REPORT ON CASE-BASED STUDY OF CULTURE-FORMING ELEMENTS WITHIN SELECTED COMPANY CULTURE

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Abstract: This paper is concerned with communication and culture-forming elements within companies. The purpose of this paper is to report on the study that was conducted in order to decide whether culture-forming elements of company culture in the Slovak business context have a considerable impact on job satisfaction of the employees. The most crucial concepts of this paper are the culture-forming elements and the term job satisfaction. The role of language and culture is closely explained in relation to these core concepts. This paper also draws attention to intercultural communication, company culture, job satisfaction and it maps current situation within the field emphasising the strong influence of the American tradition of the corporate culture. It examines mutual influence of the values on the national and organizational levels. Findings are set forth based on the case-based study analysis of company culture enhanced with a data-driven approach. This in-depth analysis of company culture serves as a sample confirming the interrelationship between the culture-forming elements and job satisfaction and it explores tendencies and strategies such as taking control of fluctuation and job performance. Besides, a unique linking between the language element and other elements such as vision has been recognized. These insights exemplify strong dependence on the culture-forming elements and job satisfaction. The findings reported in this paper refer to the differences in the perception of culture-forming elements and it also examines the origin of various company-culture elements comparing trends to American corporate culture. This paper addresses the formation of company culture in terms of knowledge from Communication studies, Cultural studies, Intercultural Communication and Sociolinguistics and recommends transferring knowledge from these fields into practical applications. Insights highlighted in this paper can help professionals from Human resources and Communication departments when forming and re-building attractive company cultures strengthening employee job satisfaction whereby it highlights a need for interdisciplinary cooperation in order to transfer the knowledge from these scientific fields into practical application and let modern society benefit from the contemporary findings from Humanities. Based on this cultural research, this paper does not only offer recommendations for the selected company, but it brings contributions in terms of company culture. The outcome of this thesis contributes highly to the best practices shared within business studies and provides the east innovation efforts in Slovakia with ways to empower their company cultures and so to motivate their employees and it is believed that application is not bound only to Slovak business context.
Keywords: Company Culture, Culture-forming elements, Intercultural communication, Job Satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

The most crucial concepts of this paper are the culture-forming elements and the term job satisfaction. Business studies in this field have covered company culture from various points of views. Most of them have dealt with company culture and its impact on the job performance (Rakatu, Chandra, Soma, 2022). However, certain lack of clarity is found within the correlation of business culture on job satisfaction of the employees. This paper is written as a result of a research in a Slovak business context, however, initiates a consideration of cultural knowledge, sociolinguistic knowledge and intercultural competence when it comes to the formation of company culture.

Research motivation was to decide whether the culture-forming elements that shape company culture have considerable impact on employees' job satisfaction and to what degree is it possible to find a significance between the individual culture-forming elements and employees' job satisfaction. The competition within the job market is tremendous, hence, not merely the employees have to meet the requirements of the companies but also companies have to provide attractive job offers.

It is hypothesised that if we increase the presence of some culture-forming elements within company culture, it may considerably influence employees' job satisfaction. Secondly, above-mentioned research aimed to find out whether the culture-forming elements are equal in terms of this correlation. It is believed that some elements influence the overall job satisfaction more than the others, so the increase in some elements means the increase or decrease in job satisfaction.

The main objective of the research is to find out the answer for the main research question: Which role has a language within company culture? What's the effect of culture-forming elements on job satisfaction of employees. Role of language and culture is researched throughout the whole paper. The insight into the field exemplifies strong dependence of the culture-forming elements and job satisfaction of the employees as well as the dependence of language and formation of culture-forming elements.

The main aim of this paper is to provide is an overview of the results of a previous study that was carried out by the author and seed the ground for further research. Study researched culture-forming elements in a selected company culture in their relation to job satisfaction of its employees. When examining these elements, various phenomena led to the notions that only with knowledge from communication studies, sociolinguistics and intercultural communication, culture-forming elements are shaped in a company culture that leads to job satisfaction. This cultural study brought also valuable insight for the human resources field.

