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Barriers to Implementing the Concept of Learning Organization in Public Administration – the Example of PIORiN

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Abstract

Theoretical background: An efficient public administration is a prerequisite for a harmonious development of business, and for the security and prosperity of society. Its rapidity and quality are particularly important in the situation of dynamic economic, political and social changes. However, the model upon which administration is built and functions fails to meet the requirements of the present day. The subject of dysfunctional bureaucracy has been thoroughly analyzed and described in detail. Blind adherence to regulations, reluctance to introduce changes and lack of motivation to help clients are well-known vices of bureaucratic organizations throughout the world. Although countless attempts have been made to change

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the way these organizations function, the design and implementation of such improvements is hindered by a variety of obstacles. In this article, we shall describe barriers to the process of implementing the concept of a learning organization in a large bureaucratic organization.

Purpose of the article: The purpose of the article is to discuss a number of barriers to the process of implementing the concept of a learning organization within a specific bureaucratic organization, namely the State Plant Health and Seed Inspection Service (*Państwowa Inspekcja Ochrony Roślin i Nasiennictwa*, PIORiN). The barriers discussed were identified in the course of research. Thus, the article adds to the existing body of knowledge about the functioning of bureaucratic organizations, their specificity and processes that take place within them. By identifying potential and actual barriers to the process of change, we can better understand organizational behavior. It also provides practical knowledge about the critical elements of the process of change.

Research methods: Research was conducted within a large public institution in charge of phytosanitary controls. Three types of triangulation were used in the study: methodological, theoretical and investigator triangulation. Conclusions were drawn on the basis of a total of 51 interviews, of which 31 were conducted within the organization and 20 with external partners (clients). The basic tool used for collecting data was an open interview, always conducted by two researchers at a time. Interviews were transcribed and read on an ongoing basis with a view to carrying out a preliminary selection and category coding. Four team members participated in the coding process. Codes were subsequently analyzed and grouped into categories that served for drawing conclusions.

Main findings: A number of barriers of great consequence for the process of implementing the concept of learning organization in administration have been identified; the most important are: excessive formalization, limited use of clients' knowledge, insufficient financing, inadequate IT support, and limited cooperation with other public institutions.

Introduction

As it affects – directly or indirectly – the life of nearly everyone, the functioning of the public sector is one of the most urgent problems of the modern world. The public sector employs a significant part of the population and anyone who needs to settle any formal matter comes in contact with it. For this reason, its functioning is of interest not only to researchers, but above all to the public. This interest can also be explained by the fact that it is financed from public funds, i.e. with taxpayers' money. The public sector would probably generate less interest if its functioning was assessed more positively. It is, however, quite the opposite: public organizations have been criticized for their operation from their inception, partly due to the very nature of the tasks performed by some of them. Tax offices or institutions whose primary function is to exert control and impose sanctions against those inspected are rarely thought of fondly. However, criticism tends to refer not so much to the role itself, but rather to the manner of operating and to its insufficient effectiveness. Public sector organizations are criticized for over-formalization, inflexibility, inadequate performance in terms of meeting society's needs, insufficient productivity or proneness to corruption (De Jong, 2016; De Hart-Davies, Pandey, 2005; Peeters et al., 2018). Dysfunctional mechanisms in bureaucratic organizations are well known and have been described (Merton, 1996; Mieczkowski, 1991; Crozier, 2009; Miller, 2002). At the same time, there is a number of efficient organizations that enjoy the

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respect and popularity of the public. They prove that the public sector is capable of operating effectively and in a manner that is accepted by the public, even though for this to happen, certain conditions must be met. For many organizations, it would require a number of difficult changes; these are rather adaptations within the social sphere than technical or structural solutions. One possible solution is to introduce the principles of the learning organization and proper knowledge management within public sector organizations. The concept of a learning organization is not new and has already been implemented in many dynamically developing companies. Many of them employ extensive sets of knowledge management tools, as they are strongly motivated to introduce solutions that can secure them an advantage over their competitors. This kind of motivation is lacking in public sector organizations. Their monopolistic position on the market, combined with their specific bureaucratic structure, are not conducive to the introduction of innovative management solutions. It is, however, possible, provided that these organizations relinquish certain typically bureaucratic behaviors, such as clinging to a strictly defined sphere of competences, shifting goals or an excessive formalization.

