

MAINTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN VIRTUAL TEAMS

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ABSTRACT

The wave of the tendency to work from home and take virtual participation in the work of companies and organizations, through the web tools that the progress of technology makes available, is gaining more and more momentum and is becoming represented in the everyday life of both smaller enterprises and firms, and giant companies. Whether it is an unintended effect of globalization or its natural developing product, however, what cannot be avoided is the fact that video conferencing, web meetings, and working over the Internet is everyday in business and society. Naturally and additionally, the pandemic with the virus COVID-19 has only strengthened this tendency to work from home, from an isolated environment or through the tools and platforms offered by the Internet and the recent successes of web communication. From the aspect of organizational culture, if the beginning of the 2000s marked a period in which knowledge about organizational culture was placed on a solid foundation, but was still followed by the need to test, delineate and develop them, twenty years later, the phenomenon manifested itself which potentially means a threat to the organizational culture of companies and organizations. The challenge that is set before the organizational sciences is the need to investigate what will be the methods for forming and maintaining the organizational culture among the teams that function in the virtual world. To achieve this, the paper analyzes the characteristics and challenges of the virtual context and virtual teams, perceives proven best practices for strengthening the social element in the virtual world, and connecting these elements with the elements of organizational culture, points to certain conclusions regarding the research problem.

Keywords: *organization, culture, teams, leadership, globalization.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Globalization, expanded facilities, and advances in technology have required organizations to be fast and flexible if they are to survive (Robbins, Judge, 2013). The traditional understanding of the term organizational work would include face-to-face meetings at the managerial level, delegating tasks to subordinates and motivating them, coordinating and synchronizing work horizontally and vertically in the organizational setting, directly controlling and gaining insight into work, as and evaluating and providing feedback to subordinates. The basis of this way of working would require direct contact and presence in work and at the workplace, regardless of whether it is a management position or an employee position. As more organizations become global entities, the need for work groups that can collaborate across national boundaries grows (Robbins, Judge, 2013). This trend primarily

contributed to the emergence of several innovations in the traditional understanding of organizational work: the need to communicate with colleagues or representative offices from different countries, holding meetings and enhanced use of web tools and communication, even in different time zones, work from a distance or working from home, without traditional coming to the company's premises. In addition, "the advances in technology that have accompanied globalization are leading us to a new type of work relationship: global virtual teams. These are groups of individuals who work together across national borders through electronic communication media" (Robbins, Judge, 2013).

Whether it is an undesired effect of globalization or its natural developing product, however, what cannot be avoided is the fact that video conferencing, web meetings and working over the Internet reflect everyday life in the business community. Naturally and additionally, the pandemic with the virus COVID-19 has only strengthened this tendency to work from home, from an isolated environment or through the tools and platforms offered by the Internet and the recent successes of web communication. Researchers such as Cairncross (2001), argue that one feature of globalization is the "death of distance" (Cairncross, 2001) (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013), however, it is necessary to investigate whether social distance and physical distance in its meaning are equated, or it is only about the cancellation of the physical distance. Such phenomena in the organizational world pose various challenges for organizational sciences that have yet to be answered.

From the aspect of organizational culture, if the beginning of the 2000s marked a period in which knowledge about organizational culture was placed on a solid foundation, but was still followed by the need to test, delineate and develop them, twenty years later, the phenomenon manifested itself which potentially means a threat to the organizational culture of companies and organizations. The challenge that is set before the organizational sciences is the need to investigate what will be the methods for forming and maintaining the organizational culture among the teams that function in the virtual world. To achieve this, the paper analyzes the characteristics and challenges of the virtual context and virtual teams, perceives proven best practices for strengthening the social element in the virtual world, and connecting these elements with the elements of organizational culture, points to certain conclusions regarding the research problem.

The theoretical assumptions set in this way formulate the main hypothesis of this paper - "The creation and maintenance of organizational culture in virtual teams mostly depends on the component of socialization for which the leaders are responsible" for which, this research is needed to provide a solid basis for further research and its full validation. The methodological part of the research will consist of using Dennison's questionnaire as a research tool to provide a scientific and analytical support for the thesis.

