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## Diagnosing methodology outline of the organisational culture

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**Key words:** organisational culture (of an organisation, enterprise), diagnosis, research methodology

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**Summary:** Culture of an enterprise is understood as thinking patterns and employees' actions preserved in it, shaped by the management attitude. It goes through both the process of formulating the strategy and the process of strategy execution. An enterprise which understands its culture, can use this knowledge as the source of strategic power. Multitude of factors shaping the organisational culture and the multitude of cultures (subcultures) requires that researchers of this phenomenon specify clearly the subject of their research, more broadly, research 'borders'. The article contains a proposal of the methodology of diagnosing the organisational culture of an enterprise.

### 1. Introduction—assumptions of launching organisational culture research

The fundamental factor defining an increase in importance of organisational structure in an enterprise is the human being. They are the most important variable of an organisation as a dynamic system, their role does not come down only to making use of professional qualifications, it is also important to engage the sphere of moral values and feelings. It extends the uncertainty area in the management process and, as a result, increases the difficulty level in holding managerial functions. Knowledge of the organisational culture of an enterprise, reflecting, in fact, values and behaviour standards as well as behaviour and thinking patterns, created and accepted by

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employees of a given enterprise, can decrease this area in management, the more so, as some believe “modern management is management of values rather than people”.

At present in (strategic) management one assumes, on the one hand, limited applicability of traditional concepts, based rationality and predictability and, on the other hand—justifiability of symbolic management (organisational culture arises and develops as part of an enterprise’s history). Research into organisational culture allows a new approach to an enterprise, responds to the need of feeling (not only thinking) and treats an enterprise as an expressive form, not only an economic one. Enrichment of the analysis being executed with a cultural dimension allows better understanding of the functioning and development of an enterprise (Bratnicki, Kryś, Stachowicz, 1988, p. 160). Culture of an enterprise is understood as employees’ thinking and behaviour patterns preserved in it, shaped attitudes of the management. It goes through both the process of formulating the strategy and the process of executing the strategy. An enterprise which understands its culture, can use this knowledge as the source of strategic power.

Flexibility, quickness, efficiency and responsibility of an enterprise depend on the skills, psyche and mentality of its employees. They should want changes, not be afraid of innovation, not fall into routine. Therefore one of the strategic management assignments is to form appropriate organisational culture. The problem is difficult cognitively, requires cooperation of economists, sociologists and psychologists, there are no good methods of culture analysis, analysis results require skillful interpretation, actions within this range provide effects with a delay of many years. For these reasons managers of enterprises become concerned with this subject-matter reluctantly. In this situation there are strategies inconsistent with aspirations of the owners or the managers or employees.

Multitude of factors shaping the organisational culture and multitude of cultures (subcultures) require that researchers of this phenomenon specify precisely the subject of their research or, more broadly speaking, the research ‘borders’. Research into organisational culture most often concerns cultural norms and values, i.e. what values dominate in an organisation, what are their sources, what is their influence on an organisation. Cultural values and norms of an organisation can be divided into values and norms of strategic importance—e.g. care and respect for people, competitiveness, quality, loyalty, orientation on the market/customers as well as norms and values of operational importance—e.g. education, skillfulness, team work, the way of treating inferiors. In every case they influence the functioning of an organisation.

The basis for solving the presented problems is the model of diagnosing organisational culture, formulated mainly on the basis of the subject literature studies and the author’s own considerations, as well as on the basis of the predecessors’, the model of diagnosing the organisational culture within the context of strategic management (Figure 1). In the process of building, the presented model the diagnostic approach was used, along with forecast elements. Carrying out the diagnosis of organisational culture with its use one should pay attention to the following assumptions:

- the prerequisite for carrying out the diagnosis is a holistic recognition of cultural symptoms;
- the strategy of an organisation is treated as a determinant of organisational culture, therefore the diagnosis cannot be executed if the strategy is not clearly articulated in a given organisation.

## 2. Methods and techniques of analysing the organisational culture

Multitude and diversity and often small legibility of symptoms of organisational culture make the selection of tools to carry out this process become an important issue in the diagnosing process (Gableta, Karamalla, 2007, p. 34). In the subject literature the following actions are most often recommended: enterprise inspection, documentation analysis, observation of debates, categorised and non-categorised interviews, a survey/questionnaire (Figure 2 presents diagnosing instruments of organisational culture, laid by the degree of information usefulness). For gathered information about organisational culture to reflect its character most faithfully, it is recommended to apply a combination of a few research tools, because each of them allows identification of its different aspects.

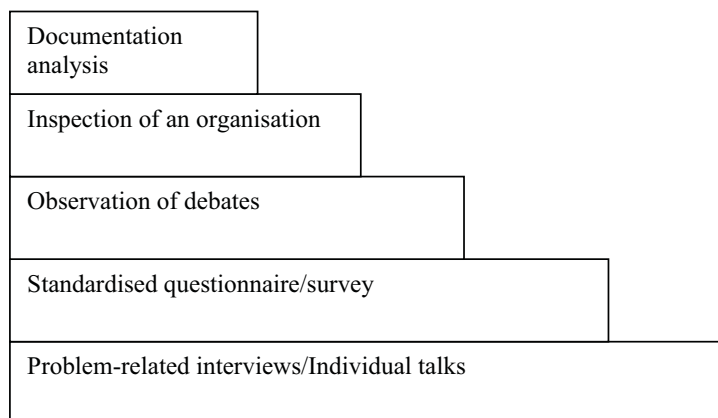


Figure 2. Diagnosing instruments of organisational culture

Source: author's own study based on: Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, pp. 6–9.