Besides, a unique linking between the language element and other elements, such as vision, has been recognized. Based on the linguistic and cultural research, this thesis does not only offer recommendations for the selected company, but it brings turning results in terms of company culture. The outcome of this thesis contributes highly to the best practices shared within business studies and provides the east innovation efforts in Slovakia with ways to empower their company culture and so to motivate their employees.

It is believed that this case-based analysis may draw attention to the development of business culture in Slovakia influenced by American traditions and may help to improve the overall job satisfaction and build strong company cultures. This paper reports on this study to enable similar research and improvement of company cultures and employee satisfaction in other countries.

2. METHODS

In order to answer the main research question and evaluate the impact of the different culture-forming elements on job satisfaction of employees. Primary data are gathered by means of questionnaire and analysed as a case-based study in the selected company which remains anonymous.

Methods used in this thesis were chosen because of their relevancy and accuracy. It is not claimed that these methods are superior to the other methods used within business or cultural research. It is claimed that these methods are the most suitable to provide the answer for the main research question; what is the effect of the different culture-forming elements of company culture on the overall job satisfaction of the employees in the context of the chosen company? A secondary question should be answered based on the analysis. Which roles has a language as a culture-forming element? The understanding of the importance of the individual elements as well as their interrelation may bring a deeper understanding of the success of the company.

To fulfil the objective of the analysis, combination of methods is used:
- Methodology: Case-based methodology combined with data-driven approach
- Data collection method: Questionnaire
- Research approaches: data-driven approach

The combination of qualitative and quantitative approach is used, as this research wants to analyse and explore the interrelationship between the culture-forming elements of company culture and job satisfaction as precisely as possible. Data-driven approach is chosen as the best method to bring new insights within the topic.

Data-driven approach, according to Schneider, means "approaching data, as a default audiotaped naturally occurring conversation, in an unprejudiced manner and letting patterns emerge from the data" (Schneider, Jucker, & Bublitz, 2018, p. 43). This analysis aims to make results based on the data collected and to analyse them based on the theory provided above but not necessarily categorise the data in pre-selected categories.

A case study faces even the challenging position regarding international business studies because critiques were found, namely on a potential researcher bias, a bias from the use of key informants and selecting certain firms (Noorderhaven, Koen, & Sorge, 2015, p. 84). In this case-based thesis, analytical part uses data derived from the questionnaire filled in by the employees of an anonymous company seated in Slovakia. Confidential data are not published. Employees answered the questionnaire with the instructions given beforehand. Case-study is considered to be very insightful in this case and it serves as a good example of the current situation of company culture in the eastern Slovakia. Based on this case, other companies may analyse their company culture and research the culture-forming elements which may result in the overall improvement of the individual company cultures as well.

As a data collection method serves questionnaire. The data come directly from the employees of the selected company and employees are asked to reflect on the different culture-forming elements of the company. Their answers serve as primary data for this research, and they are subject to the subsequent analysis.

First, a questionnaire was designed containing four main sections. In this paper just two statements from the whole questionnaire are represented. The instructions are given at the beginning of the questionnaire and there is information provided to the employees that ensures that all the data will be kept anonymous. In the first section, numeric data are collected that express the respondents age, how long they have been working at the same position or for the same department. In the second section, data regarding vision, goals, and value perceptions of the employee are dropped. In the third section, communication and intercultural communication is subject of the

analysis. The last section provides information regarding the teamwork, leadership, and the overall company culture perception from the point of view of the individual employees.

Questions in the sections are designed as combination of Likert scales questions and open questions and there are only two questions with pre-designed choices. This was meant to avoid the danger of narrowing the range of subjects that might arise out of the analysis and to avoid the researcher's preconception of what the response might be. Five questions are inspired by questionnaires used within job satisfaction questionnaires, one designed by Spector (Job Satisfaction Survey, JSS, 1994) and second one by Son (50 Must-Have Questions for Your Employee Feedback Survey, 2019). Both questionnaires are used within this field as the most successful and meaningful tools in research devoted to job satisfaction.

