

## **COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF SARATOV STATE UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING AT THE LEVEL OF LEADER**

***Kseniya S. Nesterova***  
Saratov State University  
Saratov, Russia  
[ksenianestr@gmail.com](mailto:ksenianestr@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The article presents the results of comparative research of organizational culture of Saratov State University and University of Wyoming based on order approach to organizational culture. The goal of the research is a detection of cultural similarities and differences in departments that are responsible for internationalization of universities, exchange programs and international cooperation. In the view of the research, it was hypothesized that personal characteristics and previous experience of the leader can influence the process of building of organizational culture. The methodology of work is order diagnostics of the organizational culture directed to the identification of development level of three suborders of organizational culture. In this article, the results of diagnostics at the level of organizational leader and comparative analysis have been described. According to the results of diagnostics, "family" suborder dominates in the University of Wyoming and "army" suborder dominates in Saratov State University. During the comparative analysis, it is revealed that identity of the leader and professional experience have the major impact on creation of organizational culture. The conclusion is that ethical meanings of the leaders coincide in the majority of questions that is a favorable factor for creation of constructive dialogue of cultures between universities. The special importance of this research consists in application of the order approach to diagnostics of the foreign organization that confirms universality of this methodology and possibility of its application for research of organizational cultures in globalization conditions.

**Key words:** organizational culture, order approach, organizational psychology, diagnostics, suborder.

## **Introduction**

Universities as the largest organizations, setting the trends in the field of scientific research, undergo changes within globalization processes. Earlier, universities were intended mainly to solve national tasks, now we can follow up an active internationalization of universities. Exchange of students and scientists, joint research and projects, introduction of a two-level education system – all of these shows that national borders of universities are being erased.

It is also worth considering influence of globalization on a sociocultural component, namely, bidirectionality of civilization processes: on the one hand, development of cultural unification, and, on the other hand, preservations of an ethnocultural originality. Increasing life rate, economic growth, development of world trade, scientific and technical progress subordinate unicity of cultural and semantic space. The whole regions and countries start to build similar historical vectors, close reference points in a social-economic and political way of development, standardizing various parameters of life activities. However, universalism does not mean uniformity. The modern culture can be integrated whether it is ready to dialogue of cultures, combination of cultures with preservation of variety. Dialogueness is born in research of the new issues without destruction the oldest ones, in aspiration to mutual understanding and recognition of the relative validity behind both cultures [1].

This sociocultural principle is applicable not only for understanding the ways of development of a national culture, but also for understanding specific features of formation of organizational culture in globalization conditions. For successful creation of a culture dialogue, it is necessary to reveal traditions of culture and its basic values, and then to create innovations that can become new rules because of the influence of global processes.

Activities of organizations in different countries with different level of economic development, political system, culture, historical experience, climate

conditions promote development of organizational culture research and creation of typological parameters of organizational cultures. One of the most popular typology of organizational cultures was presented by the Dutch social psychologist G. Hofstede and was developed on the basis of his large-scale research of IBM corporation. Hofstede's research promoted development of our idea of application of order approach to social-psychological studies of organizational culture for the further research into the influence of a national culture on organizational culture and use of this approach as a tool for creation of a cultural dialogue in globalization development. Within this vision, the research of organizational cultures of University of Wyoming (USA) and Saratov State University (Russia) was carried out.

The *purpose* of the article is to present results of the comparative analysis of organizational culture diagnostics of Saratov State University and University of Wyoming at the level of leader.

Achievement of the purpose assumes the solution of the following tasks:

1. To give the characteristic of the order approach to social-psychological research of organizational culture;
2. To describe the concept, empirical object and design of the research;
3. To characterize methods of the research and process the results;
4. To analyze the results and draw conclusions.

### **Characteristics of order approach to social-psychological studies of organizational culture**

According to the order approach, organizational culture is a complex social-psychological order of management interactions regulated by the system of ethical meanings of participants [2]. Order is a condition of apprehensibility of organizational and cultural system for subjects of a joint management activity. This order includes two aspects: external (organizational) and internal (personal). Organizational and cultural system consist of three main social-psychological levels:

level of personality (leader), level of a small group (management team) and level of big group (organization).

Management interaction is a forming parameter of social-psychological model of organizational culture that is set by the leader of the organization and generates organizational culture. With a theoretical support on basic types of activity of archaic people and basic types of the social organizations, three models of management interaction are empirically allocated: "parental", "commander", "pastoral". As a consequence, corresponding functional types of the leader appear ("parent", "commanders", "pastor"), that differ in ethic and semantic characteristics and features of influence on formation of organizational culture.