2 VIRTUAL TEAMS

Traditional teams offer more opportunities for close collaboration with colleagues and developing close personal relationships that can facilitate performance (Robbins, Judge, 2013). A basic step, or prerequisite for creating a virtual team, is practicing working from home. A 2008 survey of more than 5,000 human resources professionals by the Society of Human Resources Management found that 35% of organizations allow employees to telecommute at least some of the time, and 21% allow employees to telecommute full time (SHRM, 2008) (Robbins, Judge, 2013). The same organization, with the same survey, in 2019, notes results that claim that telecommuting has become more widely offered among organizations of all sizes over the past five years, with ad hoc telecommuting 69% showing the largest increases, up 13% from 2015. More than a quarter 27% of organizations offer full-time remote work. Benefits of working time flexibility of various kinds are available in many organizations. More

than half of organizations 57% offer flex time during core business hours (SHRM, 2019). This not only means that from 2008 to 2019, the number of companies that allow and practice remote work almost doubled, but also that the trend of remote work is becoming more and more popular. The increase in interest and the practice of this way of working implies the need for virtual communication and work, even if partially through web tools or through the formation of so-called virtual teams.

Virtual teams use computer technology to unite physically dispersed members and achieve a common goal (Martins, Gilson, Maynard, 2004). They collaborate online—using communication links such as wide area networks, video conferencing, or e-mail—whether they are from one room to another or across continents (Robbins, Judge, 2013). Like all other teams and temporary or permanent organizations, virtual teams are expected to emerge, establish or impose a certain organizational culture. What needs to be explored is what the potential advantages and disadvantages of virtual teams are and how they would potentially affect the organizational cultures of those teams.

2.1. Advantages and challenges of the virtual teams

Basic prerequisites for the existence of virtual teams, is remote work, the use of web tools for communication and a common goal of the work. Naturally, it follows from this that the social element of the working group will be reduced, that is, they may suffer because there is less social relationship and direct interaction between members (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013). In addition to this, Robbins and Judge (2013), point out results from 94 studies covering more than 5,000 groups that say that virtual teams are better at sharing unique information (information that individual members have, but not the whole group), but they have tend to share less information overall (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2011). As a result, low levels of virtuality in teams result in higher levels of information sharing, but high levels of virtuality hinder this (Robbins, Judge, 2013). This means that the more people have physical presence and the opportunity to work together, away from the virtual environment, the more information can be conveyed in essence. Although this seems absurd, taking into account the advantages for the exchange and circulation of information offered by the high level of development of technology, however, in this context it is more about the essence of the information and the message that should be conveyed with it.

Potential advantages of telecommuting include a larger desk to choose from, increased productivity, lower turnover, improved morale, and reduced office space costs (Robbins, Judge, 2013). For a certain group of people this is an excellent, even ideal way of working. No travel, with flexible working hours, freedom to choose the dress code, more concentration without disturbance, breaks at the desired time, less congestion at the workplace. In addition, virtual teams allow companies access to the most qualified individuals to do a specific job regardless of their geographic location, respond faster than the competition, and have more flexibility in working from home (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013). Table 1, taken from Bergiel et al. (2008) and analyzed by Huczynski and Buchanan (2013) provides a clearer overview of the advantages and challenges that characterize virtual teams, supplemented by additional research and references for the needs of this paper.

