2017-2018, in the academic year 2018-2019, the number of teaching positions increased by 41 and the occupancy rate decreased from 49.60 % to 47.68%."

How scholarships are granted is in some cases discretionary. The evaluator students note: "There are cases where scholarships are not awarded according to the specific regulation" (ARACIS, n.d.c.). Similar recommendations are made by the evaluating experts: "Applying the grant regulation, highlighting the amounts actually allocated for scholarships in the financial statements, and generally making this process transparent" (ARACIS, n.d.a.).

For example lists of students with scholarships at Master MP were posted after 7 weeks of starting the semester and disappeared from the UAIC website after three days. The

UAIC Quality Assurance Code shows that "The University recognizes the role of relevant stakeholders to students" (UAIC, n.d.g.).

The evaluator students also find out: "The results of the evaluation of the teaching staff by the students are not public according to the provisions of Order 3666/2012 approving the Student Rights and Obligations Code" (ARACIS, n.d.c.). For example, these assessments have been made public only following a request for public information and in an inconclusive form of non-observance of the law stipulating the publication of the nominal evaluation of the teachers. Furthermore, one of the quality objectives is "to produce and disseminate systematic information on the quality of UAIC services to stakeholders" (UAIC, n.d.g.).

There is a lack of transparency in terms of income and expenditure, as noted by the evaluator students: "The University does not publish the balance of income and expenditure for student dormitories" (ARACIS, n.d.c.). Similarly, these data were made public only following a request for public information and in a confused form (see also UAIC, n.d.q.; n.d.r.). In contrast, UAIC documents stipulate: " Posting the UAIC financial statements on the website " (UAIC, n.d.d.), "Implementation and observance of the procedures, regulations and methodologies elaborated within the UAIC, notification and resolution of inconsistencies or shortcomings" (FEAA., n.d.a.) and "Information of general interest for students is made public on the university's website and other means" (UAIC, n.d.i.).

The evaluator students report problems with litigation the marks. Therefore, they recommend: "Correction of the Regulation for the University Degree Licensing and the Regulation for the Master's Degree Studies with respect to litigation the marks so that they correspond to the provisions of the Order 3666/2012 approving the Student Rights and Obligations Code" (ARACIS, n.d.c.). UAIC regulations clearly state that: "The student's teaching obligations and the conditions for their achievement are foreseen in the Discipline sheet" (UAIC, n.d.h.) and as follows: "The student has the following rights: the right to an objective and non-discriminatory assessment of acquired competencies after passing a course "...the right to know the criteria by which it was evaluated "(UAIC, n.d.i.)

The quality of management and even the teaching process in UAIC and FEAA is negatively influenced by a series of problems listed by the foreign assessor Prof. Dr. Winfried Müller: "But the separation of tasks of the legislative bodies from the tasks of the executive organs is not well defined and there are several overlaps. Similar to many other Romanian universities also UAIC has a favor for collective decisions. The size of the Senate with 68 members is quite big for a modern university governing body. The Senate should be a fast and efficient decision body concentrating on core academic issues, providing the rules and the legal framework for the institution and its administrative managers. For instance, the Senate should decide the rules for staff promotion but not discuss and decide individual promotions. Individual promotions according to the rules given by the Senate should be a task of the Rector and the Deans. The habit to take decisions on individuals to the Senate also contradicts privacy and means a terrible waste of time for university members. Another waist of academic working power is caused by the fact that several academic teachers hold also administrative positions" (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

A conclusive example of the dissipation of responsibilities would be that "Legal accountability for the decisions and the work of the Ethics Committee lies with the University" (UAIC, n.d.k.). A childish justification for the overlapping of leadership and teaching positions of UAIC academic staff is "small number of teaching staff, difficulties in attracting young people in academia" (UAIC, n.d.c.), insisting on quality assurance: " Ensuring fair and transparent processes of recruitment and development of academic staff and determine the existence of a competent staff "(UAIC, n.d.d.).

