

DIAGNOSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF HEALTHCARE ENTITIES IN POLAND

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Purpose: The aim of the research presented in the article was to determine the dominant type of organizational culture in healthcare entities in Poland and to indicate the differences between the current and the desired cultural profile of these organizations.

Design/methodology/approach: In order to diagnose the organizational culture of healthcare entities, the competing values model developed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn was used. The OCAI (Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument) questionnaire was used in the research.

Findings: Based on the results of research conducted in 2023 on a sample of 85 healthcare entities (responses were obtained from 372 respondents - employees and management staff of healthcare entities) we identified a gap between the current and desired cultural profiles of these organizations.

Research limitations/implications: Research limitations are primarily related to the use of the competing values model in the study of the organizational culture of public organizations. For this reason, there is a noticeable need to develop a tool dedicated to entities operating in the public sphere, taking into account their specificity.

Practical implications: Understanding cultural processes and identifying the existing and expected organizational culture is of great importance for improving management processes and is very useful for the process of implementing changes and introducing innovations.

Originality/value: The article presents original research results. They constitute important information for management staff who want to take action to develop an optimal organizational culture for the organization.

Keywords: organizational culture, cultural profile, competing values model, healthcare entity.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Understanding and examining cultural processes in organizations is of great importance for improving management processes and is very useful for the process of implementing changes and introducing innovations. Organizational culture is one of the indicators of an organization's success, but its elements can also be a source of problems and failures. The organization's activities, and therefore its efficiency and profitability, are the result of many elements, among which the organization's culture plays an important role. It is shaped by the everyday behaviour of organization members and by deliberate actions of management leading to the development of such a culture focused on achieving success. Although management theories have identified various types of cultures in organizations, there are no ready-made organizational culture programs that an institution can adapt to its own needs. Each company, even if it is not a monopoly in its field, develops its own specific culture. Individual institutions may fit into a specific typology of culture, but the final shape depends only on them, and the decisive factor is people.

Research on organizational culture allows for the identification of its components and mechanisms that influence the behaviour of employees of a given organization. In turn, management staff, having information about these elements and mechanisms, can select tools with which they will be able to influence relations with employees and changes taking place in the organization. It should be emphasized that the primary role in creating organizational culture is played by managers who have power in superior-subordinate relations and the means of exercising this power. In this way, norms and values desirable from the point of view of the tasks adopted in the organization are created in the organization.

The aim of the article is to present the results of research that aimed to determine the dominant type of organizational culture in healthcare entities in Poland and to indicate the differences between the current and the desired cultural profile of these organizations, as well as to fill the research gap in the identification of the organizational culture of healthcare entities. The results of this diagnosis are presented based on research conducted in 2023. This research is an introduction to more in-depth investigations into the organizational culture of healthcare entities.

2. Organizational culture – review of literature and research

Organizational culture is a factor that distinguishes an organization, an important point of reference in the process of formulating organizational goals and strategies, and a pattern shaping the behaviour and actions of people in the organization. It is also an integrating element,

and for new members of the organization it is a kind of mechanism that makes them aware of how to operate in a given organization. Moreover, organizational culture aims to standardize the actions of individual organizational participants, also reflecting the organization's relationships with the environment (Jończyk, Kunecka, Mazur, 2017, p. 86).

Definitions of organizational culture are generally ambiguous. Definitions of culture in general are similarly ambiguous. Culture is an abstract concept with a wide semantic scope and, depending on the context, ambiguously understood (Krukowski, 2016, p. 181). The typology of culture definitions was built already in the mid-20th century by A.L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn (Kroeber, Kluckhohn, 1952). They classified 168 different culture terms into 8 groups. Reflections of this ambiguity of the concept of culture are cognitive and definitional problems related to organizational culture. These issues are the subject of considerations at the border of various scientific disciplines, including management sciences. This results in a multitude of approaches and concepts of organizational culture, the lack of a single paradigm and the lack of consensus among researchers as to how to organize approaches to the problem of organizational culture. An obvious consequence of such a situation is the multitude of definitions and typologies as well as the identification of relationships between organizational culture and the functioning of the organization (See Sułkowski, 2012, p. 47 et seq.).

It should be noted that a significant part of the literature dealing with the issue of organizational culture is the literature from the last three decades of the 20th century, although at the beginning of the 21st century we also note many valuable works (Hofstede, Hofstede, 2007; Sułkowski, 2012; Sikorski, 2012; Stachowicz-Stanusch, 2004; Cameron, Quinn, 2003; Boddy, 2011). Over the last few years in Poland, it has been noticeable that scientific studies have taken up the issue of organizational culture in the context of its relationship with human resources management (Buchelt, Jończyk, 2016), change management, innovation and risk (Gałek, Prokopowicz, 2017, pp. 117-137; Domańska-Szaruga, 2019) or management in a multicultural environment (Knap-Stefaniuk, Domańska-Szaruga, 2023, pp. 227-252).

