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## The Importance of Organisational Culture in a Multicultural Work Environment – a Preliminary Study.

### The Perspective of Managers from Selected European Countries

#### ABSTRACT

Organisational culture has been studied by researchers for decades. Their avid interest in this issue is primarily related to its considerable impact on various areas of organisational life and on a company's relations with its environment. The importance of organisational culture is of particular relevance in multicultural work environments, in which managers' daily work consists in dealing with employees from various national cultures and with multicultural teams pursuing a company's goals. Organisational culture is directed at eliminating organisational behavioural ambiguity and promoting employees' pro-effective behaviours, which seems particularly pertinent in case of a culturally diverse workforce.

In the theoretical part of the article, the Authors define the term organisational culture, discuss the functions of this culture, and present the Cameron and Quinn competing values model, while in the research part, they describe the methodology of the study, report the results of the interviews, and draw the conclusions. The Authors conducted the interviews analysed in the article with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers in 2022. The analysis of both the literature and the results of the study allowed them to demonstrate the importance of organisational culture in contemporary management, especially in the context of managing people in multicultural work environments.

**KEYWORDS:** organisational culture, multicultural work environment, multicultural teams, cultural differences, managers

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## STRESZCZENIE

Znaczenie kultury organizacyjnej w wielokulturowym środowisku pracy – badanie wstępne. Perspektywa menedżerów z wybranych krajów europejskich

Problematyka kultury organizacyjnej jest analizowana i badana przez naukowców od dekad. Duże zainteresowanie kulturą organizacyjną ma przede wszystkim związek z jej oddziaływaniem na różne obszary życia organizacyjnego, a także relacje z otoczeniem. Znaczenie kultury organizacyjnej jest szczególnie ważne w wielokulturowym środowisku pracy, gdzie w codziennej pracy menedżerowie zarządzają pracownikami, którzy pochodzą z różnych kultur narodowych i funkcjonują w wielokulturowych zespołach, realizując cele firmy. Kultura organizacyjna służy przede wszystkim eliminowaniu organizacyjnej dwuznaczności zachowań i promuje proefektywne zachowania pracowników firmy, co w przypadku zróżnicowanych kulturowo pracowników jest szczególnie ważne.

W artykule w części teoretycznej opisano termin kultura organizacyjna, przedstawiono funkcje kultury i model wartości konkurujących Camerona/Quinna. W części badawczej opisano metodologię, wyniki przeprowadzonych wywiadów oraz wnioski wynikające z badań. Wywiady analizowane w artykule zostały przeprowadzone przez autorki artykułu w roku 2022 wśród polskich, hiszpańskich i portugalskich menedżerów. Analiza literatury oraz wyniki badań pozwoliły na wykazanie istotnego znaczenia kultury organizacyjnej we współczesnym zarządzaniu, szczególnie w kontekście zarządzania ludźmi w wielokulturowym środowisku pracy.

**SŁOWA KLUCZE:** kultura organizacyjna, wielokulturowe środowisko pracy, wielokulturowe zespoły, różnice kulturowe, menedżerowie

## Introduction

The operation of contemporary companies to a large extent depends on their organisational culture which is reflected in shared views, ideologies, beliefs and expectations (Akpa, Asikhia, & Nneji, 2021; Kielbasa, 2021; Schuldt & Gomes, 2020; Mazur & Zaborek, 2016). Organisational culture is a set of norms and values to which employees and managers adhere in their daily work; it affects the performance of individuals and teams as well as organisational productivity. Moreover, it exerts considerable impact on job satisfaction, employees' motivation and commitment, their task performance, goal achievement and change management. Every company has its own specific norms, values and principles which distinguish it from other entities in the market.

Organisational culture is shaped by employees' views, ways of thinking and behaviours, so it is of great relevance in multicultural work environments. Thus, managers working in such organisations have a vital role to play, as they shape particular cultural patterns in them. It depends on their competence, flexibility and openness whether organisational culture in a multicultural work environment is a factor that binds employees together around common principles and values or whether it has a negative impact on attitudes and behaviours of employees who do not accept their colleagues nor the otherness of their cultures.

