

CONCEPTUALISING THE ESSENCE OF A GREEN ORGANISATION

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Abstract

The international community, the European Union, encourage to address global ecology problems immediately, e.t. since 2010, the European Commission, by recognising the important role and contribution to improving the quality of environment, each year announces the green capital of Europe – this is the city in which the most favourable conditions for ecological lifestyle are established and which may become an example to other cities. The paper gives an analysis of the change in the concept of an organization, defines a paradigm of a green organization, and formulates the most important features of a green organization. Special attention is devoted to the assessment of specific components of a green organization. With an aim of making an analysis of the concept of a green organization, while refining the characteristic features of a green organization, the methods of comparative analysis and synthesis as well as abstrahation have been applied. New organisational features characterizing their adaptation to the changing environment are formed. Identification of these features, their exclusivity enables to conclude that a new type of the organisation has formed – the green organisation.

Key words

green organisation, sustainability, sustainable development.

JEL Classification: M14, M19, L22

Introduction

Owing to the human economic activity over the last two hundred years, the climate system has become much more complicated: forest areas are diminishing; massifs of arable lands and urbanised territories are expanding; gaseous composition are changing fast; the green-house effect is exacerbating, pollution of the soil and water is increasing, and the eco-system is changing (draughts, heat waves and cold spells have become more frequent; thickness of the snow coating, depth of the permafrost has changed) (Rimkus et al., 2006; Bukantis et al., 2016; Felton et al., 2016). An effect of the climate change will continue to intensify (Keršytė et al., 2015). The international community, the European Union, encourage to address global ecology problems immediately, e.t. since 2010, the European Commission, by recognising the important role and contribution to improving the quality of environment, each year announces the green capital of Europe – this is the city in which the most favourable conditions for ecological lifestyle are established and which may become an example to other cities.

The number of organisations applying the green business practice has increased in the whole world, since this lends a competitive advantage and benefit to society (Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008). Currently, to be green is the norm (Margaretha and Saragih, 2013), whereas the management science may boast of increase in the research on green marketing, green accounting, and green human resource management (Renwick et al., 2013). The term “green” has different meanings, however most often this is associated with that what is important to nature or natural environment (Opatha and Arulrajah, 2014). The term ecological or green spreads fast in all aspects of our life (Dutta, 2012). Environmental friendliness is a holistic process which goal is smarter energy consumption, low costs, low waste using sustainable resources or recycled materials for final results which are products, etc. (Jafri, 2012). To be ecological is necessary and important (Opatha and Arulrajah, 2014), as we have to avert or reduce the global warming, natural disasters, e.g. acid rain, tsunami, floods, hurricanes, draught, etc. due to harmful and unrestricted use of natural resources for production, as well as diseases that are caused by pollution. We have to ensure proper balance of

relationships between plants, animals and people, and their environment, survival of people and business organisations. Having regard to that, modern organisations also have to develop responsibility, as corporate responsibility is not a mere means of creating a trademark (Sathyapriya et al., 2013; Delmas and Pekovic, 2013). By forming the green practice in their activity and developing the green responsibility, organisations “educate, enlighten” consumers by participating in environmental and other civil campaigns not polluting the environment and explaining consumers why this is beneficial for society, thus fostering ethical and environmentally friendly consumption (Jušcius and Šneiderienė, 2013; Tariq et al. 2014).

The object of our research is a green organisation. *The aim of the research is as such:* after analysing the concept of the green organisation, to refine the features characteristic exclusively for the green organisation. *Methods of research:* comparative analysis of research literature, abstraction, synthesis.

