



7th International Strategic Management Conference

Core Competences in Non- Governmental Organizations:

A Case Study

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to suggest the importance of core competences in the success of non-governmental organizations. Accordingly, an answer is searched regarding with which activities successful non-governmental organizations can sustain their lives, and whether the core competencies are influential in this success. Çağdaş Drama Derneği (Contemporary Drama Association), a non-governmental organization which has continued its activities by competing with profit organizations in the field of creative drama in Turkey for twenty years has been examined in depth with the sample case method. The examination has been conducted through interviews, archive scanning and participant observation. The works of the association have been observed on-site and by participating in the activities, the obtained data have been evaluated within the scope of the research. Its core competence, decision making groups of the society in the domain of education and arts, its other nongovernmental organizations, led by higher education institutions have come forth as establishing result-oriented relationships and relationship management. It is considered that the core competency of the organization, as differentiating competitive ability and competitive power, has provided a competitive edge over its competitors.

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Keywords: competences; core competences; non- governmental organizations.

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1. Introduction

On looking at the examples experienced in the business world, it is noted that the enterprises that acquired a place in the market were eliminated by more dynamic competitors and left their places to them. This indicates a basic change which causes to a great transformation in competition and company strategy. The path to the success no more passes through doing everything right, but also doing different from others. But, how would one create this difference and make it sustainable? One of the answers to this question is the identification and effective management of the core competences that are different from the competitors from the customers' perspective, which are not easy to imitate. With the identification and management of core competences and capacities in a systematic and regular manner, the enterprises can concentrate their investments and energies on what they do best, and maximize their earnings from organizational resources. Similarly, they may introduce challenges beyond their existing and future competitors who might wish to penetrate into the company's competitive fields. Corporations may also reduce risks and investments in the rapidly changing competitive environment and technological developments and create an opportunity to better answer the customers' needs owing to their competences.

Would the core competences, which are so important on the success and sustainability of corporations (as suggested by both empiricist and theoretical studies) also have such an influence on non-governmental organizations which are named as the third sector. The developments in recent years have shifted the researches towards a tendency of regarding, inspecting and managing non-governmental organizations as if they are economic units. The reason behind is that NGO's have increased their areas of impact in the entire world and obtained an important role in the economic and social developments of the societies. The sustainability and effectiveness of these organizations is the source of important transformations in the society. It is known that these institutions constitute the eighth biggest economy of the world. In this context, the search for new and creative solutions in the social domain and its facilitation by the developments in the communication and information technologies cause non-governmental organizations to face competition dynamics. Therefore, these organizations must be considered with new dynamics and management approaches and attitudes must be directed with new researches. Any kind of support must be provided to create and ensure the sustainability of non-governmental society organizations which are responsible against its stakeholders, which compete and obtain a successful organizational structure and competences. For this purpose, whether core competences would constitute an important place in the success of non-governmental organizations is an important research area. From this point, researching the core competences in the third sector has been considered appropriate.

This study looks for an answer to the question whether core competences in the management of non-governmental organizations that compete in the same domain with profit organizations play an important role or not. Accordingly, with which activities successful non-governmental organizations sustain their lives, and how influential the core competences are in this success has been studied. The study also measures the perception of core competences at the executive committees, whether the identified core competences differ between the organizations' headquarters and subsidiaries. Accordingly, Çağdaş Drama Derneği (Contemporary Drama Association), a non-governmental organization which has continued its activities by competing with profit organizations in the field of creative drama in Turkey for twenty years has been examined in depth with the sample case method. The examination has been conducted through interviews, archive scanning and participant observation. The works of the association have been observed on-site and by participating in the activities, the obtained data have been evaluated within the scope of the research.

In the study, initially the core competency literature, basic concepts, and various studies related with the subject are examined. Then, a research for examining the core competences at a non-governmental

organization is included. Finally, the theoretical and managerial findings of this application are evaluated.

2. Literature review

In the literature, the enterprises' resource types are examined with different terminologies by different authors. These resource types are given various names such as capacity, talent, competence, skill and core competence. C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel define the core competence concept as a collective learning which enables the integration of highly diversified types of technology with the different production skills at an enterprise. (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990, p.82) According to another author, core competencies are the foundations on which the enterprises base their long-term strategies (Grant, 1996, p.375.). Core competence is the combination of the enterprises' valuable, difficult to imitate resources and competences which do not have any replaceable strategic alternatives. (Barney, 1995, p.49). According to another view, core competences are unique series of resources which encompass the skills and competences that the enterprises have for ensuring strategic flexibility and obtaining competitive superiority (Hitt et al, 1998, p.28).

As it will also be understood from these definitions, core competences are the core strengths of enterprises. They are the best things that enterprises do. These core competences give the competitive strength to the enterprises. Although approached from different points, the point on which all authors agree is that core competence provides competitive superiority to an enterprise against its competitors.