In today's global business world, multicultural teams are nothing unusual. Greatly increased mobility on a global scale – in terms of both workforce and labour – has resulted in a rapid growth of the number of companies with culturally diverse employees, which, understandably, poses new challenges not only for them but also for their managers. Managers who work with multicultural teams bear a great responsibility for positive effects of their managing activities, which include skilful dealing with new challenges related to cultural diversity of their team members (Gibson, Dunlop, & Cordery, 2019; Glinkowska, 2016; Knap-Stefaniuk & Sorribes, 2022; Lisak, Erez, Sui, & Lee, 2016; Matveev & Milter, 2004), especially with a view to creating strong organisational culture shared by all employees.

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the importance of organisational culture in a multicultural work environment. The research problems formulated by the Authors are captured in the following questions: How do managers from selected European countries perceive the importance of organisational culture in a multicultural work environment? What activities are undertaken in multicultural management to integrate employees into one organisational culture? What areas in the management of multicultural teams are influenced by organisational culture? What challenges do managers face in integrating culturally diverse employees into one organisational culture?

### Organisational culture – its definitions and functions

Definitions of organisational culture are rather ambiguous, and this ambiguity is reflected in cognitive and definitional problems. Organisational culture is also analysed at the crossroads of numerous scientific disciplines, including the management sciences, which leads to a great number of different approaches to and concepts of organisational culture, a lack of a single paradigm, and a lack of consensus among researchers as to how to systematise the various approaches to its analysis. The most

relevant studies in this area are those conducted by, among others, Alvesson, 2002; Black, 2003; Boddy, 2011; Cameron & Quinn, 2003; Chao & Moon, 2005; Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2000; Gorzelany, 2020; Karakasnaki, Psomas, & Bouranta, 2019; Kumar, 2016; Gómez & Barboza, 2015; Sikorski, 2012; Sørensen, 2002; Sułkowski, 2012. An obvious consequence is the multiplicity of definitions, typologies and relations between organisational culture and organisational functioning (e.g., Assens-Serra, Boada-Cuerva, Serrano-Fernández, & Agulló-Tomás, 2021; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Hofstede, 2001; Giorgi, Lockwood, & Glynn, 2015; Kielbasa, 2021; Schein, 2004; Sułkowski, 2012). Organisational culture is a concept which is extremely capacious, multidimensional and difficult to operationalise, which leads to a wide variety of definitions adopted in the literature. Selected definitions of organisational culture are presented in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. *Selected definitions of organisational culture*

Author	Definition
E. Schein (Schein, 2004, p. 17)	Organisational culture [the culture of a group] is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.
K.S. Cameron, R.E. Quinn (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 18)	Organisational culture encompasses taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories and definitions present in an organisation.
G. Hofstede (Hofstede, 2000, p. 38)	Organisational culture is “programming the minds” of the members of an organisation, i.e., a set of values, standards and organisational rules effectively instilled by the group.
P.M. Blau (Blau, 1968, p. 298)	Organisational culture covers specific unwritten social “rules of the game” in an organisation that allow participants of the social life to understand an organisation and identify themselves with it.
L. Mullins (Mullinis, 2006)	Organisational culture is a collection of traditions, values, policies, beliefs, and attitudes that constitute a pervasive context for everything that is done and thought in an organisation, which stem from its system of rites, rituals, patterns of communication and the informal organisation.

<p>A. Stachowicz-Stanusch (Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2001, p. 77)</p>	<p>Organisational culture is the system of processes, characteristic of each organisation, that link the management's and employees' preferred values and social and cultural norms to their foundations and the ways in which these foundations interact and shape organisational behaviour. Organisational culture in this sense is a social phenomenon that consists, among other things, of relations between values and norms and the ways in which the structure of an enterprise is organised, the ways and criteria for strategic choices and leadership practices.</p>
<p>A. Brown (Brown, 1998, p. 9)</p>	<p>Organisational culture refers to the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation's history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members.</p>

Source: Domańska-Szaruga, 2019, p. 112.

According to Jabłonowska and Myśliwiec (2006, pp. 11–12), a company's organisational culture encompasses all types of employees' behaviour related to work performance, problem solving and conflict resolution. Ł. Sułkowski, looking for the common core of various definitions of organisational culture, points to its following constitutive elements (Sułkowski, 2012, p. 48):

- organisational culture is a social and group phenomenon,
- it constitutes a product of an organisation as a social group,
- it constitutes a medium for the transmission of meanings and values between people,
- organisational culture is partly created spontaneously and partly subject to being shaped and controlled by managers.