The aim of the paper is to present barriers that hinder the implementation of the principles of a learning organization within a public organization. The specific nature of public organizations creates numerous barriers that are typically inexistent within commercial entities. Methods of financing public administration, a specific level of organization, as well as strong political entanglements all generate a number of problems. The identification of barriers was one of the aims of a study carried out by a team from the Management Department of Warsaw University at the State Plant Protection Inspection; it formed part of a project carried out by the National Center for Research and Development and titled "FITOEXPORT – boosting the competitiveness of Polish plant products on international markets through improving their quality and sanitary safety" (implemented under the Gospostrateg1385957/5/NCBR/2018 program). The overriding goal of this project was to boost exports of Polish plant products through the introduction of a variety of measures aimed at improving the quality of production, as well as certain institutional solutions. One of these measures was the improvement of the operation of PIORiN, a public organization in charge of phytosanitary inspections, which also issues phytosanitary certificates to entities exporting plants and plant products. These certificates confirm that the exported products are free of organisms that are either prohibited on a given market or would require the products to be put in quarantine. The scope and quality of controls performed are key to the operation of the organization, as the safety of products intended for internal and external markets depends on it. From the point of view of exports, key aspects are competences and rapidity. The competence requirement is related to the specific structure of Polish exports of plant products, characterized by a very high level of market and product diversification. Products are exported to nearly all of the world's countries and are very diverse. This means that PIORiN must know and properly interpret international and national phytosanitary

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regulations. Not only are they extremely diverse, but also interpreted differently by inspection authorities in different countries. In this case, competences mean the ability to remain up to date with practices and regulations in force in countries importing Polish products. The second crucial aspect is the timely issuance of the necessary documents. For logistics processes to be considered efficient, products must reach their recipients in a timely manner. This rule is all the more important in the case of plant products, as failure to meet the time limit set often means the loss of product value and the exporter's inability to meet its contractual obligations. The timely issuance of documents is paramount for meeting time limits in export. For this reason, the acquisition, storage and generation of knowledge are of prime importance for the functioning of these organizations. It also adds to the value of exporting entities and is crucial for the process of establishing the reputation of the country as an exporter of quality plant products.

Literature review

The idea of organizational learning emerged almost at the outset of the science of organization and management. In the classical management approach, learning was equated with a growing excellence in the implementation of the set goals. It was achieved through the streamlining of work planning and organization processes, and through improving control methods and tools. A learning organization is a metaphor that became popular in management science in the 1990s (Sułkowski, 2003). According to Senge, a learning organization is a system in which employees constantly develop their ability to attain the desired goals, new and expansive thinking patterns are formed, and people constantly learn how to learn as a team (Mumford, 1995). An extremely important element of the learning process is the appropriate use of feedback, cooperation with clients and supporting the improvement of employees' competences and qualifications, as well as locally-based management – people learn fastest when they feel responsible for their actions and decisions (Senge, 1990). Organizational learning is inherently linked to knowledge. According to Shrivastava, it is through organizational learning that basic organizational knowledge is formed and developed (Tsang, 1997). Many authors associate organizational learning with the acquisition of knowledge within an organization (Sarvary, 1999; Mikuła, 2005; Dolińska, 2005). Knowledge is neither data nor information, although it has to do with both (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). It is a combination of structured experience, contextual information and expert analysis that form the basis for acquiring and processing new experiences and information (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Organizations are seen as learning by encoding inferences from history into routines which could be understood as, i.a. rules, procedures, conventions, strategies, and technologies around which organizations are constructed and through which they operate (Levitt & March, 1988). Organizational knowledge is created as a result of an unrestricted

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flow of information within an organization, and to manage it is to create appropriate conditions for this flow. In practice, numerous structural, bureaucratic, motivational and hierarchical barriers hinder the process of knowledge creation. Much of the necessary knowledge comes from outside the organization – in this case, knowledge creation involves its purchase. The concept of learning has long been present in the theory and practice of administration. It began with the so-called chaotic incrementalism (Rokita, 2003). Chaotic incrementalism at the level of state government meant conducting state policy as a number of serial, fragmentary, corrective actions aimed primarily at solving specific problems. According to this concept, such measures are taken – to a large extent – without any consideration for the ultimate goals; another aspect that is lacking is the central coordination of various activities. Learning by an administrative organization involves taking a number of small steps, largely determined by political interests and influence. Quinn developed this concept into logical incrementalism (Quinn, 1980) which, although based on an analysis of corporations, contains universal insights that apply to any organization. According to this concept, organizations devise their strategies as a result of internal decisions and external events. In efficiently managed organizations, managers proactively direct activity streams in line with the established strategy (Rokita, 2003). The result of this is incremental knowledge; according to Nonaki and Takeuchi (1995), it is tacit and, consequently, can be easily lost when key employees leave the organization. It is important not only for business, but also for administration, where the loss of tacit, incrementally acquired knowledge does not result in a weakening of the competitive position, but in a significant loss of the organization's efficiency. Public institutions need active knowledge management primarily in order to function efficiently, as they operate for the benefit of society and are financed from public funds.