UAIC leadership has no real concern about quality evaluation and improvement. Foreign assessor Professor Winfried Müller remarks: "In my eyes UAIC has missed the

opportunity to use this evaluation for a broad internal discussion of its present state and its future. This is surprising as UAIC has experienced an JEP-evaluation in 2012, a procedure, where the importance of the self-evaluation process for the development of a higher education institution is clearly emphasized. In general, I believe that the University should look more into the future than into its past. A healthy self-evaluation process resulting in a compact self-evaluation report of 25 to 30 pages concentrating on the improvements and changes since the last ARACIS visit in 2009 and describing the present situation (governing structure, budget, facilities, staff, students, study programmes, research, quality assurance, strategic planning and internationalisation) would have been a very useful experience for the institution and a very good basis for further strategic planning. The benefits of such a process arise from the necessity to set priorities and to concentrate on important things" (ARACIS, n.d.b.). At the same time, the UAIC Quality Manual stated that: "Performance on the strategic component of quality is reflected, with the help of performance criteria, in the specific evaluations carried out within the UAIC." (UAIC, n.d.f.).

Quality assurance is considered useless by many members of the UAIC and FEAA leadership, any attempts to discuss on this subject are doomed to failure. Quality data should be made public in order to have a debate on this issue. Foreign assessor Prof. Dr. Winfried Müller reveals the following: "Many university members still appear to consider quality assurance management as an obligation and have little understanding of its purpose and benefits. Hence in order to establish a real quality culture at UAIC the quality assurance actions should shift from inspection and control to an improve-oriented approach providing support to staff and students" (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

However, at a theoretical level, the UAIC Quality Manual is to be appreciated: "In quality assurance activities, the University has adopted and promotes principles such as: Creating value for students means for the University to meet their learning needs and to have a good context in which to learn" (UAIC, n.d.f.).

Foreign assessor Professor Winfried Müller makes the following recommendations: "The collected data and the results of evaluations should be used more explicitly for further improvement of teaching, research and administration. Try to minimise burden of quality assurance procedures. Promote more clearly to staff and students the benefits and improvements deriving from quality assurance procedures in order to increase motivation of staff and students for taking ownership of quality assurance. Formalise the involvement of stakeholders and employers in order to monitor and improve the quality of education" (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

Unfortunately, only theoretically, the UAIC Quality Manual shows that: "In its relations," Alexandru Ioan Cuza "University of Iași considers relevant the quality requirements of its services, coming from the following categories of internal stakeholders: Students and Student Associations" (UAIC, n.d.f.).

FEAA and not only proposes an exaggerated number of study programs that are often not demanded by the labor market and do not meet minimum quality requirements. Foreign assessor Professor Müller considers that: "The high fragmentation and specialisation of the study programmes (at least on paper) contradicts the demand of the graduates and employers for a broad education. The big number of similar programmes makes the selection of the appropriate programme difficult for students" (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

The UAIC documents themselves conclude that it is necessary: "To clarify the master programs more clearly by updating the contents of the teaching / learning methodologies" (UAIC, n.d.a.).

The foreign assessor Professor Dr. Winfried Müller recommends the following: "Reconsider the number of different study programmes (especially in the master area) in order to offer a broad education and to make better use of synergies. Involve stakeholders

systematically into curricula discussions. Increase interdisciplinarity and flexibility of study programmes (optional courses, joint courses of different programmes, etc.); Make more clear the correspondence between ECTS and working load" (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

Apart from the fact that no report is published as shown in the Master's Regulations: "IOSUM-UAIC has the obligation to publish an annual report on the Master's degree course" (UAIC, n.d.h.), the leadership does not observe any other obligations stipulated in the UAIC regulations: "Each teacher is obliged in the Discipline sheet to explicitly mention the evaluation modalities, the requirements that students must meet in order to be able to present themselves to the evaluation activity" (UAIC, n.d.h.). On the other hand, there are provisions that violate other legal provisions: "In the case of written assessments, the papers will be archived for 30 days from the date of the examination. Works evaluated during the semester do not archive "(UAIC, n.d.h.).