In the organizational culture of "family" type, the key value is a person: an organization cares, learns, brings up the person, and even if the person leaves the organization, he / she can be "forgiven" in case of his / her return. The important place is taken by an emotional component of relationship. In the organizational culture of "army" type, the key attention is focused on the results of activity. The person becomes a means toward these results. Attitudes to mistakes is rigid. We can observe the atmosphere of severity, hierarchy and subordination. In the "church" type of organizational culture the main value is the idea (ideal), around which the leader gather his / her adherents. This culture combines characteristics of the first two types, subordinating them to serve the idea [3].

A successful and complete organizational culture as a social-psychological order has to consist of all three types (suborders) in balance, but in reality one suborder dominates.

The three-component order model of organizational culture has its familiar approach – concept "Diversity Icebreaker" developed by the Norwegian psychologist Bjørn Bjørn Zakarias Ekelund and directed to develop skills of group interaction and communication between various divisions of large organizations. "Diversity Icebreaker" is based on a categorization of people in 3 groups by the preferred style of management interaction and communication. People who are focused on

establishment of personal relations, mutual understandings and adjustment of a social component are in "red" team, "blue" team includes people with logical thinking, concentrated on structure and activity of the organization, "green" team is for those who focus on ideas, concepts and changes [4]. Comparing ethic and semantic characteristics of all teams, it is possible to detect similarity with suborders, where members of the "red" team are representatives of the "family" type of organizational culture, members of the "blue" team are of the "army" type, members of the "green" team are of the "church" type.

### **Concept, characteristic of the empirical object and design of research**

The main idea of the research is a comparative social-psychological analysis of organizational cultures of American and Russian universities on the basis of the order approach. Detection of cultural similarities and differences at the level of the leaders of the structural divisions of the universities which are responsible for the success of internationalization processes allows to pass into deeper levels of diagnostics. Subsequently, this will help to develop training programs for employees and promote strengthening of cooperation between universities and relationship between employees and students by overcoming cultural barriers during realization of joint scientific and educational projects.

*Empirical object* are departments of international cooperation in two universities – University of Wyoming and the Saratov State University.

University of Wyoming (UW) is located in Laramie, WY. It was founded 1886. Over 13000 students from 50 states and 90 countries study here. University of Wyoming is the national research center, especially in the field of environment protection and natural resources, with specialization in agriculture, geology and hydrology.

Saratov State University (SSU) is the oldest high educational institution in Saratov, founded in June, 1909. The structure of SSU includes 15 faculties, 6

institutes and 2 colleges. Nowadays over 20000 students study in Saratov State University, 500 of students are representatives of foreign countries. SSU cooperates with 56 foreign universities of Europe, Asia and America and is in top twenty of the best universities of Russia.

For the reason that both universities are very large organizations we have made the decision to conduct the research in certain departments that are engaged in the solution of similar tasks.

*Characteristic of International Students and Scholars office (ISS) in UW.* This division provides information of interest to international students and scholars, whether they are new, currently enrolled at UW, or alumni. Annually ISS serves an international population of more than 800 international students, 100 scholars and more than 200 international dependents. The mission of ISS is familiarizing of foreign students and scientists with organizational culture of UW and support of internationalization the UW.

The head (leader) of ISS is the woman of about 30, holding a position of the head for 8 years. She started the career after graduation in this office from position of a project coordinator. Total staff number in ISS consists of 5 people (4 women and 1 man).

*Characteristic of Division for International cooperation and internationalization in SSU.* The main aspects of activity are cooperation, advance planning of international communications, research and selection of partners for contacts, participation in development of plans and programs of joint activity, implementation of interuniversity exchanges.

The head (leader) is the man of about 40, holding this position for more than 5 years. He has a strong experience in law enforcement agencies of Russia. Total staff number is about 15 people (14 women and 1 man).

*Theoretical object:* organizational culture as a social-psychological phenomenon with ethic and semantic determination.

*Subject of the research:* order differences in organizational culture of Russian and American universities based on differences in ethical meanings.

*Hypothesis:* personal characteristics of the leader, gender identity and previous professional experience influence on the type of management interaction and organizational culture.