The functioning of public administration is based on the internalization of standardized and formalized patterns of behavior. Its operation is, thus, dominated by a single learning loop (Argyris & Schon, 1978). It involves the ongoing correction of deviations without analyzing the adequacy of existing rules. This is a consequence of the way public institutions are organized according to the bureaucratic model, which is based on the assumption of stability, repetition and specialization. Double-loop learning actually refers to the organization's ability to identify and solve problems and challenges on its own. In practice, such learning occurs less frequently and is more difficult because it involves maintaining a certain amount of organizational redundancy in terms of positions and – above all – organizational functions, as well as tolerating the risks associated with diversity and lower levels of formalization. However, double-loop learning is also occurring in the public sector, as evidenced by examples of successful, well-managed and rapidly implemented change in selected organizations in this sector. However, it requires strong, courageous and highly motivated leadership in such organizations. Thus, politicians can positively influence learning processes if they commit to structural solutions and encourage the institutionalization of organizational learning (Dekker & Hansén, 2004). Knowledge

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management in public institutions has a certain ethical dimension. As public institutions tend not to have any competition, they do not need to develop any competitive advantages. Consequently, no competitive barrier to the acquisition of knowledge from other entities within the environment exist. The absence of market pressures limits the process of acquiring, codifying and developing knowledge in public institutions – hence the lack of motivation to develop knowledge management within the public sphere. Companies operating on the market can verify any investments (including investments in knowledge management) more easily, on the basis of their revenue. In the public sphere, the profitability of any investment is much more complex, and therefore difficult to assess and quantify. Limited efficiency of learning processes is often due to inadequate communication and to an ineffective information and documentation exchange with the organization's stakeholders (Cuffa & Steil, 2019). A study conducted by Moynihan and Landuyt (2009) gives evidence that efforts made to establish discussion forums and information exchange platforms can be as profitable as spending on information systems. Among the desired values which support learning in the public sector one can find transparency, inquiry, integrity, issue orientation, accountability (Popper & Lipshitz, 2000, as cited in Greiling & Halachmi, 2013). In terms of significant barriers to organizational learning, the common issue in the public sector is the admission of errors (Greiling & Halachmi, 2013) which can result in building the blame culture (Vince & Saleem, 2004). Another important issue is the financing of the public sector. Creating knowledge management instruments requires investments and financial outlays. Public entities have, for obvious reasons, a limited investment capacity. Public organizations must make more with less (Olejarski et al., 2019) which can not only limit the efficiency of organizational learning but the efficiency of the organization itself (Postuła & Rosiak, 2022).

Research methods

Research was conducted in accordance with universal rules ensuring its reliability and credibility. Three types of triangulation were used in the study: methodological, theoretical and investigator triangulation; it was carried out simultaneously by all team members. Literature review included research papers on learning administration, as well as legal acts, statistical data and documents provided by the organization itself. Once information was collected, a list of matters to be addressed in the qualitative research, i.e. interviews with PIORiN employees and clients was drawn up. The interviews, however, were open, which made it possible for researchers to gain broader knowledge and to explore matters beyond the originally formulated list. In order to achieve the goals set, a number of qualitative research activities were planned. A total of 51 interviews were conducted: 31 within PIORiN and 20 with external partners (clients). The basic tool used for collecting data was an open interview (Czarniawska, 2014), always conducted by two researchers at a time. In order to ensure the com-

