



TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA

ACTA TECHNICA NAPOCENSIS

Series: Applied Mathematics and Mechanics

Vol. 55, Issue, 2012

EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES BASED ON THE MODEL OF HOFSTEDE

Sorina Dana VEISS, Ioan ABRUDAN

Abstract: This paper presents, in summary, the results of Hofstede's model for public administration of Cluj County Council. The own reference study on national cultures, conducted between 1967-1973 by Hofstede, demonstrates that regardless of what country or society is part an individual, he has his own and different point of view regarding the definition of the fair, reasonable and appropriate behavior. All these differences can be explained by the 5 dimensions studied by Hofstede: Power Distance, Uncertainty Control, Masculinity, Individualism, long-term orientation and short-term orientation. The purpose of this paperwork is to determine the positioning of the organizational and management culture and public administration of Cluj County.

Key words: Hofstede, organizational culture, public administration, cultural dimensions, cultural perception.

1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE HOFSTEDE MODEL

G. Hofstede conducted a baseline study on national cultures by using a questionnaire consisting of 26 questions on a number of IBM's 116,000 employees in 72 countries, between years 1967-1973.[1]

The results obtained by G. Hofstede whatever country that is part of, any individual has a different view regarding the definition of correct behavior, reasonable and adequate.

All these differences can be explained by the 5 dimensions of Hofstede studied: 1. Power distance; 2. Uncertainty Control; 3. Masculinity; 4. Individualism; 5. Long-term orientation and short-term orientation.

PDI, or distance from power, is the extent to which a society accepts and expects that power is distributed unequally within institutions and companies.

Power distance is compared with the degree of centralization of authority.

Inequality or equality between superiors and subordinates in an organization makes this index has a high value, low respectively.

Cultures that have high power distance are characterized by having a management staff more powerful than their subordinates.

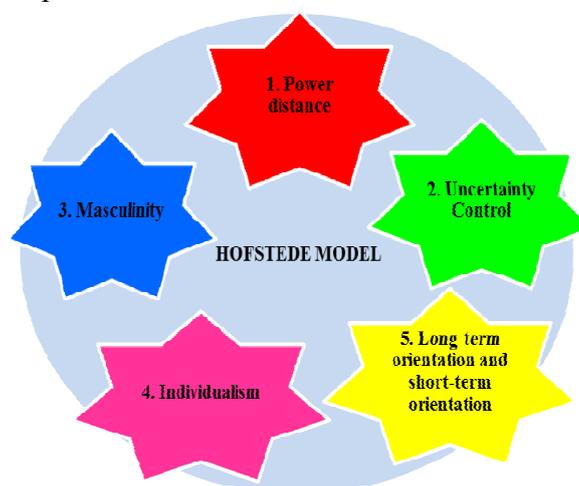


Fig.1. The dimensions model of G., Hofstede

In countries with low power distance, subordinates and superiors considered each other as equals existentially. Conventional hierarchical system is established, whenever it is possible a reversal of roles.

For Romania, Hofstede has calculated this index as 90, it follows therefore that in Romania is high power distance.

Analyzing uncertainty avoidance to the state (politics and ideas) that Hofstede uncertainty avoidance, is not about power, is about the differences in power between the state / authorities and citizens.

Truth can have different facets and no one criticized for his faith. [2]

In countries where uncertainty avoidance is high, people consider that they cannot influence decisions made by the authorities, and any protests must be stopped.

In countries where uncertainty avoidance is low, people think they have to participate in political decision making, ready to organize and support protests against decisions considered unfair.

In fact this index is the extent to which people feel threatened by elusive situations and the degree to which they are trying to avoid these situations and uncertainty.

It manifests formally by trying to reduce the degree of indeterminacy of reality with three instruments: law, religion and technology.

As there is an emphasis on uncertainty avoidance, the organization will emerge and expand more formal rules of behavior.

According to Hofstede, individualism is found in societies where human relationships are chaotic and expects each to care for him and take care of his family.

Collectivism is found in societies in which people from birth belong into powerful subgroups that it will protect the individual life in exchange for mutual loyalties. [3]

In individualistic cultures, telling the truth is a virtue, is preferred confrontation of ideas, the child is encouraged to cope alone, to know and to discover the value of money being encouraged to find a job to support him.

The school aims to adapt to the new, on the assumption that long learning during life is needed.

In collectivist cultures, personal opinions have no place, is usually expressed opinions the group. Here children are encouraged to work to pay studies; family is what will help your child.

For Romania, Hofstede has calculated this index as 30, result that Romania is identified as a society that has a very low level of individualism.

Hofstede defines masculinity index as the extent to which the roles of the two sexes in society differ.

Hofstede's masculinity is the only dimension of Hofstede which doesn't influence the culture of a country.

Gender gap varies greatly from country to country, but usually men dominate politics, community and workplace, while family and school usually are dominated by women.

For Romania, Hofstede has calculated this index as 42, so it follows that Romania is identified as a female society.

Long-term orientation index and short-term orientation is calculated to find out people's savings level indicator from that culture.

In a society that has long-term orientation, employees intend to save or invest much more than in one short-term oriented.

A society will persevere for long term results in a long-term society as opposed to short-term society that wants quick results.

To calculate this indicator, Hofstede didn't make estimates for Romania.

