Chapter 21
Organizational Urbanism: A Value Proposal for the Generation of Organizational Intelligence to Healthcare Institutions – The Case of a Portuguese Hospital Center

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ABSTRACT

The concept of intelligence in management is gaining relevance in the economic organizations. Intelligence demands to highlight the trinomial «information-knowledge-action» as a determining factor in the economic decision. The great revolution focuses on finding solutions, from a system logic of action based on knowledge and learning, capable of generating organizational intelligence allowing new dynamics of evolution. The organizational intelligence, as a vital condition to the competitiveness and sustainability, should question the organizational dynamics to innovation and value creation. The new challenges associated with network society and collaborative economic logic elicits a reflection about the new concepts and methodologies capable of aggregating the specificity of the multidisciplinary activities of the current economic reality. The aim of this work is to identify the core elements to the creation of organizational intelligence in the hospital sector and validate its applicability in management support and organizational decision.

INTRODUCTION

In all economic sectors the relevance of information to support organizational operations, in general, and management, in particular, is too evident. This relevance, expressed in the designation of the current Information Society relates information as a major economic asset, which requires a careful management of the production process based on suitable models and techniques according to their specific management needs.

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Economic organizations are information based. And the economy is a large interactive system. Therefore, information and, above all, the knowledge must support the functioning of economic agents. The possession of information and knowledge allows the establishment of new standards of competitiveness and the balance between economic and social forces accordingly with the development of strategic areas.

These new benchmarks of competitiveness necessarily correspond to new requirements and organizational dynamics materialized in the new processes or in the adaptations of existing process, innovations of products and services, establishing partnerships or increase quality standards and customer satisfaction. These and other examples are answers where information and knowledge play a critical role in internal organizational adjustment as well as in differentiating answers to market.

It is the need to continuity in a sustainable way, in this context of change that brings out the relevance of the concept of intelligence in the management. This proposal, which was advocated by several authors, as Wilensky (1967), Choo (1996) or Matsuda (1992) aims to seek management models and methodologies for economic organizations to facilitate the analysis of problems and the integration of solutions looking for the adequacy of organizational actions or reactions to market.

Knowing that the economic dynamics take place in a close and integrated relationship between the whole value chain and that involvement requires anticipation and flexibility (Mcconnell & Ward-Perkins, 1996), only those organizations that are best prepared to interact with such complexity or demonstrating ability to integrate and build collective strategies will succeed.

Although the concept of organizational intelligence and the dynamics associated with it have emerged in the enterprise domain, this does not currently constitute a unique reality of the private sector of the economy. Also the public sector, before the challenges that it faces and the shortage of resources, is introducing management logical approach near to the private economic sector, looking for new catalysts elements for the new social public and carrying out in to their activities. To do this, the public organizations require intelligent models of organization and management able to provide the respective organizations with the essential critical factors to the success of the performance of their economic and social activities.

The development of critical success factors associated with the generation of organizational intelligence, will necessarily have to go through three characteristics: be informed, understand the problems and reaction. Staying informed presupposes the ability to access and extract value from information, which requires appropriate architectures of treatment systems (information systems) and skills of managers for its use and management. Understand the situations and the associated problems presuppose the ability to adopt flexible structures to ensure proper operating dynamics of the market timings. To get reaction presupposes there is capacity to generate and enjoy high levels of knowledge that allow finding solutions to the problems encountered, according to detained information and experience. The following logical sequence should match to the identified steps in Figure 1.

Hospital organizations are no exception to this reality. By their nature and complexity are organizations where the concept of intelligence has significant advantages compared to the specificity of the problems. Beyond the specificity of their nature and the complexity of their operation, hospital organizations can also be characterized by the diversity of skills and valences, inflexible and heavy organizational structures, high consumption and difficulties in resources control and by the uninterrupted exercise of their activity.