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parability of results, interviews were partially standardized; some questions were, therefore, repeated. With this in mind, interview scenarios were prepared. Researchers could expand the list of questions with additional issues related to matters raised by the interviewees. However, for a more effective analysis of the results, certain questions were to be asked by all researchers during the interviews. These included, *inter alia*, problems faced by employees during the implementation of tasks, sources and methods of obtaining information, the consolidation of good practices within the organization, technical support, motivation to cooperate both within the organization and with external entities. Interviews consisted of two parts. During the introductory part, researchers presented themselves and explained the aims and the essence of the study; they also explained how the collected data would be subsequently used. At the start, each interviewee was asked if they consented to the interview being recorded. Researchers stressed that the recording was to be used for their own research purposes only. Interviewees were selected on the basis of the maximum variation strategy (Miles et al., 2014). Elements of the grounded theory were used in planning the research process (Konecki, 2000). Hypotheses and further recommendations for actions appeared during the process of collecting empirical material. Researchers adopted an interpretative perspective and focused primarily on explaining and understanding the studied group (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Interviews were transcribed and read, and categories were selected and coded on an ongoing basis (Kumar, 2011). Four team members were involved in coding. Codes were subsequently analyzed and grouped into categories; on the basis of this material, recommendations were formulated and selected topics were further explored during workshops and through organizational data analytics. At a certain point, the collection of organizational data began and was carried out in parallel to the ongoing field research.

Results

The analyzed entity is a typical example of a bureaucratic organization. Operation based on a system of regulations, strict specialization, hierarchical structure, and a precisely defined scope of powers and responsibilities are the hallmarks of such organizations. The bureaucratic system strongly opposes change, which petrifies the organization instead of fostering the flexibility and responsiveness typical of a learning organization. Nearly all interviewees referred to a **high level of formalization** and emphasized that they devoted far too much time to technical and reporting tasks, at the expense of substantive work.

A specific barrier, which to some extent is a consequence of the factors mentioned above, is the **limited flow of knowledge from clients to the organization**. As an institution controlling and issuing administrative decisions, PIORiN enjoys a privileged – and superior – position in relation to its clients. This hinders the flow of knowledge from clients to the organization. At the same time, many clients have

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unique, expert knowledge, sometimes difficult to understand or even inaccessible to the organization operating in a slow, conventional and bureaucratic manner.

> Sometimes exporters themselves help us in accessing and interpreting these regulations, as they are in direct contact with the recipient, and the recipient is in direct contact with the phytosanitary agency of the [destination] country.
>
> UNIT10 EMP05

The organization gains such knowledge through a network of personal contacts between employees and clients, but this knowledge generally remains tacit and is rarely preserved and formalized by the organization. If it is to be of value for the entire organization, efficient methods of information and knowledge diffusion are needed.

Low salaries are considered an extremely important barrier that hinders the introduction of the principles of a learning organization within the analyzed entity. It was mentioned by several interviewees, also as a factor that further exacerbates staffing problems. The job of an inspector is considered unattractive: requirements are high, while the salary remains low (often close to the minimum wage). Not only does it have a negative impact on the motivation of employees, which results in their reluctance to engage in activities that go beyond their basic scope of duties, but also causes recruitment problems and a gradual erosion of organizational knowledge. Another consequence of low salaries is the ageing of the staff. Many employees are approaching the retirement age; it becomes increasingly difficult to recruit new staff. Given that the inspector's job is highly specialized, attaining professional independence by newly recruited employees takes a long time. But even then, given the limited financial opportunities afforded by the organization, employees are likely to leave; some seek employment in a public administration body that offers higher salaries, others – the majority – in the business sector. It can be concluded from the interviews that a significant proportion of newly recruited employees renounce even before taking up their duties, when they realize, on the one hand, the high demands placed on the staff and, on the other hand, the remuneration they can expect. This only protracts recruitment processes and, as a consequence, generates additional costs for the organization. The organization has to deal with long-standing staff shortages, while the succession of knowledge in the organization is non-systemic and, above all, rather problematic (Pasieczny & Rosiak, 2021). These problems are noticeable even by clients who explain delays in procedures with staff shortages:

> There are no people. There really are no people, believe me, there are no people.
>
> CLI 19

There is a high risk that the quality of work may further deteriorate once experienced staff retire. Low salaries are not the only financial problem. **The organization as a whole is underfunded**. This generates a number of problems. From the point of view of a learning organization, a serious problem is **the lack of a coherent IT**

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system that would enable the creation, collection and use of knowledge in an employee-friendly manner. Such problems become apparent even at the level of voivodeships (provinces), where individual departments operate with different systems:

> And I must admit that our branches all have different software, computer systems; it is a mess [...]
> UNIT15 EMP03

> Many things are introduced into this system and could be easily extracted from it in the form of a single report, but there are no such reports, and the user cannot set the criteria freely, [...], and therefore the data cannot be extracted directly. Sometimes, I need to generate eighteen reports to prepare a single one. There are these sorts of bottlenecks.
> UNIT13 EMP02