Table 1 Advantages and challenges of the virtual teams

Advantages	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces travel and cost • Enables recruitment of talented employees • Promotes different areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes requires complex technological applications

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds diverse teams • Assists in promoting proactive employment • practices for disadvantaged individuals and groups; reduces discrimination • significantly increases flexibility and work satisfaction (Brotherton, 2011) • dramatically decreases the energetical resources, compared to the face-to-face meetings (Robbins, Judge, 2013) • the companies achieve profits by different available knowledge (Robbins, Judge, 2013) (Joshi, Lazarova, Liao, 2009). • Ability to involve the most qualified persons available to work on a project or make a decision, regardless of where they are (Yukl, 2010). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge among employees about virtual teams; need for human resource development interventions • Lack of knowledge among senior managers concerning advanced technological applications • Not suitable for all employees due to their psychological makeup and predispositions • Not an option for all companies because of their operational environment • Less direct supervision of the employees, coordination and transfer of knowledge (Stanton, Barnes- Farrel, 1996) • For employees with high social needs, telecommuting can increase feelings of isolation and decrease job satisfaction (Welch, Welch, 2007) • Possibility of disadvantage when it comes to raises and promotions (Robbins, Judge, 2013) • less social support and less interaction between members; • greater orientation towards the tasks, since the members have not met before; • less exchange of social-emotional information between members; • less satisfaction with the group process compared to face-to-face teams. (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013) • problems in communication and conveying the point of society (Robbins, Judge, 2013) • more difficult monitoring of members' work, influence on members and development of mutual trust and collective identification (Yukl, 2010)
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Source: Nature of virtual teams: A summary of their advantages and disadvantages, Management Research News, 31(2), pp. 99–110, p. 107 Table 1: The advantages of using virtual teams (Bergiel, B.J., Bergiel, E.B. and Balsmeier, P.W. 2008) © Emerald Group Publishing Limited, all rights reserved. u Huczynski, A.A., Buchanan, D.A., (2013). Organizational Behavior. Harlow: Pearson education)

If one had to draw an initial conclusion from this representation of virtual teams, it would be noted that the facts weigh significantly on the side of the negative extreme, that is, that virtual teams have more negative effects on the work group or more challenges that need to be overcome. However, what should be taken as a basic assumption is the fact that they are the future of work and that they will be increasingly integrated into the daily work of companies and organizations. These two conditions for the functioning of virtual teams – 1) the greater number of negative characteristics and effects; and 2) the inevitability of their use in the future, lay the groundwork for further research into their impact on organizational cultures, and thus on the measures that leaders will take to make them successful.

2.2. Recommendations

The numerous challenges that virtual teams pose to companies and organizations, at the same time, open up opportunities for research and finding creative ways to overcome them. Research to date indicates that, if virtual teams are to be effective, management needs to ensure that (1) trust is established among members; (2) team progress is closely monitored and (3) team efforts and products are communicated throughout the organization (Malhotra, Majchrzak, and Rosen, 2007) (Robbins, Judge, 2013). On the other hand, Alcoa (2009) finds that it is important to develop regular meeting routines to facilitate collaboration (Robbins, Judge, 2013). Routines can also be perceived as part of the organizational culture, in terms of norms that are set in the team. A sense of unity is something that is lacking in virtual teams, so it is necessary to work on it, and this is also confirmed by Robbins and Judge (2013), pointing out that "higher levels of communication and cohesion among members of global virtual teams are related to common goals, which in turn leads to higher performance" (Robbins, Judge, 2013), which would mean that alluding to the commonality of ideas and goals, the routine of communication and holding meetings, all this is driven by the leadership element in organizations.

The lack of a social component is one that is at the heart of many of the challenges posed by virtual teams, especially with employees or staff who need more social interaction or the negative effects of feeling isolated. Because of these impacts of remote work, psychologists recommend that virtual team members who normally communicate via e-mail, telephone, and videoconferencing should occasionally meet physically to become aware of each other's personal and cultural contexts (Newing, 2007) (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013).

3 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND VIRTUAL TEAMS

Organizational culture encompasses the dominant beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors and practices that are characteristic of a group of people (Warrick, 2015). Schein (1992) claims that in organizational culture three fundamental levels (or layers) should be distinguished through which culture is manifested: 1) visible artifacts, 2) values and 3) basic meaningful assumptions (Schein, 1992). In analyzing Shane's theory of organizational culture, Hogan and Coote (2013) point out that it is divided into three levels – values, norms and artifacts. In both cases, artifacts are the outermost layer, or the top of the pyramid of levels, while values are key beliefs that the organization values and anticipates their representation. What appears as a certain difference is the definition of the place of norms and basic assumptions.

