

## MANAGEMENT OF DYSFUNCTIONS AND CONFLICTS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Stelian Pânzaru

“Spiru Haret” University, Braşov, Romania

Liliana Constantinescu

“Dimitrie Cantemir” University, Bucharest, Romania

Camelia Dragomir

“Spiru Haret” University, Braşov, Romania

**Abstract:** In the public administration institutions there take place numerous and complex activities mainly aiming the achieving objectives in the optimum conditions. In public administration institutions there are formed relations between employees and working groups who consist of individuals with different personalities, mentalities, educations, value systems and behaviours. At work are many dysfunctions which can transform into conflicts, with numerous and complicated consequences. In this respect, there appears the need that the public manager to understand the place and role of dysfunctions and conflicts in the management of public administration, their nature and form of manifestation, the causes, the consequences and the effective means to combat them. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of dysfunctions and conflicts at work on the performance of public administrations institutions. On the basis of the analysis were drawn the conclusions on the role of the public management in managing dysfunctions and conflicts in this organizations.

**Key words:** management, dysfunctions, conflicts, public administration, institutions.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

While the functions are intended or recognized, and may have a positive effect on public administrations, the dysfunctions are unintended or unrecognized and have a negative effect on institutions generating conflicts. In specialty literature, the conflicts and the dysfunctions, and especially their role, were treated differently. The conflict represents an incident provoked by the existing divergences between the attitudes, means and methods of action regarding a situation or a phenomenon which represent the object of the analysis [1]. The conflict represents an incident provoked by the existing divergences between the attitudes, means and methods of action regarding a situation or a phenomenon which represent the object of the analysis. The organizational conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other [2]. Conflict is a part of organizational in public administrations life and can occur between individuals, between the individual and the group, and between groups of employees [3] [4]. Though conflict is often viewed as negative, it is capable of increasing organizational innovativeness and productivity, thereby improving organizational performance. In addition, conflicts build the spirit of teamwork and cooperation among the employees of an organization [5]. Pawlak suggests that conflict analysis and its resolutions has an important role in private, public and political organizations, as well as in judicial and work disputes, in military operations and many other institutions [6]. The presence and the action of the interpersonal conflicts at the job proves the necessity of their acknowledgement for the continuous improvement of the public management.

## **2. WHY ARISE THE DYSFUNCTIONS IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION INSTITUTIONS ?**

The dysfunction is accompanied by an atmosphere of tension and the consequences of the dysfunctions consists of animosity, resentments, fear, aggressiveness, discontent, frustration, absenteeism, stress, low yield and often the abandonment of the working place. Med Yoneis [7] show that to build and sustain high-performance teams, the leadership and human resources managers should keep an eye open for the symptoms emergence of the dysfunctions in organizations and treat the root causes before it becomes too late. Yoneis stresses that the symptoms emergence of the dysfunctions in organizations are:

- Dictatorial Leadership: Management that does not allow disagreements out of insecurity or arrogance;
- There is limited or no leadership performance feedback;
- Personal Agendas: Recruitments, selections and promotions are based on internal political agenda, for example hiring friends to guarantee personal loyalty at the expense of other highly performing and more-qualified employees;
- Political Compensation: Stock options, bonuses and perks are not fairly linked to performance;
- Inefficient Use of Resources: Budgets are allocated between business units or departments based on favoritism and power centers rather than actual business needs;
- Empire-building Practices: Managers believe that the more people they manage and the bigger the budget, the higher the chance that they will be promoted. This results in raging battles around budgets, strategies and operations;
- Unequal Workload Distribution: Some departments are underutilized while other departments are overloaded;
- Too Much Management: There are many management layers in the organization, thus, hindering communication and resulting in slower execution;
- Fragmented Organization Efforts: Interdepartmental competition and turf wars between rival managers lead to the emergence of silos, which results in communication gaps. Management silos almost always result in fragmented and duplicated budgets and projects, thus wasting valuable company investments;
- Too Much Talk: Plans are heavy on talk but light on action. In a political corporate culture, image management becomes far more important than actions;
- Ineffective Meetings: Argumentative and heated cross-divisions meetings with discussion and language focusing on point scoring and buck-passing rather than sharing responsibility and collaborating to solve the problem;
- Lack of Collaboration: Every person for himself/herself. Low sense of unity or camaraderie on the team. The key criterion for decision-making is What is in it for me?
- Low Productivity: Management wastes more time and energy on internal attack and defense strategies instead of executing the work, innovating and overcoming challenges. Critical projects fall behind on deadlines, budgets and performance targets (e.g. sales, market share, quality and other operational targets);
- Constant Crisis Mode: Management team spends most of their time on fire fighting instead of proactive planning for next-generation products and services;
- Morale Deterioration: Muted level of commitment and enthusiasm by other teams. Even successful results cannot be shared and celebrated due to animosity and internal negative competition;
- The defamation among the executives and managers becomes common and public;
- Highly Stressful Workplace: There is a high rate of absenteeism and a high employee turnover rate.