Research is often superficial and irrelevant, with publication in conference volumes and anonymous journals, often for a fee. Foreign assessor Prof. Dr. Winfried Müller, (ARACIS, n.d.b.) notes: "Research is highly fragmented and of a large proportion grown historically". He recommends: "Develop a research strategy based on clear priorities and already existing fields of excellence; Try to simplify the organisational structure of research (number of research centres, separation of academic departments from research departments, etc.); Further increase visibility of research by intensifying international activities (e.g. participation in international research groups, publication in international recognised journals)" (ARACIS, n.d.b.). In the same direction, the evaluating experts (ARACIS, n.d.a.) recommend: "to identify the possibilities of targeting the truly relevant research and the possibilities of disseminating the results with major impact, in the context in which the promotion criteria often lead, to speculative research ".

As negative aspects highlighted in UAIC documents regarding doctoral studies, I quote the following: "insufficient bilingual information on the website of doctoral schools" (UAIC, n.d.c.). Thus, even the few scientific papers of PhD students are not visible. Some of the FEAA teaching staff prefer not to display their CV and / or scientific activity, as it is legally, to hide gaps in their scientific research.

UAIC regulations are contradictory, often unethical, or even contrary to law. In this respect, the evaluating experts recommend: "initiate processes of analysis and improvement of the content of the regulations applicable in the University, in order to adapt them to their own functional specifics; the actual use of the data obtained as a result of the evaluations carried out in order to continuously improve the activities concerned, the development and especially the consistent and unitary application of some procedures related to the processes needed to be implemented, e.g the procedure of evaluating the teachers by the students. (ARACIS, n.d.a.).

This "bypass" of ethics or even legality leads to a vicious circle of mediocrity. UAIC documents report as weaknesses: "low response rate to surveys addressed to students ... Knowledge transfer - Low" (UAIC, n.d.a.). An example of an unethical provision is the one that states: "For activities carried out outside the basic workload, members of the Ethics Committee may be remunerated by prizes, overtime, as the case may be, according to the law." (UAIC, n.d.k.). It is at least unethical that on the electronic platform only some summaries of doctoral thesis are uploaded, as shown in a 2018 report: "In order to comply with copyright law, as well as H.G. 681/2011, public access is currently only allowed for consultation with doctoral dissertation summaries uploaded to the platform."(UAIC, n.d.c.). Practically, under the pretext of complying with different laws, various unethical or even illegal aspects can be hidden, e.g. plagiarism.

Within the FEAA, the minimum conditions for disabled students are not ensured, while the documents stipulate: "Ensuring the specific endowments for persons with

disabilities, according to Law 448/2006" (FEAA, n.d.a.). There are students with disabilities who have dropped out of studies due to lack of specific endowments for people with disabilities.

6.2. Ethics

The FEAA and the UAIC leadership do not communicate public data, and some provided data is incorrect. Prof. Dr. W. Müller mentions in his report, (ARACIS, n.d.b.), that: "The Internal Quality Assessment Report 2013/14 (IQAR) is not totally clear with respect to the number of teaching positions and the number of students. The presented tables are partially contradicting. Similarly the information on study programmes needs some additional explanations. Some programmes seem to exist only on paper. The financial resources of the University do mainly come from the government, from tuition- fees of students as well as from research and consulting. In the IQAR details are only given for the research income" (see also UAIC, n.d.o.; n.d.p.).

The same assessor notes: "UAIC did not prepare a separate self-evaluation report for this ARACIS evaluation. The Internal Quality Assurance Report 2013/14 (IQAR) was provided for information. Naturally this Report is not very self-critical and does not contain any Swot Analysis. In addition, the data provided in the Report is not always consistent. The number of students in the year 2012/13 is given as 19177, probably counting only undergraduate students. The total number of teaching positions is given as 1407, but the detailed table shows 1761 positions including 84 research positions. Another table gives 94 Bachelor degree programmes but the following table shows only 79 such programmes. Evidently the bigger number also contains 13 distance-learning programmes and 2 part-time programmes, which were not considered separately in the table. The statistics with the completion rate has to be studied carefully too because students of the June and the February dates are added, what results in a total number of 42644 students. In order to compare the number of students with the number of students taking exams the June and the February candidates should have been better considered separately" (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