*Design of the research* includes the following steps:

- 1) Order diagnostics of organizational culture in University of Wyoming (November 2015, the USA).
- 2) Order diagnostics of organizational culture in Saratov State University. (December 2015, Russia).
- 3) Comparative analysis of organizational cultures of both universities (February-May 2016).

Steps 1-2 consist of:

- 1) preliminary conversation with the leader (goal of the research, short review of order model of organizational culture, etc.);
- 2) order diagnostic procedure (filling out of questionnaires, fixation of oral remarks, discussion);
- 3) processing of results (calculation, detection of the dominating suborder);
- 4) analysis of the results (comparison of points and oral comments, characteristic of organizational culture by comparison of the results of the leaders and staff of various levels);
- 5) feedback to participants.

### **Methods of the research and processing of results**

The methodological basis of the research is the order approach to social-psychological studying of organizational culture that includes system of ethic-determined methodological principles of organizational culture research, and, also, a set of methods, techniques and technologies for its diagnostics and change.

Our research is focused on the order diagnostics of organizational culture. Nowadays the system order diagnostics of organizational culture is carried out by three techniques of Russian psychologist L.N. Aksenovskaya (diagnostics of development degree of the basic suborders of organizational culture, diagnostics of formation degree of suborders of organizational culture and soteriological diagnostics of development level of the leader) [3]. Order diagnostics is both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative measurements have auxiliary character. Application of each technique takes the long time (2-3 hours per one respondent). System order diagnostics is divided into three levels, each of them includes application of one of the three techniques. The research is the first level of diagnostics and illustrates a technique of order diagnostics directed to identification of development degree of three suborders.

The general structure of the order diagnostics includes four levels: leader, top manager, middle-level manager, employee. The number of levels can be changed depending on a structure of an organization, but it is important to keep the hierarchy and provide the comparative analysis of the results on each of the available levels [5]. In our case, the empirical object has two levels (leader and employees). This article describes the results of diagnostics at the level of the leader of the structural divisions of two universities.

The essence of the technique is diagnostics of each management level for positions "present state" and "desirable state" (must be), comparison of the results received at all levels, detection of mismatches with the leader level and development of measures for elimination of mismatches.

The applied technique has the universal order design, including the questionnaires completed by the psychologist during the conversation with the respondent. The technique includes 6 questionnaires about various aspects of organizational culture: 1) functional meaning of activity; 2) beliefs (about the organization; the relations: to the organization; the organization to employees; to work; to supervisors; to colleagues; to subordinated; to organizational rules); 3) the



model of management interaction domineering in the company; 4) psychological climate; 5) interaction of leaders; 6) the dominating suborder. The questionnaires have to contain wordings related to the language of a certain organization [6].

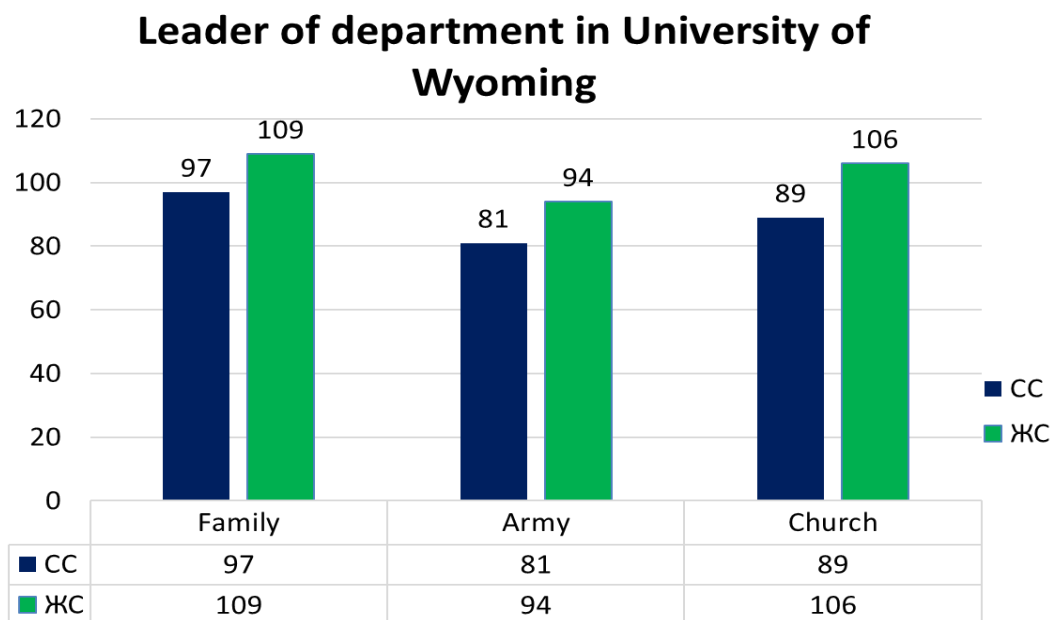
The diagnostic procedure contains assessment of statements in questionnaires and ranging them within the scale from 0 to 10. The data are filled in by the psychologist during the conversation where a respondent has an opportunity to comment the assessment and explain the reason of the choice. At the end of the conversation the psychologist summarizes points in every line. The statements in questionnaires offer information about degree of development of “family”, “army” and “church” suborders. The maximum score on each of suborder makes 130 points. The received results are supported with the results of observation and conversation.