He also presents different paradigms of organisational culture (Sułkowski, 2012, p. 39ff) and observes that researchers formulate different definitions depending on the paradigm within which they work. However, these different perceptions of organisational culture do not negate one important point in the organisational research, namely, that culture in organisations exists and is something unique, affecting different areas of the operation of any organisation (Krukowski, 2016, pp. 184–185).

From the perspective of managing multicultural teams, the three functions of organisational culture – integrative, perceptual and adaptive – are highly relevant. The integrative function of organisational culture refers to forming a group and treating it as a unity. The perceptual function allows members of an organisation to adopt a given perception (present in the external environment) of the environment, phenomena and processes.

The adaptive function involves defining patterns of responding and reacting to changes occurring in a company's environment.

It is necessary that organisational culture be adopted by all employees of a company, as it affects their everyday work and motivates them to pursue its goals. The task of creating and promoting this culture rests primarily on managers, whose role in this area increases in culturally diverse work environments. Trefry aptly emphasised this aspect:

an organisational culture is even more critical in multicultural organisations because of its impact on the benefits and challenges of employee cultural diversity – and thus on organisational performance, organisational learning and potential competitive advantage. The potential for magnified effect is applicable in all multicultural organisations, whether operating across national borders or within a single country with a culturally diverse workforce (Trefry, 2006, p. 563).

Already two decades ago, Ely and Thomas (2001) also observed that cultural diversity in a company will exert a positive impact on its operation if organisational culture of this company promotes integration and learning between cultures.

Organisational culture gives coherence and integrity to culturally diverse workforce; coherence and integrity offer employees protection against uncertainty, support them in ambiguous situations and help them build relationships within the organisation and with the external environment.

It should be emphasised that understanding and accepting cultural differences are key aspects of intercultural management (e.g. Backmann, Kanitz, Tian, Hoffmann & Hoegl, 2020; Behfar, Kern & Brett, 2006; Browaeys & Price, 2008; Coote-Martin, 2014; Dixon-Fyle, Dolan, Hunt & Prince, 2020; Halverson & Tirmizi, 2008; Schneider & Barsoux, 2003; Knap-Stefaniuk, 2021; Knap-Stefaniuk & Sorribes, 2022; McFarlin & Sweeney, 2011; Molinsky, 2007; or Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt & Jonsen, 2010), which play a crucial role in integrating employees from different cultures around common principles and values within one organisational culture.

### Typologies of organisational culture – selected concepts

Organisational culture is important in the change process in an organisation, as it can support this process and the introduction of new solutions, including multicultural team management solutions. In analysing the role played by organisational culture in multicultural work environments, it is necessary to mention various typologies of this culture. Researchers have developed a number of models and typologies that take into account different

characteristics of organisational culture identified by their grouping and logical ordering. These typologies can be either one-dimensional or multidimensional, although the most frequent ones used in the literature are two-dimensional (Krukowski, 2016, pp. 205–225; Sułkowski, 2012, pp. 83–103). The most common one-dimensional typologies, which are based on a single variable, include the following (Sułkowski, 2012, p. 84):

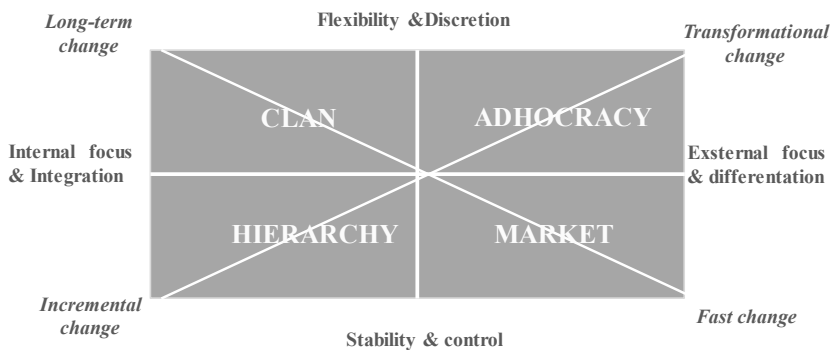
1. weak culture – strong culture.
2. positive culture – negative culture,
3. pragmatic culture – bureaucratic culture,
4. introvert culture – extrovert culture,
5. conservative culture – innovative culture,
6. hierarchical culture – equalitarian culture,
7. individualist culture – collectivist culture.