An information or skill must have the following three features to be considered as a core competence. (Hamel, p.224) Value for the customer, differentiation from the competitors, and applicability on other fields. The customers give the final decision of whether a competence is core. Core competences are the skills which enable the enterprise to offer benefits to its customers. A capacity must be unique in terms of competition in order to be defined as a core competence. The mentioned capacity may be found at many enterprises in the same sector; but the enterprise's competence level must be very high compared to other enterprises in order to consider it as a core competence. Finally, core competences can also be measured with their applicability in new product fields. (Leslie, 2007) B Unless an enterprise can design a new series of products or services arising from a competence they have, then it will not be considered as a core competence by the enterprise.

A work may compete in a certain market only if it has certain skills and competences. In other words, it is possible to predict the markets in which an enterprise can compete and be successful by looking at its existing and potential competences and skills. Therefore, competence approach appears as a very strong tool in the strategic planning process. Another aim of identifying the core competencies of enterprises is to ensure integration among strategic business units. There may be companies with many strategic business units; these business units may also be successful among themselves; but the company might not be integrating these units in an effective manner. At that point, core competences play a great role in creating synergies among strategic business units. In this sense, empirical findings are noted between core competences and acquiring competitive superiority. (Bani-Hani & Faleh, 2009) It is noted that the managers who know what core competences are would increase the innovative capacity of enterprises and obtain a competitive advantage, and increase their organizational intelligence. (TechnologyOneCorp, 2010)

3. Method

3.1. Importance of research

Core competence is a concept which has been a research subject frequently in the research in recent years and which has been mostly studied on profit organizations. Core competences are the competences that consist of the merger of an organization's knowledge, skills and competences which cannot be

imitated by the competitors and which create a competitive edge. Although the researches that have been conducted so far on the importance and management of core competences have dwelled on corporations, they did not quite take into account non-governmental organizations.

Regardless of the sector, core competences greatly contribute to an organization's success. Therefore, how the subject of core competence –which has been discussed and developed in the literature- is adopted and implemented in the third sector is an important research topic.

The conducted literature study has not resulted in any researches conducted within the context of the perception of core competences in the management of non-governmental organizations and their stakeholders in Turkey. From this point, the study pioneers the topic and the results of the research contribute for the enrichment of the related article and for drawing the interest of different researches.

3.2. The purpose of research

The aim of this study is to suggest the importance of core competences in the success of non-governmental organizations. Accordingly, an answer is searched regarding with which activities successful non-governmental organizations can sustain their lives, and whether the core competencies are influential in this success. According to this core purpose, the study probes for answers to the following questions:

- Which core competence or competences the studied organization has,
- How core competences develop,
- Whether core competences play a role in the organization's success
- What are the major factors effecting core competences within internal and external environments of the organization.

3.3. Method of research

This study employs purposeful sampling technique, and the headquarters, branches and representative offices of Çağdaş Drama Derneği (Contemporary Drama Association), which acts as the first and only non-governmental organization working on drama in Turkey for a very long time as an association specialized in a certain field, has been identified as the sampling group. An interview has been made with the chairman and deputy chairman of the executive committee from the headquarters of Contemporary Drama Association (Ankara), and with the chairmen of the executive committees of Eskişehir Branch, Istanbul Branch and Izmir Branch, and the members of the executive committees of the headquarters and branches, as well as the representatives tried to be contacted with the question form. The number of replied question forms is three. Totally five face to face interviews have been made and all three completed question forms have been obtained through the electronic environment.

The impact of core competencies to success at non-governmental organizations has been analyzed on the basis of a descriptive study. The interviews with the chairman and deputy chairman at the headquarters of the association, and the interviews with Istanbul, Izmir and Eskişehir branch chairmen have been voice recorded; transcribed, and the obtained data have been inspected with the content analysis. In addition, the news in the national media, the web site and archives of the association have been examined and the data obtained with the content analysis have been tested. Content analysis method has been chosen for the analysis of the research data. The participants were asked 21 questions in accordance with the previously prepared questionnaire, and the interviews were tape recorded with the participants' approvals and then they were transcribed. The conducted analyses were created from the mentioned records.

4. Findings and Evaluation

In studying factors influencing the success of the Contemporary Drama Association, the presentation of the organization as well as the external environment is primarily referred upon, subsequently the organization's assets and capabilities which have been identified to have effect on the success of the organization are explained and the hierarchy of core competences are put forth. The findings resulting from the interviews conducted and the content analysis of the reviewed documents shall be aimed to be given in line with the sub goals of our research.

4.1. General overview and environment

Officially founded at Ankara, in 1990 by scientists who have been conducted their studies in the field of creative drama since 1985, the Contemporary Drama Association is the first official educational institution and the first and only nongovernmental organization in Turkey active in creative drama discipline. In the publications of the association the total number of members in head office and branches has been indicated as 640 and the number of drama teachers educated in the association has been indicated as 171. The association has 12 representative offices in various provinces in Turkey and three branches in Istanbul, Izmir and Eskişehir respectively with their foundation dates. It is a member of IDEA (International Drama/Theater Education Association) and member of BAG. While the research's participants describe the mission of the association, they define it in general as "to introduce drama to various segments of the community by expanding its scope and to build together a drama life with people from all age groups and socio cultural levels in Turkey by making creative drama a discipline which is widely used and valid in the fields of art and education and to serve in the formation of creative individuals". It is observed that the managers of the association prefer to say "foresight, long term purposes, aims" instead of the concept of vision and express "aims towards the future" in line with their mission.