There are certain causes in all the specific conflicts of the public servant. The most significant causes are the followings:

- The distribution of the resources which, irrespective of the institution's dimensions, are limited. We are referring mainly to the fact the public manager is obliged to distribute the human and financial resources among different departments for the achievement of the purposes of the institution. With respect to its meaning and difficulty in the managerial reality, this process constantly generates different types of dysfunctions [8];
- The interdependence of the tasks, acknowledged as a possibility of a conflictual state appearance, is present in all the situations in which the personnel depends on the accomplishment of the task by another persons. The consequences of this cause – factor of dysfunction states - becomes complicated when connected to the systematic characteristic from a horizontal and functional point of view of the institution. As the entire organizational constitutive parts represent the constitutive parts of that specific system, in the case of an inappropriate activity of one of the subunits the independence to which we refer can be constituted as a dysfunctions state generating factor [9];
- The different content of the means can represent a cause of the dysfunctions, during the development of the institution's specialization and divides in departments which carry different means and objectives. In practice, referring to the quality of the means, the departments can grant more attention to the accomplishment of their own objectives then to those of the institution;
- The different appreciations regarding certain situations or states of the managerial process or of an action conceived by the manager, usually subjective, generated by an analysis of the superficial situation discussed, can lead to the overappreciation of certain alternative points of view and aspects which can be favourable for the micro-group, but unfavourable for the institution;
- The differences in the individual behaviour can increase the possibilities of the dysfunctions' appearance, especially when the manifestations of aggressiveness and malice interfere in the relationship system;
- The communication insufficiency, especially the defective transmission of the information, can be considered both the cause and the consequence of the dysfunctions[10];
- The differences encountered in the professional training, the capacity of effort, the stress endurance, present in every institution of public administration. As a consequence, there appears a feeling of injustice and revolt which, in the majority of the cases, generates dysfunctions;
- The differences from the point of view of the character and of the work style influence the compatibility of the employee with his job and his group, a phenomena which gives birth to states of irritation and dysfunctions during the work period;
- The difficult behaviors of certain public servants generate conflicts;
- The ambiguous definition of the individual and derived objectives;
- The ambiguity in the decisions' transmissions;
- The existence of certain parallelisms between departments and jobs;
- The imprecision in the establishment of the tasks, authorities or responsibilities of certain jobs or of the activities and attributions can generate dysfunctions;
- The discontent regarding the social status which grants greater and more honourable chances to certain groups;
- The environment differences which impose certain work hours, special work conditions, attract privations or privileges capable of leading in the end to dysfunctions;
- The incomplete description of the job or of the position;
- The unbalanced load of tasks;
- The lack of concordance between the official authority and requested responsibility;
- The discordance between the material and moral rewards and the level of the work results;
- The lack of cohesion inside the informal group;
- The motivation differences between the members of the informal collective.

### **3. THE PRACTICE OF A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TO PREVENT DYSFUNCTIONS AND CONFLICTS**

In general and especially inside the public institutions, the dysfunctions and conflicts do not appear suddenly. They develop over time, and has the steps of:

- The tensional state, characterized by the existence of all the conditions that lead to the activation of the dysfunction, but they are not yet observed;
- The recognition of the dysfunction;
- The accentuation of the dysfunction;
- The end of the dysfunction, a stage characterized through the modification of the causes that generated dysfunctions.

The practice of a performance management to prevent dysfunctions and conflicts aims at using certain guiding principles for to prevent dysfunctions and conflicts. Surely, some of the principles are known by the managers, but they are not applied in the day to day work that they develop. This principles reunite, in a logical order, all the main aspects of the problem, on the whole [11].

It is underlines the importance of the psychological – social aspects of the work with persons for the combat and prevention of the conflictual states, showing not only their practical utility, but also the theoretical founding.