### **Results of order diagnostics in University of Wyoming (level of leader)**

During the preliminary conversation with the head of International Students and Scholars office in University of Wyoming (Head A) information about a research objective, the order concept of organizational culture and a technique of a research was provided. The head showed interest in this technique and readiness for participation in a research into organizational culture of the division. She agreed that the organizational culture includes three aspects ("army", "family" and "church") and gave her own assessment of division. The head A reported that she supports a family atmosphere and takes care of each of the employees. She built up close relationships with all staff members, consequently, there is a lack of the "army" component, namely manifestation of severity and persistence in the working processes. The "church" type of organizational culture is ideal for her, she dreams to be rather an ideological leader, feeling support from her followers, than a "parent" for discussion of personal problems. The key value for this leader is correct understanding of the forming organizational culture by the staff, therefore, she has expressed absolute readiness for participation in diagnostics to detect possible divergences of vision at

various management levels. Also, the head A characterized organizational culture of the whole university as the "army" type.

In view of the results of order diagnostics of the leader of ISS in University of Wyoming, the dominating position is taken by the "family" suborder (97 points from possible 130). The key values are good relationship between employees and comfortable working conditions. The rules of conduct such as mutual support, understanding, tolerance and loyal relation are supported in the department (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Leader of department in University of Wyoming**

The "church" suborder takes the second place. The head expresses a desire for being a mentor ("pastor") for the employees. It is reported that subordinates trust the head in questions of career development. Psychological climate in this organization is inspiring and motivating: there is a continuous contact between the head and subordinates, subsequently, new purposes and developments appear and are initiated frequently by the head, but can be realized only with the support of the employees.

The "army" suborder is the least developed in the division (score – 81). This component is present in the organizational culture in the form of constant fight

against the arising problems and maximum use of skills of the head for solution of professional tasks. The head intuitively understands the need of strengthening of the "army" component for corporate culture because discipline and control are necessary for the effective implementation of tasks.

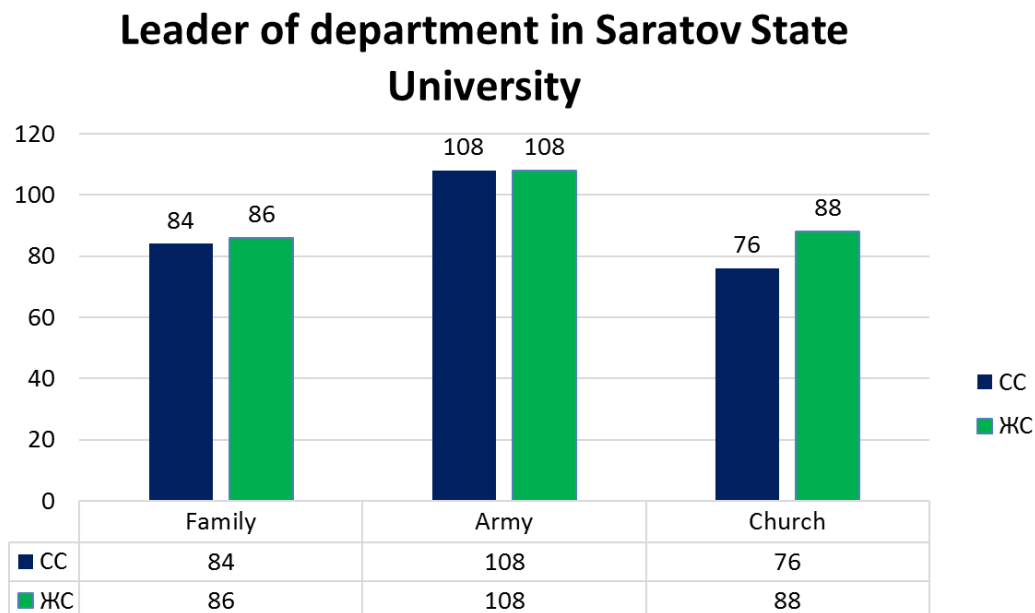
Nevertheless, the profile of suborders' division in desirable state is similar to the present state results with little changes towards strengthening of each of suborders.