H.Ö.A: "... I prefer to say foresight rather than vision...aiming to expand creative drama in education, theater and social life. To perform our work with the foresight we have in line with the sound, qualified and ethical values and to install it. Raising qualified and specialized staff in this subject is the first part. That is, one of our most important tasks is to raise the staff who will generalize this area...."

N.A: "... It is considered, we consider that creative drama has a vital importance. That is, we can say that it has a perspective which aims, in every society, as well as in our society, to make creative drama reach wider communities, to expand and develop this domain not only in education but also in other disciplines as well as other areas, therefore aiming to form more contemporary and scientific minded as well as critically thinking individuals."

When the activity area of the Contemporary Drama Association; its legal, technological, economic, socio-cultural, demographic, politic dimensions and its competitors as well as cooperation are comprehensively studied, making a presentation to further explain conditions which have an effect on its success seem likely possible. In the last years, it is observed that the importance attached by the national and international education and art circles to creative drama is increasing. In this respect, both in the developed countries as well as in Turkey a drift from teacher centered learning towards learner centered approach and with the acceptance of creative drama as an outstanding value, this "young" discipline has started to take place in educational institutions and in art. CDA continues to exist as the first and only non-governmental organization in the field of creative drama and is competing in a dynamic and complex corporate area. In the analysis made, subject dimensions have been examined with the aim to support them with data and in this respect CDA as a young discipline has embraced creative drama and headed for domestic and international cooperation. Such collaborations are conducted both through the human capital of the leaders as well as the relations (IDEA etc) of the institution.

Factors which stand out by influencing the success of CDA as well as the core competences in the scope of the study are the legal environment, competitors, social responsibility and collaborations.

4.1.1 Legal dimension

Associations in Turkey operate under the supervision of the Associations Desk in the *Ministry of Interior*. According to the data updated in the date of 01.03.2011; 87482 associations are active. These associations have displayed a large growth since 2000 increasing their numbers by 1/3 and according to their foundation purpose, a civil society structure where associations focused on the social and cultural development of its members, where CDA is also included encompassing 17.60% of their total number is observed. (T.R. Ministry of Interior, Associations Department Presidency, 2011). In the interview conducted with the participants, it was indicated that associations similar to CDA being for public interest association would increase the quantity and quality of the services it provides, but that legal procedures in this subject are preventive. The Chairman of CDA indicates that its acquiring the status of association for public interest shall eliminate many obstacles and shall strengthen its hand in establishing relations and shall render them more independent economically:

H.Ö.A: "...One of the policies or foresights that I and my friends aim to realize since 2003 is to acquire the status of association operating in the public interest. This status may bring us this, but I don't know. Will it restrict what we shall be doing, but I don't think so, we shall be incredibly more comfortable in receiving economic support to our projects from institutions and corporations..." "....For this, we have to demonstrate our works, following reports from the ministry of interior, ministry of finance, ministry of education it has to be approved by the cabinet of ministers..."

The Ministry of Education, for trainings that cannot be provided at institutions directly connected to it or through the higher education institutions by formal education and/or mass education, ensures their provision by authorizing various institutions and finally by undersigning them with its own name. The subject of creative drama in Turkey is one of these subjects. The trainings CDA offer a Ministry of Education approved certification program. In addition to that, since CDA was established, it provides trainings in the subject of drama at the in-service trainings of the M.O.E as well as applied seminars directed to teachers within the capacities of the association.

E.E.: "...We are already conducting works both with the Ministry of Education as well as the Higher Education Council, certain things have been attempted through the previous works of our association, the works of our head office or the works of academic circles and the contributions from the circles we are in and currently obligatory or elective courses are being provided."

N.A: ".....We still fear that, for instance, the domain of creative drama might be misused, this disturbs us a lot, we think that people who are not sufficiently specialized in this area, should not work in the field without receiving adequate training. Therefore, when necessary, we apply to the Ministry of Education. We tell that this cannot be done like this, that it should be carried out differently. We try to tell them what creative drama is. For instance last year in Ankara, we provided seminars to 2000 school directors, administrators, managers, assistant managers....."

4.1.2. Competitors

The competitors of CDA in its field of activity are; State Theatres, City-municipality theaters, private theaters, private personal development institutions, other public institutions and institutions which have not been established to operate in the creative drama area but which have evaluated creative drama as a "side product-service".