The Concept of the Organisation

The organisation, as a product of human activity, has been created in order to do something; it also has to have a goal, thus giving meaning to its existence (Butkus, 2002). In 1936, the classic of management Chester Barnard defined the organisation as a system of consciously coordinated activity or powers of two or more persons. The above mentioned boosted research in this field by noting that a common objective pursued collectively turns the human community into an organisation, and that this common goal

may not coincide with the goals of people joining the organisation, but must be expressed by the needs of consumers of activity results of that organisation. People unite into an organisation driven by different goals which they expect to achieve easier by namely being a part of it (whereas its viability is guaranteed by the consumer of the product of joint activity). Therefore a special type of activity becomes necessary – management, sharing of the common work, product creation process among organisation members, and establishment of such conditions that would allow the organisation members to achieve their goals in the best way while doing such works that are assigned to them in the process of creating the organisation’s product (Barnard, 1968). It may be stated that an organisation exists when people communicate mutually in order to perform essential functions instrumental in the achievement of its goals (Barnard, 1968; Daft, 2010; Hatch, 2018).

Against the background of constant change of social and economic processes, increasing complexity of technologies, a permanent change in the concept of organisation takes place objectively (see Table 1). This change is determined by a number of different factors (Zakarevičius, 2012). All researches unanimously state that in the near, or maybe in the more distant future, only the organisations that will be capable of solving two main economic tasks will be able function successfully and to compete: 1) to optimise production costs and 2) to guarantee the quality of production. These two tasks are dialectically related – this as if seemingly contradicts each other, yet, on the other hand – must be resolved in a comprehensive manner (Zakarevičius, 2012).

Table 1. Change in the concept of organisation

Type of organisation	Description
Mechanistic organisation	An organisation is treated as machines, engineering objects (Taylor; 1911; Fayol; 1916). Organisation members do not have goals associated with its activity; they fulfil requirements of their owners, whereas their actions in the organisation are strictly regulated. Employees are treated as components of the mechanism, whereas their totality – as a well-tuned machine.
Organisation as a social system	An organisation as a totality of people in which every person, group of people, are linked by close mutual relationships, whereas their whole activity is consciously coordinated (Barnard; 1938). The most important property of this system – the property of integrity.

Systemic organisation	It has clearly expressed one or several goals, and it functions solely for realising these goals (Parsons 1960; Blau, Scott; 1962; Etzioni 1964; Thompson, 1967; Lawrence, Lorsch, 1967 Miller, 1972). Features: system adaptivity to the external environment, integratedness of all system components, regulation of internal relationships (Zakarevičius, 2009).
Entrepreneurial organisation	This is a systemically organised, structured organisation managed in a professional manner in which economic, social, managerial mechanisms operate in such a way that make it possible to integrate innovative, creative, managerial ideas of employees, to mobilize them and other resources for the implementation of these ideas (Zakarevičius, 2009; 2012).
Learning organisation	An organisation creating knowledge. By relying on its internal resources, it constantly increases its potential, improves all performance parameters, develops possibilities for the achievement of these parameters. The organisation is capable of accumulating the necessary quantity of knowledge, generating new information and using this knowledge in an optimal way. Knowledge is acquired by learning (Kanišauskaitė, 2011; Peleckienė, 2014).
Socially responsible organisation	An organisation active participant of public processes, and follows the principles of responsible conduct in its activity. Social responsibility of organisations covers economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic expectations nurtured by society. In other words, social responsibility – is a commitment to act ethically while solving economic, legal, social and environmental issues of activity in relationships with the surrounding social environment (Siltaja, 2009; Stukaitė, 2012).

Source: own processing

It is obvious that an organisation is a group of people who are linked together by cooperation ties, common interests, and goals. In this respect, each organisation is a social system. On the other hand, an organisation is an economic system, as a transformation process of raw materials, materials, and the product made by others takes place. Organisations exist, since they combine resources in order to achieve desired goals and results,

It is noteworthy that it is customary to regard an organisation as a group of persons consisting of at least two people who act together in particular manner and seek the goal set. This is a social – economic system composed of the people communicating mutually, and which exchanges different information, human, material, etc. resources with the environment (Barnard, 1968; Butkus, 2002; Navickas and Navickienė, 2009; Daft, 2010; Lipinskienė, 2011; Hatch, 2018).