### **Results of order diagnostics in Saratov State University (level of leader)**

Within the preliminary conversation, the head of Division for International cooperation and internationalization (Head B) showed high interest in participation in this research as he was familiar with the presented technique earlier. As for his vision of the organizational culture of the division, he is confident that subordinates take him only as a commander building the "army" type of management interactions, nevertheless, he tries to develop the "family" aspect, building up relationship with each employee and giving support in personal difficulties. The head pays much attention to forming of a friendly atmosphere in the female staff, preventing conflicts and coalitions. The head was excited to present his vision of the organizational culture as authentically as possible, therefore, throughout the diagnostic procedure he commented the answers in details. It is interesting to note that throughout the whole conversation the head constantly carried out comparisons of corporate culture of this division and the whole university with the previous place of work (law enforcement agency). It was unexpected to find out that the high level of development of the "church" suborder is more relevant to the culture of a law enforcement agency than to a university that represents the "army" type of organizational culture.

In view of the results, the dominating suborder in this division is "army". The main values are solution of professional tasks, working results, discipline,

functionality of relations, clear understanding of rules and methods of work (Figure 2)



**Figure 2. Leader of department in Saratov State University**

The "family" suborder takes the second place. Despite the big difference with the "army" suborder in points on graphics, the head comments that comfortable psychological climate and care of the employees are one of the priority tasks for him. Attentive relation to employees and loyalty to their personal circumstances is maintained in the division, but only in case when this does not interfere with the working process.

As for the "church" suborder, the head draws a set of parallels with the previous place of work in a law enforcement agency, illustrating weak development of this suborder in the university. High points are given only to the question about relation to organizational rules where focus is put on like-mindedness, unanimity, commitment to excellence, coincidence of values. In desirable state results of the "church" suborder increase, and exceed results of "family" type. The head sees the organization as a circle of people with whom he is constantly improved and find

meaning of life, become the strong expert and mature personality, and the subordinates are not only soldiers, but also colleagues in the professional way.

### **Comparative analysis of received results**

According to the results of the questionnaire 1 "Functional meaning of leader activity" the following differences are revealed: the major aspect for the leader in University of Wyoming (the head A) focuses on care about employees, and for the leader in Saratov State University (the head B) – care about the results of productive activity. These differences can be caused by previous life and working experience of heads. For the head A, this collective is the first working group that promotes attentive attitude towards each employee and manifestation of bigger loyalty and gentleness towards subordinates. The head B has military professional experience that affected the nature of management interaction with the subordinates: demonstration of orientation to goal achievements was fixed up. As for the common features, they give less attention to correspondence between the state of mind and behavior of the employees and goals, values and rules that exist in the university, because both heads reported that they do not agree with all values of such large organization as the university and tend to establish special values in the department.

In beliefs about the organization (questionnaire 2.1) both heads take the organization as "a second home" in the present state. However, in desirable state they want to take the organization as a circle of people with whom they can find meaning of life. In addition, it should be noted that both heads consider that the university cannot be "the front line of scientific war", therefore, this answer in both questionnaires gets lower points. It is possible to assume that such results are a consequence of the fact that both heads spend the most part of the daytime in the university and prefer to create the peaceful atmosphere at work.

Beliefs about the relation to the organization (questionnaire 2.2) revealed both differences and similarities. Both respondents feel gratitude and respect to the

universities. However, in desirable state the head B wants the university to be a meaning of his life like a religion, illustrating an example of law enforcement agency where employees believe in the mission of the organization. The head B considers that allegiance is an important feature of a successful employee because in this case the level of responsibility for quality of work increases.

Discussing the attitude of the organization towards employees (questionnaire 2.3), the respondents were equal in the opinion that the universities "use" them for the solution of professional tasks, and in desirable state they wish to win support from the university. In this case, heads tend to represent themselves as effective managers, despite insufficient gratitude from the organization. For permission of this dissatisfaction, it is necessary to reconsider the system of rewards for professional achievements. This aspect has to be discussed with top managers.