Organizational culture is an extremely broad, multidimensional and difficult to operational concept. The multidimensionality and ambiguity of the term "organizational culture" means that we find many different definitions in the literature on the subject (see Domańska-Szaruga, 2019). The authors of these definitions pay attention to values, norms, attitudes, relationships and ways of behaving as the basic components of organizational culture (Schein, 2004, p. 17; Cameron, Quinn, 2011, p. 18; Kanhaiya, 2023; Mullinis, 2006; Brown, 1998, p. 9). Organizational culture is an intangible component of an organization covering a wide range of social phenomena, including beliefs, values, behaviours and assumptions that become embedded in the consciousness of organizational members (Aycan, Kanungo, Mendonca, Yu, Deller, Stahl, Kurshid, 2000, pp. 192-221; Preskar, Zizek, 2020, pp. 36-54; Barney, 1986, pp. 656-665; Ngo, Loi, 2008, pp. 1654-1666; Poczowski, 2006).

Broadly speaking, organizational culture is the style of operation of the organization, the views and values shared by its members, common patterns of behaviour and methods of communication. The culture of an organization is one of its particularly valuable resources, which determines its competitive advantage and market success. Common values, mutual relationships, adopted patterns of thinking and behaviour, and methods of cooperation have a significant impact on the efficiency of the functioning of every organization.

3. The competing values model

Based on the features mentioned in the definitions of organizational culture, divisions, typologies and classifications of organizational culture are created, allowing for modelling this phenomenon. Researchers of the theory of organizational cultures have developed many models and typologies that take into account various features of organizational culture, distinguished by grouping and logical ordering. They allow for modelling the phenomenon of organizational culture. The most famous and most frequently cited concepts are those of E. Schein (Schein, 2004), G. Hofstede (Hofstede, 2000, p. 43) and the Cameron/Quinn model of competing values (Cameron, Quinn, 2006). The competing values model is widespread primarily in the aspect of diagnosing organizational culture (Figure 1). This model was created as a result of research on the main features of effective organizations, where it was possible to isolate effectiveness indicators and create two main dimensions allowing for dividing the indicators into four basic groups. One of the dimensions, at opposite poles, groups effectiveness criteria emphasizing flexibility and freedom of action (one pole) and immutability and control (the other pole). Based on the second dimension, we can compare effectiveness criteria related to orientation towards internal affairs and integration and orientation to position in the environment and differentiation (Florczak, Lisowska, 2018).

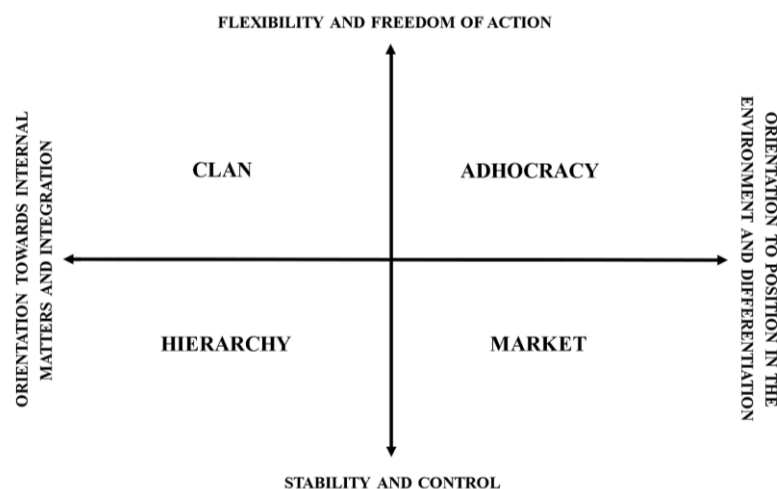


Figure 1. Competing values model.

Source: Cameron, Quinn, 2015, p. 44.

Based on the model presented above, the following types of culture can be distinguished (Domańska-Szaruga, Knap-Stefaniuk, 2023, p. 42):

Clan culture

The organization is a friendly workplace where people willingly cooperate with each other. It resembles a big family. Bosses and supervisors take on the role of advisors and teachers. The organization survives thanks to the loyalty of employees and attachment to tradition. A high level of commitment is observed. The organization emphasizes the long-term benefits of personal development and places great importance on cohesion and morale. The measure of success is the development of human resources and care for employees. The organization highly values teamwork, participation and consensus.