The best known and most often cited two-dimensional concepts are those proposed by E. Schein (Schein, 1992), G. Hofstede (Hofstede, 2000, p. 43), and the Cameron and Quinn competing values model (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

K.S. Cameron and R.E. Quinn identified thirty-nine indicators influencing an organisation’s effectiveness. After applying statistical analysis and clustering, they obtained two main dimensions, which enables distinguishing four types of organisational culture (Siemiński, 2008, p. 59).

In the first dimension, the criteria of flexibility and discretion are opposed to those of stability and control. The second dimension is based on the opposition between an internal focus, integration and unity versus an external focus, differentiation and competition (Marek, 2014, pp. 291–292). The Cameron and Quinn competing values model is illustrated in the figure below (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Cameron and Quinn Competing Values Model



Source: Cameron, Quinn, Degraff, & Thakor, 2006, p. 62.

In their model, Cameron and Quinn identified four types of organisational culture: clan culture, adhocracy culture, hierarchy culture and market culture.

The clan culture is a friendly workplace where people willingly interact with one another. It resembles a big family. Bosses and supervisors take on the role of advisors, teachers, mentors and even parents. An organisation operates successfully thanks to employees' loyalty and commitment to tradition. A high degree of commitment is observed. An organisation puts emphasis on long-term benefits stemming from personal development and places a high value on cohesion and morale. Success in this culture is measured by the development of human resources and care for employees. An organisation highly values teamwork, participation and consensus. In their description of the clan culture, Morente, Ferràs & Žižlavský (2018, p. 63) list its following features: flexibility, autonomy, collaboration, participation, interpersonal cohesion, commitment, shared values, collective goals, loyalty, affective bonds, human and professional development.

The adhocracy culture is based on dynamism, entrepreneurship and creativity. People working in companies with such culture are not afraid of risk, and their leaders are regarded as innovators and visionaries. The cohesion of an organisation is obtained thanks to its managers' being visionaries, entrepreneurs and employees' willingness to experiment and introduce novelty, as its aim is to be a market leader. In the long-term perspective, an organisation emphasises growth, taking on challenges, acquiring new resources, freedom and initiative. Success is identified with offering unique products or services. According to Morente, Ferràs & Žižlavský (2018, p. 63) the adhocracy culture is based on: maximum flexibility, agility, dynamism, adaption to change, prototyping methodologies, new resources, new challenges, creativity, innovation and risk tolerance.

In the market culture what counts is results, and the main concern is to achieve goals. People working within this culture are highly ambitious and goal-oriented. The leader is a ruthless and demanding manager and supervisor focused on competitiveness and production, and the management style encourages fierce competition. The cohesion of an organisation is ensured by its expansiveness and desire to win, and it is directed towards achieving reputation and success. What matters in the long run is competitiveness and the achievement of measurable goals. Success is measured by market share and continual expansion in the market. Offering competitive prices and holding the position of a market leader are important. In Morente, Ferràs & Žižlavský's (2018, p. 63) opinion, the most salient features of such culture are: control of the market, focus on value exchange, external and internal relations based on the position in the market, high competition between organisational agents, stability, profitability and result-oriented goals.



The hierarchy culture is a highly formalised workplace with a strict hierarchy where everything people do is governed by procedures. Managers as leaders are focused on efficiency and pride themselves on being good coordinators and organisers. What matters most is the smooth running of an organisation. Consistency is ensured by a set of formal rules and regulations. Long-term goals include stability, efficiency and working without disruption. Measures of success are certainty of delivery, adherence to schedules and low costs. People management focuses on job security, ensuring constancy and predictability. Morente, Ferràs & Žižlavský (2018, p. 63) characterise this culture as being based on: “the classic approach to power demonstrations. Orientation to results and maximum efficiency. Rigid organization based on roles and positions, which are translated into policies, procedures and norms. Strict and close to Weberian bureaucratization where reigns the cultural uniformity.”

One of the most important advantages of the competing values model is the identification of those organisational dimensions that exist in all or almost all human organisations and activities and enable the discovery of regularities present in organisational culture as well as methods used in motivating employees, leadership, decision-making, and cognitive processes (Marek, 2014, p. 291).