EE: "First of all there are other institutions doing this. These institutions do not belong to the academic circles; naturally their foundations are not correct and structured. They either receive education from us and try to provide trainings there, certain friends become leader, or some learn without knowing through revelation or think that they know and use these words. Naturally, these are not things that we approve. As we are not profit-oriented, there are no institutions such as a NGO's, but there are institutions that are especially profit-oriented. Both in the context of leadership training as well as in the context of children. Especially in the context of children there are too many institutions trying to provide

creative drama training. Of course, if you ask whether they are very successful, unfortunately I shall be unable to say that they are. It is true for Izmir in particular as well as for Turkey in general. ”

AÖ: “.....And as there is no such equality, I don’t think that it’s correct to compare us with them. Because common components are needed in order to be able to compare. There is nothing in common. First of all, I know very well that there is no one in the city with ministry approved drama competency other than those working in the association’s branch. Secondly, the organizational form is different. Either they work somewhere. Or they don’t have a place at all. They move from school to school. Or a center which has courses in x areas says, says ok lets have this as well, to drama....

EE: “As we are not profit-oriented, there are no institutions such as a NGO’s, but there are institutions that are especially profit-oriented.”

AÖ: Course centers providing private lessons in certain fields of art, provide drama lessons as well. I frankly don’t know to what extent they are healthy or what are the results they provide. There are no Ministry approved associations.

AÖ: On institution perhaps, it exists in Ankara. Its program, MOE approved certificate program has been made by the association and its past dates back to three to five years. It followed a process towards frequency. Depending on the bureaucratic conditions, in the period of interruption, another institution obtained the authorization from the Board of Instruction and Education for the certificate competency program. The program it uses is our program.

AK: I know that there are three institutions other than us, active in creative drama area. Three of them are profit oriented.

4.1.3. Social responsibility projects and their collaborations

According to the information received from the CDA head office secretariat and through interviews conducted with the participants of the research as well as through the reports of the general assembly of the last period, it operates by benefiting from its relations as an international member with BAG (Bundesarbeit Gemeinschaft Theater und Spiel e.V.) and IDEA (International Drama Education Association) as well as from the personal relationships of its members it conducts works with specialists abroad and domestically with many state institutions led by the Ministry of Education, the Security General Directorate, Higher Education Council, public institutions related to the Ministry of Health, the University of Ankara, the University of Anadolu and Middle East Technical University, the penal institution of Ulucanlar, Intelligence Department, Ministry of Interior; with more than twenty non-governmental institutions and with private ventures.

4.2. Core competences and internal analysis of the organization

As a consequence of the analyses conducted, the model below displaying core competences of the head office and branches of the Contemporary Drama Association has been formed. In creating the model the chart of assets and values to be used in the internal analysis of the enterprise in the strategic management process of Ülgen and Mirze is taken as basis.

In this respect; as in the other non-governmental organizations its most important **material resource** being human resource; its **nonmaterial resource** being the academic knowledge and information of the volunteers from the foundation of the association onwards, its most important **talent**, the transfer of the subject information and experience and through this opening the path for social entrepreneurship and innovation by creating employment in this field of study, its **core competences**, decision making groups of the society in the domain of education and arts, its other nongovernmental organizations, led by higher education institutions have come forth as establishing result-oriented relationships and relationship

management. It is considered that the core competency of the organization, as differentiating competitive ability and competitive power, has provided a competitive edge over its competitors.

Data coded in the analysis phase are transformed into categories and each category has been arranged through creating sub themes and themes. Thus the process leading to the core competencies of the organization and the factors constituting the process have been summarized by correlating them with the main themes as well as sub themes and a hierarchy of core competencies has been created. The benefit of creating such hierarchy has been tried to show in the diagram below. The main themes which have been created have been arranged under four headings: resources, capacities, talents, core competences. (Javidan, 1998; 62) Sub themes discussed under these headings are enumerated as, for core competencies, establishing relations and managing them, for talents, interdisciplinary work, creating employment and service value; for capacities, branches, representative offices and units and for resources, physical resources, revenue resources, human resources, shared values and field information.

