

ORGANIZATION'S IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the identity of the organization in conjunction with the image of the organization. In a meta-analytic approach clarifies that the social reality of the organization is subject to internal and external evaluation concern.

When internal community members look to the organization, they take into account the identity of the organization. When external audiences relate to the organization, he takes into account the organization's image.

Results that the identity of the organization consists of the vision, mission, values, logo, staff organization and organizational culture (myths, beliefs, history, specialized language, symbols, ceremonies, rituals).

KEYWORDS: identity, image, organization, organization image, identity of the organization, organizational culture

1. THE RELATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATION'S IMAGE AND ORGANIZATION'S IDENTITY

In their complex interactions, organizations make available important resources that underlie their activities with internal or external purpose. With very diverse goals, these activities, have also as effect organizations customizing some related to other. Whatever its type and specific, any organization has certain features that identify it, differentiate it, emphasize it comparing other organizations which populate the extra-organizational medium. Organization's identity is a survival mode of this, through its visible actions capitalization, distributed products, performed services, background layout for products presentation or headquarter, public behavior (Man & Marin, 2011).

As we mentioned above, identity can't be defined only in direct connection with image. In a global vision regarding this two concepts, identity and image constitute the same perceived reality of two distinctive social entities: organization and public categories. Starting from this unique reality perceived from two different perspectives, Wally Olins defines corporatist identity as "explicit management of all ways in which is presented its publics through experience and perceptions", while the corporatist image is, for the same author, "what the public ... perceive from identity that was created and projected" (Ollins, 2004, p. XVII). Therefore, based on identity and image, organizations are differentiated, positioned and comparative evaluated, so from interior, and especially from exterior (Traistaru, 2013a; Voicu, 2013). As a direct consequence of this fact, organizations have to be concerned equally of external perception, as also internal one, between the two being relations of mutual generation and conditioning: "a good image in interior has compulsorily consequences also in exterior" (Bachman, 1996, p. 17).

In specific literature there is a multitude of definitions of identity, developed from different perspectives, based on some theoretic patterns mostly incompatible. This situation is appreciated by John M. T. Balmer as doubtful and confuse because of diverse factors, among which: the subject approaches from some paradigms perspectives and different disciplines; sometimes inadequate terminology; not enough distinction between identity and organization identity management; disaccord regarding objectives of corporate identity; lack of dialogue between academic circles and researchers and between researchers of different disciplines; fashion effect and identity association with the design; sterility of academic studies of applied research; exaggerated concentration of studies on holdings, transnational corporations or parent company; lack of clear distinction between real identity and desirable identity (Balmer, 2001, p. 251) (also Vladutescu, 2013a; Vladutescu, 2013b).

Analyzing the definitions given to identity in specific literature, Sue Westcott Alessandri makes distinction between definitions of tactical level, necessary for organizations identity observance and measurement, and definitions of strategic level, necessary crisis situations analyze from corporations life. Trying a combination of these two approaching modalities, the author defines organization identity conceptual and operational. From conceptual perspective, identity is "an own presentation, strategic scheduled and oriented on some clear objectives, in order to gain of some positive images about organization in people mind. Organization identity is set in order to achieve in time a settled reputation" (Alessandri, 1996, p. 176) (also Man, Rivas, & Gadau, 2011; Nowicka-Scowron, Dima & Vladutescu, 2012). From operational perspective, identity is defined as "the sum of all observable and measurable elements which organization develops them related to its public behavior and to its visual encompassing presentation" (Alessandri, 1996, p. 176) (also Traistaru, 2013b).

2. IDENTITY ELEMENTS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Projecting and performing of organizational identity are complex of duration processes which suppose the medium

analyze in which organization activates, of categories of relevant target audience, of strategy considered optimal for goal reaching (Buşu, 2010). In Wally Olins's conception, organization identity must projected taking into account four definitive elements for this: who is, what is doing, how is doing and where wants to get organization. Starting from these elements, identity will be developed functional at the level of four visible zones: products and services (what organization produces or sales), background (where is performed organizational activity), communication (how explains organization what is doing) and behavior (how treats organization employees and outside world) (Olins, 2004, p. 3). Organizations, according to the structure and their specific, will establish what zones will become dominant in identification communication, thus choosing for a certain type (category) of identity: monolithic identity or unique business identity (specific for organizations with only one name, only one visual system, a great visibility and a great positioning on market); vouched identity or multiple business identity (specific for organizations that form a group and are perceived as parts of group through visual vouching or written; in other terms, specific organizations which are developed through acquisitions and taking-over another organizations, but want to maintain integral the own identity associate it with corporatist organization identity); centered identity on brand or derived from brand (specific for some activity domains – pharmaceutical, alimentary – where principal organization identity – corporatist – is not important for consumer) (Olins, 2004, p. 128).