Adhocracy culture

The organization is dominated by dynamics, entrepreneurship and creativity. People are not afraid of risk. Leaders are considered innovators and visionaries. What ensures organizational coherence is the willingness to experiment and introduce new things. It is important to lead in your field. In the long term, the organization emphasizes growth, taking on challenges and acquiring new resources. Success is identified with offering unique products or services. Organization strives to be a leader in a product or service field. The organization encourages freedom and initiative.

Culture of hierarchy

The organization is a highly formalized workplace with a strict hierarchy. As a result, everything people do is governed by procedures. Leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organizers, focused on efficiency. The most important thing is the efficient functioning of the organization. Its consistency is ensured by formal rules and regulations. In the long run, it's about stability, efficiency and trouble-free operation. The measures of success are: delivery reliability, keeping schedules and low costs. Employee management focuses on job security, ensuring stability and predictability.

Market culture

What matters most to the organization are the results; the main concern is the implementation of tasks. People are very ambitious and goal-oriented. The leader is a supervisor focused on competitiveness and production. He is ruthless and demanding. The cohesion of the organization ensures its expansiveness and the will to win. The main concerns are reputation and success. In the long run, what matters is competitiveness and achieving measurable goals. The measure of success is market share and continuous acquisition of it. Competitive prices and market leadership are important. The management style promotes fierce competition.

Each quarter of the presented model corresponds to a different type of organizational culture and contains a different set of organizational effectiveness indicators. Many years of testing of the model, which can be used to determine the organizational culture of one enterprise or a group of enterprises has shown its great practical value.

4. Research methodology

The diagnosis of organizational culture and the development of its target model allows for the analysis of the gap between the current and the desired culture. The method used to diagnose the organizational culture of the surveyed enterprises is the competing values model, developed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn. The study used the OCAI questionnaire (*Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument*), which allows determining the type of organizational culture according to the classification of KS Cameron and RE Quinn (Cameron, Quinn, 2006). It should be emphasized that the research was of a pilot nature and is an introduction to broader research on organizational culture in healthcare entities in Poland.

The research was conducted in 2023 on a sample of 85 healthcare entities. The CATI method was used to conduct the research¹. In this way, responses were obtained from 372 respondents - employees and management staff of medical entities. The characteristics of the research sample according to the type of entity, its size and the position held by the respondent are presented in Tables 1-3.

Table 1.

Distribution of the sample according to the type of medical entity

Entity type	Number of entities	Number of respondents
Hospital	42	204
Outpatient specialist care	17	56
Primary health care	26	112

Source: Own research.

Table 2.

Distribution of the sample according to the number of employees in the health care entity

number of employees	Number of entities	Number of respondents
From 10 to 49 people	25	92
From 50 to 149 people	23	113
250 people and more	37	167

Source: Own research.

Table 3.

Distribution of the sample according to the position held

Entity type	Respondents held managerial positions	Respondents in other positions
Hospital	63	141
Outpatient specialist care	16	40
Primary health care	47	65

Source: Own research.

¹ CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) is a computer-assisted telephone interview. When obtaining information, an appropriate computer script is used to automate the work.

5. Findings

Based on the research conducted, cultural profiles of healthcare entities in Poland were prepared. Selected profiles are illustrated in Figures 2-10.