**Inspection of an enterprise.** During inspection of an enterprise an image of the organisational culture arises, based on the observations made, allowing as a result (Gableta, 1998, p. 55):

- description of the external appearance of an enterprise, including the development and surroundings, e.g. the access road as well as the condition and size of the parking place;
- recognition of interior design as well as greeting and farewell rituals;
- experience of the so-called first impression as a result of contact with employees of an enterprise; simultaneously one can make observations as regards the location of some rooms (the office, the ‘chief’s’ study), atmosphere in the enterprise, working conditions, the state of machines and devices, et cetera (Table 1 contains the form of the observation plan while inspecting an enterprise).

**D o c u m e n t a t i o n a n a l y s i s.** It includes three stages: 1) defining the information being searched for, 2) defining the documents being analysed, 3) proper analysis and reaching the final conclusions.

Documentation analysis provides the basis to formulate the initial questions in the diagnostic procedures and the contents brought up in interviews. When analysing the documentation one should pay attention to:

- contents of documents, its truth and topicality;
- documentation completeness and indispensability;
- order and method of running, archiving and making available;
- appearance of documents—whether they are prepared according to the agreed graphic sample;
- whether there is a cult of ‘cigarettes’ in the organisation.

In the presented diagnostic methodology identification of an enterprise’s strategy is of special importance. The strategy is a point of departure to formulate recommendations concerning directions of change in the organisational culture. Therefore it is important to analyse the documents which describe it. Analysing an enterprise’s documentation one should be aware of the fact that it does not always reflect the actual image of an organisation, therefore this technique should be applied in combination with observation, interviews.

**O b s e r v a t i o n o f d e b a t e s.** Observation of debates and sessions of the managerial staff can be a source of information about the values which the management observes. Observation of the course of sessions should concentrate on (Czerska, 2003, p. 64; Stańda, 1993, p. 59): the session content, topics of utterances, used arguments, duration of addresses, the substantial assessment of the method of achievement of the debate aim, interactions between participants, frequency of interaction between individual participants and their character—who opposes who, who and with whom agrees, who and when/after whom takes the floor, who interrupts whom, who and when is silent—rituals and symbolic gestures, behaviour patterns; corporate order of the sessions, location of individual people towards each other, critical behaviours, mimics, gestures. An interesting subject of observation can also be debates of the management with employees and those of employees themselves, are they called or are they of spontaneous character, how often do they take place, what do they concern, what role do employees play at the debates (‘grateful listeners’ or ‘co-partners’).

