

TEAM WORK IN FLEXIBLE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE IN ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING IN SLOVAK AND CZECH REPUBLIC

Abstract: Flexible organisational structure is characterised by the creation of temporary teams within a basic departmental structure to solve a particular difficult task, important for the organisation and limited by time. It can be stated on its grounds that team work is the basis of innovative organisation operation. However, fact that organisations most often use individuals and not the creation of a team specialised in the given issue in solving of new, important and demanding projects and tasks sounds negative. If organisations want to create so called innovative environment, it is necessary to focus on organisational structure, while it is necessary to realise that different organisational structures are appropriate for different types of organisations. Presumption which was the basis of our analysis of organisational structure flexibility was the fact that organisational flexibility results from its ability to respond to changing conditions and new situations. Therefore, we monitored the frequency of characteristics like adaptation of organisational structure to changing conditions and delegation of operational decisions to line managers. However, the research implied that only a smaller part of organisational structures of the analysed organisations fulfils this characteristics.

Key words: flexible organisational structure, team work.

6.1. The need to focus on flexible organisational structure

Regardless of the fact how well developed the systems for identification and development of innovative products or processes are in the organisation, these systems will not work well unless an appropriate organisational structure is built in the organisation (ŠIGUT, Z. 2004).

¹ Assoc. prof. Ing., CSc., School of Economics and Management in Public Administration in Bratislava, Furdekova 16, 851 04 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, anna.kachanakova@vsemvs.sk.

Of course, it is impossible to set a universal organisational structure optimal for all organisations. Each organisation has its own individual specific features, which need to be taken into consideration. Rather perfectly elaborated structure with precisely defined competences benefits ones, while a freer one with the possibility of self-realisation of more ambitious individuals benefits the others.

On the basis of several researches focused on OS application under our conditions, it can be stated that OS of our organisations have undergone partial changes, however they still mostly comply with the administrative and directive organisational management system applied in the past (URBANCOVÁ, H. 2012).

Traditional organisational concept has certain advantages, however it should be gradually substituted by the flexible concept at present turbulent times, as the traditional concept does not satisfy the members of organisation (predominantly employees) sufficiently and it creates barriers to motivation on the way towards effective and initiative work (VOŠTENÁKOVÁ, Z. 2009).

Flexibility is generally understood as the ability to respond or adapt to changing or new situations. In relation to organisations, we find a great amount of partial characteristics, when flexibility is seen as a flexible production, flexible automated production, flexible information systems, flexible checking systems, working flexibility, flexible managing styles, flexible organisational structures, etc. (SEDLÁK, M. 2009).

The flexibility of organisational structure and related decision and information processes is based on their dynamic adaptation to changing conditions upon solving new tasks.

Organisational management requires a great internal structural flexibility or restructuring during the time of changes in order to facilitate reorganisation or transformation of present structures and processes (SEDLÁK, M. 2008).

The key features of the flexible concept of organisations are defined by Burns, T. and Stalker, G.M. as follows:

1. each employee contributes according to their best abilities,

2. the basis of the role of individual is a part of the overall situation of the institution,
3. roles of individuals are in the interaction with other roles within the institution,
4. a problem solving cannot be delegated to anyone else,
5. expansion of objectives (mission) of the institution beyond the boundaries of official definition,
6. network structure of operational management, authority (power) and communication,
7. the most extensive knowledge is not only focused on the top management level of the institution anymore,
8. horizontal rather than vertical direction of communication prevails in the institution,
9. communication rather includes advice and information than binding instructions or mandatory decisions,
10. the bond of employees with institutional tasks has a greater value than their loyalty and obedience,
11. importance and prestige are attributed to affiliation and expertise.

It is necessary to realise that the flexible concept cannot be applied in organisations where different partial working operations need to be precisely and clearly balanced in a technically and technologically arranged whole. On the other hand, the flexible structures play a crucial role in case of innovation processes or unforeseeable situations. It is therefore necessary upon arrangement and management of individual tasks within a certain organisation to take into account whether it concerns operations of a routine or innovative, specific character (VOŠTENÁKOVÁ, Z. 2009).