While the FEAA documents state: "Increased transparency and visibility through the use of the faculty portal and website" (FEAA, n.d.a.) and the UAIC documents state: "Ensuring the transparency of budgetary and administrative procedures by publishing in the national public registers, on the University website or in other specific spaces of public interest information." (UAIC, n.d.d.; n.d.e.), the lack of transparency is obvious. Moreover, the reports of the UAIC Ethics Committee for the years 2017 and 2018 state that: "The Ethics Committee's activity was also affected during 2017 (2018) by inadequacies between the legislation in force, UAIC Code of Ethics and Ethics Committee Regulation "(UAIC, n.d.m.; n.d.n.). In the same reports, it is proposed, in order to enter into legality, the drafting of a new Code of Ethics, respectively of a new Regulation of the Ethics Committee (see also UAIC, n.d.l.).

In UAIC there is no culture of encouraging students' critical thinking. On the contrary, there are cases in which critical thinking is repressed by members of the UAIC and FEAA leadership. Foreign assessor Prof. Dr. Winfried Müller presents several interesting findings: "The meetings with the huge groups of students, graduates and employers did not really disclose any big problems. As usual students and graduates did not have severe complaints. A student of law mentioned problems with the recognition of credits from abroad, another one complained about the lack of places in the student hostels. Several students and graduates spoke for more support for internships and a better preparation for employment. Contact and information flow between regular students and their representatives in the different boards seem to be very loose. The involvement and engagement of students in UAIC's activities and governing bodies is not noticeable. Graduates and employers argued for a broad education at

the University, because special skills and competencies have to be learned anyhow in the job” (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

The same assessor also suggests: “Try to motivate students to take more responsibility and ownership for the development of the University” (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

At the same time, in a declarative manner, the FEAA documents detail as a specific objective: "Increasing the involvement in the socio-economic development and in the cultural development of the community in the spirit of independence of critical thinking" (FEAA, n.d.a.)

The lack of transparency regarding the academic positions and the filling of the vacant positions is profoundly unethical and leads to a decrease in the quality of the teaching process. Foreign assessor Prof. Dr. Winfried Müller comments as follows: “UAIC should stop the carry-over of unrealistic vacant staff positions from year to year and open new positions when necessary. Similarly, only existing study programmes should be listed and programmes figuring only on paper should be at least marked” (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

A good example is that of the department of Management, Marketing and Business Administration that fails to comply with the recruitment, evaluation and promotion regulations for teaching and research staff, which states that: "Filling of vacant teaching positions in hourly payment with own teaching staff or associate staff, is made only by public offer "(UAIC, n.d.t.).

Furthermore, the presentation of the documents must be clear and transparent. The evaluating experts note that: "Improving the presentation of the teaching plan, the model used may be supplemented with a number of necessary and useful information, such as a guard page, discipline codes, or statistics on compulsory and optional disciplines, respectively fundamental, specialized or complementary disciplines "(ARACIS, n.d.a.).

Analyzing the FEAA operational plans for the years 2017 and 2018, they seem to be approximately 99% identical without clear quantifiable targets (FEAA, n.d.b., n.d.c.). In contrast, the FEAA operational plan for 2019 is slightly different with a new heading (Expected Results / Indicators) that induces a major confusion between the indicators used to measure the results and the expected results, e.g: "Modernizing workspaces, Active involvement of students in promotion activities, etc. "(FEAA, n.d.d.).

In addition, referring to master studies, the UAIC documents mention some negative aspects such as: "Incomplete posting of information required for students on course supports, discipline sheets, evaluation criteria, etc." (UAIC, n.d.b.).