Artifacts include everything from the physical layout (in the organization/firm), the dress code, the way people behave, the smell and feel of the organization, emotional intensity, and other phenomena that have lasting material manifestations such as archives, philosophies, and annual reports. (Schein, 1990).

Values in an organizational context are defined as evaluative standards relating to work and the work environment, according to which individuals discern what is right and what is wrong (Dose, 1997).

Basic assumptions represent a set of shared but unspoken assumptions about the best way to do things in a company and relate to the nature of reality and the organization's relationship with its environment (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013). According to Schein's (1990) model, they represent the deepest level of organizational culture. They start with the thinking of the founder and then develop through a common learning process and finally, they are established as basic assumptions or norms of the organization (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013). Understanding the basic assumptions is a prerequisite for understanding the meanings of employee relations, but also the artifacts that refer to the way of communication, motivation, problem solving, approach to the problem and other subjective examples. Such an approach in

understanding the basic assumptions leaves room for them to be defined as norms through organizational learning, which have been established in the organizational culture through various critical events.

Usually, organizational culture is learned by new members of a team or organization through experiences and through a socialization process (Pascale, 1985). The doyen in the field of organizational culture, Edgar Shane, points out that organizational culture is transmitted through transmission mechanisms consisting of the elements that leaders pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis, the way leaders respond to critical incidents and organizational crises, the way that , leaders allocate resources, through role modeling, teaching, and coaching, through the way leaders allocate rewards and status, and through the way leaders hire, select, promote, and fire (Schein, 2004). According to Schein (2004), it can be noted that his theory on the transmission of organizational culture is largely based on the way leaders practice their leadership style and the way they lead their team. One would expect that the same would apply to virtual teams, logically, within the framework set by the limitations and characteristics explained earlier. Given the conditions in which virtual teams and remote work operate, it would initially be assumed that the formation of an organizational culture would be particularly challenging, especially if the team that has to work together has not previously met face-to-face. In this regard, Huczynski and Buchanan (2013) indicate positive leadership practices (Table 2), recommended for leaders of virtual teams.

Table 2 Practices of effective virtual team leaders

<p>Establish and maintain trust through the use of communication technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing the norms on how information is communicated • Revisiting and adjusting the communication norms as the team evolves ('virtual get-togethers') • Making progress explicit through use of team virtual work space • Equal 'suffering' in the geographically distributed world
<p>Ensure diversity in the team is understood, appreciated, and leveraged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent team expertise directory and skills matrix in the virtual work space • Virtual sub-teaming to pair diverse members and rotate sub-team members • Allowing diverse opinions to be expressed through use of asynchronous electronic means (e.g. electronic discussion threads)
<p>Manage virtual work-cycle and meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All idea divergence between meetings (asynchronous idea generation) and idea convergence and conflict resolution during virtual meetings (synchronous idea convergence) • Use the start of virtual meeting (each time) for social relationship building • During meeting – ensure through 'check-ins' that everyone is engaged and heard from • End of meeting – ensure that the minutes and future work plan are posted to team repository
<p>Monitor team progress through the use of technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely scrutinize asynchronous (electronic threaded discussion and document postings in the knowledge repository) and synchronous (virtual meeting participation and instant messaging) communications patterns • Make progress explicit through balanced scorecard measurements posted in the team's virtual workspace
<p>Enhance external visibility of the team and its members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent report-outs to a virtual steering committee (comprised of local bosses of team members)

Ensure individuals benefit from participating in virtual teams

- Virtual reward ceremonies
- Individual recognition at the start of each virtual meeting
- Making each team member's 'real location' boss aware of the member's contribution

Source: adapted version from *Huczynski, A.A., Buchanan, D.A., (2013). Organizational Behavior. Harlow: Pearson education*)

