

**ความสอดคล้องทางวัฒนธรรมระหว่างองค์การกับปัจเจกบุคคล :
ปัจจัยสำคัญที่ลดความขัดแย้งขององค์การ
CULTURAL CONGRUENCE BETWEEN ORGANIZATION
AND INDIVIDUAL : A VITAL FACTOR FOR DECREASING
ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT**

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บทคัดย่อ

ความสอดคล้องทางวัฒนธรรม เป็นปัจจัยสำคัญสำหรับการจัดการองค์การในยุคปัจจุบัน โดยเฉพาะในการบริหารงานบุคคล เนื่องจากเป็นปัจจัยที่สามารถลดความขัดแย้งขององค์การ และก่อให้เกิดความสมดุลระหว่างค่านิยมเชิงปทัสฐานและค่านิยมเชิงพฤติกรรมระหว่างองค์การกับปัจเจกบุคคล บทความนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อชี้ให้เห็นว่าปัจจัยความสอดคล้องทางวัฒนธรรมสามารถลดความขัดแย้งระหว่างปัจเจกบุคคลและองค์การลงได้อย่างไร วัฒนธรรมองค์การได้รับการยอมรับว่าเป็นพื้นที่ร่วมที่สามารถตอบสนองความต้องการและความสำเร็จของชีวิตองค์การทั้งสองฝ่าย คือฝ่ายขององค์การและฝ่ายของปัจเจกบุคคล ข้อเสนอแนะคือทั้งองค์การและปัจเจกบุคคลต่างต้องตระหนักและเข้าใจในอัตลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของตนเอง และพยายามปรับตัวให้เกิดความสอดคล้องทางวัฒนธรรมทั้งสองฝ่าย

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ABSTRACT

Cultural congruence is a key factor for managing today's organizations, particularly in personnel management since it can decrease the conflict of the organization and lead to the balance of normative and behavioral values between organization and individual. This article is intended to elucidate that how this factor can lessen the conflict between the individual and the organization. Cultural organization is considered as an area that both organizational life and individual life can meet their needs and success. The conclusions offer beneficial caveats that both organization and individual have to aware of their culture and choose culture that most suitable for both.

KEYWORDS: Cultural congruence, Organizational culture, Individual culture

1. Preamble

Nowadays, it's widely accepted that a vital factor in the selection of new employees in any organization is a factor called "cultural fit". Cornwall and Perlman (1990) concluded that culture is the most important criterion for selecting, hiring and firing employees. On account of the rapid change of managerial context in this century, the former paradigm 'Put the right man into the right job' is now inadequate. Organization must pay more attention to a much broader and more important factor including organizational characters and employee's identity. Handy (1991) stated, "Inappropriate cultures lead to unhappiness and inefficiency" (p.10). Every organization desires for employees whose attitudes and behaviors are compatible with those of the organization.

2. The importance of "cultural fit" management

Organization cultures are the new vogue topic in a prescriptive as opposed to a descriptive sense. In effect, the concept of an organizational culture is another expression of realization that organization itself takes on features which can be characterized as organizational personality and character. Organizations are thus perceived as having their ways of thinking, feeling and acting just as human individuals do. Not only be considered in descriptive sense as 'soft criterion', but organizational culture is understood in prescriptive sense as creating the normative context for shaping behavior of members as well. The great advantage of the approach is that it starts with real organizations and behaviors. Organizational culture theorists (Ott, 1989; Bolman and Deal, 2003; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003) asserted that organizations have their own cultures, roles, and needs for achievement such as progress, reputation and successful employees. On another side, individuals are different in many aspects and have their own ways of living and working. If organizational culture does not match with individual one, there will have conflict between both sides. Thus, cultural-fit management is the best solution for decreasing this conflict. This approach can completely fill in the deficiency and limitation of those prior concepts or theories, which failed to decreasing conflict, since it helps both organization and individual meet their values, priorities, needs and proper behaviors. The congruence between both cultures can lead to the success of both sides. At present, experts on human resource management realize that culture should be a major determining factor in hiring employees, given the fact that an organization is look for those who fit well with the organization norm and culture since they tend to work better and stay longer with organization. A best organization does a superb job about its values and priorities and it selects people who will resonate with what it offers and succeed within its culture. There will be a mistake and damage if the work pattern of organization doesn't match with the pattern of employees. Manager needs to know what an organization's true culture is, the one that the logic of the work demands, or the one that exists in the existing complex of the individuals and their cultures (Handy, 1991). A better cultural fit means a person will be happier on the job, will want to stay, and will have greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Saks, 2004). Without best cultural fit, the chances for success and retention plummet; with best cultural fit, the chances for success ascend.