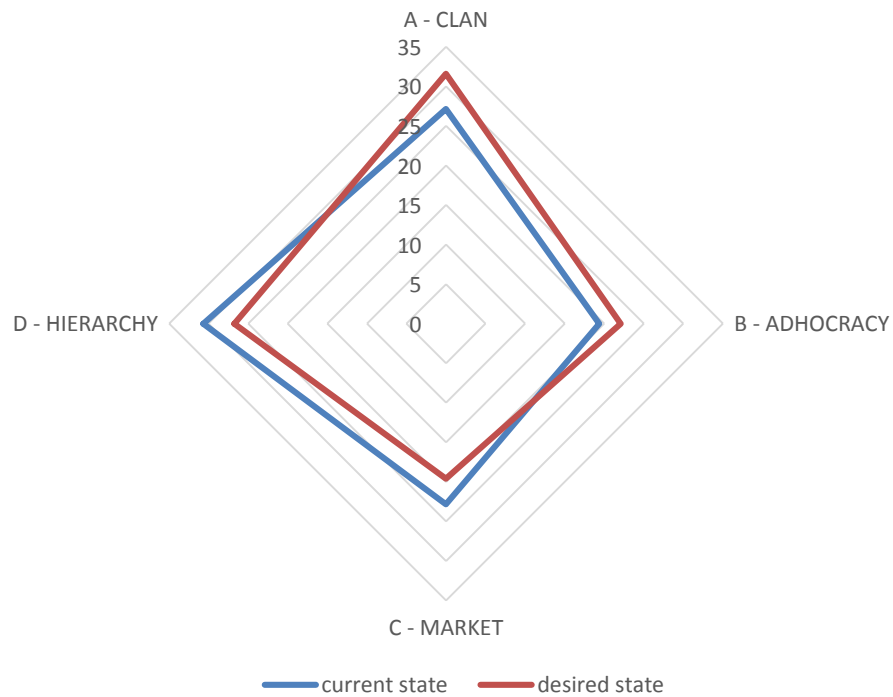


Figure 2. Cultural profile of healthcare entities in Poland.

Source: Own study.

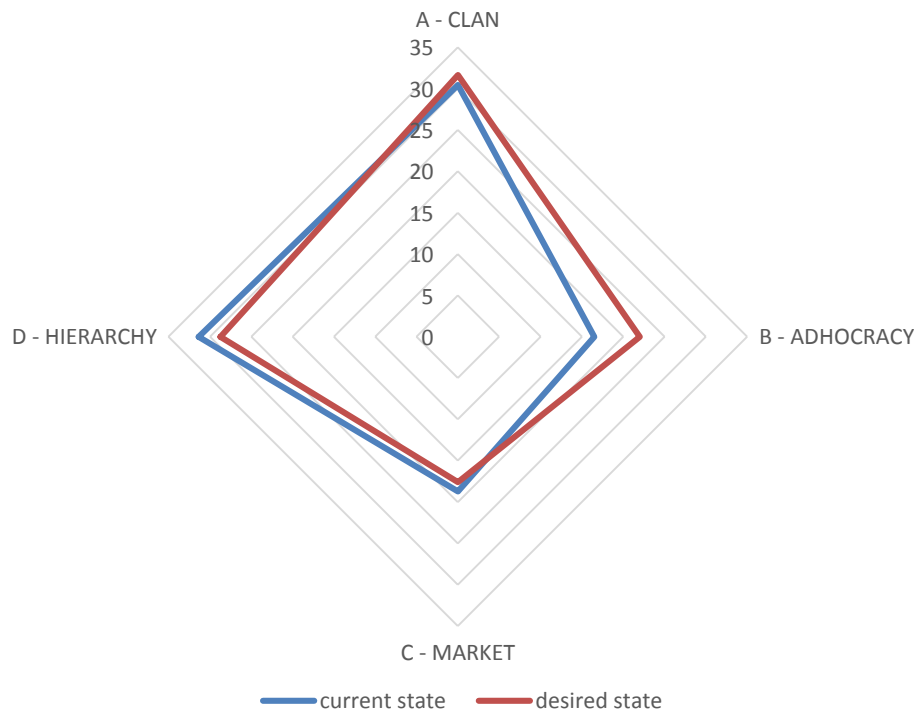


Figure 3. Cultural profile of healthcare entities in Poland - opinions of people in managerial positions.

Source: Own study.