The existence of critical views of some students is repressed by opposition with a large number of students who, from disinterest or fear, make critical views irrelevant. Foreign assessor Winfried Müller notes very clearly in his report: “I think that the visited universities and ARACIS should reconsider limits for the size of the meetings with students, graduates and employers. Discussions within huge groups of more than 50 participants do not really contribute to a good knowledge of the institution or disclose problems. It is also somehow embarrassing to invite about 40 employers when there is only time for at most 10 participants to give a statement” (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

This is despite the fact that at UAIC level, regulations stipulate that students benefit from the following social rights: "the right to report abuse and irregularities and to request verification and assessment of these complaints ... the right to receive answers to these requests" (UAIC, n.d.i.).

Discussions with stakeholders are not organized to get a correct and honest feedback. There is a practice of selecting people who are obedient or pressured. Foreign assessor Prof. Dr. Winfried Müller argues in his report: “The involvement of stakeholders into curricula discussions seems to be very informal based on personal relations. In the meeting with

graduates, it turned out that many of the attendees were following a master or PhD-programme at UAIC” (ARACIS, n.d.b.).

On the other hand, the university regulations stipulate in the field of communication and public relations: "Promoting a continuous dialogue with the academic community" UAIC. (n.d.e.), as well as the fact that: "It is considered a breaking of the Code of Ethics the provision of false information to the university leadership and is sanctioned" (UAIC, n.d.j.).

7. Effects of organizational culture on FEAA

7.1. Ethics

Lack of transparency is a dominant feature of organizational culture at FEAA, which actually conceals the violation of regulations, with a convincing example of the director of the Management, Marketing and Business Administration Department of FEAA. which does not publish the academic positions, the list of disciplines available to be filled by cumulation and hourly payment, the contest criteria for filling the vacant positions etc.

Also within the same department, some tenured teaching staff and those who teach by hourly payment do not post their resume and scientific activity. Moreover, access to some public lectures was banned by the same director of the Management, Marketing and Business Administration Department and was supported by the FEAA Dean and the UAIC Interim Rector despite repeated requests to the FEAA dean's office and the UAIC Rectorate. Finally, although I was given access to two public lectures that were recorded audio-video, I was denied a copy of the recording under the pretext that it was a "personal memory".

Another example of the lack of transparency is the suspicion of plagiarism over the doctoral thesis of the same department director by the impossibility of photocopying the thesis from the FEAA branch of University Central Library Iasi because they did not have a copier and the impossibility of moving the thesis to the headquarters where there is the possibility of photocopying.

Regarding the non-transparent system of granting scholarships, scholarships list appears with delay of several weeks and disappears from the site in three days.

On the other hand, the organizational culture of the FEAA is also supported by the FEAA Dean's next response: "The practical test of the competition for an academic position is not public and access to the course room is not discussed." This kind of replies suppresses any suggestions for improvement of activity that are rejected without even being analyzed. The only effect of these suggestions is to lower the grades of the students concerned. Statements such as "It's my discipline and I am doing what I want" should not be heard at a master program at "Al. I. Cuza " University.

Thus, the appraisal of students is largely based on subjective criteria. There is a practice of introducing the score for attendance and obedience in the discipline sheet, including students' appraisal by students that are taken into account in the final grade. There is also a change in examination conditions compared to those initially set out in the discipline sheet such as for example the Project Management Software discipline.

The organizational culture of the FEAA is dominated by the rejection of critical thinking and the encouragement of obedience. Obedience brings higher grades than professional knowledge (e.g. the Quality Management course). Perhaps the most suggestive is the insertion in the course support for the Project Management discipline of the "method of getting rid of an unwanted employee".

More unethical situations are also due to the existence of kinship among teaching staff in FEAA (sometimes even three tenured professors from the same family: husband, wife, son, daughter-in-law etc.) e.g. the Project Cost Management discipline.

7.2. Quality

All that has been shown so far leads to a poor quality of the teaching process. Drawing up discipline sheets is negligent, (e.g. Project Cost Management discipline). Some disciplines have no course support, some courses are negligent, overwhelmingly obsolete since 1965, such as Quality Management. There are unnecessary or inappropriate disciplines such as HR Recruitment, Selection and Development, and Organizational Communication, or just hilarious such as Special Events Management. Other disciplines seem to be largely duplicated (Project Cost Management and Project Management).

