

# CULTURE AND TACIT KNOWLEDGE IN SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

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## Context

The concept of organizational culture became popular in the early 1980s when it was considered an important factor for explaining success or failure in organizations. Analysing culture in sport organizations seems to be promising, since they are traditionally rife with characteristics such as stories, myths, symbols and rituals, some of the principal manifestations of an organization's culture (Slack, 1997: 271). This may lead to interesting insights into both the concept of organizational culture in sports and the factors determining behaviour in such organizations. Frese stressed that attitudes and behaviour of members in an organization can only be understood comprehensively by understanding organizational culture (2000, 187). While recently several occupational fields of German sport managers have been studied (e.g. Horch, Niessen & Schütte, 2003, Hovemann, Kaiser & Schütte, 2003), a scientific discussion on organizational culture has hardly taken place. "A focus on organizational culture provides a different approach to the understanding of action patterns in sport organizations" (Slack 1997:271). In an interdisciplinary project promoted by the German Sport University, the concept of organizational culture in sports is being analysed. Its main objectives are to understand

- what are the cognitive, perceptual and interpretative patterns constructing culture in sport organizations?
- what cultural particularities do sport organizations have in comparison to other organizations? and
- what influence does organizational culture have on the actions and behaviour of sport managers?

## Methodology

Three methodological approaches were used. (1) Following e.g. Schütz (1971), *qualitative interviews* were used to understand organizational culture as an implicit phenomenon. (2) Following e.g. Hofstede (1980), organizational culture was analysed through *quantitative research*. (3) *Structure-dimensional analysis* (Schack, 2002) was used to understand the knowledge on organizational culture.

## Results

At the congress the methodological and theoretical framework of the project as well as first results of the three methodological approaches will be presented. A special emphasis will be given to different views on culture in an international context.

## Discussion

Neither by using standardized questionnaires nor qualitative interviews can organizational culture be measured satisfactorily, but only by using a multidimensional approach. This is particularly valid as organizational culture in the field of sport is characterized by certain distinctive features. The Structure-Dimensional Analysis offers new opportunities for comprehending organizational culture as an implicit phenomenon.

## References

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