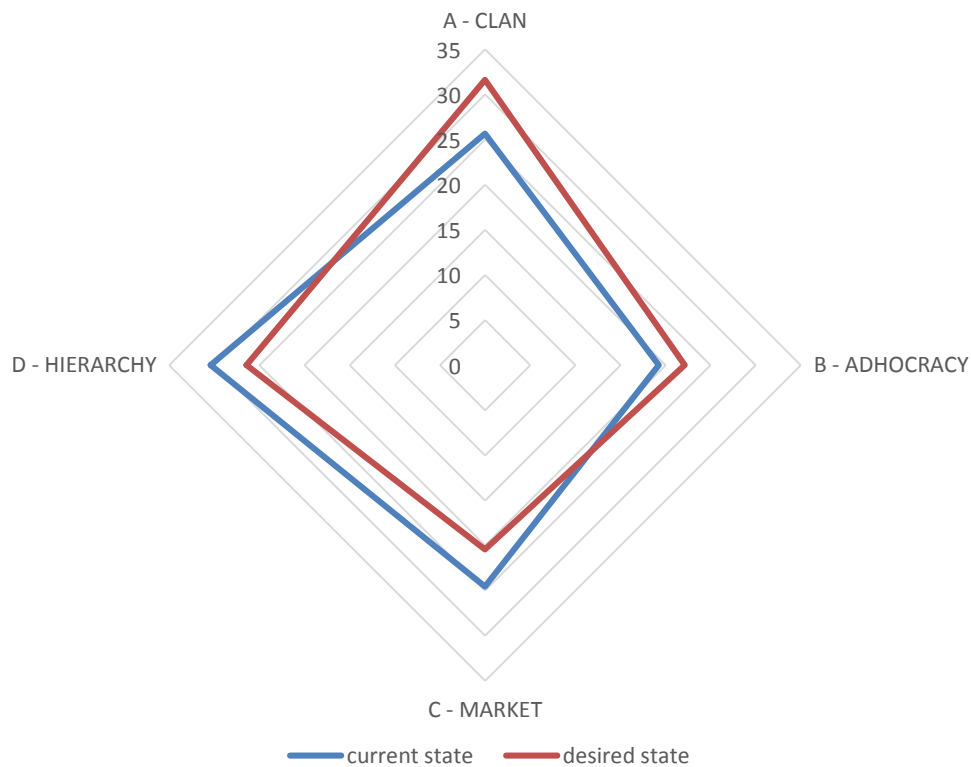


Figure 4. Cultural profile of healthcare entities in Poland - opinions of people who are not in managerial positions.

Source: Own study.

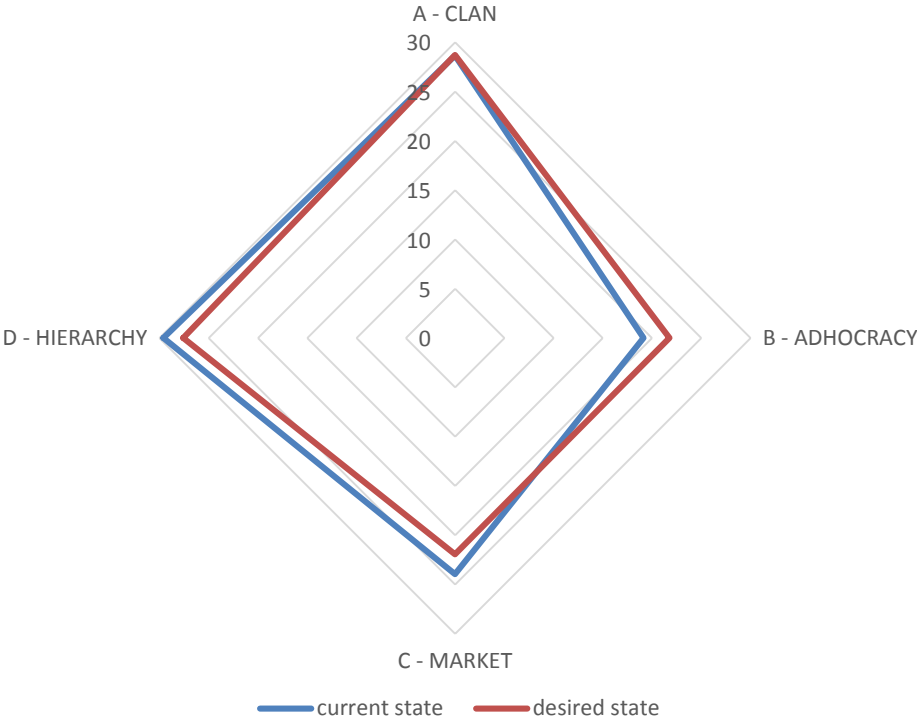


Figure 5. Cultural profile of hospitals.

Source: Own study.