Interact Gallup survey Romania reports for OTL an index of 42 (Hofstede scale), which means employment in the "down" on the average, bounded between 40 and 60 points. [4]

2. HOFSTEDE METHOD APPLIED FOR THE CLUJ COUNTY COUNCIL

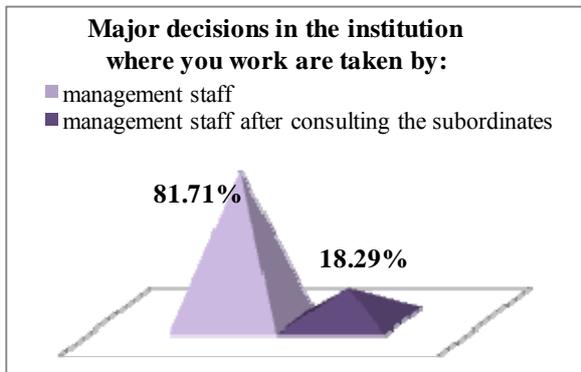
The objectives of this research has been to find and highlight the organizational culture of an organization of public administration respectively the Cluj County Council, to identify certain changes that can be made at management level to the positive development of this culture.[5]

The aim was to identify the key ideas of the organization, leadership style of managers, communication and knowledge of employee's desire.[6]

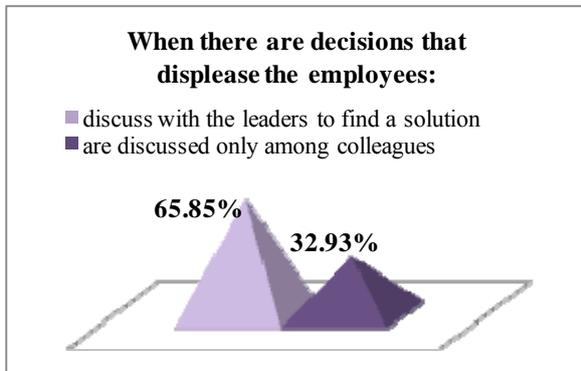
Since Cluj County Council has fewer than 100 employees (97), I went on variant questioning all staff.

2.1. Power distance index – PDI [7]

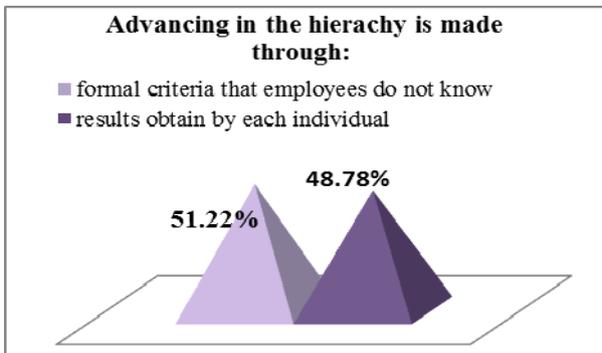
Below are the results of the questionnaire applied, represented by graphical method in figure 2.



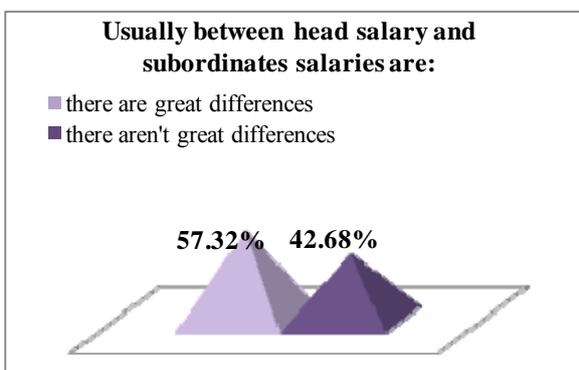
a) Major decision.



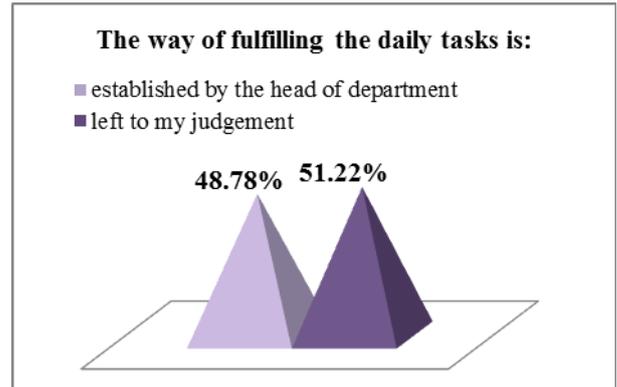
b) Decisions that displease the employees.



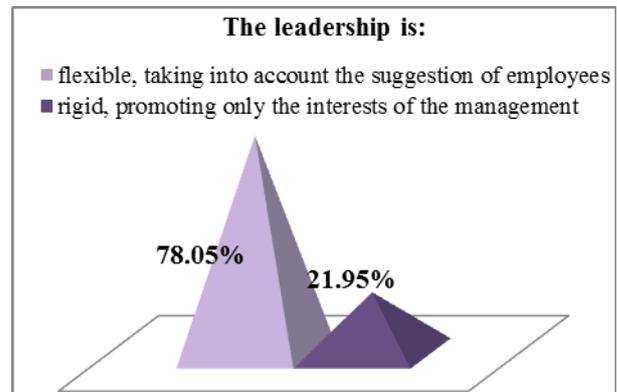
c) Advancing in the hierarchy.