The questionnaire itself seems to have the following limitations: There is limited number of questions in order to achieve a responsive behaviour as this is considered as one of the biggest disadvantages of using questionnaire in research. It may be challenging to achieve the collaboration of the respondents.

The number of participants is considered the second limitation of this analysis but in regard to this research there might be a chance to achieve bigger research in this field in the future. Even though not every answer is responsive or admittable in terms of research, the seemingly limited numbers of respondents provide a comprehensive picture of the company's culture and its main elements that have impact on job satisfaction.

Anyway, the limitations of this questionnaire are not limitations in terms of the study of the interrelationships among the culture-forming elements, and their impact on job satisfaction. There is possibility to analyse this mutual relationship based on the gathered primary data. The advantages of using questionnaire are considered more relevant in this case. As this research deals with more than one culture-forming element of company culture, the survey brings the advantage of incorporation more than one element under the scope and reaching more insights..

Questionnaires in this section are based on the age divided into two groups, one ranging from eighteen to thirty (Age Group I) and the second one ranging from thirty-one up (Age Group II). It is believed that these two groups do have different career experience and therefore there might be a difference in job satisfaction perception, or they may prioritise the different culture-forming elements in relation with job satisfaction. The former group consists of twenty-seven questionnaires and the latter one consists of twenty-three questionnaires.

First part of the questionnaire consists of only four questions and is named entry data. This section was designed to provide the research with basic information regarding age, length of the employment, length of the occupation in the position, possibility of the promotion. This information serves in order to call attention on possible relations when talking about job satisfaction and potential correlations.

3. RESULTS

As the analysis aimed to be in-depth and consisted of four section there were several findings on the different levels. To report on the results of the analysis that is not demonstrated within this paper, author reserves the right to shed light on the most important finding coming out of the analysis.

Results of the analysis demonstrated internal vision to be a culture-forming element of the selected company culture that had major impact on the job satisfaction of the employees. The strongest elements of the selected company culture are atmosphere promoted in terms of vision and values. Internally promoted vision successfully drives the atmosphere where employees feel as a one family (as described in the internal vision, hence, not being analysed further to keep data and company anonymous), so vision is the very successful forming-part promoting the element of "familiar atmosphere" within selected company culture. Across the whole analysis, friendly environment comprehending of "good colleagues" or "good team" is appreciated as a value and so employees are taken as the first and the most important element creating the whole culture based on the vision itself.

The hypothesis of the reported study has been supported, there are culture-forming elements that have considerable impact on job satisfaction within company culture. If we increase presence of certain culture-forming elements it has a considerable positive impact on job satisfaction whereas lack of other culture-forming elements causes job dissatisfaction. It has been also discovered that age and work experience play a role in terms of job satisfaction and culture-forming elements prioritization.

When comparing the Age Group I with Age Group II, there are certain similarities and differences found in mutual relations among company culture elements and job satisfaction. The elements which cause dissatisfaction in majority of cases differ in regard to the Age Group.

Age Group I perceives as the elements to be improved within company culture were mainly the workload and provision of training. In minor cases, there were mentions of empowerment of the feedback culture. Whereas the Age Group II felt dissatisfaction because of long time spent at the same position, financial reward, lack of communication, provision of innovations and latest technologies. Analysis of these questionnaires individually shown that despite their dissatisfaction, they have supported the importance of the atmosphere within the company,

emphasising vision and values which make employees feel that every opinion counts. Flexibility and work-life balance is appreciated by these employees signifying that these elements are strongly overarching within company culture. As the elements causing dissatisfaction are considered lack of trainings, lack of workload, and lack of development, either personal or in terms of technological innovations.

Among the elements causing job satisfaction within the Age Group I belong team spirit, fun, happiness, benefits, events. Predominantly, vision and values underlying the atmosphere and friendly work environment within the company. This element is considered to the one enhancing the cooperation and commitment to the work tasks, customers, and company itself. Within the Age Group II tolerance, work-life balance, freedom, international environment, project and customer diversity, professionality, and opportunities are appreciated, apart from informal behaviour, familiar atmosphere, vision, and values.