The organization relies on many local databases, often created by employees for their own use. Both hardware and software are purchased by regional offices; as a result, it is impossible to gain access to information from the outside. Despite certain positive changes in this area, the quality technical equipment remains unsatisfactory due to insufficient funding; this may hinder operational activities:

> The lack of vehicles may be an obstacle, as we could carry out more inspections, if we had more cars. [...] We've got two, they are rather old. Last year, we got a new one. Sometimes, when one of the cars is being repaired, the employee who uses it cannot carry out their inspections. They have to change, they have to go with someone.
> UNIT9 EMP03

Poor cooperation with other public entities is another problem identified by the researchers. In international trade, an entity must be able to enter new markets if it is to effectively build its position. From this perspective, a significant obstacle seems to be the coordination of activities with other administrative bodies reporting to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and other ministries (Kędzierski, 2022). Such projects typically form part of the so-called cross-border transactions: e.g. allowing partners from a foreign country to participate in a lucrative call for tenders in Poland should open up opportunities for Polish products to enter its market. According to the respondents, the opening of new, large and promising markets is hindered. Therefore, it is important to efficiently coordinate the work of ministries and their subordinate institutions, and to assign responsibilities and powers to manage such projects; without this, processes will remain slow and ineffective.

The functioning of PIORiN within integrated administration was referred to at nearly every stage of the study. In practice, integrated administration is based on the double subordination of the organization: it reports to the Minister of Agriculture and to the respective voivodes who finance the operation regional offices (Kołtuniak, 2021; Kłobukowski & Kłobukowska, 2021). Although the idea of a decentralized structure affords certain advantages, in the case of PIORiN it seems that disadvantages – such as underinvestment, inflexibility, the limited possibility of exerting

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central supervision over the functioning of the organization, and insufficient coordination tools – clearly outweigh any potential benefits. Challenges related to the coordination of information flow may result in discrepancies in the interpretation of legal provisions:

> [...] information from the headquarters is transferred to all voivodeships. […] if there are any problems, for example, the same entity is in charge of cases in X and Y voivodeships, with the same goods, the same country, sometimes the interpretation is slightly different.
>
> UNIT9 EMP04

> [...] divergent interpretations of regulations in different voivodeships – it is a huge problem in our organization, even though, so to speak, meetings are held from time to time. Managers of all departments, e.g. the seed and the phytosanitary department, meet with the Chief Inspector and, theoretically, they should discuss the matter to ensure a certain coherence [...] for example, there isn't a single application template. Each voivodeship is free to create its own applications for entries, deletions and updates.
>
> UNIT13 EMP03

Such problems are usually promptly resolved. However, they require additional work, which generates transaction costs for the organization.

Due to little interest from the media, voivodeship authorities tend not to consider local offices a top priority, and therefore allocate to their operation limited funding from the budget. It also results in limiting the cooperation between entities operating in individual voivodeships, as they focus on their relations with their respective voivodes. As a result, the flow of information and knowledge takes place mainly within individual offices. Contacts between voivodeships are limited, which creates a serious barrier to the development and learning of the entire organization. Decentralization generates additional problems for the organization: inconsistent document templates, divergent customer requirements and, in many cases, conflicting interpretation of regulations by individual offices. Interviewees emphasized how difficult it may be to obtain a uniform interpretation of regulations; consequently, employees sometimes prefer to abstain from making a decision.

Discussions

Research findings confirm that the introduction of the concept of learning organization within an administrative body may be hindered by several barriers. This is largely the consequence of adopting the bureaucratic organization model. As a result of the shifting of goals, of the vicious circles of formalization and inadequate responses to changing needs, bureaucratic organizations tend to gradually lose their efficiency. This mechanism has been well described by Merton (1996). As bureaucratic organization strive for reliability, various control mechanisms (*ex ante*, steering, *ex post*) are put in place. They further rigidify the organization, which

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becomes resistant to change. This, in turn, makes the organization unable to adequately respond to the changing expectations of its clients. It also triggers defense mechanisms, e.g. justifying individual behavior that may be unconstructive, yet compliant with regulations, and a greater solidarity among employees. This creates tensions between the bureaucratic organization and its clients.

Other researchers confirm the negative consequences of excessive formalization, reporting and control referred to by the interviewees. Surveys conducted among the employees of German administration prove that evaluation systems, introduced as part of management by objectives, translate into a greater trust in the employer, while standard systematic performance control has the opposite effect. The results of same study point to the importance of participation and assessments that foster learning and collaboration between members of the organization (Wiemann et al., 2019).