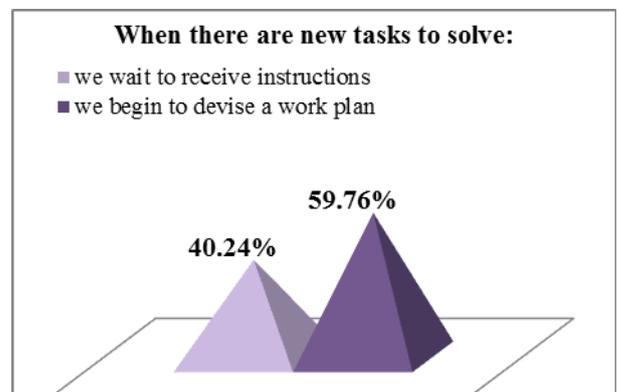
d) Differences between salaries.



e) Way of fulfilling the daily tasks.



f) Leadership.



g) New tasks.

Fig.1.a) - g) Graphical representation of power distance index

To determine this index were asked questions about:

- Subordinates afraid to express disagreement with the manager?
- Perception of the subordinates on consultative leadership style of the manager.

- Appreciation of the existence in the organization of a leadership style, autocratic and persuasive of the head of the organization.

From this analysis, we see that the power distance index is not very high, it would be somewhere around a medium value.

Interviewed subjects are gripped by fear to express disagreement with the manager if they have a problem, talk with leaders to find a solution.

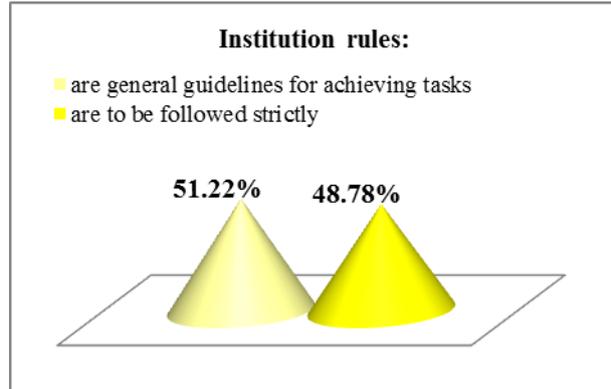
Managers in this administration are of two types, flexible and rigid, with predominance flexible style.

2.2. Uncertainty Control – UAI

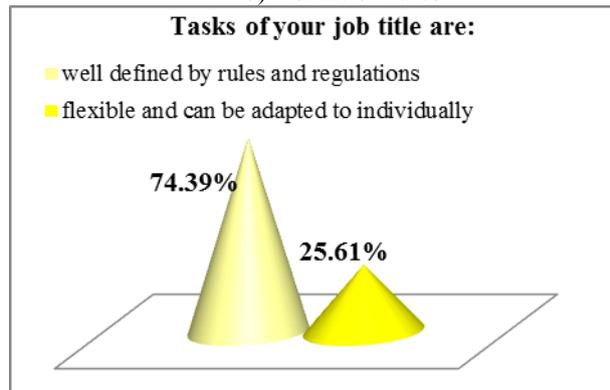
To measure the index of uncertainty were asked questions to determine the state of nervousness and retention of the personnel, and the degree to which rules can be circumvented or violated.[8]

Uncertainty avoidance within subjects is large, daily activities and job tasks are clear rules and procedures are well developed, nothing is chaotic, it is conducted under the supervision of the managers.

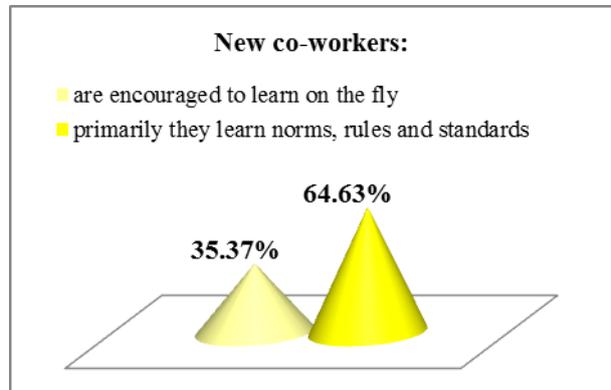
Average responses are favorable to certain situations (control) of uncertainty avoidance.



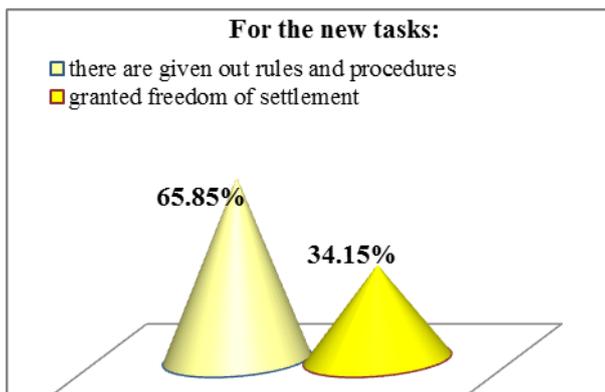
b) Institution rules



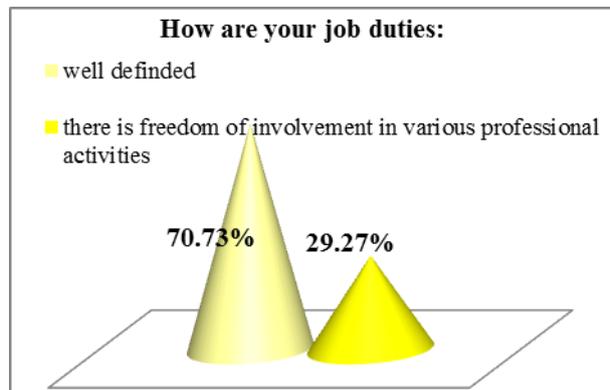
c) Job tasks.