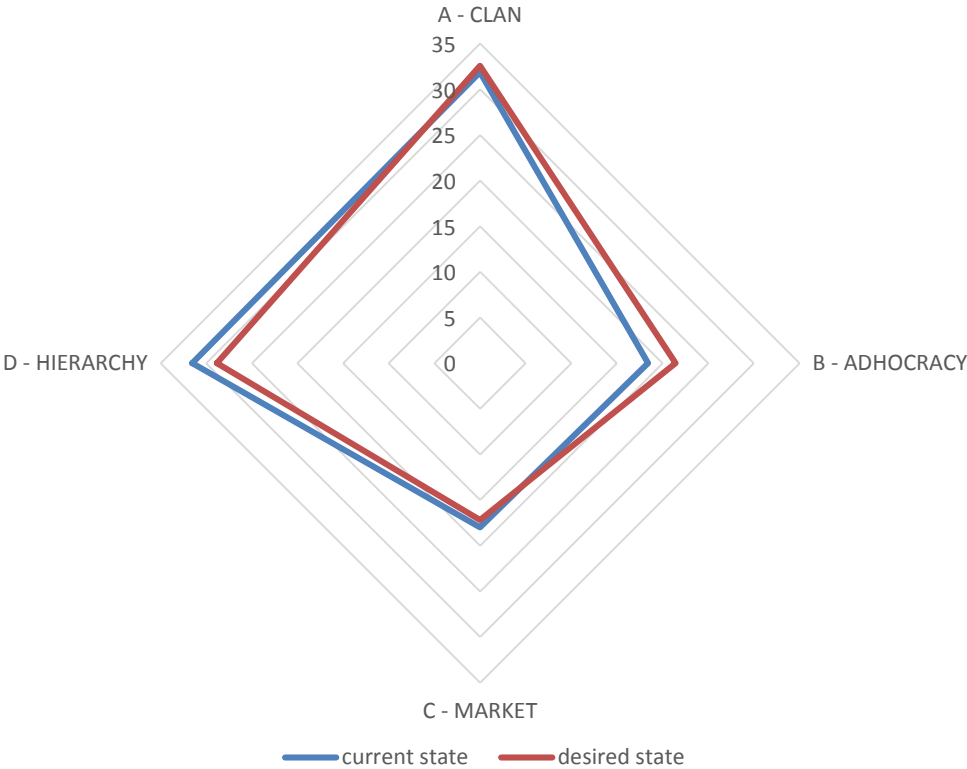


Figure 6. Cultural profile of hospitals in Poland - opinions of people in managerial positions.

Source: Own study.

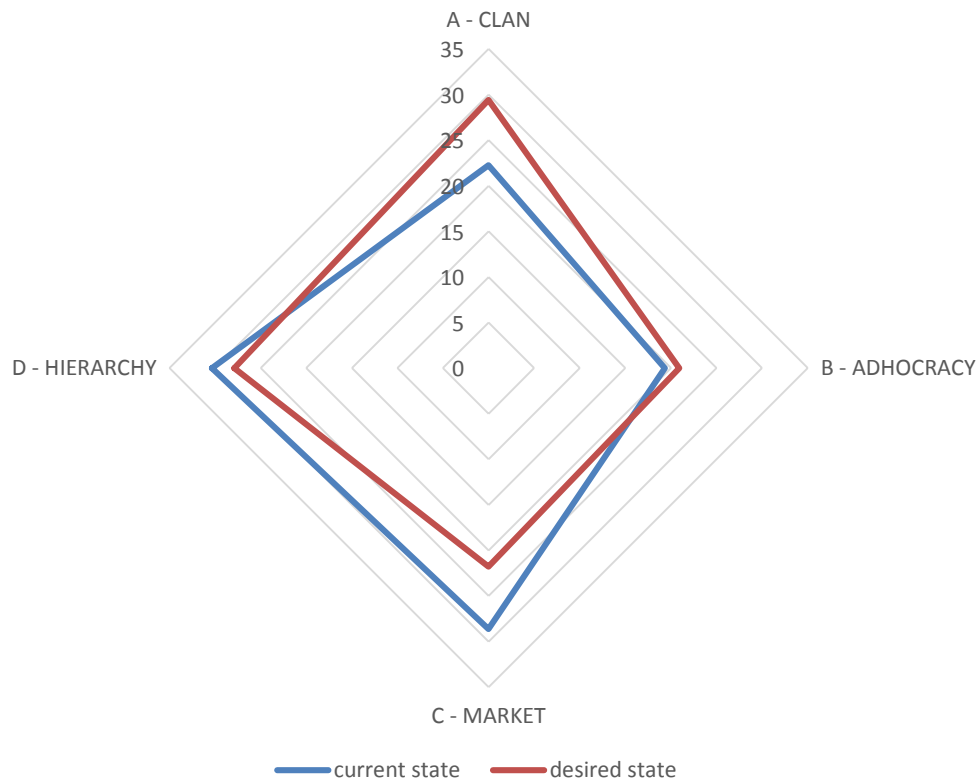


Figure 7. Cultural profile of hospitals in Poland - opinions of people who are not in managerial positions.
Source: Own study.