According to the recommendations given in table 1, it is noted that in addition to skills for leading meetings, elements of social skills are indicated for leaders, in the direction of forming a functional team, or a strong organizational culture. Comparing these propositions with the way in which Schein (2004) points out how organizational culture is transmitted, it will be noted that a significant number of elements are similar to each other. Namely, one of the ways to transmit organizational culture is based on the way leaders reward, punish and redistribute status, at the same time, a segment of the social elements of leading virtual teams indicates that leaders should establish virtual reward ceremonies, individual recognition and "checking in" during the meeting, as well as using and building social relationships at the beginning of the meeting. In this way, not only will an organizational culture be established, but it will also be easily recognizable and applicable the moment new virtual team members come on board and start working.

Role modeling is a mechanism for transferring the organizational culture, in that the person to whom the culture should be transferred will be indicated (modelled) by a person who in himself, or his work, is the embodiment of the culture of the organization. At the same time, from the point of view of managing virtual teams, it is indicated that in addition to taking care of equal representation and respecting the element of diversity, it is also indicated that it should be considered to establish a virtual sub-team for pairing and rotating members from the sub-team, thus enabling support, assistance, experiences and adaptation of all members, especially those who are part of a certain minority (on whatever basis).

3.1 Directions, recommendations and advices for organizational culture creation in the virtual teams

Researching and analyzing the claims, shared points and recommendations regarding the management of virtual teams and the building of organizational culture and routines among them, a certain pattern of repetition of the elements that different sources have highlighted as important is observed. Similar to the overview of leadership recommendations adapted from Huczynski and Buchanan (2013), these recommendations and tips also promote and advance the idea of creating an organizational culture in virtual teams. Based on the points made by the various sources and authors, it is stated that the directions for the formation and maintenance of organizational culture move in four directions: 1) ideas and forms of socialization, 2) measures for empathy and the formation of psychological security, 3) understanding on the context of team members and 4) routines and management practices.

3.1.1 Ideas and forms of socialization

According to the findings from the indicated sources, the conclusion materializes that the biggest missing part in virtual teams and remote work is the moment of socialization. This challenge that arises in the management of virtual teams, can be a cornerstone of increasing the effectiveness of the team and the formation of an organizational culture that will be useful for the work and the achievement of the mission. Additionally, forms of socialization (table 3) have the potential to help bring employees together and create a sense of belonging (Tracy,

2020), which is key to creating and enhancing team spirit and organizational culture. In general, they can range from dedicated time to talk about non-work related topics, through organized games, shared meals, congratulating and celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, to actually going out and socializing live. Such forms of socialization would help cancel out the antisocial component, which is one of the basic characteristics of virtual teams and a challenge posed to working in virtual teams.

Table 3 Ideas and forms of socialization

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to discuss topics not related to work - to share common values (Support Adventure, 2020), for example "what are you having for dinner tonight?" or "did you work out today?" (Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, 2020) • a joint outing in the city or for a walk (Support Adventure, 2020), and this should be organized once or twice a year (Morgan, 2015). • mandatory "beer-hour" the last working hour on Friday (to have a socialization hour). (Support Adventure, 2020) or "happy hour" once a week (Tracy, 2020). • shared "virtual" meal (Burkus, 2020) • "office hunt" - to take three objects: 1) which reminds you of something dear, 2) which helps you to be productive, 3) which makes you laugh; • more time before and after the meeting, in order to talk and spend time in casual conversation; • board game night, inter-departmental competitions, non-work related things (Morgan, 2015). • congratulations and celebrations - sharing information about something that is being congratulated (anniversaries, birthdays - own, children's, successes, celebrations) • virtual secret Santa (BestSelf, 2020) |
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3.1.2 Empathy and psychological safety measures

In addition to the ideas of socialization, among the experts, leaders and participants of the virtual teams, in the indicated measures for leading virtual teams, the measures for empathy and the formation of psychological security among the members of the virtual teams appear as a constant. Psychological security refers to a state in which people are free to speak and express what they feel, followed by mutual respect and trust (Burkus, 2020). This means that the less dominant members of the team should be provided with an environment in which they can be sure that they can speak and be understood (Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, 2020). This would be achieved through the elements of expressing empathy and understanding feelings (table 4) and the state of members in the direction of forming psychological security, shared vulnerability and shared purpose (Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, 2020).