3. The conflict between individual and organization

From the past until present, every manager has been coping with the same old question, ‘what makes Johnny tick?’, or what is the key success factor used for motivating people to satisfy with their work? It’s believed that employees’ work satisfaction leads to work efficiency as well as organization efficiency. In addition to figuring out what the satisfactory factors which can lead to happiness, work satisfaction, and the meaning of life in the workplace are, manager needs to know those causes of unsatisfactory factors which can lead to employee stress and in effect lead to conflict between individual and organization. Manager should consider the internal and external motivation factors to understand the needs that arise within the soul of each worker.

The author has studied the conflict of individual that leads to employee’s dissatisfaction and affect the organization's ineffectiveness, and concluded that there are at least five root causes of the conflict between individual and organization: bureaucratic situations (Merton, 1952), (b) ethics of the organization (Denhardt, 1999), (c) employee’s alienation (Sartre, 1976), (d) goal conflict (Argyris, 1965), and (e) managerial context (Stewart, 2002), as illustrated in Diagram 1.

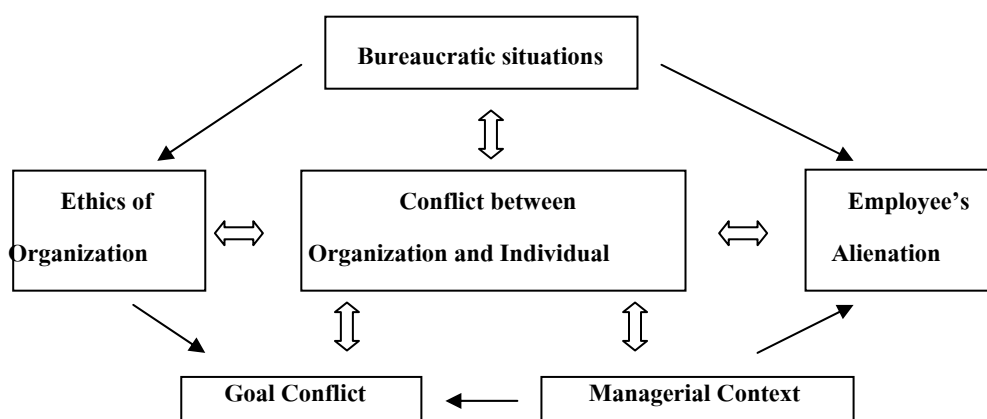


Diagram 1: Causes of conflict between organization and individual

Source: Diagram by Jittaruttha, C., 2006 : 60

(a) Bureaucratic situations

Old problem of Thai government officials is about their attitudes and behaviors, which continually derived from the values and culture of ‘patronage system’ and those of ‘bureaucratic polity system’. Such values were considered as barriers to public sector management. Government officials always have conflict and ask for the merit system. While the critical issue of bureaucracy is the grandeur of bureaucracy with command-based hierarchy, which created a series of repetitive behavior called ‘trained incapacity’ (Merton, 1952). Since the work of bureaucracy is the repetitive tasks in the organization or system which is produced by long-linked

technology process (Robbins, 1990). Its consequence is the epidemic of 'a cold dish breakfast dish' or 'paralyzing' style of work that make a person disgust and ask for his/her own values.

In the old paradigm of public administration, a government official was seen as a starving worker who sought for security in bureaucracy. As for New Public Management, a government official is considered as a worker who participated in competitive market mechanism. In fact, a government official should be a person whose incentive and reward is placed on higher motivation factors than those of wages or job security. That means a government official is expected to make a difference in the lives of people. (Denhardt 1993; Perry and Wise 1990; Vinzant 1998).

(b) Ethics of the organization

On studying public administration, there is a vital concept proposed by the action theorists group that 'ethics of organization' had domineered and influenced to human life. They believe that the most critical issue of public management is the conflict of organization derived from the relationship between individual and organization. Machine bureaucracy organization (Mintzberg, 1983) has lessened the value of human life by its principle of hierarchical structure (Weber, 1968) and that of division of labor (Gulick and Urwick, 1937; Smith, in Tyson and Jackson, 1992). Handy (1991) pointed that individual is called 'human resource', which means resource that can be planned, prescribed, deployed, and changeable. So individual is only an interchangeable human part in organization. This concept is a denial of humanity. Employees feel that they have been reduced their dignity and individuals' imperative, and conflict arose.

Value to the efficiency of bureaucracy is widely thought in the early management as well as the one-best way to control the operations and employees in organizations. Such paradigm illustrated an individual as the only part or added component that expands the tools and machinery used in organization. (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003) It was believed that money and motivation by fear is the factors which can make the work assignment complete. (Taylor, 1947) The world heritage of mankind has been filled with many bureaucracy organizations that have grown larger. Denhardt (1984) has proposed challenging debate that modern organizations thrive in the usurpation of freedom and responsibility of individual's decision making and create a 'smoky curtain' called 'Ethics of the Organization' to domineer human life. Thus, the knowledge established from logical and reason principle of Simon (1976) had blinded us from the danger of that 'smoky curtain'. Instead of looking for the best performance of manufacturing process or achievements of organization, manager should focus on developing the individual firstly.