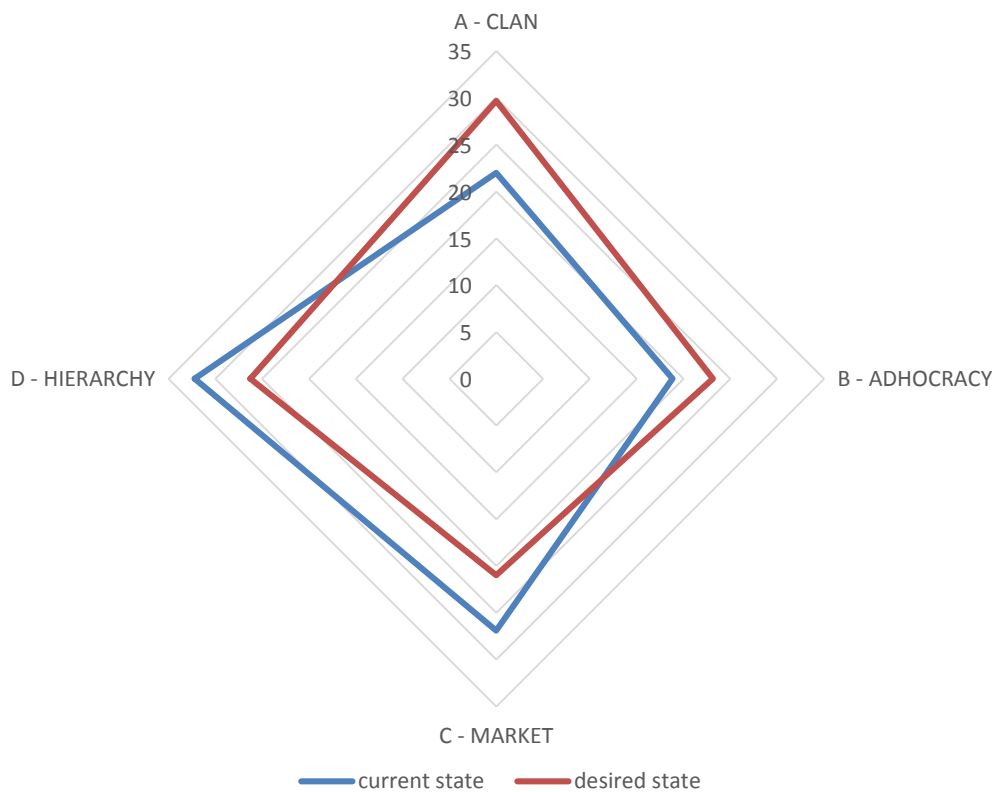


Figure 8. Cultural profile of healthcare entities employing 250 or more people.
Source: Own study.

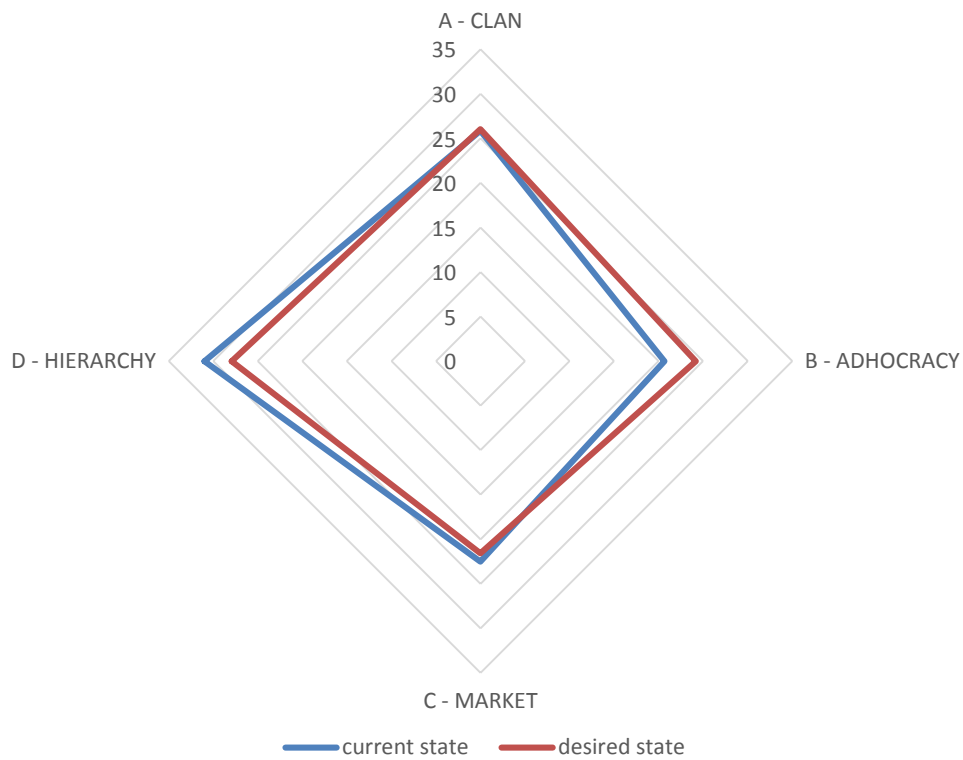


Figure 9. Cultural profile of healthcare entities employing 250 or more people - opinions of people in managerial positions.