	Age Group I	Age Group II
Culture-forming elements causing job satisfaction	team spirit fun happiness benefits events	flexibility, tolerance, work-life balance, freedom, international environment, project and customer diversity, professionality,
Culture-forming elements causing job dissatisfaction	workload, lack of training possibilities	lack of promotion, financial reward, lack of communication, lack of innovation and latest technologies

Correspondingly, it is necessary to underline the tradition of American corporate culture which as stated considers values and beliefs one of a key component of corporate culture and it only plays role through the interaction of key shapers: people and environment, among the others (Schwartz, 2013). Another element which is characterised as coming from the American tradition of corporate culture is fun, appearing repeatedly as a response across the analysis. This only confirms overlap of the western culture into the Slovak company culture. Throughout the analysis of the responses, atmosphere (highly promoted in the communication of vision) created by people, being the key shapers of culture, is the most relevant for employees. It was also researched if there are certain indications following the tendency of the westernization within company culture.

Theoretical research in this field enables to understand the origin and impact of these essential constituents underpinning and influencing Slovak company culture. On that account, it is important to emphasise that many of these elements analysed within case-based studies of company cultures are coming out of the American tradition of corporate culture and demonstrating strong impact on the Slovak company culture tradition which needn't be natural.

This research hence supports other authors recommendation to conduct further research on the best practices for building effective work teams (Gut, Wilczewski and Gorbaniuk, 2017) "the need to continuously explore the relationship between cultural diversity and communication efficacy." The goal of formation of the company culture seeks to become inclusive place to attract employees and customers, hence, considering intercultural competence and knowledge from Intercultural studies sounds reasonable and calls for further action when forming a company culture. This finding is also strongly supported by the employees' responses to the following statement in the questionnaire:

➢ Steps that company should make to make it a better workplace are:

This statement provides employees with the space to propose their own ideas how to achieve even better workplace. Most of the time, there has been more than just one element suggested to be improved or intensified. Responses are further categorised based on their nature into the seven main categories as depicted in a Table 3:

Table 3   Proposals for Improvement

Communication-related	Training-related	Benefits-related	Innovation-related	Cheering	Workload-related	Other
20%	17,5%	15%	12,5%	12,5%	10%	12,5%

Apart from more benefits, newer technologies, majority of responses was devoted to the perception of communication within the workplace. Responses related to training are worth mentioning as 10% of the respondents admitted that there was lack of intercultural knowledge on their side and their intercultural communication perception is relatively low.

➢ I know a lot about intercultural communication; I have participated in training regarding this topic.

Employees were asked to state their attitude towards this statement. This statement is designed in two parts, first claiming the knowledge of intercultural communication, secondly, showing that knowledge should be the outcome of a training rather than just a feeling of appropriate experience regarding the topic. Results were distributed in the whole scale, only 14% strongly agree with this statement, 30% agree slightly, 24% agree nor disagree, 22% slightly disagree and 10% strongly disagree. Out of the results, there is a tendency showing that the element of the intercultural communication is not the strong, mostly supported within company culture. Overall, over 30% people headed for the option stating disagreement regarding intercultural communication competence.

If a company operates on the international level, it goes beyond the use of the one or several languages, it also has to overcome and manage cross-cultural miscommunication that may occur. Language is an enormously powerful tool to express ourselves, and it is a substantial part of the marketing of the company. As a result, language is an undeniable part of company culture and it is considered as its forming elemnt. Understanding different behavioural patterns enables us to respect other nationalities, ethnicities, and races. "Intercultural communication covers the interaction of people belonging to different cultural backgrounds" (Panocová, 2020, p. 21).

Negative feeling often prevails when there is something new or different. According to Riccardi, culture means "a system of behaviour that helps us act in an accepted or familiar way" (Riccardi, 2014). Based on that, we see that recognition of some patterns in speech may lead to a different behaviour opposed to the new, unknown, strange, or unfamiliar patterns that cause communication misunderstandings. These communication misunderstandings are present in the day-to-day world and often lead to conflicts. Analysis strongly supported that not only in the business world, is there a need to understand your partner in communication and overcome any possible misunderstanding, but it is believed the role of communication and culture is essential and has a large impact within a formation of culture-forming elements. "Thankfully there's a way to work with the power of social norms instead of against them, and consequently change cultures" (Zaki, 2019).