The negligence in drawing up the materials on the portal, posting them with great delay, the existence of projects at inadequately prepared seminars determined that at least half of the students should not enter the session. Even the Head of the Quality Management Bureau of the UAIC does not comply with the students' assessments regulations.

Tutorial activity is marked in some cases by negligence and disinterest (e.g. the tutor from Project Management Master). Further, the FEAA list of tutors appears a few days on the faculty website then disappears and so on.

Any request for public data addressed to the Dean and interim Rector (who does not have the resume on faculty website) is denied under different pretexts. While the Research Ethics Committee does not exist, at FEAA the vice-dean in charge with scientific research and projects assumes no responsibility, as do other FEAA leaders. Research in general is irrelevant, used more for internal promotions, resulting in a vicious circle of mediocrity. Moreover, the annual report of the UAIC research activities is not made public on the university's website. Another example of FEAA inconsistencies is the difference between the high number of admitted post-doctoral researchers and the number of announced places in the Doctoral School of Economics and Business Administration.

We can notice the non-observance of the internal quality assurance procedures, of the legislation in force and the lack of the necessary human resources both in number and level of competence (some tenured professors are under a minimum level of competence) leading to failure to fulfill the faculty mission and objectives. Any attempt to change is met with strong resistance by many members of academic staff.

Moreover, the teaching, learning and evaluation process is not centered on students' needs and is not flexible enough to allow different levels of student learning and different styles of learning and presentation of acquired knowledge.

As far as the forms of assessment are concerned, they are not properly chosen so as to validate the fulfillment by graduate students of the declared learning objectives of the study program. In fact, the methods and criteria for assessing students regarding developed competencies are not appropriate and do not allow verification of their actual acquisition of the knowledge and skills stated.

The curriculum does not provide students with a structured and meaningful pathway that leads to the acquisition of competencies corresponding to the declared learning outcomes. Moreover, reports on student assessments are not made public.

The curriculum is not student-centered and is not capable of providing students with quality learning experiences, manifesting disinterest in collecting and integrating student feedback towards the content and the way the learning and research process takes place.

This is largely due to the fact that a part of the teaching staff does not have the training and experience corresponding to the taught disciplines. At the same time, policies regarding academic integrity and freedom and vigilance against academic fraud are not promoted and enforced.

Preoccupation to prevent university dropout is only theoretical, and the explanations offered avoid the main cause: lack of quality and ethics based on an organizational culture with many gaps and contradictions, with origins in obsolete customs and habits.

8. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to analyse the functioning of a faculty from different insiders' perspectives on academia, based on organizational culture. 'Insiders' in this case are academic leaders, evaluators, and students. I have also aimed to look at academia from the point of view of quality management, ethics, and leadership.

One can argue that the new practices and identities brought by The Bologna Process are the key drivers for change in UAIC, respectively FEAA. However, the result is scarcely an adaptation of the 'new' to the detriment of the 'old'. Rather than progressive adaptation, compromises are made, by partial adaptation, by mixing new principles with old habits, resulting in a more amalgamated higher education institution.

The dimensions of culture in FEAA can be summarized as follows:

- A means-oriented culture since employees tend to avoid risks and make only a limited effort in their routine jobs.
- Externally driven since the emphasis is on attracting large numbers of students.
- A very easygoing culture due to the lack of predictability and little control and discipline.
- A very local culture, employees are very short-term directed
- A closed system with special rules for outsiders
- Very employee-oriented culture

FEAA presents the signs of a Dysfunctional Organizational Culture:

- An ancient organisational culture that may be used to work in the past but not suitable for the present
- Internal "sabotaging" between departments
- Many conflicting rules and regulations.
- The Dean doesn't encourage initiative taking, creativity or innovation
- Some managers adopt a foreign management style that they interpret in their particular style
- Unawareness of the actual culture

The FEAA structure is inefficient, with great resistance to any change from many academics, although it faces many challenges and opportunities in an ever-changing external environment. Individual responsibility is in many cases non-existent, decisions are taken by voting, and collective responsibility is preferred.