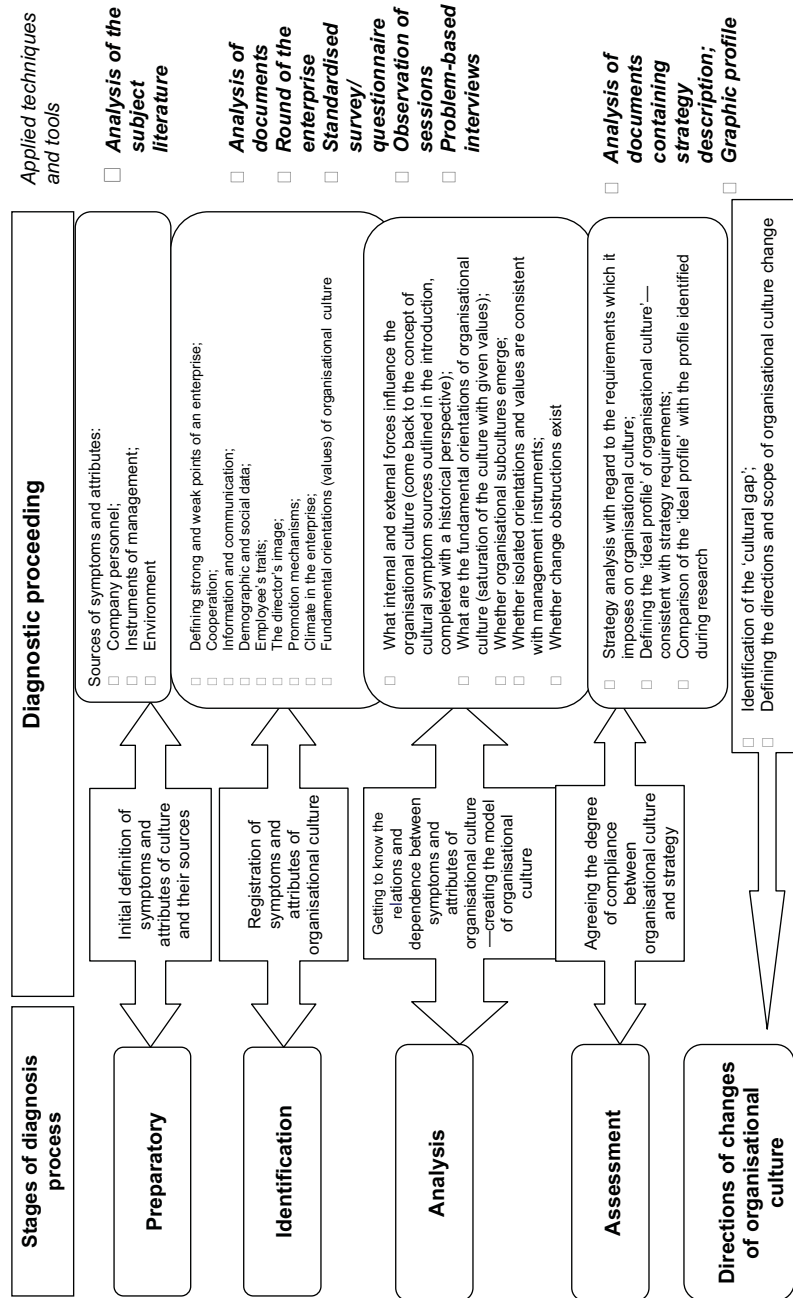


Figure 1. Model of diagnosing organisational culture of an enterprise within the aspect of strategic management

Source: author's own study, based on: Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, pp. 6–9.

Table 1

## Observation plan

Inspection at an enterprise	
I.	External appearance of a company
1.	Buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– style and form of buildings (usable structures, blocks et cetera);</li> <li>– state of buildings (clean or dirty facades, missing letters in the enterprise' signboard et cetera);</li> <li>– size and layout of rooms (big/small areas, et cetera);</li> <li>– geographic location (city, village, et cetera)</li> </ul>
2.	Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– arrangement of the drive, entrance (layout of buildings, information boards, artistic facilities, et cetera);</li> <li>– sphere reserved for the enterprise (property, size, separation from the external world, et cetera);</li> <li>– development logics of the parking place (who?, where?, next to whom?, et cetera)</li> </ul>
<i>General impression</i> .....	
II.	Receiving guests
1.	Place for guests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a hall, meeting room, another room where guests are received;</li> <li>– arrangement: flowers, 'marbles', atmosphere, portraits of the company founders, publications about the company</li> </ul>
2.	Ritual of reception and presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the impression made by the first person met in the company (a gardener, watchman, receptionist et cetera);</li> <li>– style of presentation (formal, informal), duration, who comes to receive us, et cetera;</li> <li>– telephone conversation (tone, restraint, politeness, kindness, et cetera);</li> <li>– treatment of other guests (complaisance, politeness, et cetera)</li> </ul>
<i>General impression</i> .....	
III.	Visit course
1.	Accompanying persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– utterances and explanations over the course of the visit: told stories, recalled traditions, demonstrated pride of working for the company, mimics and gestures appearing as a response to problems and situations during the visit, jargon, attitudes to different areas of activity;</li> <li>– behaviour towards employees: the way of addressing and greeting employees, spontaneous initiation of conversations, respect towards certain employees, an exceptional approach to 'champions', et cetera. Reactions caused among the crew by accompanying persons: open, public;</li> <li>– staff behaviour towards accompanying persons: use, fear, lack of safety, respect, joy, et cetera</li> </ul>
2.	Visit dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– what they show us, in what way and order, if, e.g. do they show only some departments?;</li> <li>– what areas of the company's business operations do they continuously stress?</li> </ul>
3.	Areas being particularly thoroughly observed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– layout of offices, location of important peoples' offices (whose room is directly adjacent to X?);</li> <li>– how are employees' rooms furnished: furniture, flowers, appearance of desks;</li> <li>– arrangement of corridors, production halls, lifts et cetera;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– location and appearance of the secretary’s office, how distribution of internal mail is organised;</li> <li>– staff’s behaviour: employees’ attitudes, the way of ‘dressing,’ stress symptoms, a sense of humour, do people speak to each other?;</li> <li>– are informal circles (gatherings) of employees noticeable?;</li> <li>– are signs of binding customary standards noticeable?;</li> <li>– are signs of influence of significant people (dominating personalities) noticeable?;</li> <li>– employees’ behaviour during breaks, their attitude towards materials and appliances;</li> <li>– selected work positions: technical equipment, atmosphere, colours, music, et cetera;</li> <li>– modernity and the automation degree of procedures and technology, the state of selected appliances, IT use, et cetera;</li> <li>– notice boards—what type of information do they include, what degree of formalisation (seals and signatures), is there place for employees’ suggestions, do trade unions and organisations acting within the enterprise advertise?</li> </ul> <p><i>General impression</i> .....</p>
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Source: Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, pp.14–15.

Table 2 contains an exemplary set of documents useful in the organisational culture diagnosis

Table 2

A list of documentation useful in diagnosing organisational culture

Analysis of documents	Is there (will there be) available data on this subject?
1. Development, history of an enterprise – history of an enterprise (e.g. occasional publications); – basic data about an enterprise (personnel, turnover, profits, market position, return rate on investment)	
2. Documents concerning an enterprise’s policy – formulated commercial policy, strategy; – annual reports; – reports, minutes from the management sessions	
3. Organisation – structural charts; – schemes of functioning; – job descriptions	
4. Personnel management – written management; – guide-book for new recruits; – training and professional improvement schedules; – demographic and social data about the personnel; – qualification network; – general recruitment rules (including those of working time)	
5. Planning and controlling systems – planning instruments; – annual plans and the budget; – reports (e.g. monthly)	

6. Internal and external communication – internal information, company gazette, radio station, the Internet (intranet), CCTV, others; – published material; – examples of advertising activities over the past few years; – examples of published employment offers; – results of previously executed research into the image (of the company, product); – examples of recorded speeches	
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Source: Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, p. 13.