Speaking about the attitude towards supervisors (questionnaire 2.5), the head A gave the maximum scores in all respects that illustrates gratitude to the mentors for the gained knowledge and effective creation of career "from the ground up". The respondent B specified that higher managers mainly set tasks and ask for results. Less inspired attitude towards higher managers from the respondent B can be caused by the fact that they are not the first mentors in his professional activity though he desires to get support and help in future career way.

Significant differences are revealed in the attitude towards subordinates (questionnaire 2.7). The head A takes the subordinates only as believers and followers in a professional way, while the head B says that he "muck about with subordinates like with sisters or brothers" that negatively influences working efficiency. Therefore, in desirable state he prefers to see them firstly as "soldiers" who can quickly execute his orders and secondly as "believers". These differences are also caused by the previous professional experience: the head B get used to lightning solution of military tasks and models behavior of the commander. He prefers to combine it with mentoring, but the current climate forces him to perform like as "parent".

Beliefs about organizational rules (questionnaire 2.8) differ. For the head A, the basic rules include mutual support, tolerance and loyalty, for the head B, discipline, functionality and smartness are the major rules.

The analysis of questionnaire 3 "Dominating model of management interaction" revealed that the head of the department in University of Wyoming behaves like the inspiring "pastor" and "careful commander". Head B behaves like "careful commander" and "believing commander". Thus, filling the questionnaire both heads choose the mixed suborders ("family" + "army" = "careful commanders", "church" + "army" = "believing commanders") that explains in the way that it is necessary to combine different models of management interactions for effective work.

In the questionnaire 6 "Dominating suborder", the respondents accurately designated their positions. The head A identifies the department with a "family", and points to presence of the "army" elements. The head B takes the division as "armed fighters" that relates to a high influence of military experience projected onto organizational culture of the international division of Saratov State University. As the important value of a military structure is belief, the Head B also associates division with "believing fighters".

To sum up the results of the comparative analysis, in the majority of aspects positions of the head A and B coincide that is a favorable factor for creation a constructive business cooperation. The differences are mostly caused by the influence of the previous life and professional experience.

## **Conclusion**

According to the results of the order diagnostics of the organizational culture of departments in University of Wyoming and Saratov State University, it is possible to draw a conclusion that identity of the leader and his professional experience has the great impact on creation of organizational culture. In University of Wyoming, the

head of department is the woman for whom key values are care of employees and family climate in the division. This fact is confirmed by the results of diagnostics where the dominating suborder is "family". International Students and Scholars office is the first place of work for her, therefore, she seeks to create the most comfortable psychological climate for the employees based on the principles of mutual support, understanding and tolerance. Special impact has the fact that she is a mother of two small children that influences the nature of management interactions: relation to the subordinates is more loyal and attentive. Nevertheless, the head sees the value of management activity in mentoring, therefore, tendency to the "church" suborder is observed frequently in her answers. Also during the conversation she mentioned that it is difficult to her to be rigid to the subordinates, therefore, the "army" suborder is weakly developed.

In Saratov State University the head of the department is the man with a military experience projecting the values of the previous professional experience on the current management activity. The military discipline is shown even in ranging of the points in the questionnaire where he gives the highest point only to one of the possible answers. The key objective of military activity is the result, therefore, the main goal of Division for International cooperation and internationalization is high-quality and effective implementation of the objectives, and the dominating suborder is "army". Military experience of the head proved that the important role in armed force is played by the belief and ideals of the organization that relates to the "church" type of organizational culture, therefore, in a desirable state the "church" suborder takes the second place. It should be noted that the staff of the division consists of only women, therefore, the male head has to combine severity and discipline with special attention, emotional support and loyalty. Consequently, the "family" suborder takes the second place in the present state.

The common denominator is the aspiration of the heads to development of each of suborders for an increase in working productivity and achievement of high professional results. Besides, the general tendency to strengthening of the "church"



suborder in desirable state is interesting because during the conversation it was not obvious, but it is expressed in the results of diagnostics. This trend can become a perfect basis in creation of culture dialogue between these departments.

During the comparative analyses at the level of leader the main features of organizational cultures of two universities were revealed, the results and conclusions of the present research can become the basis of the model of effective culture dialogue between University of Wyoming and Saratov State University.

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