What characterizes the effort of the manager in the practice of a performance management is that it is influenced by certain actions that we present as follows:

- Every manager obtains the task and consequently the right and the duty of forcing the persons who are subordinated to him, with the precise purpose of determine them, through different means (dispositions, orders, regulations, etc.) to accomplish the duties expected of them, meaning to develop their job in the conditions of an increased efficiency;
- An often neglected matter in the domain of the hierarchic relations is that of the collaboration between the public manager and its subordinates. Through his professional position a subordinate must replace the manager at every needful moment. He must identify as much as possible with the manager's optics and collaborate with him to ensure an additional efficiency;
- In order to prevent the dysfunctions, the public manager must establish precisely the purpose of the tasks, to underline them and to mention their importance to the institution, to underline correctly each person's competence and responsibility, to coordinate the drawn task with other tasks and to control the stages of realization of the drawn task.

### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

With all the aspects presented, we conclude that it is necessary for the manager of public administration, in order to collaborate efficiently with his subordinates and this way to prevent the dysfunctions and conflicts, to to apply the following recommendations:

- To grant the collaborators sufficiently large competences in order for them not to feel obliged to demonstrate continuously their need of amplification, but not too large because, in this case, they would often have to justify the unfulfilling of certain tasks;
- To underline with skill the competences of all the subordinated, in order to make a simultaneous and equivoque appreciation of the qualities;
- The responsibility degree of the collaborators must be in accordance with the level of their authority, verifying that the attributed tasks are real;
- To grant the department managers the liberty of dividing the tasks to the people, as they know better the possibilities of each one;
- The establishment of real tasks for every department and the taking into consideration of the entire events on the market and on the institution, given the fact that the smallest modification can influence the accomplishment of the tasks handed over to every manager;
- Not to exaggerate in the adoption of his solutions as being optimized;

- To know exactly the performances as well as the tasks and the capacities of the collaborators;
- In order to avoid the dysfunctions it is recommended as the manager to reduce the number of claims demanded from his collaborators, makes fewer promises, clearly expresses his expectations, reviews and actualizes his expectations and uses them as the basis of a periodical retrospective analysis;
- The persistence over the detailed knowledge of people, which can be obtained in various manners: with the help of certain observations and systematical verifications, accomplished mainly during the concrete activities and, finally, through impression and intuition;
- Every manager must analyse establishing if the organization of the effort corresponds to the aim so that in the end, to be able to combat the dysfunctions and ensure the institution's development.

The results of an public institution mostly depend on the modality to practice a performance management. This paper sustains that the exercise of a performance management to prevent the dysfunctions and the conflicts is recommendable and efficient in every public institution.

## 1. REFERENCES

1. Petrescu, I., *Managementul crizelor*, Editura EXPERT, p.566, (2006).
2. Henry, O., Organizational Conflict and its effects on Organizational Performance. *Research Journal of Business Management*, 2 (1): 16-24, (2009).
3. Weihrich, H., *Management: A global perspective*, 11th edition, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, (1992).
4. Ikeda, A.A, Veludo-de-Oliveira, Campomar MC., Organizational conflicts perceived by marketing executives. *Electronic Journal of Business and Organization Studies*, 10 (1): 22-28 (2005).
5. Henry, O., Organizational Conflict and its effects on Organizational Performance. *Research Journal of Business Management*, 2 (1): 16-24, (2009).
6. Pawlak, Z, O investigație în anatomie a conflictelor. *Journal of Information Sciences*, 109: 65-78, (1998).
7. Yones, M., Dysfunctional Leadership & Dysfunctional Organizations. Available at: <http://www.mtpinnacle.com/pdfs/DysfunctionalLeadershipDysfunctionalOrganizations.pdf> [Accesat 24.05.2016].
8. Petrescu, I., *Tratat de management public*, Editura Universității „Lucian Blaga“, Sibiu, , pp.191-192, (2002).
9. Pânzaru, S., *Managementul structurilor activităților și acțiunilor*, Ed. Academia Forțelor Aeriene „Henri Coandă”, Brașov, p.67, (2007).
10. Dragomir, C., *Comunicare și negociere în afaceri*, Editura Fundației „România de Mâine”, p.98, (2013).
11. Hotepo, O. M., Asokere, A.S.S., Abdul-Azeez, I. A., Ajemunigbohun, S.S.A., *Empirical Study of the Effect of Conflict on Organizational Performance in Nigeria*. Available at: [http://astonjournals.com/manuscripts/Vol2010/BEJ-15\\_Vol2010.pdf](http://astonjournals.com/manuscripts/Vol2010/BEJ-15_Vol2010.pdf) [Accesat 24.05.2016].