**Interview.** It is a conversation run for a strictly defined purpose, i.e. a guided conversation. It is a very time-consuming and costly technique. Prior to starting the interview one should specify: the aim, people, time, the scene, its form. It should be applied when the number of people covered by research is small and there are people particularly acquainted with a given topic (the so-called competent judges). An interview can have the form of a free or categorised interview. The first variation has, in its very assumption, the aim and range of the sought after information, without a ready conversation scenario. It gives a chance to obtain additional information but it takes up more time and entails the risk of straying off the main conversation topic. A categorised interview is shorter, the risk of straying off the leading topic is smaller, but simultaneously, we do not have an opportunity to find out something more. It is more stressful for the interlocutor.

In the process of diagnosing organisational culture the interview is the heart of diagnostic work. Therefore the selection of interlocutors is important. Below there is a list of people worth being interviewed in this way (Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, p. 8):

- a. people playing an important role in the informal structure of an organisation ('priest', 'storytellers' and 'gossips');
- b. supervisory board members;
- c. people receiving complaints from customers;
- d. apprentices, trainees;
- e. people with the longest work experience;
- f. secretaries;
- g. men 'Friday';
- h. people holding the least meaningful positions, performing the least valued jobs in the organisation.

An interview is the final stage in the standard procedure of gathering diagnostic data, if need be, one can make use of additional diagnostic instruments, e.g. research into clientele or co-operators, analysis of abandoned projects (reasons).

**Survey.** It plays a similar role to that of an interview, but due to its essence it is less cost-consuming, therefore one can make use of it should research of a bigger number of respondents be planned. Building a survey one should remember about the following issues (Czerska, 2003, p. 63):



- defining the magnitude and structure of the research test;
- number of questions—too big can discourage respondents;
- sequence of questions—from easy to more complicated ones;
- applying closed questions—they will facilitate data gathering and analysis;
- language—should be understandable for respondents;
- ensuring anonymity;
- avoiding sensitive questions;
- carrying out pilot research in order to verify the built survey.

The subject matter of surveys used in the process of diagnosing organisational culture should concentrate on the same issues as in case of interviews (Gableta, 1998, p. 57):

- an enterprise's strategy—action aims and programmes;
- strengths and weaknesses of an enterprise as a whole;
- strengths and weaknesses of the human potential;
- characteristic features of the management members;
- cooperation within an enterprise, including also that of the 'top' with the 'bottom';
- conflict situations and the way of solving them;
- the state and efficiency of functioning of the information system;
- applied types and mechanisms of professional careers;
- dominating motivations of employees and motivating tools, used within an enterprise;
- the range and methods of innovative actions;
- attitude of employees and the management to customers and competitors;
- technical and technological level of production processes.

Irrespective of the chosen diagnostic technique it is important to always inform people about the aim of research and the way of using the gathered data. It is aimed at ensuring their acceptance and cooperation.

### 3. Specific research methods and tools

In gathering and compiling the information useful to specify characteristic features of organisational culture of an enterprise under analysis, a method based on the model of competitive values, created by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn (2003), is particularly useful. A research tool used in this method is a questionnaire made up of six questions concerning the fundamental dimensions of organisational structure of the enterprise under analysis: organisation description, leadership, management of employees, criteria of organisational coherence, what is emphasised in the organisation and success criteria. There are four answers to every question, 100 points must be distributed among the answers, depending on to what degree a given answer reflects the situation of an organisation. The most points should be attributed

to the answer which is the closest to the situation in an enterprise. A questionnaire built in this way serves to analyse both the present organisational culture and the desired one (i.e. which an enterprise should have in a few years in order to continue functioning efficiently). Working out the results is very simple. First all the points attributed to answers A should be summed up in the questionnaire ‘present state’ and subsequently—divided by 6. In this way we obtain an arithmetic average for answers A—the present state. We act in an analogous way in case of answers B, C and D. Afterwards we calculate the results in the questionnaire the ‘desired state’ in the same way. Every obtained number refers to a given type of organisational culture:

- values of answers A reflect the clan culture;
- values of answers B the adhocracy culture;
- values of answers C the market culture;
- values of answers D the hierarchy culture.

The results acquired in this way are entered into a system of coordinates and we obtain a chart, being a graphic image of the most important values of organisational values of the enterprise under scrutiny (Figure 3).

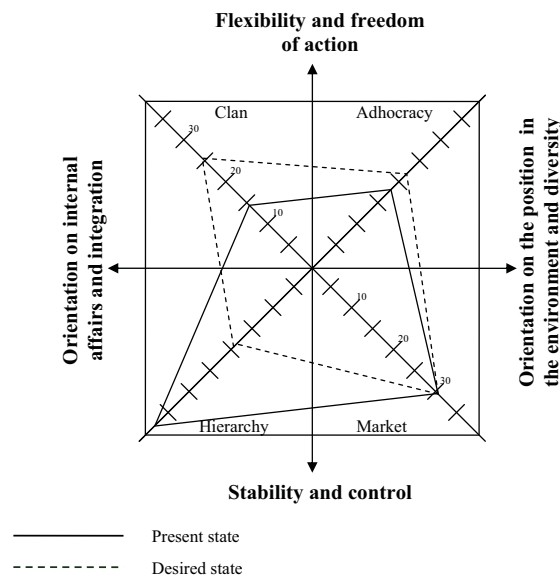


Figure 3. Profile of organisational culture—the present state and the desired state

Source: author's own study.