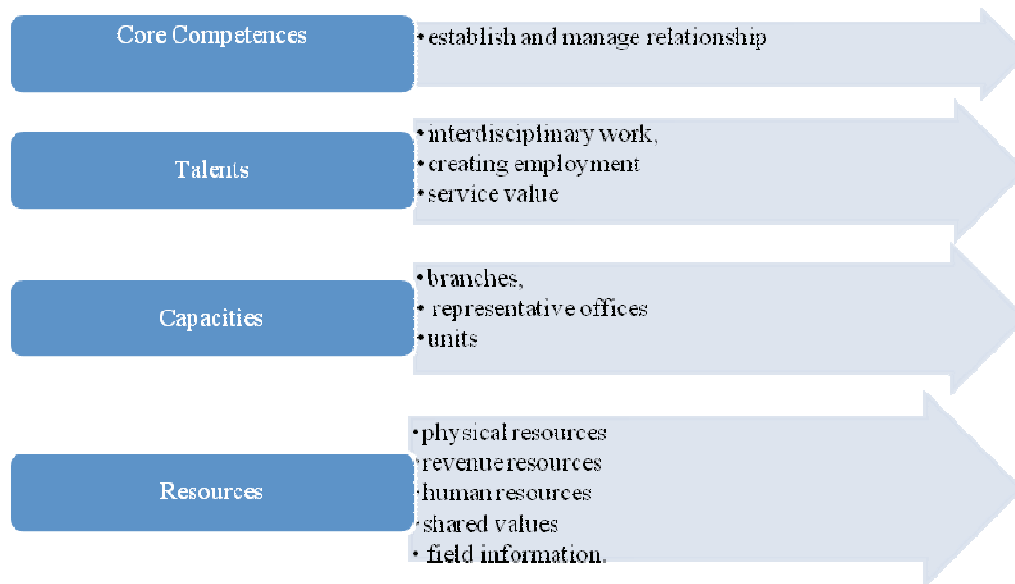


Figure 1. Core competences hierarchy

4.2.1. Resources

Resources that the organization has transformed through its capacities into its competencies; are studied under the sub themes of physical resources, revenue resources, human resources, shared values and field information.

Physical Resources; means the physical environment necessary for pursuing creative drama activities and whether CDA has such an environment at its head office, branches and representative offices or not. Physical resources come forth as an important variable in the nongovernmental organizations competing especially in private venture.

EE: “We try to maintain technical resources of these places as orderly and high level as possible.”

AK: “We are able to reach the information of a participant who has received creative drama training under the roof of Contemporary Drama Association at any place in Turkey. This also shows that we have a good communication network and a good archived documents culture. We have sufficient equipment to meet our needs in terms of facility, barcognition, and computers.”

H.Ö.A: “We have 2 ateliers and a place where the head office of our organization as well as all archives are located. These are locations that belong to us. Therefore this is our most important superiority. Apart from that, if we had a theatre hall, a multipurpose hall, it would constitute one of our sides which could be superior to many institutions in Turkey.”

Revenue resources, ensuring minimum requirements for CDA to continue its existence, show differences from many nongovernmental organizations. The organization, in addition to donations, subscription fees etc. that the other nongovernmental organizations receive, was able to design and implement revenue generating activities.

NA: “We attach great importance to the fact that it is carrying out its activities through its own resources, i.e the association being itself a subject that is able to decide about each work that it shall carry out.”

NA: “When necessary, we are in a position to personally transfer resources one by one from our own equity capital. Because we lead our life from other occupations. Therefore, we think that we have financial advantage in this respect.”

H.Ö.A: “We certainly receive payment from MOE and from the other ateliers that we set up. However this payment is never profit oriented, it is fully aimed at meeting the expense of this program, the salaries of the trainers as well as expenses such as rental, electricity, water, telephone etc. Furthermore, for a nongovernmental organization to be independent and autonomous, it is necessary that it has good financial strength. Therefore, obtaining this economic strength is only possible through donations it receives and projects it realizes as well as through revenues obtained from the ateliers in addition to such members. The most important revenue of our organization is this.”

Human resources; from the phases in the process of determining core competencies explained briefly above, regarding the subject and purposes of the study, it is observed that the most important heading regarding the subject and purposes of the study are human resources and the structure formed by the organization of other elements. Although there is a range of factors leading a nongovernmental organization to sustainable success, the organization examined in the case study has brought forward its competency in establishing and managing relations by developing a structure of its own.

AK: “We are an institution formed by academicians and specialists who have created this field in Turkey and who continue to structure and develop it. We primarily feel very privileged and lucky in this subject.”

NA: “We have, again due to being an association, members of very different social and academic status. There are many people who have made great efforts in the domain. Both in the domain of theater

and in the domain of education as well as in other domains. That is, we have great richness wealth in human resources. There are relations provided by these human resources. It enables us to establish relations within the country and abroad. For instance, when we decide about holding an international seminar, by activating our connections abroad, we can reach very quickly the specialist in that area.”

H.Ö.A: “Secondly, our most important difference is qualified manpower, staff qualified in its area, and having quite a few academic and scientific staff. We do have qualified personnel, and it is not a small number, we now have a data indicating us that they are more than 150 who can be called as qualified only at the drama association, having completed their education. 150 active leaders.”

In order to understand the interaction between the participants and the organization, it necessary to examine the participant structure of the association. The human resources of the organization are differentiated under the following captions:

- a. Board of Directors
- b. Trainers, leaders
- c. Leader candidates (participants of the certificate program)
- d. Atelier, seminar participants
- e. Volunteers (those working on voluntary basis in the organizations)
- f. Professionals (secretariat)

Subject human resource is employed in various positions within the organization. In this respect, when abilities are enumerated, the ability to acquire as trainer and participant part of those come to the certificate program and who are willing comes first. In addition, participants are employed in various projects and the approach of mutual benefit is activated. The participants, whether through a pragmatic move towards receiving a professional certificate, or through curiosity, contact the organization and enhances the quantity and quality of this relationship, becomes related to the organization sometimes as a participant or as a manager and with this role, the organization benefits from the social capital of the participants and becomes related to other organizations.