The lack of openness towards the outside is also manifested by the perpetuation of the shortage of tenured professors year by year, with only a few teaching positions per year being filled.

The violation of some scholarship rules and the non-transparency of this process continue from year to year. Moreover, there is a lack of transparency in terms of revenue and expenditure in general.

The results of teacher evaluation by the students are not public, and even when these evaluations have been made public following a request for public information, they are not conclusive as not being nominal. There are many documents that are not clear and transparent.

Litigation the grades is a non-transparent process that in some cases does not comply with the regulations in force. This occurs in the context of poor management and a complicated didactic process by burdening some teaching staff with administrative functions. This is due to the lack of a real concern about assessing and improving quality by looking more at past achievements than in the future, avoiding any real debate or suggestion on quality assurance.

Thus, the FEAA proposes a large number of study programs that in many cases do not meet the requirements of employers and students' expectations and are not prepared to a satisfactory level of quality. On the other hand, annual reports on many study programs are not published.

There is no research strategy and therefore a truly relevant research, publication of results is done in conference volumes and unimportant journals, often for a fee or in journals that have no connection with economic research (e.g. the FEAA vice-dean on student issues, partnerships with the business environment and the public sector publishes in the Chemistry Journal).

This vicious circle of mediocrity is also stimulated by the fact that UAIC regulations are contradictory, in some cases unethical, or even contain unlawful provisions. Moreover, the FEAA and the university leadership do not provide public data and some of the data provided are incorrect (e.g. differences in number of teaching staff, differences in study programs, differences in number of students).

The responsibility and critical thinking of students is not encouraged in FEAA, even in some cases they are being "repressed" by some leaders. The existence of critical views of some students is repressed by the opposition with a large number of students who, from disinterest or fear, make critical views irrelevant.

Discussions with stakeholders do not seek to get a fair and honest feedback, by resorting to a selection of obedient people or pressured on various grounds.

The decrease in the quality of the teaching process is also caused by the unethical practice of the lack of transparency regarding the academic positions and the filling of vacant positions, and in some cases the failure to observe the teaching staff's recruitment, evaluation and promotion regulations.

By developing a specific framework and improving ways of assessing organizational culture, the stakeholders will be in a better position to change the factors in the university that are at variance with the culture. An identification of how organizational culture manifests in universities could provide rectors and deans with the relevant information to facilitate positive institutional change and growth. By a better understanding of organizational culture, administrators and faculties members may better advocate for more significant changes that ultimately their undergraduates will benefit from.

Nevertheless, I think that change is possible at FEAA and that this change can have beneficial effects on academics and undergraduates. The future will tell if that change can influence the teaching and research at FEAA or if it will be isolated to a small number of enthusiasts. There is also little systematic evidence so far regarding the progress of the Bologna process.

The data gathered for this case study underlined that a challenge for a good teaching and learning environment is to ensure positive institutional change and to reduce unethical behaviour. Other challenges for a quality teaching and learning environment identified during the case study are its need to design a series of effective procedures, rules, regulations and decision-making structures to enable academics to be engaged in university mission.

The main challenge for the future of FEAA lies in the limits of its outdated model of organizational culture, and its reliance, almost exclusive, on academic internal resources. There are also challenges regarding the interest of academic staff concerning participation in new initiatives and processes under the current conditions. FEAA should look at ways to meet these challenges and continue to improve its organizational culture.

FEAA should also consider ways to develop means to assess the impact of a change process on academic staff and administrators, and consider ways of avoiding favouritism and corruption by promoting academic honesty and integrity.

A further challenge is that the change in academic cultures that is triggered by changes in political, economic, and social conditions is not always equally welcomed by the academic staff. There are still many people who perceive change as an enemy to what they are doing. There are deeply rooted fears and it is a challenge to convince everyone that what it is done can help them and that they can benefit from it.

Taking into account the findings and conclusions of this case study suggesting a close link between organizational culture and quality in state higher education, future studies could examine the stages of organizational culture evolution alongside quality through perceptions of other stakeholders. Moreover, it would be interesting to have a comparative analysis of several economics faculties from different universities in the country.

9. References

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