Summing up, it should be emphasised that organisational culture plays a key role in managing multicultural teams. It has the power to unite people from different cultures around values endorsed by an organisation and shared by all its employees as well as around its norms, principles, methods of working and achieving goals. Organisational culture provides employees with a sense of community, ensures mutual acceptance, and allows integration with the internal and external environment, all of which facilitate their working together.

## Methodology

The Authors conducted the study described in the article, that is five interviews with the managers of three nationalities (Polish, Spanish and Portuguese), in August and September 2022. Three interviews with the Polish managers took place face-to-face, one was conducted over the telephone and one using the ZOOM application. All ten interviews with the Spanish and Portuguese managers were conducted online using either the ZOOM or the Google Meet application.

The criterion for selecting managers for the study was their work experience: the requirement was working in an international company for a minimum of three years and managing a team whose members come from a minimum of three cultures-countries.

The interviews were of a qualitative nature and lasted between 70 and 80 minutes. They were conducted on the basis of an interview scenario developed by the Authors and additional materials related to the Cameron and Quinn competing values model. The interviews with the Polish managers were conducted in Polish, while those with the Spanish and Portuguese managers in English.

At the beginning of each interview, the respondents were provided with information about the method and the technique used in the study as well as its purpose and other formal matters that proved important to some of them, such as the anonymity of the results. The collected research material was subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis. The characteristics of the respondents (i.e. the managers who took part in the interviews) are presented in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2. *Characteristics of the respondents (the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers)*

Criterion	Polish managers	Spanish managers	Portuguese managers
Age and gender	Manager 1: 48/Man Manager 2: 62/Man Manager 3: 42/Man Manager 4: 47/ Woman Manager 5: 62/ Man	Manager 1: 45/Man Manager 2: 55/Man Manager 3: 48/Man Manager 4: 53/ Woman Manager 5: 40/ Man	Manager 1: 47/Man Manager 2: 44/Man Manager 3: 51/Man Manager 4: 58/ Woman Manager 5: 39/ Man
Work experience as a manager in an international company	Manager 1: 7 years Manager 2: 10 years Manager 3: 3 years Manager 4: 5 years Manager 5: 12 years	Manager 1: 8 years Manager 2: 14 years Manager 3: 11 years Manager 4: 13 years Manager 5: 4 years	Manager 1: 10 years Manager 2: 7 years Manager 3: 14 years Manager 4: 16 years Manager 5: 5 years
Number of different nationalities in the team managed by the manager	Manager 1: 3 nationalities Manager 2: 3 nationalities Manager 3: 3 nationalities Manager 4: 4 nationalities Manager 5: 6 nationalities	Manager 1: 4 nationalities Manager 2: 5 nationalities Manager 3: 4 nationalities Manager 4: 5 nationalities Manager 5: 4 nationalities	Manager 1: 5 nationalities Manager 2: 4 nationalities Manager 3: 5 nationalities Manager 4: 6 nationalities Manager 5: 5 nationalities

Source: Authors' own study based on the interviews with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers (2022).

## Organisational culture and its importance in a multicultural work environment – the results of the study

The research objectives the Authors intended to achieve by conducting the study include the following:

- to obtain information from the managers regarding their understanding of the term “organisational culture,”
- to identify the functions played by organisational culture in the managers’ companies,
- to identify the type of organisational culture (following the Cameron and Quinn competing values model) dominant in the managers’ companies,
- to identify activities undertaken in the area of managing multicultural teams which aim to integrate employees into one organisational culture,
- to identify the impact exerted by organisational culture on various areas of management of multicultural teams in the managers’ companies,
- to obtain information on the challenges involved in integrating employees of multicultural teams within organisational culture in the managers’ companies,

The table below reports the managers’ responses regarding their understanding of the term “organisational culture.”