A feature of the flexible organisational structure is creation of a temporary unit (team, group) within a basic departmental structure to solve a particular demanding task, important for the organisation and limited by time. The task requires an objective set in advance, and employees of different departments and specialisations are to participate in its fulfilment regardless of their orientation (VOŠTENÁKOVÁ, Z. 2009).

6.2. Justification of team work

Building and development of teams is one of ways how to support a greater engagement of employees in their working efforts, how to encourage employees to create innovations, how to increase responsibility of employees for executed work, its quality and effectiveness, and how to set clear rules of rewarding. Excellent individuals are not sufficient for organisations anymore, they need excellent employees able to work on the basis of team spirit (BELUŠIKOVÁ, J. 2008).

As business environment is constantly changing at present turbulent times, organisations often feel uncertainty. The greater this uncertainty in business is, the more important team work is. The key factor of team work success is interpersonal relationships, balanced team roles and motivation of individuals to solve problems. The more viewpoints, the more solutions. Encouragement of open discussion and feedback, communication, revealing of actual reasons, brainstorming, constructive criticism, pleasant and cooperative environment – these are only several benefits which can be gained from work teams (JÁČ, I. ET AL. 2007).

Everybody generally recognises the need of team work expansion. In spite of that, its implementation represents one of differences as well one of the greatest restraints of organisations operating in Slovakia compared to more developed world. However, our managers and employees have several strengths compared to the others, which include the ability to improvise or achieve results even without appropriate inputs. Their usage under the conditions of team work can bring very significant effects directly reflected in the results of work of the whole organisation (POLÁKOVÁ, I. 2007).

Team work mainly represents economic and personal benefits for organisations. Regarding the economic sphere, a definite advantage for organisations is the fact that it is not necessary to invest significantly in restructuralisation of organisational strategies regarding human resources,

that staff the organisation disposes of is fully sufficient and is even more effectively used. Team work also has a positive impact on employees fluctuation – employees working in teams feel a greater loyalty to their organisation, fulfilling one of the fundamental goals of the innovative organisation – retaining of quality and competent employees.

Implementing team work, many organisations have achieved a greater amount of submitted improvement proposals and more complex innovations, which is how team work contributes to the overall processes optimisation and organisational cost reduction.

6.3. Materials and methods

Analysis of how organisations operating in Slovakia and in Czech Republic approach human resources management was carried out in the form of questionnaire researches conducted over 2012, from February to May in cooperation between School of Economics and Management in Public Administration in Bratislava and Faculty of Economics and Management, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. Questionnaire was distributed in organisations with 50 and more employees. Upon determining a target group, depending on the size of organisation from the viewpoint of a minimum number of employees, we presupposed that organisations with the number of employees lower than 50 do not have a standardized and formally defined approaches to human resources management and to its individual functions. Collection, sorting and subsequent summary of information obtained from the researches was carried out from June to September. 340 respondents from the Slovak Republic and 109 respondents from the Czech Republic participated in the research.

6.4. Analysis of conditions of team work in flexible organisational structure in organisations operating in Slovakia

With regard to the variety of objectives, abilities of managing as well as managed employees with whom different organisations enter markets, which are also significantly diverse, it is impossible to define characteristics of a universal organisational structure appropriate for all organisations. It is only possible to analyse the found organisational structure characteristics, and subsequently to analyse, e.g. by cross-comparison, which organisations with the given characteristics also fulfil other characteristics, predicting implementation and maintaining of the given analysed level of the innovative organisation in our case. Therefore, our research focused on evaluation of the frequency of found organisational structure characteristics (Table 6.1).

The research results implied that most often reported characteristics, respectively principle of the organisational structure was the principle of labour division, which means that it is clearly defined in the organisation who is responsible for what task; the second most often declared principle was the principle of subordination of the organisational structure to organisational strategic goals. The third reported principle was the principle of centralisation of powers with top management deciding on everything. Other organisational structure characteristics regarding adaptation to changing conditions and operational issues solutions were reported significantly less frequently, while these are generally most often denoted by authors of professional publications as significant in implementation and maintaining of the innovative organisation.