Table 4 Review of empathy and psychological safety measures

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asking members specifically "how are you and how do you really feel?" |
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- short questionnaires that will include questions such as: "to what level can you expect your team to cooperate?", "to what level do you have time and space to take care of your family?", "how free and safe do you feel to speak?" ", "how much does management ask you for consultation or ideas?"
- to pay attention to how the leader behaves and how the leader answers and reacts to questions, how he delegates tasks and how he communicates (Burkus, 2020)
- if it is a team that is hybrid – most of the employees come to work, and in addition, certain people work remotely, to have one-on-one meetings with the people who work from home, to understand their problems and their challenges.
- those who work remotely should be the first to speak and everyone should listen to them, without interrupting them, but they should have the right to interrupt someone if they did not understand.
- Those who work remotely must come on certain occasions to have face-to-face contact with other employees (Morgan, 2015)
- To do a "check-in" and feedback, to understand what they need, what is their perspective, is more or less communication needed?
- to feel part of the team - to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, to congratulate (Emanuele, 2020).

3.1.3 Understanding the context

What can further help in the direction of understanding the feelings and forming the psychological security of the members of the virtual teams is the understanding of the context in which the employees find themselves. Burkus (2020) claims that the context in which each of the team members is located affects the level of collaboration (Burkus, 2020). This will not only help to understand the physical state the member is in, but will also cover the time dimension, the social component and the psychological state of the team member. The measures indicated in table 5 can help to form a basis for understanding the way of work, reaction and communication of each of the team members, which will help for cooperation on a horizontal level, between colleagues, and on a vertical level, with superiors and subordinates. when delegating, performing tasks and reporting after the completed task.

Table 5 Review of measures for context understanding

- everyone should show their workspace, the room, the middle, the work-corner (Burkus, 2020)
- when waking up to greet everyone with "good morning" to understand the dimension of the spread in the different time zone in the world (BestSelf, 2020)
- to talk about the obligations during the day.

3.1.4 Routines and management practices

The last constant that stands out from the claims of the selected sources is the group of routines and management practices. This group fully coincides with Schein's (1990) theory of organizational culture, which recognizes artifacts as the most visible element of organizational culture, consisting of rituals, customs, dress code, way of addressing and communicating, ceremonies, customs, and the like (Schein, 1990) (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013). Routines,

rituals and customs are a prerequisite for creating the organizational climate, which is an artifact of the deeper cultural levels, as well as the visible behavior of its members (Schein, 2004). Artifacts also include the organizational processes by which certain behaviors are made routine, and include elements such as charters, formal descriptions of how the organization works, and organizational charts (Schein, 2004). From the point of view of virtual teams, all previously mentioned elements and constants can grow into some kind of rituals, routines and customs, however, the experts' recommendations for the establishment of rituals are given in table 6, while certain management practices that will help in the creation of the fabric of the organizational culture.