In this respect, it must be indicated that persons in the Contemporary Drama Association Board or in the management boards of the branches are mostly members at other nongovernmental organizations and that they are sometimes actors who are founders. In summary, the association creates its own participants and raises participants, volunteers and managers. All participants of the research have received training at the association or at the lessons given at the university by the founders of the association and four of the participants have been trained by working at various levels in the head office of the center. The fact that Branch Managers in Izmir and Eskişehir have worked in the center in Ankara before the foundation of their branch is a concrete example of its management training approach. Furthermore, the fact that section heads at two universities in Turkey providing graduate education in the field of drama are also managers at CDA is also remarkable.

H.Ö.A: “...At an association with 400 members, if 100 persons arrive, democracy is ensured by the majority of the one fourth. I am 100% sure of that, all associations, foundations even cooperatives operate in this manner. That is, they are several quantitatively, whereas in active work, what we call active members are few, and in the planning of members we are slowly shifting towards the following; let

us rather be a professional organization, that is, with members who are rather drama teachers and leaders, but also who are active members. As a consequence our most important plan is to activate our members. ...”

Shared values are of great importance when the intangible assets of the organizations are considered. When the data of the researches are evaluated, this caption points out to three different sub themes being image, modernity and nongovernmental organizations. Statements of the participants support that certain of the subject sub themes may be evaluated sometimes as shared value and sometimes as a message to be given to the organization stakeholders.

- *Image*: participants of the research bring forth an image which displays parallelism in the relationship that the association establishes with the participants with the mission and vision.

EE: *As persons who have brought this field to Turkey are heading us, and in this context people come to us because our name has more quality.*

EE: *We have been operating since the 90’s as an official institution. There is an association which is present for 20 years. We are a very serious association having representative offices in various provinces of Turkey and working actively in 14 provinces. And we try to take it seriously to the utmost level.*

EE: *Something that I have observed for a very long time is the fact that the academic staff is included in the process. This really differentiates the process. It seriously changes the approach both from the perspective of other associations as well as from the perspective of the public, the community.*

- *Contemporariness*: The organization brings forth the approach of modernity as a value shared since its establishment.

NA: *“Pay attention to the word contemporary. Thinking about Turkey in the 1990’s, following especially 12 September, it’s a period where new conservatism is increased and where privatizations are made and where the perspectives of the educational institutions have slowly started to change. It is something which has been stated to refer to the modernity defined by the republican ideology in the sense of enhanced republic, enhanced laicism, enhanced modernity. It is also an assertive thing, in the sense that putting the word contemporary before the name of the association brings about a certain approach.”*

EE: *The image of being modern. We attach a lot of importance to the word contemporary placed in front of our name. What we mean by contemporary is not only catching the era, but placing the true values to its era. It is very important for us to show that we are republican, that we are pro democracy. We show it to the public when necessary. We participate to certain manifestations. We issue declarations when appropriate.*

- *Nongovernmental democratic organization*: Participants use the word nongovernmental democratic organization instead of civil society organization.

AK: *“Nongovernmental democratic organizations are mentioned as civil society organization in the new terminology but I prefer to call it nongovernmental democratic organization and try to use it. Because you have to be democratic. It is necessary to have a democratic operation. I think that the participation must be based on a certain collective spirit, a certain division of labor and I think that we*

are practicing it. To believe in what we are doing, that is to our area of activity, sincerity and auto control. These three things hold us firmly, and keep us alive.”

H.Ö.A: “We are the first nongovernmental democratic organization in this field. Nongovernmental democratic organizations are mass organizations where members are united, where equals are gathered in the framework of by-laws in line with the laws to elect their representatives and which conduct their works within the legislation. In our organization too, in this sense, is included within a mass organization operating in the field of education and culture.”

Knowledge in the academic field is one of the most important resources upon which all participants of the research are in agreement. Certain participants perceive this resource as a fundamental resource.

EE: “Knowledge is what sustains them morally. I can also say value attached to knowledge. I mean I can also say our policy of knowledge. We try to share knowledge with everyone. We are aware that knowledge is power. And as long as we are able to provide that knowledge our resources drawn from the public never dry up.”

AÖ: “The official term is twenty years. There is also a preparatory phase of ten years. There is an upper management that we are able to call every hour. There is a mass of experiences brought by a period of more than twenty years.”

AK: “We are an institution founded by academicians and specialists who have created and who still continue to structure this field in Turkey. I can comfortably say that our difference from other institutions operating in this field is our domination of the main field. Primarily we feel very privileged and very lucky in this subject.”