The Green Organisation

Over the years, against the growth of economic activity, people could have forgotten the fact that

manufacture goods and provide services effectively. They are open to novelties, use modern production and information technologies, adapt to the changing environment, create value to the owners, customers and employees, give rise and maintain permanent challenges of diversity, employee motivation and coordination (Daft, 2010).

their farm is dependent on the planet's ecological systems (Mikalauskienė, 2014). With the strengthening of civilisation impacts, economic activity has gradually encompassed the whole planet, and no free area not touched by man has remained in it (Melnikas, 2011; Boiral et al., 2012; Šimanskienė and Petrusis, 2014; Mikalauskienė, 2014). Changes in the natural environment during the last century progressed fast: due to the impact of global processes, unsustainable development of economy and ecological problems ignored for a long time, nature has suffered even greater devastation (Melnikas, 2011; Boiral et al., 2012; Šimanskienė and Petrusis, 2014). Polluted environment gave the society the first signals on the fact that irreversible processes associated with

the economic development taking place in the world may determine lifestyle peculiarities not only for our generation, but also bring much more serious consequences for the future generations. (Melnikas, 2011; Boiral et al., 2012; Šimanskienė and Petrusis, 2014; Mikalauskienė, 2014). Each Earth dweller starts to feel painful consequences, and this stimulates the desire to act and to change (Chen, 2011; Tumulytė, 2012; Chang and Chen, 2013; Šimanskienė and Petrusis, 2014; Song and Yu, 2018). Modern societies have to solve a lot of essential issues on environmental protection, energy, raw materials, construction, consumption of material possessions, as well as the improvement of work conditions for employees, their wellness, operation quality of organisations and the assurance of competitiveness with other organisations (Kutkaitis and Župerkienė, 2011; Petkevičiūtė and Balčiūnaitienė, 2018).

As ecology is gaining increasing importance, a new approach – sustainable development associated with the substance of economic growth that is important in solving contradictions between production and consumption, as well as aspects of the survival of humanity itself is formed. It is

based on the assumption that development has to satisfy current day needs and not to pose any danger to the well-being of future generations (Bagdonienė et al., 2009; Stasiukynas, 2013; Jolink and Niesten, 2013; Mikalauskienė, 2014; Pivorienė, 2014; Petkevičiūtė and Balčiūnaitienė, 2018).

All the prepared strategic documents (see Table 2) pertaining to more environmentally friendly *green* growth of economy, are treated as an inseparable part of the sustainable development process and combines three basic dimensions: economic, environmental and social (Stasiukynas, 2013; Mikalauskienė, 2014; Pivorienė, 2014; Jolink and Niesten, 2016; Petkevičiūtė and Balčiūnaitienė, 2018). Social and environmental dimensions cover the “human capital” (knowledge, skills, social cohesion, culture, values, health, education, etc.) and the “nature capital (natural resources, bio-geological processes, etc.), whereas the economic dimension covers “the capital created by man” (all economic types of activity, their participants, means) (Mikalauskienė, 2014; Pivorienė, 2014; Šimanskienė and Petrusis, 2014).

Table 2. Development of environmental awareness in strategic documents

Important events of development	Aspects
UNO Council session (1969)	A global crisis has been emphasized, as due to rapid growth of economy, natural resources have been declining.
The green movement, Europe and North America. “Greenpeace” and “Earth First!” organizations are set up (1971 – 1980)	Environmental, social, political, economic tasks are formulated.
United Nations conference, Stockholm (1972)	The view was expressed for the first time that ecological issues and their solution must be related with the development of economy and society. The provision that it was necessary to take care of the future generations, and to leave the Earth similarly fertile, not polluted, by reducing different threats was formulated, therefore economic development had to proceed by using natural resources in the most effective way and with regard to the environmental impact.
International discussion (“Limits to Growth”), Rome (1972)	An eco-development approach was developed which had a great effect on the conservation and preservation of natural resources.
World Conservation Strategy (1980)	It was declared that rational consumption of natural resources is an integral part of economic development and environmental protection.
Report of the United Nations	A new term of economic growth was defined – this is a fast,