The structure reflects organizational hierarchy which objectivizes the power relations from organization inside and allows cognition processes of internal communication, of communication structures (inclusive of public relations structure), of distance between structures and decision centers (Olins, 2004, p. 128) (also Vlăduţescu, 2006a; Vlăduţescu, 2009). In conclusion, the structure of each organization represents the identity element with direct consequences on all its components; confers distinction and specific to organization image (Măgureanu, 2005; Măgureanu, 2006).

Organization's personnel is definitive for identity and image of this. Essential for organization are, simultaneous, people relations, (human interaction) and relations of each person with the assembly structure of organization. People quality determines organization quality and, therefore, is imposed a major pursuit for socialization performing and professionalization for each person apart (Măgureanu, 2009).

Organizational culture contain: myths and beliefs; symbols; ceremonies and rituals; specific language; values system and norms which orients the behavior (Vlăduţescu, 2002; Vlăduţescu, 2006b; Ciupercă & Vlăduţescu, 2010).

Myths and belief contain the facts historian which determined a behavior or another, successes from past, the organization people, that visionaries who transformed organization, impressing it another direction: optimal direction, modern, requested by context (Dima, Man & Vlăduţescu, 2012; Dima & Vladutescu, 2012a; Dima & Vladutescu, 2012b).

Symbols emphasize what is important to be esteemed in organization. The flags, logos, emblems and signboard reveal the importance and the place of certain ideas (force-ideas) in the life and activity of organization. They disclose "the philosophy, values, ideals, beliefs or expectations of organization employees" (Stanciu & Ionescu, 2005, p. 5) and make sense and meaning both for those of organization inside, and also for those of organization outside (Vladutescu, 2012).

Ceremonies and rituals confer symbolic valences and emotional to some actions with meaning in organization relationships with social medium in which functions and with own members: ceremonies of the functions, welcoming ceremonies of guest account, initiation ceremonies, ceremonies out of business of people etc. (Dussault, 1996, p. 33; Kertzer, 2002, pp. 20-22; Vlăduţescu, 2007).

Organization specific language contains specialized language and language codes. Any organizations has a slang, which represents more than a short form and appropriated of communication, because it affects, in different forms, the people behavior, in that "the professional slang means messages change with a certain meaning" (Stanciu & Ionescu, 2005, p. 47). The specific language learning is performed through organizational socialization and it is essential for individual integration and for his possibility to communicate efficient inside and outside of functional and hierarchy structures.

Values and norms define fundamentally "the organization vision on professions and the place that the employees fill

within this vision” (Mucchielli, 2008, p. 156). They are reflected in structure, in rules and procedures which establish what is and what is not allowed to organization members. The employee’s attitude beside values and norms reflects a certain position beside organization. “You can’t remain in organization if you didn’t decide how you are positioned according to norms and rules that govern it” (Mucchielli, 2008, pp. 156-157). In fact, through values and norms, organization asserts the life principles, is constructing “a moral identity” (Mucchielli, 2008, p. 157). In other terms, they define the status and roles assigned and assumed, desirable organizational behavior and the competences limits and members responsibilities involved in structures and hierarchies. In all organizations can be found a value of system which characterize them (Dima & Vladutescu, 2012c; Dima & Vladutescu, 2013). Some of them are thinking only for profit, other only for image, while there are also organizations which “develop a specific culture, favoring the feeling of affiliation and promoting specific action projects” (Dangenais, 2002, p. 127).

3. CONCLUSION

It follows that the identity of the organization can’t be seen as isolated from the image of the organization. The image is the external perception of the organization's identity. Moreover, they are mutually reinforcing interrelated variables. Any planned change in identity is verified by examining the image change.

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