Table 6 Review of routines and management practices

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday meeting for a successful Friday - to discuss what the goals and mission of the organization are and to see what will be done during the week to achieve those goals / everyone to say what they did the previous week, what the projects were, and how they helped (BestSelf, 2020) • morning meeting for coordination - to tell the directions for the day, to motivate the employees (Tracy, 2020). • praise at the end of the week - everyone should say and praise someone for the work they did or for a challenge they overcame (BestSelf, 2020) • to recognize the work and praise it (Emanuele, 2020). • communicate culture by setting communication expectations, ensuring employees understand and live company values, and leading by example (Tracy, 2020) • ritual - instead of applause, they use "jazz hands", an inside joke, (Burkus, 2020) • a gift package of products produced in the company (BestSelf, 2020) • creation of visible culture - hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, parts of stationery, uniforms, etc. (Emanuele, 2020). • Monday voice messages from the principal (Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, 2020), which could be incorporated into Monday morning rituals • an "ask me what you want" session with the director? • pay attention to the element of monitoring and control - be transparent - why do you control and how do you control? • best practices needed for new colleagues to adapt and learn the organizational culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sending an announcement with the biography of the new colleague • zoom meeting with leaders and management staff in the organization • determining a mentor (model) who will help the newly admitted (Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management, 2020) |
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4 DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

The previous elaboration clearly points to several facts that define the framework for further research regarding virtual teams and the formation of organizational culture in them. First, virtual teams and remote work are perceived to be the perspective of business and work

in organizations and companies. The results of the research set the expectations that in the future remote work and the formation of virtual teams will be more prevalent in the work environment. In this regard, further elaboration indicated an analysis in which the characteristics of virtual teams were perceived. Such an analysis of advantages and challenges is of particular importance, considering two things: 1) virtual teams will be inevitable and more frequently used in the future; and 2) despite the many challenges that characterize them, they will have to be effective and efficient.

Organizational culture as a set of dominant beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors and practices that are characteristic of a group of people (Warrick, 2015), exists in all organizations and teams. Its formation and transmission mostly depend on the behavior and way of leading the leaders, that is, the process of achieving the mission of the team they lead. The basic elements of organizational culture, artifacts, values and assumptions (Schein, 2004) are an inevitable part and characteristic of culture. Although the formation, transmission and maintenance of organizational culture is in itself a challenge in organizations in which the physical component and the social element are represented and people can function and communicate live and away from the virtual world, it should be taken into account that in virtual teams, this would be even more challenging. The characteristics of virtual teams, as well as the way of transferring organizational culture, set the assumptions that the strengthening of organizational culture in the virtual world, and its transfer, should especially represent the social element, i.e. work on improving the socialization of members, strengthening their sense of belonging, to provide opportunities for conversations about the real world and the environment, not just about work, and to allow equal representation and a sense of security among all members. If these elements were covered, in virtual teams, a basis would be formed for all members to feel that they belong to the same team, in which everyone is safe to express their opinion, that they are working towards a common goal, that despite the virtual distance, everyone has a private life and has the opportunity to share elements of their environment.

Considering this, Dennison's questionnaire (1995) seems like the most convenient tool which can deliver the results in need for further analysis and thesis confirmation. As a research instrument it consists of sixty items (statements and sub-areas), which enable a simple but comprehensive analysis of organizational culture, through the evaluation of the basic cultural peculiarities and managerial practices that affect business performance (Denison, 1995). The results of the research are presented in a summary report that includes a graphical profile of the organization, a line-item report that summarizes the organization's results by individual items, and a list of suggested "levers for change" that might be appropriate for the organization. Denison explores four areas as determinants of organizational culture – employee involvement (participation), consistency in work, adaptability (adaptability) and the organization's mission. Each of these areas consists of three sub-areas, which include four statements each, to which the respondents have to answer according to the Likert scale.

Leading all team members through the process of socialization through virtual platforms, thereby forming an organizational culture, is the job of virtual team leaders. What will make such research richer and more impactful is the exploration of best practices in leading virtual teams, the exploration of the best recommendations and examples of socialization in the virtual world, their role and impact on team members and the organization, the clear recognition of artifacts, the routines, norms and values of the organizational culture, as a basis for the formation of basic assumptions. Hence, linking these elements to the primary transfer mechanisms and secondary reinforcement mechanisms indicated by Schein (2004), lessons learned, and conclusions would be drawn that would help facilitate the process of building and transferring organizational culture in virtual teams, promoting their effectiveness, by

incorporating social elements into the virtual world. In this way, the knowledge about the organizational culture, in the field of the virtual world, would be expanded.

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