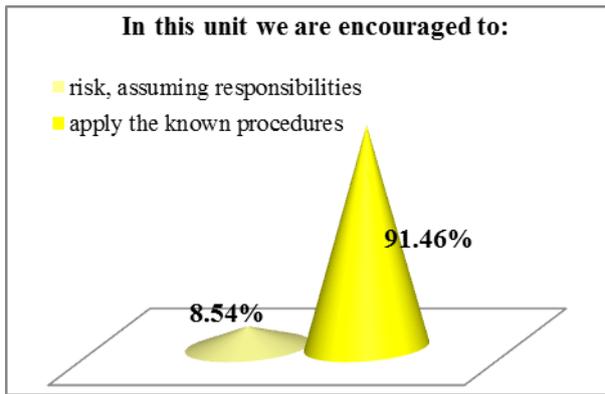
d) New co-workers.



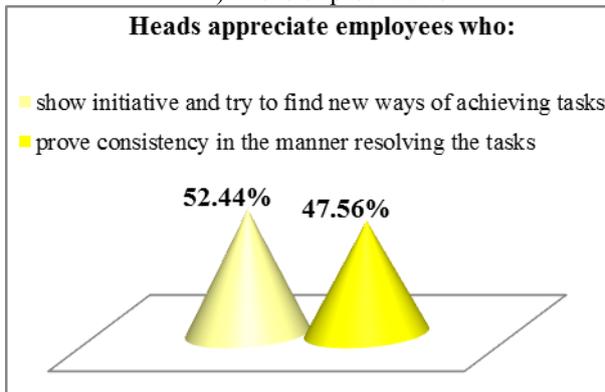
a) New tasks.



e) Job duties.



f) Risks or procedures.



g) Appreciate employees.

Fig.3. a) – g) Graphical representation of uncertainty control

2.3. Individualism, IDV

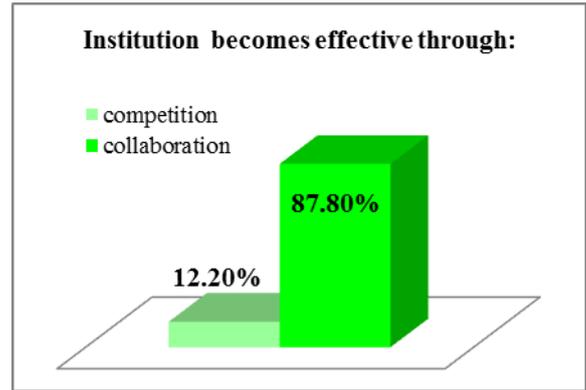
Culture, through this dimension of individualism / collectivism influences both professional individuals as well as the family.

Individualism is found in societies where individuals have a personal life or a family life but also have great freedom to organize work so that they can achieve and professionally.

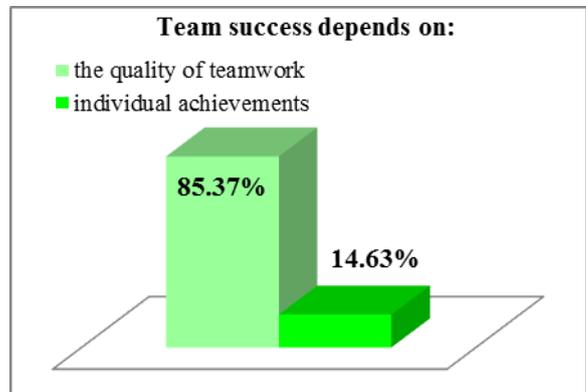
In cultures based on collectivism, human relations or service are set based on moral, while in cultures based on individualism they are based on moral grounds.

In societies characterized by collectivism each member is responsible for the others, with strong links between members.

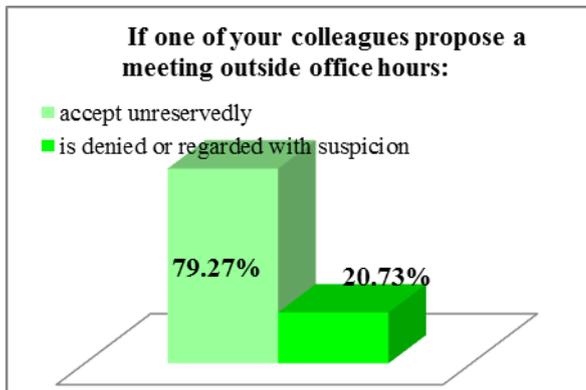
Colleagues are seen as potential friends, as spending the leisure time together besides the required hours of work, will lead invariable to the development of group relations.