World Commission on Environment and Development “Our common future” known as the Brundtland report (1987)	socially and environmentally sustainable (responsible) economic growth. The vision of further development as a sustainable development which allows satisfying current public needs without reducing opportunities for future generations to satisfy their own needs and covering economic, social and environmental dimensions was formulated.
United National Environment and Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro (1992)	The provisions of sustainable development as continuous progress of society in seeking to satisfy humanity’s needs now and in the future by rationally using and replenishing natural resources, as well as preserving them for future generations, covering environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects were formulated.
UN world summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg (2002)	Poverty eradication; change of non-balanced consumption and production models; conservation and management of natural resources; development of sustainability in the globalised world; development of sustainability and health; development of sustainability and implementation measures.
UN Green economy strategy (2008)	Economy is treated as the green economy capable of ensuring human welfare and social equality by mitigating environmental threats.
Declaration on Green Growth by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2009)	The declaration consolidated the preparation of the “green growth strategy” covering economic, environmental, social, technological and development aspects.
EU growth strategy 2020 (2010)	Special attention is devoted to sustainable development by using natural resources in the most effective way and addressing the climate change.
OECD Green growth strategy (2011)	Measures how to ensure economic growth and development by reducing the pace of climate change, environmental degradation and ineffective use of natural resources.
Rio + 20, UN world conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (2012)	Improvement of life quality and ecology by eradicating HIV, malaria and other diseases, reducing infant mortality; improvement of social inequality; assurance of global primary education; sustainable development of environmental protection and ecology; green economy in the globalised world; strengthening of the institutional basis of sustainable development; implementation measures for sustainable development: dissemination and adaptability of the Human Development on the local level.
Green action plan for small and medium-sized enterprise, European Commission (2014)	Goals: 1) to seek that European SMEs would use resources in the most effective way, 2) to support the green entrepreneurship, 3) to use the opportunities offered by the greener value chains, and 4) to facilitate the advent of the green SMEs to the market. The plan of green actions is aimed to contribute to the European re-industrialisation by strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs and to support the creation of green enterprises in all European regions, by paying particular attention to the fact that at this stage, in the field of effective use of resources, great differences between the sectors and member states subsist.

Source: own processing

It is perceived that sustainable development is a crucial paradigm on which basis the practices of organisations and relationships with the surrounding environment are built (Bagdonienė et al., 2009; Atkočiūnienė and Radiunaitė, 2011; Reiser, 2011; Jurgelėnas, 2014). The *green organisation* is an essential condition of sustainable development and an integral part of the growth process of the green economy. Modern business which has historically paid attention only to the accumulation of profit, now has to take into regard sustainability of environment and broader social interests, as this is a basis of business success without which business would not be able to develop further (Šimanskienė and Petruilis, 2014).

The concept of the *green organisation* has not been finally formed yet, and is fragmented. It is noteworthy that *green organisations* cover actions

of a sustainable organisation in seeking to create an organisation effectively consuming and less aggressive towards the environment by saving resources, reducing negative impact on the organisation’s activity, enhancing competitiveness, etc. Although the *green organisation* is associated with long-term sustainable changes, mere sustainability is not a *green organisation* (Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008). In the *green organisation*, sustainability means *green and long-term activity* (Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008). An analysis of research and special literature revealed a lack of clarity and consensus on the use of different terms, such as sustainability, corporate social responsibility, ethics, and sustainable development (Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008; Potašinskaitė and Draugelytė, 2013). Examples of sustainable organisation and green organisation practices are provided in Table 3 (Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008).

Table 3. Examples of sustainable organisation and green organisation practices

Description of a sustainable organisation	Description of a green organisation
Suggestions on ecological initiatives are provided, analysis of ecological footprints, reports on sustainable development, proposals for changing a policy and (or) practices and recommendations for mitigating an impact on the environment are put forward.	A learning environment was formed in which organisation members together develop the green business practice, strengthen work relationships and cooperation, create a common vision and individual solutions based on the most progressive environmental technologies.

Source: Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008

A *green organisation* may be recognised upon assessing its daily practices: it uses “the green lens” in the value chain in cooperating and producing goods, providing services that are useful to the consumer and nature; takes decisions determining effective use of energy; produces a new, innovative product while satisfying the poor needs and receiving profit; together with examples of the green practice and green initiatives, increase the engagement and involvement of employees into the organisation’s

activity; participates in the markets aspiring to resolve the most important world problems (water filtering, residents health insurance, etc.) (Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008).

