

CULTURALLY BASED MANAGEMENT MODEL

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Abstract

The article substantiates the role of Uzbek culture as a source of development and a condition for consolidating society. The problem is analyzed from the standpoint of the unity of fundamental and sectoral influence of culture. Conclusions are being drawn about the lack of clear contours of the "image of the future" in Uzbekistan, about the underestimation of the significance of culture in the new management paradigm. A modern management model is impossible without a dialogue between culture and management, without prioritizing the cultural foundation of national and regional development strategies.

Keywords

management culture, management model, organizational culture, cultural priority, socio-cultural indicators, cultural factor.

In modern society, the role of culture has not been sufficiently clearly defined or universally accepted, which is indicative of changes associated with the transformation of cultural ideals and behavioral models. This is not a weakness of culture itself, but rather a limitation in societal development, resulting in contradictory interpretations and conclusions both among specialists and within public opinion. For example, from an economic and legal perspective, culture may be classified as part of the service sector; in pedagogical terms, it can be viewed as an area of supplementary education and training; and in social practice, with regard to the reproduction of culture, it may be understood as a form of professional and amateur creative activity.

These contradictions are numerous, yet collectively they exhibit two clearly expressed characteristics. First, culture—being fundamentally a basic factor of development—has never occupied a place among the state priorities of the new Uzbekistan. Second, the perception and evaluation of culture within society differ significantly from those within the managerial subsystem of society. If, during the previous Soviet period of our history, it was not possible to fully realize the idea of

a comprehensively developed individual in accordance with declared ideals and supported by sufficient resources, this does not mean that today the processes of modeling and cultivating the relevant qualities of personnel have ceased. Evidence of this is the clearly defined trend toward shaping new “old ideals” of personality through organizational culture, where the core element—human behavior—is formed.

Alongside the philosophical, ethical, historical, educational, ethnic, and national aspects of culture, its managerial significance is becoming increasingly evident. In the future, management actors will not be able to ignore the need to understand the opportunities and threats inherent in the phenomenon of culture, and in each strategic period they will be compelled to consider this factor as a priority and fundamental element for achieving sustainable success.

The idea of using the cultural factor to enhance organizational effectiveness in competitive environments emerged within management theory and has evolved into a global trend and a conscious necessity for the development of management. It continues to gain increasing support and is being recognized as a foundation for organizational survival. From this perspective, nonprofit public-sector organizations may represent the most effective growth point, where profits are reinvested in development and, most importantly, where culture is widespread and management can achieve optimal results in a relatively short time [1, pp. 82–84]. Moreover, the transboundary interaction between culture and management is becoming increasingly apparent, and Uzbekistan is no exception to this process. This is evidenced by our entry into the market, beginning in the 1990s, when the practical task of training managers for emerging businesses became a focal point for management specialists. Due to the absence of domestic recommendations for training management professionals under market conditions—and given the lack of market relations and competition inherent to them—the extensive adoption of foreign management experience served as the foundational basis for change.

At this stage, the dominant idea was the search for a universal mechanism capable of automatically regulating the economy through changes in the rules of the game. The concept of market self-development and self-regulation became such a “magic wand.” In our view, this was a simplistic strategy; however, the idea of governance through a universal mechanism attracted not only politicians and authorities but also management professionals. As a result of real practice, we did not obtain a universal remedy for all market shortcomings, while issues concerning the impact of culture on management, economics, and business were misunderstood in development programs, inadequately reflected, or entirely

disregarded. Nevertheless, the classical thesis – that organizational culture cannot exist independently of the culture of the society in which the organization emerges and develops – has not been invalidated. Consequently, foreign values have not yet been able to fully transform our way of life.

Today, the concept of organizational culture has been incorporated into various leadership training programs; however, there are no clearly defined indicators or boundaries for its development. In our firm conviction, this development should be based on dialogue between culture and management, while simultaneously deriving from business interests in determining the priority of culture. This delicate balance between the significance of competing priorities constitutes one of the key criteria for development, shaped by social and national cultural characteristics as well as changes in people's lifestyles.