The basis of the second question, focused on the analysis of flexible organisational culture conditions, was the definition of the flexible organisation concept, saying that: "A common feature of the flexible organisational structure is the creation of a temporary unit (team, group) within a basic departmental structure, to solve a certain difficult task,

important for the organisation and limited by time (CAGÁŇOVÁ, D. et al. 2012)..” The research implied (Table 6.2) that 21 % (SK) and 33% (CZ) of interviewed organisations solve new projects and tasks by the creation of a team specialising in the given project or task. Such situation is most often solved by an individual, either specialised or, being a worse case, not specialised in the given task.

Table 6.1. The frequency of found organisational structure characteristics in analysed organisations

The frequency of found organisational structure characteristics	Share of org. in % SK	Share of org. in % CZ
is a subject to strategic objectives	58	62
everybody has clearly defined tasks	69	67
is cheap and effective	24	33
strict management unity is secured	25	32
strategic functions are separated from operational ones	7	5
everything is decided by top management	47	52
operational questions are solved by line managers	26	24
optimal number of subordinates of a single manager	38	42
adapts to changing conditions	38	35

Source: own study

It is necessary for innovative organisations to create the atmosphere where the dialogue between managers and other employees plays an important role. We were therefore interested in whether employees more often decide to use the team meeting or to solve the given problem on their own, respectively through an external organisation in case of finding and subsequent solving of a problem. Answers to question: “**How do you solve problems at individual organisational levels** (at departments, between departments and within whole organisation)”? implied that organisations leave solution of problems at departmental level, between

departments as well as within whole organisation on individuals in the greatest extent (Table 6.3) and on teams in a smaller extent. Least used in problem solution are external organisations.

Table 6.2. How are new projects and tasks most often solved in organisations?

How are new projects and tasks most often solved in organisations?	Share of org. in % SK	Share of org. in % CZ
specialised research team	21%	33%
permanent research team	15%	10%
specialised individual	29%	45%
non-specialised individual	33%	10%
external organisation	2%	2%

Source: own study

Table 6.3. Preferred way of problem solving in interviewed organisations

Preferred way of problem solving in interviewed organisations						
	problems at departments		problems between departments		problems within whole organisation	
	SK	CZ	SK	CZ	SK	CZ
team creation	30%	20%	29%	25%	36%	31%
individually	60%	52%	43%	38%	47%	50%
external organisation	3%	1%	2%	4%	12%	10%

Source: own study

Preference of individual activity is also reflected in answers to next question, analysing the most often way of new projects and tasks solving

by organisations. As shown in Table 6.3, individual solution is used in more than 60 % of organisations, which does not sound positive even in relation to the analysis of team work conditions.

6.5. Evaluation of the team work and flexible organisational structure in organisations operating in Slovakia

The organisational structure analysis was based on the presumption that a different organisational structure is appropriate for each organisation. However, the basis at particular focus of the research on the analysis of flexible organisational structure level was the presumption that organisation's flexibility results from its ability to respond to changing conditions and new situations. Thus set presumption implied that organisational structure characteristics in analysed organisations do not create the environment for innovative organisation, as characteristics like adaptation of the organisational structure to changing conditions and delegation of operational decisions to line managers were marked significantly less frequently than other characteristics.

Since business environment is constantly changing at present turbulent times, organisations are often in uncertain situations, and the greater uncertainty is in business, the more important team work is. Interpersonal relationships, balanced team roles and motivation of individuals to solve problems are among the key factors of team work success. It is necessary for innovative organisations to create the atmosphere where the dialogue between managers and other employees has an important position. The need of team work expansion is generally recognised. In spite of this fact, its implementation represents one of the differences as well as one of the greatest restraints of organisations operating in Slovakia compared to more developed world. It is also reflected in the fact that in finding and subsequent solving of problems, organisations more often decide to solve the given problem individually than to use team work. The fact that organisations most often use individuals, not the creation of a team specialised in the given issue in

solving of new projects and tasks does not sound positive either in relation to adaptation of the organisational structure to changes.

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