Table 3. *The respondents’ understanding of the term “organisational culture”*

Respondents (managers)	Polish managers	Spanish managers	Portuguese managers
Manager 1	Organisational culture is a set of shared values and beliefs reflected in the everyday behaviour of the members of an organisation	Organisational culture is a set of norms, principles and values endorsed by the employees of an organisation	Organisational culture is a set of norms and principles that help everyone understand how an organisation works and what behaviours, attitudes and actions are acceptable and what are not acceptable

Manager 2	Organisational culture is a set of dominant values and rules of conduct that are associated with a particular culture, tradition, worldview and beliefs	Organisational culture is a system of shared convictions, behaviours and beliefs which are relevant to an organisation and which are shared by managers and employees	Organisational culture is a set of norms and principles that affect the cohesion of teams and an organisation as a whole, help in communication within an organisation and with the environment; it is common patterns of behaviour in difficult situations
Manager 3	Organisational culture is the patterns of behaviour developed in an organisation. It is the norms and rules of an organisation, both written and unwritten	Organisational culture is the beliefs, values and ways of behaving in an organisation; it is the way of doing business and building relations with the market	Organisational culture is the values, principles and norms that are important in an organisation and that are followed by employees; it is the way of managing a company, the rules binding in it and all the products of culture, such as ceremonies, rituals, language and image on the market
Manager 4	Organisational culture is the norms and rules of behaviour binding in a company. It is the “rules of the game” and the way in which an organisation operates. Organisational culture is shaped by the management and members of an organisation	Organisational culture is a company’s dominant values, norms and rules followed by employees and managers	Organisational culture is everything that characterises an organisation, norms and rules within it and adhered to by people, ways of communication, structures and procedures

Manager 5	Organisational culture is the way in which an organisation operates based on cultural heritage and tradition yet also open to new cultures and experiences	Organisational culture is the values, traditions, beliefs, convictions and attitudes that are characteristic of a particular company	Organisational culture is simply something that characterises a company – the attitudes and behaviours of its employees and managers, the communication within a company and with the environment, the rules and norms that are followed in a company, its history and the traditions associated with it
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Source: Authors' own study based on the interviews with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers (2022).

As can be seen from the table above, the respondents are familiar with the concept of organisational culture and correctly describe it.

One of the next questions regarded the functions of organisational culture in the respondents' companies. During the interviews, the Authors described various functions of this culture to the respondents and gave them time to think their answers over. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Functions of organisational culture in the respondents' companies*

Functions of organisational culture	Polish managers	Spanish managers	Portuguese managers
Integrative function	5	5	5
Perceptual function	4	3	3
Adaptive function	5	5	5

Source: Authors' own study based on the interviews with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers (2022).

As Table 4 demonstrates, the integrative function and the adaptive function were chosen by all 15 respondents, while the perceptual function was indicated by four Polish, four Spanish managers and three Portuguese managers

The next question the respondents answered concerned the dominant type of organisational culture in their companies. The types the managers could choose from were based on the characteristics of organisational

cultures in the Cameron and Quinn competing values model and on these researchers' OCAI questionnaire.

Table 5. *Dominant type of organisational culture in the company in which the respondents work (based on the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) developed by Cameron and Quinn)*

Organisational culture typology (Cameron-Quinn)	Polish managers	Spanish managers	Portuguese managers
The clan culture	–	2	1
The adhocracy culture	2	2	2
The market culture	3	1	2
The hierarchy culture	–	–	–

Source: Authors' own study based on the interviews with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers (2022).

\*Characteristics of different types of organisational cultures – based on: Cameron, Quinn, Degraff, & Thakor, 2006, p. 62 and OCAI questionnaire: Cameron & Quinn, 2003.

The Polish managers indicated the adhocracy culture twice and the market culture three times. The Spanish managers' choices were as follows: the clan culture (two responses), the adhocracy culture (two responses) and the market culture (one response), whereas the Portuguese managers' ones: the clan culture (one response), the adhocracy culture (two responses) and the market culture (two responses).

Another question regards activities undertaken in the process of managing multicultural teams which aim to integrate employees within one organisational culture.

Table 6. *Activities in the field of multicultural team management aimed at integrating employees within one organisational culture*

Type of activity	Polish managers	Spanish managers	Portuguese managers
Planning the team composition (selection of members taking into account cultural differences)	5	4	4
Adjusting the work rhythm to the cultural specificity of the team members	1	4	4

Building relationships in the team	5	5	5
Shaping intercultural communication patterns between team members	2	5	5
Promoting principles and values to be shared by the team members	5	4	4
Selecting appropriate ways of conflict resolution	4	4	4
Developing appropriate attitudes towards other cultures (nationalities)	5	5	5
Choosing adequate motivation tools (taking into account cultural differences)	1	4	4
Developing fair employee appraisal policies, taking into account cultural differences	3	4	4
Finding and retaining talent, with an understanding of cultural differences	3	4	4
Applying equal promotion rules for team members, regardless of their cultural background	3	4	4
Supporting team members in difficult situations	5	4	4
Promoting and implementing diversity principles	2	4	5
Applying principles of equal treatment in team management, regardless of culture	5	5	5
Implementing and adhering to anti-discrimination procedures	1	3	4
Organising cross-cultural team integration meetings as a basis for understanding and accepting cultural diversity	3	4	4

Source: Authors' own study based on the interviews with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers (2022).