The model of competing values by K. S. Cameron and R. E. Quinn was created as a result of research into the main features of effective organisations. The research entailed defining the assessment criteria, i.e. answers to the questions: What makes an enterprise efficient or inefficient? What fundamental factors define the efficiency of an organisation's functioning? In the course of subsequent analyses

two main dimensions were obtained, which allowed division of the identified efficiency factors of an organisation into four groups. The first dimension is flexibility, independence and dynamics versus constancy, order and control. It means that some organisations are considered to be efficient when they change, adjust and are characterised by a low level of formalisation (e.g. Microsoft, Nike), others are considered to be effective when they are stable, predictable, with an unchanging structure (e.g. universities, state institutions). The second dimension is made up of orientation on internal matters, integration and oneness versus orientation on the surroundings, diversity and rivalry. Some organisations are considered to be efficient when they form a harmonious whole (e.g. IBM, Hewlett-Packard), whereas others are effective when they concentrate on competitiveness or cooperation with others (e.g. Toyota, Honda). A combination of the two dimensions divides the area into four quarters, each of which is described by a separate set of efficiency factors. Efficiency factors show what people value the most in the functioning of an organisation, in other words—they present the fundamental values serving to assess an organisation. The four fundamental values oppose and compete with one another. Therefore each axis forms the quarters which oppose or compete with each other—which leads to the name of the model.

Every quarter has received a name conveying the most characteristic features of the organisation: clan, adhocracy,<sup>1</sup> market, hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> Dimensions—axes and quarters which they have formed, can be very helpful in explaining different orientations and competing values which characterise behaviours of the human being. Universality of these types and their capacity has made the authors of the model to identify each quarter with the type of culture. It means that every quarter represents the fundamental assumptions, opinions and values—i.e. the elements making up organisational culture.

What is the most interesting, using the model of competing values in diagnosing organisational culture we obtain the result in the form of a cultural profile, namely a square which illustrates cultural diversity of the organisation under scrutiny. On this basis we can easily decide which type of culture is the dominant one and what changes should be made for the culture profile to satisfy our expectations.

## 4. Stages of diagnosing organisational culture

### 4.1. Recognising the situation of an enterprise

A significant element of the strategic management process is strategic analysis which, in a functional sense, is a set of activities which diagnose an organisation and

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<sup>1</sup> The word 'adhocracy' was formed from the phrase *ad hoc* in order to stress the fact that it is about temporarily appointed dynamic units.

<sup>2</sup> Due to limited frameworks of the article it does not contain a description of individual types of organisational culture; I recommend to all interested: Cameron, Quinn, 2003.

its surroundings within a range allowing construction and execution of the strategy. In a tool sense, the strategic analysis is a set of analysis methods which allow examination, assessment and forecast of the future states of selected elements of the enterprise and its surroundings from the point of view of survival and development prospects (Gierszewska, Romanowska, 1998, pp. 17–18). Its aim is above all (Penc-Pietrzak, 2003, p. 2):

- to identify opportunities and threats generated by the environment, in the context of the future development of the enterprise;
- to discover as early as possible all irregularities in the functioning of the enterprise as such and their causes;
- for the enterprise to self-define and establish its position on the market in relation towards the main competitors (identity assessment and company image);
- to create the substantial and pragmatic basis in order to undertake indispensable actions aimed at dynamising the company and activating essential developmental processes;
- confrontation (assessment) of opportunities and threats stuck in the environment as well as strengths and weaknesses of the enterprise, in order to define the variants of development strategy and, as a consequence—plans and programmes of the management strategy;
- to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the enterprise with regard to the possibility of building its competitive advantage;
- to optimise the production portfolio and to assess the risk connected with running individual types of business activity;
- to define the possibility of creating added value for customers and other stakeholders.

Generally the strategic analysis procedure includes three stages: environment analysis, divided into microenvironment and competitive environment analysis, that of potential of an enterprise and a breakdown of the results of the analysis of the surroundings and an enterprise itself. On the basis of the above one can state that diagnosis of organisational culture contributes to fuller execution of the aims of the strategic analysis and should be executed at the stage of the internal analysis of an enterprise, completing its substantially.