The initial period of Uzbek cultural management following independence extended over several decades and can be characterized as a period marked by disregard for culture – and, consequently, for responsibility, ethics, and duty. Over time, as experience has accumulated, and against the backdrop of attempts to resolve social problems through political, economic, and legal mechanisms, socio-cultural criteria and indicators have begun to exert increasing influence. If this trend persists, management practice and its sphere of activity will increasingly be determined by the interests of organizations rather than by political interests or the political decisions of authorities [2, pp. 75–79].

Organizational culture is an independent concept possessing expressed integrity and autonomy; it cannot be substituted by the general notion of culture, nor can the organizational culture of others be assimilated in an identical manner. The real practice of professional management is fundamentally constrained by cultural factors and traditions, regardless of whether an enterprise holds commercial or non-commercial status. The prolonged integration of cultural indicators into organizational life is attributable to the conservative nature of culture and to its dual interpretation – narrow and broad – by many generations of specialists. For instance, there remains a widespread belief that culture is merely about song and dance, and that economic and production issues are unrelated to culture and fall outside its domain. This view is often held by managers who do not consider themselves part of culture and, most importantly, do not regard themselves as cultural subjects simply because they do not sing or dance. A similar perspective may apply to economists who, when discussing the influence of the human factor, largely overlook the socio-cultural characteristics of socially active actors (individuals and groups), who in fact drive development processes, including those within the economy. Formally, they are correct, since culture is still

regarded primarily as a sector of economic activity—one that does not generate substantial income and is therefore financed according to the residual principle. This narrow, practical interpretation has reduced the influence of culture to purely instrumental effects. As a result, it becomes understandable why culture is entirely absent—even in its instrumental sense—from Uzbekistan’s national development projects. From this it follows that management problems in Uzbekistan, as well as challenges related to its development, are rooted not in the outcomes of ineffective managers but in cultural factors. It is culture that creates the values accepted by consumers and that should form the foundation of management activity. In our view, both management policy and strategy today should begin precisely from this interpretation.

However, if the cultural factor is not reflected in state policy, it will ultimately lead to a “broken trough” scenario. This implies not the placement of cultural services in official registries somewhere between hairdressing services and shoemaking workshops, but rather an understanding of culture as a fundamental, system-forming force that permeates the activities of every element of society and determines the direction and content of those activities. The role and status of culture—and most importantly, its practical implementation—represent the most delicate and vulnerable point among measures aimed at overcoming systemic crises in management, as well as in any other sphere where crises manifest themselves, whether in the economy, politics, or the fields of culture and art. The point is that, when making strategic management decisions that later transition automatically into operational processes, it is not sufficient merely to take socio-cultural indicators into account. It is also necessary to construct a feedback mechanism demonstrating that the distinctive features of national culture, cultural traditions, and customs directly influence every organization’s activities, its operating environment, managerial decisions, formal and informal relationships, and even the structure of the state itself. Management as such, along with social institutions and norms, constitutes elements and derivatives of culture.

At first glance, this truth appears obvious; however, it has not yet been transformed into a practical guide for action. Achieving this requires extensive efforts to explain and instill in the consciousness of representatives at all levels of government the enduring value of culture as the cement that binds the state structure and as the primary source shaping its intellectual governance capacity. This must not only be understood but deeply internalized and, most importantly, translated into management decisions, beginning with the country’s fundamental laws and state budget. Moreover, in conditions marked by increasing corruption, dual values, and the growing subjectivity of decision-making, culture remains the

only means of preserving the distinctiveness of governance—one capable of adapting the best global practices to the realities of state, private, or public organizations. Unless one takes comfort in acknowledging the destructiveness of the above-mentioned and many other problems, along with their cultural conditionality, decisive action is inevitable [3].