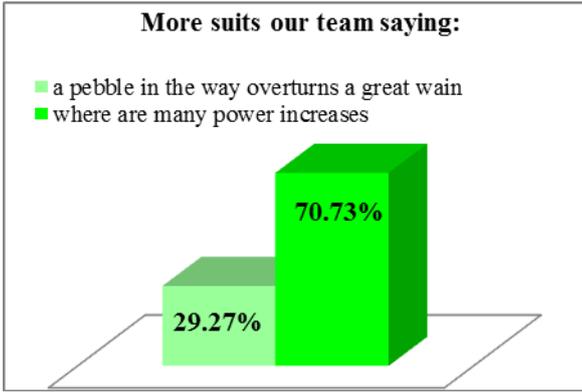
a) Effective institution.



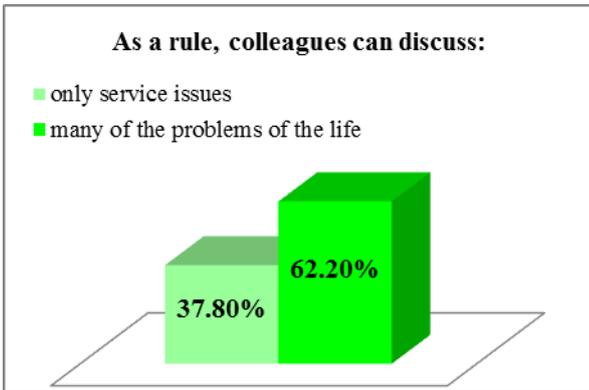
b) Team success.



c) Meeting outside office hours.



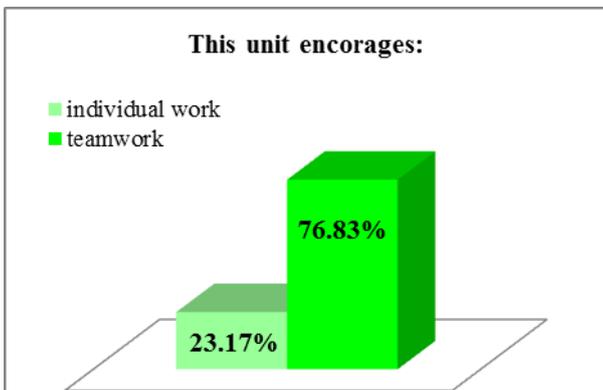
d) Team



e) Rules at work.



f) Breaks at work.



g) What tip of work is encouraged.

Fig.4. a) – g) Graphical representation of Individualism, IDV

Individuals get to know each other much better, developing a group relationship, becoming from a formal relationship to a friendly relationship of mutual respect.

Undoubtedly, people have in commonalities, similar grievance and the same value system so they will work much better together.

To these are added their own desires and the tendency of the institution that encourages teamwork.

There are, however formal relations, there is an organization and tasks set, but this does not prevent subjects to feel well together and complement through what they do.

So we are dealing with an institution that tends to collectivism, to the power of the many over those who prefer solitude and uniqueness.

Here, individuals are integrated into groups small and large, work together and complement each other.

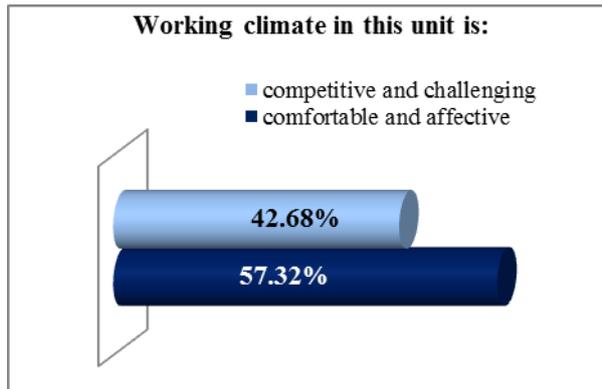
In conclusion, it appeared that individualism in Cluj County Council has a low level and the cultural dimension is very close to the estimate made by Geert Hofstede, index scale 30.

2.3. Masculinity – MAS

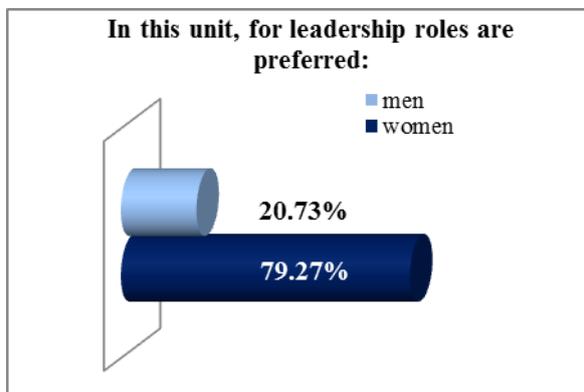
In general, men dominate politics, community and workplace. Women are the primary in the family and school.

Masculinity, as measured dimension represents the weight that individuals accumulate money, fame, generally everything related to the material. Femininity is the extent to which individuals strive for a life of harmony and wellbeing.