4. DISCUSSION

Another stand taken within this study and confirmed by the analysis is that not only language, but culture is fundamental in terms of job satisfaction and human resources. It is a key component of business, influencing the strategy, management and it turns to be related with behaviour and ethics within the company. It is also demonstrated within the analysis that American influence of the tradition of corporate culture has successfully entered into Slovak market. This influence is strongly emphasised within the thesis because it is crucial in order to understand the origin sense of the culture-forming elements. Ever-presented element of familiar atmosphere expressed by the employees as well as their call for improvement of feedback culture are strongly supporting the idea of the westernization of company culture in Slovakia. This insight is seen as a contribution to the overall understanding of the concept of company culture and its development.

There are myriad ways in which intercultural communication awareness can be increased on the institutional, national, international, or supra-national level. Currently, they are not easily accessible. Several ways of the intercultural awareness development and building a competence is discussed above to provide an evidence for the need of this knowledge within companies. Benefits raised by an increase in this field have impact on the employees, customers, as well as on the business results. Intercultural awareness increases social inclusion and prevents conflicts and thus it is very common to provide the employees with trainings in this area, however, study has shown that this was not common part for the selected company culture.

This field remains vibrant and requires more research to approach to the intercultural competence. Intercultural communication studies are one of the most important studies within the globalised world of 21st century. Every form of explaining a cultural difference enhances the living in a society and breaks the stereotypes in a rational, scientific way. Communication matters and based on previous literature review, language and communication are undeniable elements of company culture.

5. CONCLUSION

This exploration on a role of a language and culture-forming elemnts has been explained just as s brief demonstration from practical lives of employees and it puts language as a shaper of vision, values and the whole communication culture within companies. In these terms, language represents a way of influencing culture and initiates behaviour. It serves to target audience and employees effectively, to deliver clear messages. Moreover, this

analysis shows possible distinction within the mutual relationships of company culture and job dissatisfaction in regard to age, exploring remarkable distinctions on this level of analysis that may help other companies to build their effective company culture and so to increase the overall job satisfaction.

A successful empowerment of what is indicated by the employees has considerable impact on increasing job satisfaction which is aimed by every company culture. When forming these elements, a strong expertise from sociolinguistics, psycholinguists should not be ignored as the correct way of communication might be a distinguishing criterion of the overall success of the culture-forming elements, such as vision, values, benefits.

On the basis of this study, company culture has a considerably deep impact on job satisfaction of the employees. Drawing upon the responses gathered, employee do appreciate company culture and it does have a considerable impact on their job satisfaction. The main research question is answered as well. The effect of culture-forming elements is increase or decrease of job satisfaction depending on a presence or lack of these elements perceived by employees. Job satisfaction as a results of a successful company culture, has direct applicability on HR practices because building a strong culture prevents overarching fluctuation. Taking into account attitudes of employees, atmosphere and communication are the most essential culture-forming elements increasing job satisfaction. Though atmosphere as such is considered to be an outcome of another element within this research, the internal vision of the selected company. Linguistics and communicatione studies not only broaden our horizons in understanding different languages, but it also enables us to discover the breadth and depth of the power of language. Either dealing with meetings and negotiations or considering intercultural communication settings.

Another meaningful contribution of the research reported in this paper is seen in the discovery of the elements that are perceived to be more crucial for the employees in terms of job satisfaction and the elements standing more in the background. Positive development or empowerment of the culture-forming elements found the most essential may lead to the overall success of company. This study may help companies to adapt their company cultures to the employees and so increase their job satisfaction. This may consequently lead to the prevention from fluctuation. Sticking employees with the company represent a competitive advantage within the current market. The nature and power of company culture has been demonstrated, exploring the strongest elements concerning their considerable impact on job satisfaction. This field remains vibrant, and this paper aims to initiates bigger research within the topic as well as it aims to develop best practices shared not only within the eastern region of Slovakia.

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