The professional activity of a contemporary management specialist extends far beyond the scope of sector-specific knowledge and skills. For decisions at the lower and middle levels of management, sectoral specificity is indeed important. However, at both the organizational level and within the framework of a regional cultural system, management must rely on a broader worldview encompassing nature, society, and the individual in order to stimulate development and growth. This broader perspective enables managers to view their actions within a strategic horizon. Perhaps today it is more appropriate not only to pose questions about organizational or managerial culture but to consider the issue more broadly—as the culture of professional activity in general—particularly as applied to organizational management.

This constitutes an essential feature of the portrait of a “culture-oriented manager,” who, in addition to specialized knowledge and skills, must embody the characteristics of the general culture of management actors. In our view, this has unifying significance both for the strategic prospects of cultural governance and for addressing the issue of managers’ professional training, including the formation of adequate values and ideals. Such an understanding enables and requires the following:

A comprehensive awareness of culture’s potential and the prioritization of culture in solving management problems;

An assessment of the essence and prospects of management culture, as well as an evaluation of its current state;

The incorporation into vocational education programs of competencies that allow specialists to avoid ready-made recipes and instead develop flexible, adaptive strategies for the future development of their organizations;

The training of managers capable of innovative thinking and of effectively transforming future uncertainty from a threat into a factor of success.

Another important aspect to emphasize is the conciliatory function of culture. Through culture, it is possible to use systemic crisis situations constructively and to create a renewed, healthy state while preserving Uzbekistan’s political stability. Sooner or later, these goals will play their role, as the promotion of the idea of cultural priority is currently being reinforced through the widespread introduction of corporate culture and the development of management culture—not only in

Uzbek business but also in the practical activities of nonprofit organizations. This represents a positive moment in the process of transforming future uncertainty into a factor of success.

However, alongside optimism, there exists a deeply rooted contradiction between new corporate relations and the traditional behavioral patterns of our population, particularly in value orientations manifested in social and everyday culture, as well as in organizational relations within the public sector and leisure sphere. Organizational management culture is inherently professional but limited by a certain range of experience and traditions (clan-based), as it is naturally formed and relies on values accepted within specific cultures, countries, social groups, and regions. For example, Western cultures are characterized by a predominance of individualistic values in social relations, whereas collectivist values prevail in Eastern countries. Uzbek organizations, for instance, often rely on belief in ready-made universal recipes for success, typically without appropriate adaptation.

As a result, a situation emerges in which, on the one hand, collective psychology and Soviet-era traditions remain influential, while on the other hand, value orientations are shifting toward Western behavioral models due to the state's efforts to integrate into the market economy. Consequently, employees learn to operate within corporate rules at the workplace, while outside the organization they function within a familiar, established socio-cultural environment. In this context, the cultural factor is not accorded priority by the state. The specificity of the phenomenon whereby culture exerts a weak influence on social processes lies in the fact that this influence is, in essence, a management problem. Uzbek culture is distinctive, exceptionally rich, and fully commensurate with the country's abundant resources. However, we have neither created nor identified an adequate management model – both in terms of utilizing resources to improve quality of life and in terms of leveraging cultural potential for the same purpose. As long as culture is relegated to a hedonic and entertainment sphere, societal problems will continue to be structured around dual standards.

What is needed is a management model grounded fundamentally in socio-cultural criteria and indicators. What objectives should this model be designed to address? First, the elimination of dual standards and double morality in governance; second, the provision of mechanisms for adjusting management strategies; and third, ensuring the dynamism and modification of lifestyles in response to concrete socio-cultural changes in the external environment. The problem of “double standards” in management manifests itself as a contradiction between changes in the external environment and the system of managerial

responses to those changes. On the one hand, by the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the external environment surrounding cultural organizations can be characterized as rapidly changing and close to turbulent. At the same time, the services market is mass-oriented, segmented (with market niches quickly filled), competitive, and demands from providers complex, standardized products tailored to specific consumer groups. Market interactions are chosen by consumers, and motivational factors increasingly reflect individual interests. The nature of labor has become more complex, integrating pedagogical, professional, creative, and organizational qualities. There is strong demand for highly qualified specialists capable of responding flexibly and promptly to changing needs.