The diagnosis is ‘recognition’,<sup>3</sup> i.e. defining the qualitative state of a facility, based on its symptoms. Making a diagnosis is a cognitive act, being an assumption of the decision to maintain the stated condition of a facility or to change this condition. In case of unfavourable changes decision taking will be a kind of therapeutic treatment, aimed at achieving a desired state (Wersty, 2000, p. 79). On the basis of the model of organisational culture by Edgar Schein who compares organisational culture to an iceberg and distinguishes visible elements there—easy to observe (being the tip of an iceberg, above water) and invisible elements—difficult to observe (the

<sup>3</sup>The word ‘diagnosis’ consists of two Greek words: *dia*—meaning, among other things, the prefix ‘re’—and *gnosis*, i.e. ‘recognition’.

remaining part of the iceberg is underwater), one can state that *the aim of the organisational culture diagnosis is its visualisation*. Getting to know the elements of organisational culture allows explaining people's behaviour and, at the same time, selecting appropriate methods of influencing these behaviours. At the moment organisational culture is becoming a tool of the management staff that, through personnel policy, has an opportunity to influence members of an organisation in such a way as to achieve the aims of the organisation. Contrary to the strategy recorded in writing or a formalised image of organisational structure, organisational culture is hardly perceptible in its entirety. Only activities in the form of single symptoms on all surfaces are recognised and, in the processes being performed, results and forms of expression of binding norms and systems of values. The basic condition of carrying out a diagnosis of organisational culture is holistic recognition of cultural symptoms, due to which a point of departure in the process of diagnosing it is to define signs of organisational culture initially and establish the sources of their origin. One can distinguish the following occurrence areas of organisational culture symptoms (Stańda 1993, p. 51 et seq.; Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, p. 11 et seq.) (Table 4):

- the area of personnel factors (area of the fundamental factors);
- the area of factors within the management area (instrumental factors);
- the area of external factors (factors of the surroundings).

The defined areas are counterparts of forces shaping organisational culture in an enterprise. The personnel area means social forces ('soft') influencing an organisation's character from the outside, these are: age, gender, qualifications of managers and employees, their readiness to take risks, openness to changes, an inclination for learning, visions of the future, et cetera. The area of factors of the management sphere means also internal, 'hard' forces: binding procedures, type and quality of organisational documentation, a degree of centralisation and decentralisation, regulation of operations. The area of factors of the surroundings matches external forces, independent of an organisation's actions.

The frame list of source areas and the forms of cultural symptom occurrence presented in Table 4 does not, naturally, reflect the entirety and complexity of the problem of identifying organisational culture. It can, however, for the basis to construe diagnostic procedures. In order to recognise the situation of an enterprise within these three cultural spheres, one should apply appropriate diagnostic instruments. At this stage of research the most useful ones will be: a visit to an enterprise (a round), observation, analysis of documents and a survey/questionnaire. Analysis of documents and a visit to an examined enterprise allow the 'first insight' into the organisational culture. At this stage of research one should gather information concerning:

- strong and weak points of an organisation;
- preferred means of communication;
- a specific language (jargon) spoken by employees and the management;
- features of a good company employee;
- traits and ways of viewing superiors by their inferiors;

- a type of leadership;
- promotion mechanisms binding in an organisation;
- joint customs and rituals celebrated within an organisation;
- climate within an enterprise and—the fundamental values of organisational culture.

Table 4

A list of sources and matching organisational culture symptoms

Main factors	Forms of expression of organisational culture symptoms
	Area of personnel factors
<p>Personality profiles of the management staff</p> <p>The management on all the levels of the structure creates with its behaviour and preserves the desired models of organisational culture. Its behaviours express specific personality features.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– curriculum vitae social background, professional preparation, work experience, age, gender</li> <li>– respected values and mentality preferred ideals, perception of the future, its visions, engagement, attitude to changes, acceptance of innovation, persistence, an ability to win popularity, readiness to learn, readiness to take risks, tolerance, self-confidence</li> </ul>
<p>Rituals and symbols</p> <p>Rituals and symbols existing in every enterprise create a special source of organisational culture symptoms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ritual behaviours of the management personnel systems of promotion, selection and selection of personnel, method of running debates (behaviour during mutual sessions), behaviour and decision-making procedures, behaviour at work</li> <li>– ritual behaviours of employees (crew) ways of greeting, reception of guests, attitude to the client, attitude to complaints, organisational jargon</li> <li>– institutionalised rituals and conventions dress code, rituals of debates and sessions, rituals of guest reception, the way of celebrating holidays and organisational ceremonies, arrangement of parking places</li> <li>– symbols connected with the area and organisation of the company's image, state, décor and equipment of the rooms, organisation of office work, 'green' areas, working gear, luxury cars as an addition to the function</li> </ul>
<p>Communication</p> <p>Both the communication means and communication behaviours (internal and external) can be an educational source of information about the signs of organisational culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– communication styles behaviour within the sphere of communication and information, openness, spontaneity, readiness to reach consensus and compromise</li> <li>– internal and external communication organisation identifiers, forms of cooperation/participation, quality cycles, 'boxes for ideas', company roads, advertising, public relations, access to information</li> </ul>