The respondents stated that in their companies the following activities were undertaken in the management of multicultural teams: building relationships in the team (five responses from the managers of all nationalities); developing appropriate attitudes towards other cultures (nationalities) and applying the principles of equal treatment in team management, regardless of culture (also five responses from the managers of all nationalities). In the respondents' opinion, it is also important to select team members in such a way as to achieve the expected work results and, at the same time, minimise the likelihood of intercultural conflicts within the team (i.e., planning team composition: five responses from the Polish managers and four from the Spanish and Portuguese managers). Similar results were obtained with reference to supporting team members in difficult situations (five responses from the Polish managers, and four from the Spanish and Portuguese managers). In the Authors' opinion, the analysis of the respondents' answers presented in the table above leads to the conclusion that more activities are undertaken in the area of management of multicultural teams in the in countries which longer traditions of multiculturalism (i.e., in Spain and Portugal).

The next question focused on the areas within the management of multicultural teams which, in the respondents' opinion, are affected by organisational culture the most. Their responses are presented in the table below.

Table 7. *Organisational culture and its impact on various areas of the management of multicultural teams*

Areas of managing people in multicultural teams	Polish managers	Spanish managers	Portuguese managers
Communication within the team	5	5	5
Atmosphere in the team	5	5	5
Relationships in the team	5	5	5
Integration around shared rules, standards and objectives	4	5	5
The way in which tasks are performed and their quality	3	5	5
Motivation in the team	4	4	4
Conflict resolution	4	4	4
Talent management	2	4	3
Competence development	3	4	3



Performance appraisal (individual and team)	4	4	4
Support in difficult situations	5	5	5
Change management	4	5	5
Other areas of people management	<p>Manager 3: Impact on risk management; failure of group work (projects)</p> <p>Manager 4: Impact on the perception of a product and how it is offered to customers (communication and customer relations)</p>		<p>Manager 2: Recruitment and selection of candidates to work in teams; undertaking projects within the team as well as with other teams</p>

Source: Authors' own study based on the interviews with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers (2022).

According to the managers participating in the interviews, organisational culture has the greatest impact on the following areas of managing multicultural teams: communication within the team, atmosphere within the team and support in difficult situations (these three areas were indicated by all the respondents).

The aim of the next question was to obtain information on the key challenges in integrating employees of multicultural teams within one organisational culture. The table below shows the respondents' choices.

Table 8. *Key challenges in integrating employees of multicultural teams within one organisational culture*

Challenges	Polish managers	Spanish managers	Portuguese managers
Integration around common norms, principles and values	5	5	5
Adherence to the same rules binding in a company/team	5	5	5
Communication in multicultural teams	3	5	5

Developing positive relationships in multicultural teams	3	5	5
Motivating employees from different cultures (accurate identification of employees' needs and expectations)	5	4	5
Evaluating employees' performance (taking into account their needs and expectations, based on knowledge of cultural differences)	1	3	4
Talent management in multicultural teams	5	4	3
Other challenges	–	<p>Manager 2: Solving problems together, based on shared principles and values within an organisation (respecting differences resulting from different cultures)</p> <p>Manager 5: Integrating the team around new tasks and challenges (supporting each other)</p>	<p>Manager 1: Integrating teams around common development of knowledge and sharing experiences from different cultures/ different markets</p> <p>Manager 2: Jointly identifying problem areas in team collaboration (talking openly about problems stemming from cultural differences)</p>

Source: Authors' own study based on the interviews with the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers (2022).

The challenges identified by managers of all nationalities (Polish, Spanish and Portuguese) as the greatest ones were: integration around common norms, principles and values (fifteen responses) and adherence to the same rules binding in a company/team (fifteen responses).