Source: Own study.

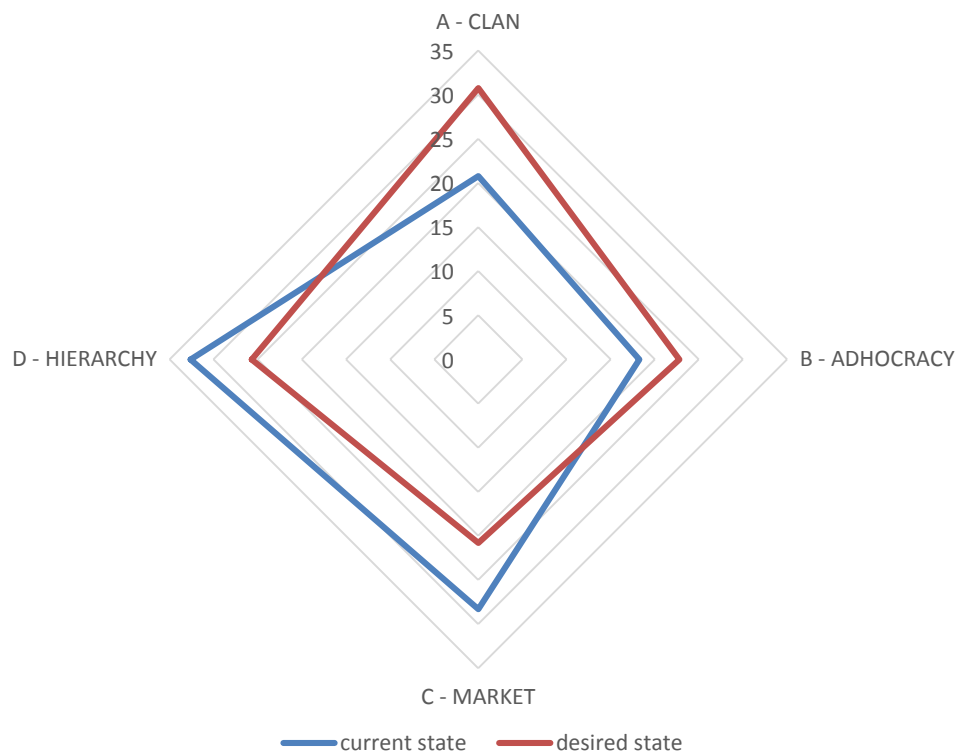


Figure 10. Cultural profile of healthcare entities employing 250 or more people - opinions of people who are not in managerial positions.

Source: Own study.

The results of the conducted research indicate the following issues:

1. Cultural profiles of medical entities in Poland in general indicate the predominance of hierarchy and clan culture in these entities. The desired state is an increase in the advantage of the clan culture at the expense of the hierarchy culture and a slight increase in adhocracy.
2. Cultural profiles of hospitals and cultural profiles of large healthcare entities (employing 250 or more people) are also characterized by the predominance of hierarchy culture and clan culture, as well as similar characteristics of the desired state.
3. There are noticeable differences in the assessment of organizational culture between management staff and employees (in each group of entities). The latter clearly point to the growth of clan culture at the expense of hierarchy and market culture as a desirable state.

6. Summary

In the face of growing social needs in terms of adequate health care, there is a clear need for health care systems - not only in Poland but also in the world - to systematically increase the effectiveness of their functioning. With limited changes in its financing, elements closely related to efficient human resources management, including the development of an optimal organizational culture for the organization, are becoming more important.

Currently, in medical entities we have an organizational culture with a predominance of hierarchy and clan culture. Medical entities are characterized by high formalization and a multitude of procedures aimed at ensuring smooth operation. At the same time, these entities are a friendly workplace where people willingly cooperate with each other. In these organizations, great emphasis is placed on employee development and their involvement. Such attitudes reduce the risk associated with undertaking entrepreneurial activities and competing on the market. Achieving measurable financial goals, expansiveness and competition are not typical of medical entities, especially public entities, which seem understandable considering their specific role and mission. Understanding cultural processes and identifying the existing and expected organizational culture is of great importance for improving management processes and is very useful for the process of implementing changes and introducing innovations.

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