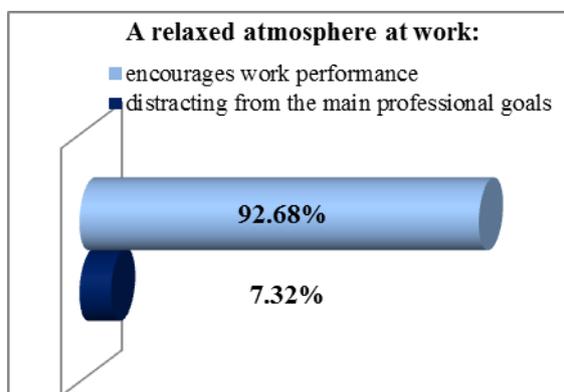
We asked questions to determine the subjects to identify the extent to which femininity or masculinity dominates the institution in which they work.



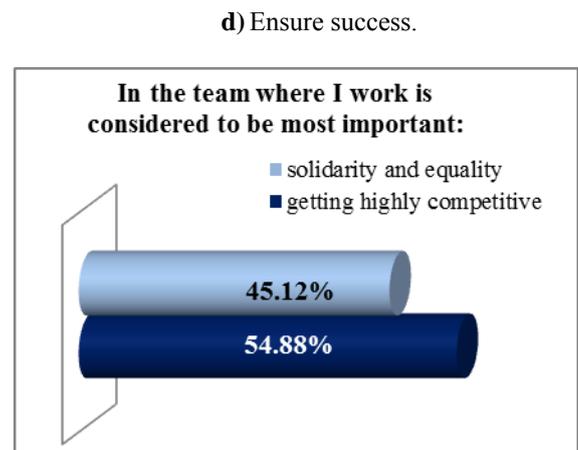
a) Climate in institutions.



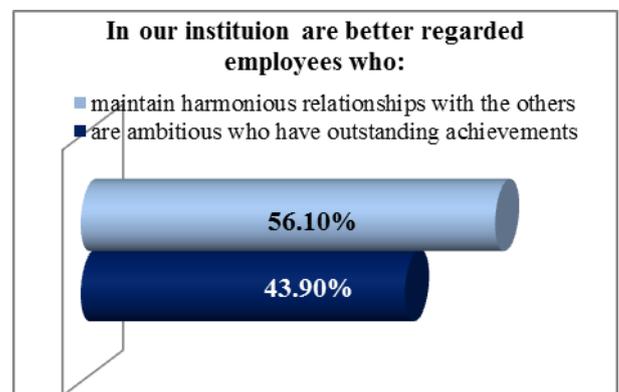
b) Leadership roles.



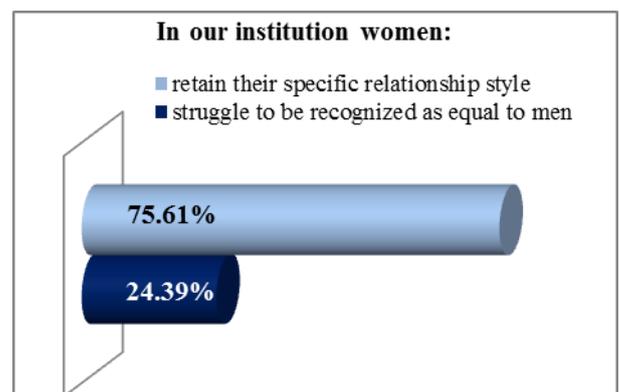
c) Atmosphere at work.



e) Solidarity and equality VS performance and competition



f) Better regarded employees.



g) Women in institution.

Fig.5. a) – g) Graphical representation of Masculinity – MAS

Regarding the work climate, subjects believe that in this institution, the work is almost the same as comfortable and affective, characteristic to femininity, but also competitive and challenging feature in a masculine culture.

For management positions, women are preferred in a fairly large proportion, approx. 79.27%. Because of women in relation to men in this group is predominant, this preference is probably normal, it is not necessarily that women are more capable than men, but the increased number of women in relation to the number of men, led to that answer.

The analyzed labor climate in the first question compared with responses given by the subjects to the question regarding the existence of a relaxed ambiance at work, where a percentage of 92.68% of respondents said they favor performance at work, it shows that we are dealing with a culture strongly influenced by femininity. Women and men have similar behaviors, are equally concerned about harmony and mutual respect.

Through communication and conflict resolution success can be reached is the prevailing opinion of the subjects. Thus, 86.59%, want to work in a team, personal ambitions have no place in this institution than a small percentage of 13.41%. Is not denied the existence of the conflict, but it is resolved through negotiation and compromise.

Performance and competition, in accordance with solidarity and equality, are perceived as almost equal. A percentage of 54.88% believe that the team that they are working, it is considered to be more important the performance and competition. Where there is competition there is progress as well.

Solidarity and gender equality is present in responses, in a percentage of 45.12%, representing a characteristic of culture based on femininity.