## Discussion

Undoubtedly, organisational culture has been extensively analysed in academic and popular management literature for several decades, yet, it cannot be claimed that it is thoroughly understood today. Although a considerable interest in this issue visible in research conducted in the 1980s and early 1990s diminished in the 21st century, organisational culture is still investigated, because – as Trefry aptly put it – “it has genuine intuitive appeal for managers and (...) because the pervasive assumption has been that organisational culture somehow has a strong effect on performance and effectiveness in organisations” (Trefry, 2006, p. 563) (e.g. Alony & Jones, 2007; Boyle, Nicholas & Mitchell, 2012; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Chao & Moon, 2005; Dennison & Mishra, 1995; Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

The results of the interviews confirm that the Polish, Spanish and Portuguese managers are familiar with the term “organisational culture,” emphasise the integrative and adaptive functions of organisational culture, and indicate the adhocracy culture and the market culture as the dominant types of organisational culture in their companies. They undertake a wide range of activities in their management of multicultural teams, although the number of such activities is greater in Spanish and Portuguese companies, which have been dealing with multiculturalism for years, than in Polish companies.

Organisational culture has a significant impact on the management of multicultural teams. In the respondents’ opinion, the areas of this management most affected by organisational culture include communication within the team, the atmosphere within the team and support in difficult situations. The key challenges related to the integration of employees of multicultural teams within one cohesive organisational culture identified by the respondents are employees’ integration around common norms, principles and values and their adherence to the same rules binding in a company/team.

## Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The Authors assumed that the study they conducted and described in this article is preliminary. In the future, it can be continued and extended with reference to organisational culture and its importance in multicultural work environments. Further research can be conducted among managers of other nationalities and among employees who are members of multicultural teams.

Undoubtedly, a larger sample will provide an opportunity to develop a more in-depth analysis based on the diverse knowledge and experiences of managers and employees of various nationalities.

## Conclusions

The term “organisational culture” is difficult to define precisely because it covers a number of elements. However, despite the difficulty in defining the term precisely, the importance of organisational culture in management, especially in multicultural work environments, should be emphasised. Understood as a set of norms and rules, organisational culture helps employees, especially when they come from different cultures, to understand why certain behaviours are desirable in an organisation and others are not. It is a system of values shared by employees of multicultural teams which conditions the alignment of the interests of a company with those of its employees and their teams and shapes a company’s ability to cope with a changing, dynamic environment.

The interviews conducted by the Authors and the literature review allow drawing certain conclusions concerning the role and importance of organisational culture, particularly in relation to multicultural work environments. These conclusions are as follows:

- organisational culture is a factor that shapes behaviours and activities of employees and their teams; it is an element that integrates people who come, for example, from different national cultures, and leads to coherent, acceptable actions;
- organisational culture reflects the relations that are established within an organisation and the relations of an organisation with its environment (customers, suppliers, etc.);
- it is a mechanism that helps employees to understand how to function in a given organisational culture, in a given company;
- organisational culture is a factor that can distinguish an organisation from other entities in the market, as the culture of each company is a certain unique set of norms and values built on the traditions and beliefs of all or most its employees (and, from the perspective of a multicultural work environment, also of employees’ diversity of knowledge and experiences).

Undoubtedly, multicultural teams and cultural diversity can be either advantageous or disadvantageous to a company. A company’s attitude towards diversity is heavily influenced by its managers’ perception of diversity: for some of them this is something undesirable and should be eliminated, while for others it enhances a company’s performance and should be encouraged and strengthened.

If properly handled by managers, employees’ cultural diversity can definitely contribute to their company’s success. Managers will be able to capitalise on the advantages of multicultural teams – e.g., their creativity, innovation, flexibility and effective problem solving – if their company’s

organisational culture is strong, consistent and aimed at integrating employees from different cultures around common rules, norms, values and goals.

Thanks to organisational culture, the behaviour of employees working in multicultural environments is more consistent, which allows employees and managers to build more effective and efficient teams. Organisational culture improves communication, facilitates the assignment of tasks and responsibilities, mutual understanding and problem solving. If it is based on clear, accepted principles and values shared by all employees, it can be a factor contributing to a company's success. Organisational culture is particularly important in managing multicultural teams, as it helps to create a cohesive community of people who are willing to perform different tasks and take on new challenges together, even if they come from different cultures.

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