The negative impact of a specific barrier to the flow of knowledge from clients, typical of the bureaucratic model, has been confirmed in theory. The inefficiency of learning processes is often due to insufficient communication, information and documentation exchange with the organization's stakeholders (Cuffa & Steil, 2019). Improving the exchange of information with clients, but also with other public institutions, would bring significant benefits to the organization and allow for a more effective use of limited organizational resources.

The problem of limited resources is typical of administration, although it varies depending on the organization. Creating knowledge management instruments is an investment and requires certain financial outlays. For obvious reasons, investment possibilities of public entities are severely limited. Public organizations must make more with less (Olejarski et al., 2019). Scanty resources prevent the use of modern technical instruments to support the management and monitoring of ongoing activities and changes. However, monitoring both intended and unforeseen consequences of organizational changes is an important learning tool (Cuffa & Steil, 2019). The specific, bureaucratic type of organization, limited financial resources, barriers to external and internal communication, functioning within an integrated administration and the resulting ambiguous decision-making system thwart innovation within organizations. These unfavorable conditions and barriers are unlikely to change in the near future. Therefore, the organization must try to mobilize its internal sources of innovation, that is, its qualified and experienced staff. Research shows that learning boosts innovation within public organizations (Gieske et al., 2019). Consequently, original and innovative solutions quickly become consolidated and can be incorporated into a set of routine organizational patterns of behavior. Two common knowledge management strategies are the codification strategy and the personalization strategy (Hansen et al., 1999; Macias, 2011). It seems that PIORiN ought to begin by focusing on the knowledge codification strategy. The codification strategy mainly revolves around explicit knowledge (Jasimuddin et al., 2005). The goal of this strategy is to consolidate knowledge in the form of documents, databases or expert systems. The implementation of this strategy requires, however, investments in IT

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solutions. Nevertheless, it seems that attempts at overcoming barriers impeding the implementation of the concept of learning organization through the adoption of the knowledge codification strategy should be technically simpler than the simultaneous implementation of codification and personalization strategies. The latter strategy focuses on tacit knowledge. The main source of knowledge within an organization is the person who collects, develops and – when properly motivated to do so – shares it. Sharing knowledge is also possible thanks to information technology, but interpersonal relationships and the interest of employees in sharing knowledge are crucial. This also requires a much more sophisticated human resource management system.

However, the conducted research was quite broad, it has some limitations which are typical to applied method. On the one hand, qualitative research allows for an interpretative standpoint, essential for studying learning processes which involve context-specific tacit knowledge (Yanow, 2000, as cited in Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009). On the other hand, it is not representative and, therefore, conclusions drawn from the research cannot be generalized to all types of organizations. In addition, some of the topics addressed during the research (e.g. fair remuneration, organizational policies, workload) are characterized by considerable subjectivity and are at the same time an extremely sensitive matter from the point of view of both the researcher and the research participants.

In the future, it would also be valuable to extend the research to other organizations of this type, which would allow for the verification of the results obtained and strengthening the conclusions.

Conclusions

It is not easy to implement the principles of a learning organization in administration. However, it is possible. Our research showed that almost all aspects of learning were observed: at the individual, group and organizational levels. However, many barriers were identified as well. It seems, many of them are, at least partially, universal. Formalization and limited autonomy, both quite typical of public administration entities, are barriers to innovation (Acar et al., 2019). According to Morgan (2006), a prerequisite for effective organizational learning is a critical minimum of specification, which is the opposite of the bureaucratic principle that every organizational arrangement must be defined as clearly and as precisely as possible. The revision, simplification and elimination of some formal rules could be seen as actions on the implementation of this postulate.

Many identified obstacles interfere not only with the learning of the organization, but with organizational changes in general. It is important to ensure that their elimination does not worsen the situation. This paradox has been pointed out by Batko, who claims that although New Public Management was supposed to be a departure from the bureaucratic model of public administration and bring about a greater efficiency,

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it only further exacerbated bureaucratization and decreased efficiency through the use of tools employed by corporations (Batko, 2013). Therefore, not only should the process of introducing changes in public administration be well prepared, but above all well-thought-out.

The sources of organizational learning are usually sought in the individual attitude of employees and the behaviour of teams. Eliminating the blame culture could contribute to a more open and proactive approach to searching for new solutions, both at the level of individual and team learning. Thus, empowerment of employees and adjustment of an incentive system for such an approach is highly recommended.

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