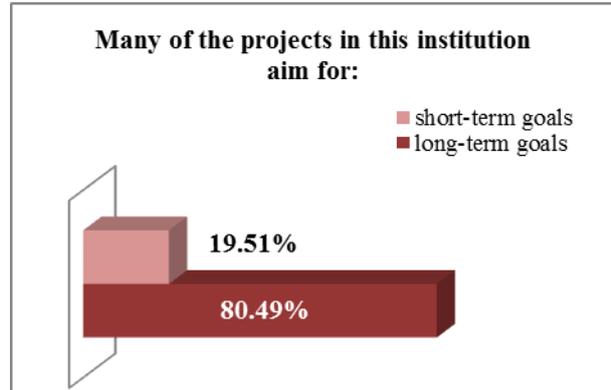
2.5. Long-term orientation and short-term orientation - LTO

We define this index as far as society respects traditional values related to future orientation. [9]

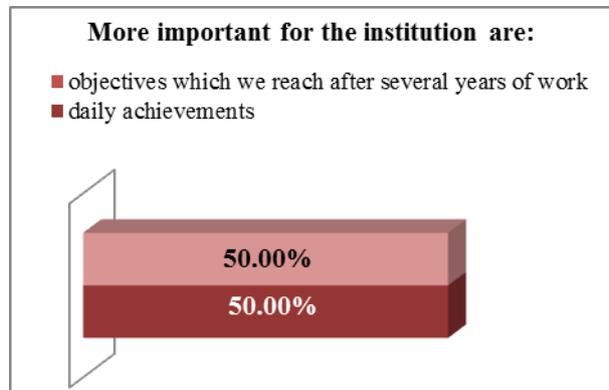
To calculate this index, Hofstede is based on data that has resulted from a separate study conducted by Hofstede between 1985 - 1987, coordinated IRICE (Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation).

Wanting to know if this institution has a vision perspective, subjects were asked the

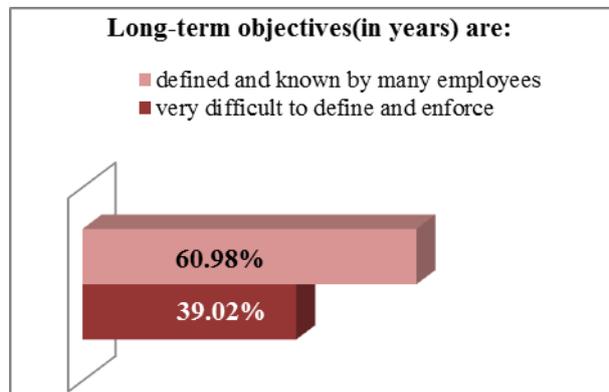
following questions, represented graphical below:



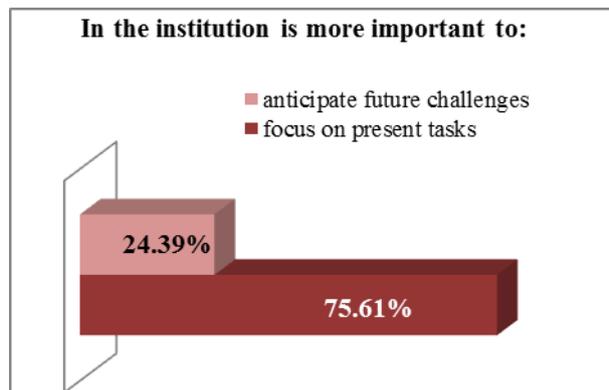
a) Institution goals.



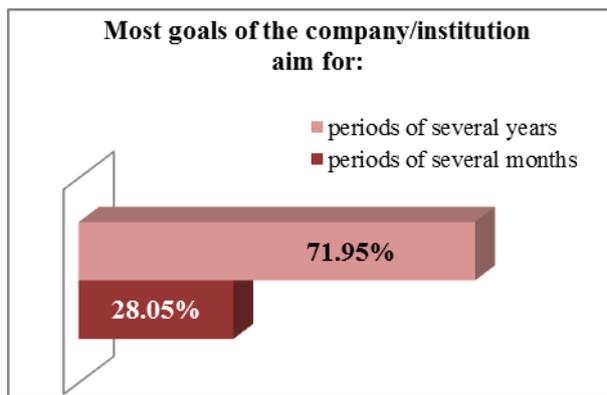
b) Objectives.



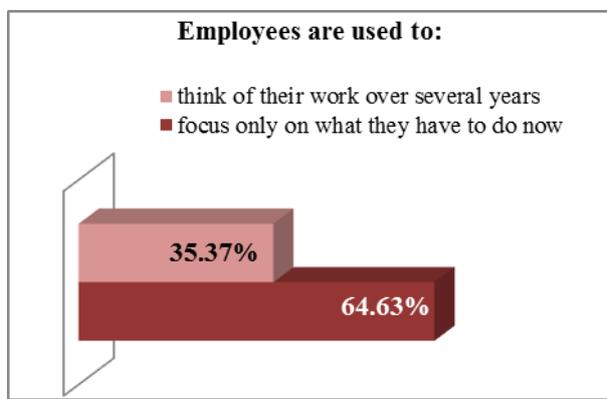
c) Long-term objectives.



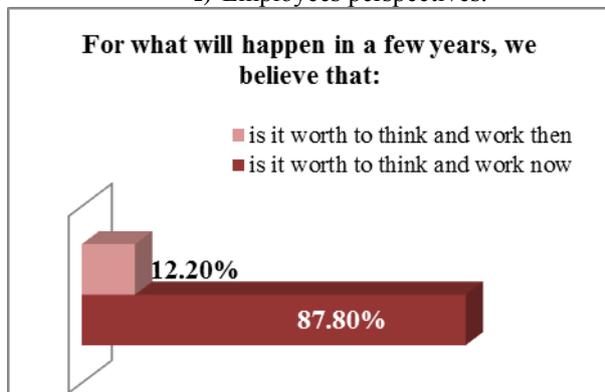
d) Challenges VS present tasks.



e) Duration of goals.



f) Employees perspectives.



g) Future concerns.