Area of (instrumental) factors of the management sphere	
<p>Strategy</p> <p>Methodology of behaviour when defining (formulating) the strategy, documents containing the strategy or concerning the strategy and the power of strategic assumptions allows reaching conclusions about binding systems of values and norms in the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– strategic documents kind and range, their number, degree of concreteness and comprehensibility</li> <li>– directional ideas of the strategy orientation and perceived key issues, parameters of the desired strategic position, planned resources, the degree of market and competition recognition, self-perception</li> <li>– strategy change way of strategy execution, familiarity and importance attributed to the strategy of an enterprise every day</li> </ul>
<p>Structures and procedures</p> <p>Organisational documentation and applied organisational philosophy are a valuable source of information about demonstrating organisational culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– organisational documents number, scope and way of preparation</li> <li>– organisational philosophy degree of centralisation and decentralisation, degree of formality, hierarchical levels, management span, role of competences, structure type, criteria of resources division, formation method and formal description of jobs</li> <li>– informal structures and processes system of informal communication, informal contact network, informal groups, informal leaders</li> </ul>
<p>Management systems</p> <p>Type, scope, content of systems of planning, accountancy, control and remuneration, used in a formal and informal way in an organisation and applied management techniques (e.g. management through aims, quality cycles, TQM) are important areas of organisational culture symptom occurrence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– systems number, scope, configuration</li> <li>– redundancy in systems 'holy cows' among systems, pride of membership in given systems</li> </ul>
Area of external factors	
<p>Economic influences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– economic area and systems expectations concerning prosperity and growth, development of capital markets, level of salaries, infrastructure, behaviours of consumers, customs on the market</li> </ul>
<p>Social influences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– social, trade and local-government organisations</li> <li>– media</li> </ul>
<p>Technological influences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– technological changes product technologies, substitute technologies, pace of technological changes</li> </ul>
<p>Ecological influences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– accessibility of resources natural resources (scope of availability of natural resources), conditions of environmental protection</li> </ul>

Source: author's own study based on: Stańda 1993, p. 51 et seqq.; Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, p. 11 et seqq.

## 4.2. Analysis and assessment of existing organisational culture

On completion of diagnostic research we have a lot of information at our disposal which needs to be systematised. This stage of research is very time-consuming and requires a researcher to be well prepared substantially. An attempt to answer the five questions can be useful in this process (Marcinkowski, Sobczak, 2000, p. 9):

1. What internal and external forces influence organisational structure? It is particularly important here to specify how the present culture has been influenced by outstanding individuals (the founder, managers), the field of activities (business area, market, production and technologies, clientele), closer and further social surroundings (legal, economic and social influences), life stage of an organisation (initial stage of activity, stage of growth, consolidation), possible success of an organisation.
2. What are the fundamental orientations of organisational culture?  
In this case one should specify the 'degree of saturation' of organisational culture, a given climate of values, elect the dominating orientation and examine its relation to others, less marked.
3. Do organisational cultures emerge?  
Which values are widely and which ones are locally accepted in an organisation? If there is a group of values widely accepted in an organisation, demonstrated in every-day business operations, one can assume then that the organisation has strong culture at its disposal, resistant to the influence of existing subcultures.
4. Are isolated orientations and values consistent with management instruments?  
It is particularly important to specify to what extent organisational culture is coincident with the strategy being executed. Establishing this interdependence is of significant importance in assessment of the existing organisational culture and decides about setting the area of its changes.
5. Are there blockades of changes?  
What encourages and what obstructs flexibility of an organisation in the light of the data being gathered? What elements support flexibility (intensity of dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs, open attitudes of the management, employees able to adapt, ready to accept a change), what are the obstructing mechanisms (extended hierarchy, authoritarian management style, size of an organisation, being deeply rooted regionally, locally, self-satisfaction level, a significant percentage of experienced employees).

## 4.3. Indication of directions and areas of changes to organisational culture

The choice of a strategy as the basis for organisational culture assessment is not accidental. In order to survive in the current environment, organisations need strate-



gies, in simple words a list of activities which must be undertaken in order to ensure the right conditions for development over longer perspective.

Mutual dependence between the strategy and organisational culture is not uni-directional and varies substantially depending on the assumed time perspective of the considerations being made. In the operational (short-term) perspective, and even tactical (medium-term) organisational culture is of independent variable character, setting the strategy, because it cannot be changed over a short period of time. It becomes possible only over a long period of time. In longer time perspective culture can be subject to purposeful and directed changes, in order to be adjusted to the requirements of the strategy. Perceiving this mutual dependence we assume for the purposes of this study that in the long-term the perspective is original towards the other elements of an organisation, including organisational culture. Therefore they should 'follow the strategy' in order to support its execution.

Similarly to organisational culture, the strategy of enterprises is diversified by the environment, its degree of changeability and complexity. The environment can be described with the help of a scale stretching from the situation of certainty and stability up to the situation of uncertainty and complexity. The above peculiarity of the environment provides basis for distinguishing two extreme types of both the strategy and organisational culture. The strategy fits into the area between the perfect strategy and creative strategy (see Table 5), whereas organisational culture can be orientated on stability and concentration on an organisation or an innovation and flexibility and concentration on the environment (we obtain three types of organisational culture from the model of competing values).

Table 5

Features of the perfect strategy and creative strategy

Perfect strategy	Creative strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focused on continuous improvement of the presently performed tasks, aims, without the analysis of justifiability of this behaviour, taking into account demand in the organisation and environment;</li> <li>- leads to copying actions, procedures and results;</li> <li>- works in satisfactorily stable conditions, in the conditions of a changeable environment leads to 'learnt incompetence'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- works in a stormy environment;</li> <li>- aims to look for new ways of satisfying the hitherto needs;</li> <li>- allows creativity and active response to new needs;</li> <li>- allows designing of new ways of producing things which are already being produced;</li> <li>- aims at searching for new markets or a deeper penetration of hitherto markets</li> </ul>

Source: author's own study based on: Czerska, 2003, p. 53.

The above-mentioned typology of strategies has served as the basis for formulation of the five fundamental dimensions serving to identify it (Table 6).