4.2.2. Capacities

In the literature, capacities are mentioned as tools used in transforming material and nonmaterial resources into capabilities. (Besler, 2004) The capacities that CDA has within its head office and outside are; the branches in Istanbul, Izmir, Eskişehir, the representative offices in Kocaeli, Hatay, Trabzon, Mersin, Adana, Antalya, Denizli, Çanakkale, Van, Trabzon, Şanlıurfa, Bursa, and commissions and units operating under the names of Dance – Mobility Unit, Literature Unit, Folk Dances Unit, Museum Unit, Music Unit, Creative Drama in Special Education, Project Generation Unit, Cinema and Creative Drama Unit, Theatre Unit.

H.Ö.A: “We are a registered youth club at the same time consequently we have sub commissions at various units ranging from modern dance, i.e. ballroom dancing to folk dancing, from literature unit to cinema unit, from special education unit to theater unit from language unit that is foreign language teaching unit to children and disabled persons unit. Intensive works are done.”

4.2.3. Talents

While ACD is directing the above mentioned resources and the capacity that will evaluate it, according to the results of the research, there are three skill captions appearing. The first one is interdisciplinary work, the second one is creating employment and the third is creating service quality.

Interdisciplinary works, In the works conducted by ACD with both public institutions, as well as private ventures, it is observed that it is using almost all availabilities of the creative drama discipline which is a rich and flexible discipline.

EE: “*For the public outside, for people who have no relations at all with the Contemporary Drama Association, we have a chamber music group. We give chamber music concerts three times a year. We are bringing in experts in areas which seem unrelated to us, such as photography, fairytales, psychology, archeology, history, science, various areas; pedagogues, etc. may also be included in our area, or may not be but we try to plan things that would be for the benefit of the public.*”

AÖ: *We especially have a study conducted with the wardens working in the penal institutions.*

AK: *As we are very close to the discipline of theater our warmest relations are with the transfers we make to the discipline of theater. Furthermore in the level of the units’ operation, we conducted works such as cinema, scenario writing, short film making, also literature workshops, with the purpose of transferring and presenting creative drama to the area of literature.*

Creating employment is a possibility provided to participants of ACD within the organization through the units and through the certification process outside the organization. This possibility plays sometimes a decisive role in the relations that volunteers establish with the association.

N.A.: “*At the beginning, in the founding of the association such a thing does not exist, but later, with the expansion of creative drama, perhaps with its taking root, we can perhaps further explain this root, it became an employment area. A domain that we may call creative drama teaching. Especially in the private schools, they started to hire creative drama teachers. I think that the way will be clearer in the future.*”

N.A.: “*...as this domain is an employment area, people who join our leadership program are mostly as I have said before are trainers. Those who participated mostly were those who had been previously teaching, now, stepping back I can say that students, also university students represent most of our participants.*”

Quality of Service; it represents the approach of volunteers and participants towards the drama services they receive. Participants of the research are associating the sustainability feature of the service they provide with its quality.

EE: “*We are an institution which is conducting academic studies since 1985. In other words we take this matter very seriously. We really split hairs. We do have a program and we try to execute this program in an appropriate manner.*”

AK: “*A trainer of trainers must absolutely practice 440 hours of a certification program of 320 hours. Therefore we insist very much on practicing these 440 hours. We do not make concessions from our principles.*”

AK: “*In fact I think that what draws 90% of our participants to us is their acknowledgement of our mastery, our predominance in academic knowledge in this domain.*”

NA: “*We attach importance to raising our participants in the subject of creative drama as persons who pay attention to ethic principles who know their limits and who are more scientific...*”

H.Ö.A: It is always our company which is doing the innovation and pioneering. Other institutions always imitate this.”

H.Ö.A: “To complete and conclude the project, the activity that we have started without fail. This is another one of our core competences. To conclude without fail. We do not leave it hanging in the mid air.”

H.Ö.A: “We have the capacity to take drama education to every place throughout Turkey very fast and easily.”

H.Ö.A: “We consider as competence our leadership in creating resources, crating programs in many areas.”

4.2.4. Core Competences

CDA, with the studies it has conducted officially during the last 21 years and in total for over 25 years, and by performing almost all of them through its own resources, has established a “drama life” with more than 4500 people, it is a nongovernmental organization which has made 25 publications, conducted activities under 5 different captions and has organized itself in 11 provinces, with its roles as founder, participant and supporter at national and international levels, which has been a resource provider to many nongovernmental organizations, and which pursues its existence by competing with private institutions in its area of activity. Taking into consideration the innovative capacity of the institution as well as its capacity to raise specific human resource, this study points out that the main factor ensuring the organization’s success within the institution as well as outside, its core competence is the capacity to establish and manage relations. In this respect the organization, by using its capacities to operate in different areas and to provide quality service has developed its capability to establish and manage relationships “which cannot be easily imitated and which provides competitive advantage by differentiating itself from its competitors”. This capability is based on specialized human resource coming from different disciplines, and is expanding itself with voluntary purposes, though branches, representative offices and units. The core competence is being developed with a leadership model that the association managers try to institutionalize since the establishment of the association. In the scope of the research; in the electronic mail coming from the general secretariat of the organization, leadership features are defined as “democratic characteristics of leaders: tolerant, patient, must not interfere with personal rights, at equal distance to participants, without discrimination, volunteer and at the same time academic. (Contemporary Drama Association, 2011)

Such capacity and talents present to the association a portfolio of participants such as children, grown-ups, housewives, lawyers, businessman, teacher, people in the tourism business, art teachers, players etc. of different age, gender, professional group. As a consequence, the association is benefiting from the human capital of the participants from different socio cultural levels, of different age, different areas in reaching other social and economic networks and pursues its relationship. In brief, the finding resulting from the research data is the fact that the most important competence of the association is its capacity to

establish and manage a relationship which creates values that create abstract and concrete values from abstract relationships obtained through non material resources.