On the other hand, power remains centralized, with governance primarily exercised through directives and orders. Management decisions involve numerous levels of coordination and lengthy timelines from idea development to adoption. The approach to the future is characterized by the problematic extrapolation of the past.

While new ideas and approaches to management are permitted and exist, the management structure itself—along with systems of development, coordination, and decision-making—remains unchanged: hierarchical, with a pyramidal orientation. This situation has particular significance for cultural institutions, as the state, acting as founder, has granted greater autonomy across various areas of activity. As a result, increased responsibility has emerged for selected directions and decisions, yet the external environment evolves faster than organizations can respond. Given the modest staffing and budgets of cultural organizations, rapid responses to market demands are extremely difficult unless new mechanisms of labor relations—aligned with service individualization—are introduced.

For some cultural institutions and administrative bodies, this situation has been unexpected, disrupting established routines. It became necessary to rapidly distinguish between the permanence of spiritual values and the speed of changes in management systems. Organizational structures that once appeared immutable have proven ineffective under conditions of a changing external environment. They now must rely on clear reference points, monitor the linkage between external conditions and organizational goals, and meet numerous other market requirements. Personnel policy can no longer be based on expectations of state support, without which it is impossible in many regions to reorient social programs toward strengthening the role of culture. It has become evident that directive-based management does not correspond to the characteristics of the external environment and that organizational restructuring must proceed not according to the needs of the socio-cultural services market, but rather under scenarios of reduction

strategies. All of this does not provide grounds to assert that there exists a conscious effort within society and the state to manage the process of shaping needs. In practice, it is necessary to “chase” mass demand, which, as is well known, is largely formed by the ideas of mass culture and does not lead to positive changes in value orientations—either within society as a whole or within its individual segments. As a result, in the absence of strategic clarity, cultural institutions continue to rely primarily on the time-tested capacities of outdated management systems and on the dedication of specialists. Unfortunately, these factors indicate not effective adaptation and development under conditions of constant change, but mere survival [4, pp. 5–7]. Under such conditions, a cultural organization can function successfully only if it establishes cooperative relationships with consumers, imposes professional requirements on the personal and professional qualities of employees and managers, and operates as a competitive, independent, and proactive entity. The old idea of the cultural worker’s universality—being simultaneously a specialist in a particular art genre, an artistic director, and a manager—was once aptly described by the public as someone who is “a tailor, a reaper, and a lute player all at once.” Yet today, this personnel policy is widely applied, despite widespread recognition that it resembles a parody of effective management. At the same time, narrow specialization of cultural leaders has also failed to take hold, increasingly becoming a factor that limits efficiency due to personnel and economic constraints.

Under such conditions, a cultural organization can operate successfully only if it establishes cooperative relationships with consumers, sets professional standards for the personal and professional qualities of hired employees and managers, and demands competitiveness, independence, and initiative. In order to adapt effectively, it must overcome constraints in its interactions with consumers, the nature of managerial labor, organizational structures, the psychology of attitudes toward the future, organizational culture, and the character of decision-making. In our view, overcoming these constraints can and should be achieved by defining objectives based on organizations’ strengths, the external environment, and established management theories.

In the long term, a social model that seeks to combine a market economy and democracy with centuries-old cultural traditions, collectivism, and the aspiration for equitable distribution will not acquire a clear form until it incorporates a cultural component. Without this, it is difficult for such a model to function effectively, as its shortcomings are evident while constructive solutions for overcoming them remain absent. This aspect is not a political or managerial tradition of governance but a distinct cultural phenomenon. Should it be relied

upon in shaping the ideal image of Uzbekistan's future in the long-term perspective? If so, what will be the outcome of its application? The answers to these questions must be sought within the field of cultural studies.

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