The level of strategy creativity, defined in this way is the source of recommendations on changes within the area of organisational culture. It should be assumed that the higher the level of strategy creativity, the bigger flexibility and orientation on the environment should be characteristic of organisational culture.

Table 6

## Strategy classification

Strategy dimensions	Level of values of individual dimensions					Assessment of strategy parameters
	1	2	3	4	5	
	absolutely perfect	perfect	neutral	creative	absolutely creative	
1. Clients' expectations	Complete standardisation and repetition of a product or service			Continuous changeability of product or service		
2. Accepted strategy of competition	Cost leader			Brand leader		
3. Sales subject	Work of muscles, used resources and subjects of work			Work of the mind, an idea and concept as the effect		
4. Reaction to a difficult situation	An attempt to sell the customer what the company owns at present			An attempt to obtain for the client what they expect		
5. Attitude to the client	Customer is an intruder causing trouble			Customer is the actual employer of the company's employees		
					Average	

Source: Czarska, 2003, p. 54.

Furthermore, the directions and area of changes in organisational culture can be established on the basis of differences between the profile of the present culture and that of the desired culture, prepared on the basis of the model of competing values by Cameron and Quinn.

## 5. Conclusion

The above-mentioned interpretation of the process of diagnosing organisational culture can arouse a few doubts.

First: organisational culture is treated in an instrumental way. Organisational culture cannot be examined, measured or changed, obtaining the result assumed 'in advance'. One should remember that it is a creation of given community, developing under the influence of the environment and several other complex factors such as: leadership and strategy. The process is determined historically, which means that the influence of individual factors is subject to changes in time. This makes it impossible to easily create techniques of change of organisational culture leading straight to a given state of culture.

Second doubt concerns the level of skills which the person diagnosing organisational culture should have, according to the presented procedure. The procedure consists of several complex diagnostic assignments—preparation of the catalogue of signs of an enterprise's culture and the area of their occurrence, compilation of research results, description of the strategy and preparation of the concept of ideal culture. Correct performance of these assignments requires extensive knowledge on the academic level from a few scientific fields: sociology, sciences about organisations and management, psychology. It is also doubtful whether one person can accomplish all detailed assignments of the diagnosis, therefore one should think about a research team with diversified qualifications.

Third, the fundamental assumption in the presented model of diagnosing organisational culture is for the entity under scrutiny to possess a clearly formulated and articulated market strategy. Even though this condition is possible to be fulfilled by western enterprises or big economic entities, in case of most Polish enterprises, small and medium, it is often impossible. To say nothing of the concept of 'emerging' strategy, having a formulated action strategy very often boils down to preparing appropriate documents and nothing beyond that.

Diagnosing organisational culture is a difficult and time-consuming process but it is worth making this effort in order to, at least to a certain extent, limit uncertainty connected with social conditionings of execution success of an organisation's action strategy. In order to face up to the challenges within this range, practical recommendations concerning the process of diagnosing organisational culture may be useful:

1. A factor facilitating carrying out research is openness of employees of the enterprise under scrutiny and awareness of organisational culture<sup>4</sup> of the management.
2. Therefore, prior to beginning the research one should carefully inform all the interested about the aim and method of research execution. In the process of diagnosing organisational culture it is very important to cover with the research as many employees as possible, it contributes to increasing credibility of the conclusions being formulated.
3. In order to obtain a possibly complete and precise image of organisational culture one should present the obtained survey research results not in a collective average form, but divided into particular occupational or social groups. It will allow identification of the differences in individual cultural profiles and can significantly facilitate defining possible directions and methods of changes in organisational culture.
4. During assessment of the strategy of an enterprise and establishment of cultural conditionings of its implementation, it is helpful to perform this stage within the framework of a team appointed for this purpose. When such a possi-

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<sup>4</sup>Awareness of organisational culture of the management should be interpreted as an ability to define what the term organisational culture means and what role it plays in the functioning of an enterprise.

- bility does not exist, one should agree the formulated conclusions at least with people responsible for planning and strategy execution in the enterprise.
5. In the situation when an enterprise does not have a strategy described in relevant documentation, one should gather opinions of people holding the key positions in the enterprise in order to define the way of their perception of the future and prospects of development of a given organisation, methods of competing and running a business, perceiving the customer and their needs.
  6. Freedom of actions and easy access to different types of information during the process of diagnosing organisational culture are very strongly dependent on the interest and practical use of the obtained results by the management of the company under scrutiny.

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## Zarys metodyki diagnozowania kultury organizacyjnej

**Streszczenie:** Kultura przedsiębiorstwa jest rozumiana jako utrwalone w nim wzory myślenia i postępowania pracowników, kształtowane przez postawy kierownictwa. Przenika ona zarówno proces formułowania strategii, jak i proces jej realizacji. Przedsiębiorstwo, które rozumie swą kulturę, może wykorzystać tę wiedzę jako źródło strategicznej siły. Wielość czynników

kształtujących kulturę organizacyjną oraz wielość kultur (subkultur) wymaga od badaczy tego zjawiska dokładnego określenia podmiotu badań czy ogólniej „granic” badawczych. Artykuł zawiera propozycję metodyki diagnozowania kultury organizacyjnej przedsiębiorstwa.

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Słowa kluczowe: kultura organizacyjna (organizacji, przedsiębiorstwa), diagnoza, metodyka badań

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