Fig. 6 a) – g) Graphical representation of Long-term orientation VS short-term orientation – LTO

A high percentage of the subjects responses show that projects targeted on long-term institution, or 80.49%, at the expense of short-term projects, 19.51%.

Because usually the campaign is based on primarily achievements of the last four years, every party in power tries to get involved in big scale projects to continue ongoing projects and not lose time with short-term projects.

This does not mean that there is a long-term vision. A period of 4 years is not a long-term strategy, it can be considered as a short to medium term strategy.

Public administration employees have a different perception because these long-term projects the question refers occur regardless of power migration, and usually whoever is in power, prevail in the political development of the county.

To develop the institution as important are short-term achievements and objectives which will be achieved after years of work, showing an equal percentage of 50%.

According to the institution organization, there are compartments which mainly work with daily tasks and with the citizens, and departments actively participating in development of scale county projects.

Long-term objectives are not known by everyone or properly defined as such results in a rate of 39.02%, which effectively participate in long-term projects.

Most, however, 60.98%, meet these goals, and as such follows them and tries to implement them.

Important tasks are still present to anticipate future challenges. Although only 24.39% of respondents anticipated future projects, doesn't mean that daily tasks do not include long-term vision.

The objectives of the institution remain the long-term ones, 71.95% were of this opinion.

28.05% percentage of the subjects, are considering that institutions objectives are intended for a period of several months.

With well-defined job description, well developed rules and procedures by which the institution is operating, a percentage of 64.63% of employees are used to focus on what they are doing now. There is still lasting concerns that 35.37% of the respondents are thinking of their work over several years.

Most interviewees have future prospect, 87.80% prefer to think and work now, for what will happen in the future. Only 12.20% prefer to think and work then.

In conclusion, it is clear that we are dealing with an institution that has a medium to high long-term orientation.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Our research revealed the following positioning of the management and organizational culture of public administration of the Cluj County:

1. Average power gap, according to leaders with far more power than their subordinates, employees who show unconditional obedience to superiors, and there are also employees who expect their superiors to be accessible, willing to talk to leaders to find a solution to their problems.
2. High level of uncertainty avoidance.
3. Respondents' answers were mostly positive definite situations (control) of uncertainty avoidance. Institution's activities are carried out based on norms, rules and clear procedures.
4. Very low individualism, more collectivism, is expected and accepted help from the community. Employees work together and complement each other.
5. Mid-level femininity with masculine tendencies. Employees are equally concerned about the quality of life for social integration.
6. Medium to high long-term orientation.

4. REFERENCES

- [1] Hofstede, G., *Cultural Dimensions*, <http://www.geert-hofstede.com>
- [2] Hofstede, G., *Managementul structurilor multiculturale*, Editura Economică, București, 1996.
- [3] Dunn, C.C., *Global Formation: Structures of the World – Economy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. New York, 1998.
- [4] <http://www.iinteract.ro>.
- [5] Ionescu, Gh., *Dimensiunile culturale ale managementului*, Editura Economică, București, 1996
- [6] Luca, A., *Studiul despre valorile și comportamentul românesc din perspectiva dimensiunilor culturale după metoda lui Geert Hofstede*, <http://www.i-interact.ro>.
- [7] Lungescu, D., *Distanța față de putere și organizația românească*, în *Noi oportunități I de afaceri în contextul lărgirii Uniunii*, Editura Risoprint, Cluj-Napoca, 2004.
- [8] Luthans, F., *Organizational Behavior*, McGraw Hill International Editions, 1992.
- [9] Mereuță, C., *Culturi organizaționale în spațiul românesc. Valori și profiluri dominante*, FIMAN, București, 1998.

STUDII EXPERIMENTALE BAZATE PE MODELUL LUI HOFSTEDE

Rezumat: Prezenta lucrare prezintă, în mod succint, rezultatele aplicării modelului lui Hofstede, pentru administrația publică din Consiliul Județean Cluj. Studiul propriu de referință referitor la culturile naționale, realizat între anii 1967-1973, de către Hofstede, demonstrează faptul că indiferent din ce țară sau societate face parte un individ, el are un punct de vedere propriu și diferit, în ceea ce privește definiția comportamentului corect, rezonabil și adecvat. Toate aceste diferențe pot fi explicate prin cele 5 dimensiuni studiate de Hofstede: Distanța față de putere, Controlul incertitudinii, Masculinitate, Individualism, Orientarea pe termen lung și orientarea pe termen scurt. Scopul lucrării este de a determina poziționarea culturii manageriale și organizaționale din administrația publică a județului Cluj.

Sorina Dana VEISS, PhD, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Department of Management and Economic Engineering, Romania, dana_veiss@yahoo.com, Cluj-Napoca, str. Dobrogeanu Gherea 18, 0740083923.

Ioan ABRUDAN, Prof. Eng., Ec. PhD, Professor, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Management and Economic Engineering Department, abrudan.ioan@k.ro, (+4) 0264401578, Cluj-Napoca, Mehedinti 37, ap. 10, 0723322537.