Identification of components of internal and external environment of the *green organisation* enables to distinguish features of the green organisation more precisely. After analysing research works of different authors, key features of the green and traditional organisation are provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Characteristics of the green and traditional organisation

Green organisation	Traditional organisation
Internal environment components	
Aim	
Seek to manufacture/provide green products by applying innovative business solutions that are environmentally friendly; seek the satisfaction of consumers and society in the product and services, organisation. To realise the products, they apply the green marketing which focus is based on the production of green and environmentally friendly products and their supply to consumers in order to satisfy their needs and not forgetting the organisation's goal to receive profit.	Seek to manufacture/provide goods and services in demand by using limited resources in the most effective way.
Human resources	
Employees implement the policy which is aim is to achieve that the organisation's employees would become ecological and useful to society, nature and organisation by seeking to ensure environmentally friendly products through successful realisation of environmental programmes, objectives, and thus contribute to environmental sustainability.	Employees implement the organisation's goals.
Structure	
Flexible, horizontal structure facilitating the involvement and their participation of employees in making decisions; direct communication with employees.	Clear hierarchical structure, distance between the superior and the subordinate, units.
Technologies	
Advanced, environmentally friendly technologies are used in creating and developing innovative, better green products.	A traditional combination of equipment, tools or relevant knowledge necessary for work, information or transformation of materials into products is used.
External environmental components	
Suppliers	
When selecting suppliers, not only to the price and quality are taken into account, but also the impact of the purchased resource for production or consumption processes on the environment. Such selection measures as green purchases, green logistics, etc. are applied. Criteria of the green purchases enable to make sure that the products used are made or supplied without using harmful substances, child labour, etc. Criteria of the green logistics enable to make sure whether the organisation's solutions are sustainable, effective, and less aggressive towards environment.	When selecting suppliers, the price and quality criteria are applied.
Competitors	
Competition takes place for more effective means of energy consumption, use of renewable energy resources, and effective consumption of resources.	Competition for consumers, labour resources, price, quality, etc. takes place.
Consumers	
Green consumers are those who avoid the goods/services which may endanger consumers' health, cause damage to environment through production, consumption and disposal processes; which consume disproportionately much energy, cause unnecessary waste and difficulties in processing them, use materials received from endangered species. Green consumers buy only what is necessary. They are familiarized with the environmental programme implemented	Traditional consumers purchase goods/services not necessary when they need them.

by the organisation, waste processing and management, packaging in secondary packages, recycled raw materials used in production. Green organisation carry out environmental training of consumers, employees, community. They have regard to the consumers who respond to problems caused by unethical or illegal world trade with their purchase actions.

Source: own processing

After outlining exclusive features of the *green organisation*, it is necessary to define the *green organisation*. Authors of different works (see

Table 5) provide quite a similar concept of the green organisation.

Table 5. Concept of the green organisation

Authors	Basic concepts
Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008.	The <i>green organisation</i> means benefit to society and environment, also added value to the organisation. This is a “compromise” between the creation of a business value and the input to the public and environmental well-being. The environment covers not only nature, but also the level of poverty, health, peace, housing and all other factors that contribute to the well-being of society.
Reiser, 2011; Azevedo at al., 2012.	The <i>green organisation</i> may be understood as a conception of a responsible business creating permanent value to the organisation which is understood through the organisation’s links with the accessibility and consumption of resources, as well as creation of public well-being.
Sathyapriya et al., 2013; Rani and Mishra, 2014; Tariq et al. 2014.	The <i>green organisation</i> is defined as an organisation that is environmentally friendly, well organised and socially responsible.
Duarte and Cruz-Machado, 2012.	Special attention of the <i>green organisation</i> is focused on the reduction of waste, effective use of resources, satisfaction of customers’ needs.
Opatha and Arulrajah, 2014.	<i>Practices of the green organisation and its development</i> are crucial for the survival and development of humanity. The direction of activity and development targeted at sparing consumption of material products, alternatives, by improving consumption indicators, processing and recycling particular products are related with the pursued green economy and benefit to society.

