Culture and tacit knowledge in sport organizations

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Introduction

The concept of organizational culture became popular in the early 1980s when it has been considered as an important factor for explaining success or failure in organizations (Staehle 1999, 497). An analysis of culture in sport organizations seems to be promising as sport organizations are traditionally rife with such characteristics 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 into the factors determining behaviour in sports organizations. Frese stresses that attitudes and behaviour of members in an organization can only be understood comprehensively by understanding organizational culture (2000, 187). While in the past decade several occupational fields of German sport managers have been studied (e.g. Horch, Schütte 2003, Horch, Niessen & Schütte 2003, Hovemann, Kaiser & Schütte 2003), a scientific discussion on organizational culture has hardly taken place so far. “A focus on organizational culture provides a different approach to the understanding of action patterns in sport organizations” (Slack 1997, 271). In an interdisciplinary research project promoted by the German Sport University Cologne the concept of organizational culture in sports is analysed. The main objectives of the project are to understand

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

Methods

Three methodological approaches are used: (1) Following Schütz (1971), Rosen (1988), van Maanen (1988) and Czarniawska-Joerges (1991) qualitative interviews are used in order to understand organizational culture as an implicit phenomenon. (2) Following Hofstede (1980) and Cochran (1990) organizational culture is analysed through quantitative research. (3) Structure-dimensional analysis (Schack 2002) is used in order to understand the representation of knowledge referring to organizational culture.

Results and Discussion

On the congress the methodological and theoretical framework of the project will be presented with the objective of discussing it particularly with regard to the different views on culture in an international context.

References