EE: *“We are bringing to the public specialists from different areas which seem to be unrelated to us such as photography, fairytales, psychology, archeology, history, science.”*

EE: *“We find specialists from our milieu, from other cities, and bring them if necessary. We try to organize conferences. In these conferences the public is naturally very important for us. While we are aiming the public in our Tuesday conversations and themed meetings, we aim our own participants at the other leadership trainings.*

AÖ: *“There is a senior management that we can easily call upon. We can easily call on x subject on a friend who is not in the management for a moment. We can easily knock on the door of the head office.*

AÖ: *“Nowadays we are planning eighteenth of our international seminars. Without this academic accumulation, communicating with a professor from x university, establishing relations would probably not be possible I think.”*

AK: *“We communicate the other nongovernmental organizations in line with our purposes. Youth Re-autonomy Foundation of Turkey, Lösev, Community Centers, SAHAÇEK Social Service and Children Protection Institution are the ones that I can mention in the first instance. In addition we cooperate with educational institutions. For instance with Kadir Has University. At the 17th meeting we had arranged Creative Drama Congress at their location. The result was so good that they stated in written that they wished us to organize such an activity each year. We do have such cooperation.”*

NA: *“By using our relations, with the advantage of being an association, we activate different locations and places physically, for instance there is a place called Ütopya in Kazan, this is something that is conducted under our informal relationship.”*

NA: *“For example, we have representative offices in ten cities, the sustainability of these representative offices or our opening representative offices are relations related to that social capital.”*

H.Ö.A: *“We are even the first and only institution arranging international symposiums, congresses and contacting foreign specialists on a one to one basis and still continuing to do so.”*

H.Ö.A: *“In this subject, we are the only and first institution having a creative drama magazine, publishing an international refereed magazine limited almost to 4-5 magazines in Turkey and even in Europe and almost worldwide.”*

5. Conclusion

The subject of core competences have been mostly a subject related to strategic management of profit oriented organizations. As a consequence, resource based strategies in the literature or problems such as the place of core competences in the internal analysis of the enterprise are generally considered through *profit oriented enterprises*. Subjects such as *management of nongovernmental organizations, social entrepreneurship* and researches related to how these studies can be sustainable and developable are yet newly occupying the agenda of researchers. The research which has been conducted in the subject of

strategic management and non-profit organization, both regarding the subject it deals with as well as regarding its method of discussion has a pioneering identity.

In the research, predominantly the internal environment of a nongovernmental organization which has left behind 25 years since its establishment; its resources, capacities and capabilities have been analyzed and a core competences hierarchy has been formed and an attempt to draw a framework concerning the share of core competences in a successful nongovernmental organization was made. Taking into consideration that a nongovernmental organization which aims to reach its organizational goals efficiently by specializing in a special area has unique dynamics and organizational approach, a model has been displayed and an attempt to create a procedure for subsequent researches was made.

When the organization subject to research is evaluated within a hierarchy of core competences; it appears that its most important resource is the human resource, its most capacity, the units it has, its talents the ability to work in different areas and ability to provide quality service, whereas its core competence can be conceptualized as the ability “to establish and manage relationships” with the cumulative contribution of all these components.

The ability to establish and manage relationships is set to work as an all-purpose tool in the regeneration of the activities and organization approach of CDA. Differentiating into several dimensions, human resource which has been defined as differential feature by the participants of the research it provides the potential to establish relations both in the level of individuals one by one as well as in the level of the organization in an integrated manner, and the capability to establish and manage relationships serves to create new participants and therefore new relationships. This cycle enables new branches, representative offices and units to be established and different talents to be included in the cycle. This mechanism which cannot be easily imitated by the competitors of the organization may be summarized in this manner. On the other hand, every new attempt made in the organization has an effect of the legal framework by forming an institutional framework and provides a ground for social responsibility projects and collaborations. As a consequence the ability to establish and manage relationships which is the core competence of the organization makes a multi directional and a comprehensive model useful in the external and internal environment of the organization.

As a conclusion; when the success criteria of the research are taken into consideration, it represents an example which can be explained as focused on the perspective of core competences regarding its competitive aspect, its innovative capability, and its approach to institutionalizing shared objectives and values under the captions of self-realization, lastingness and having efficient access to organizational objectives.

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