Source: own processing

It may be claimed that the *green organisation* is based on the sustainable development concept taking into account economic, ecological and social aspects, seeking benefit for the organisation, environment and society. The *green organisation* – is the one creating constant and added value, seeking not only profit, but also contributing to the creation of public and environment well-being in the present and future time; focusing on the green and long-term practice, having regard to nature, poverty reduction, health accessibility, peace

assurance and all other factors that contribute to the development of public and environmental well-being. The *green organisation* seeks to give a meaning and to implement the green policy in its daily activity. A sustainable organisation is most often associated with the implementation of sustainable development principles in the organisation by acknowledging that coherence of an organisation, as a business practice, is most often isolated from the core activity strategy of the organisation (Bagdonienė, et al., 2009; Navickas

and Navickienė, 2009; Šimanskienė and Paužuolienė, 2011).

The *green organisation* is not a spontaneous phenomenon, and its creation and operation requires the establishment of appropriate conditions: it is necessary to determine the green initiative factors in the organisation, and a system fostering and supporting them, as well to develop and improve them constantly (Yeganeh and Glavas, 2008). The green organisation is an excellent medium to develop programmes as the staff, continuously encouraged by the management, may improve the existing technologies and create the new ones. Therefore, seeking to foster progress, the *green organisation* must be created first of all (*Green action plan for SME; Green Employment Initiative*).

Organisations are committed to serve the society in which they carry out business in the best way (Jackson et al. 2011). The organisation's liability now rests not only with shareholders, but also other stakeholders – employees, consumers, business partners, local communities, non-governmental organisations, activist groups. Being a part of society, the organization will have to operate *on the basis of green management* (Jackson et al. 2014). The *green management* commits becoming a *green organisation* in each cell of the organisation, e.g. *greener business operations, green human resources management, green accounting and green financing, greener retail trade, green marketing*, etc. (Renwick et al. 2012). This is a way of organisation management

Conclusion

Complex economic, environmental and social processes give rise to the green changes in organisations. New organisational features characterizing their adaptation to the changing environment are formed. Identification of these features, their exclusivity enables to conclude that a new type of the organisation has formed – the green organisation.

The emergence of green organisations is a reflection of transformations taking place in society, ranging from individual persons preoccupied with the destiny of future generations to real actions of supranational, ethical politicians. Contrary to the previously existing initiatives that have often were limited to the presentation of

when environmental issues have a direct impact on the organisation's results (Jackson et al. 2011, 2014). In order to make business flourish, the organisation must comply with the new standards and implement them (Atkočiūnienė and Radiunaitė, 2011). The organisation in which nature and people are properly appreciated creates an astounding competitive advantage. Organisations, seeking to acquire a competitive advantage, create their *green image* based on the concept of sustainable development, thus emphasizing the good and at the same time some bad properties of a product (service) (Griesienė and Sarvutytė-Gailiūnienė, 2014). The organisation has to produce such goods and provide such services which are in demand at a particular time. In other words, the better the organisation satisfies public needs, the firmer it becomes established in society and its activity becomes more profitable. To this effect, it is necessary to control and improve properties of a product, cut down production costs in order to get profit, also to reduce the risk of loss upon decline of market prices, to present exclusivity of a product, as business success most often depends on it (Juščius and Šneiderienė, 2013). Only such organisations that readjust their business models, products and processes, are able to respond to changes, adapt, will acquire a competitive advantage and be viable long-term (Baležentis, 2007; Atkočiūnienė and Radiunaitė, 2011; Hurn, 2012).

reports, in the case of the green organisation all stakeholders develop, elaborate the green business practice conjointly.

The green organisation is a fundamental condition of sustainable development and an integral part of the green economy growth process. The green organisation is an excellent medium for developing green initiatives, implementing innovations, existing technologies, and creating the new ones, making new products that are in demand and distinguished for exclusive properties, by saving resources used for the production thereof. The green organisation – is a future organisation.

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