(c) Employee's alienation

The philosophers of French Existentialism believe that freedom is the most valuable thing for human being. Sartre (1976) stated that 'Man is condemned to be free'. So the ethics of organization, which seized our freedom and responsibility to 'choose' and 'determine', has made individuals in organizations

disable to use their competency on decision-making. This circumstance effects to the conflict of individuals and leads them to 'alienation' state. Alien individuals will be fed up with work life and will be lost of their 'natural of human being' (Kant in Walford, 2003)

(d) Goal conflict

Efforts to decrease the conflict between individual and organization enable scholars to offer various guidance and theory focused on participative management and democratic values. (McGregor, 1960; Argyris, 1965; Maslow, 1970). But conflict between organization and individual is still there.

De Tocqueville (1990) explained that those approaches couldn't reduce the conflict between individual and organization because (a) organizations are committed to forgo their prerogative too much, (b) requirements of meeting the needs of individual, in term of humanitarian reasons, is too high for organizations, and (c) those concepts can not educe in large public organizations. It is difficult for both parties to review or reduce their expectations and obligations. It also appears that both individual and organization has become a prisoner of a self-built model (Wind, Crook, and Gunther, 2006), which resulted in conflicts between the two parties. While organizations are trying to achieve their goals, those goals increase conflict within the individual's.

(e) Managerial context

In the 21st century, human resource management on the contrary needs to pay serious attention to an employee as a separate individual not as a group of individual as it used to do in the past. The core differences among individuals in an organization require that it's imperative for an organization to customize its policies and practices to engage people, keep them satisfied and keep them motivated. There have far greater differences in priorities between people and organization nowadays. For example, we no longer need to have all the people in the same place at the same time to get work done. There is now the core-periphery model with people working in the core while others work outside of the core. The old corporate models grew out of the Machine Age, and that age is passing rapidly. We are now in the Globalization of Talent Age, based on knowledge and technology (Stewart, 2002). The rise of nontraditional work practices such as outsourcing, contracting or telecommuting which surrounds us had transformed the tasks of management to be much more complicated and needed to be customized than ever before. In order to survive and grow, management system in any organization should be revisited and modified to suit a particular individual or task.

4. Individual differences

Organization management has made an attempt to lessen that conflict and to seek for motivation factor responded to employees' need and satisfaction for many decades. Until present, we are still looking for the answer of "why do we do the work we do?" In the very old day, the answer was easy, "we are doing it because we need money in order to live our life". Now it's widely claimed that money, for many people and institutions, is more symbolic than real. We generate more wealth than we really need to live on. We're looking for

something more. Handy (1997, 1998) stated that ‘Money becomes a rather crude measure of success’.

The existence of human being needs for wealth of soul more than wealth of life. As to Morley (1946), he said that there were three ingredients of good life: learning, earning and yearning. Individual always desires for good life and good work. The search for quality of work life focuses on the search for meaning of life in the workplace and needs for work satisfaction. It is much harder for manager, accustomed to former approach, to face with various new challenges stemming from new paradigm of work. Not only dealing with individual differences of the employee known as “knowledge worker” or “intellectual asset” (Stewart, 2002) but manager is now facing with new organizational conditions resulting from changes in both technical and conceptual complexity. Need, priority, value, characteristic and behavior of both organization and individual are varied much greater than one can see in the past. At present, organization and people have unlimited choice to fulfill their desirability.

5. Organizational and individual culture

Organizational culture vitally and inseparably relates to individual culture (Handy, 1991). A different group of people has different way of life, different way to give meaning to things, different values and behaviors. Thus, organizational culture is dictated by the values, beliefs, behaviors and norms which permeate organization members and is expressed through the words and behaviors of each member in organization. It reveals organizational life, both organization and individual sides, and creates particular pattern or way of its identity. Culture functions as an organizational control mechanism, informally approving or prohibiting behaviors (Ott, 1989). It expresses the ideas and overall values that define an organization and has a significant and long-lasting influence on its members (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003). Though culture may be a ‘soft criteria’ and it may seem subjective to an outsider, but manager knows how she/he wants her/his organization to run and she/he has an obligation to make the tough decisions to make sure that the culture develops in a way that is consistent with the values, ethics and vision of organization. That is why manager has to use insight to assess how the job candidate’s character and personality, not just skills, will fit into the organizational culture

6. Cultural congruence: Equilibrium of organizational life and individual life

Ideal outcomes are achieved when there is a best cultural fit between the requirements and opportunities of the organization and the capacities and priorities of the employee. While organizations are selecting people whose core needs or highest priorities can be met. In turn, individuals have to know what most matters to them at this time, and the conditions in which they're most likely to flourish. The wider range of organizational conditions that were created by the advent of borderless organizations means there are no ‘best organizations’ or ‘best employees’.

There's no one size that fits all. Instead, there's a best cultural fit, a match between an individual's values, priorities, and behaviors and those of an organization, which also decreases conflict between organization and individual (Bardwick, 2001).

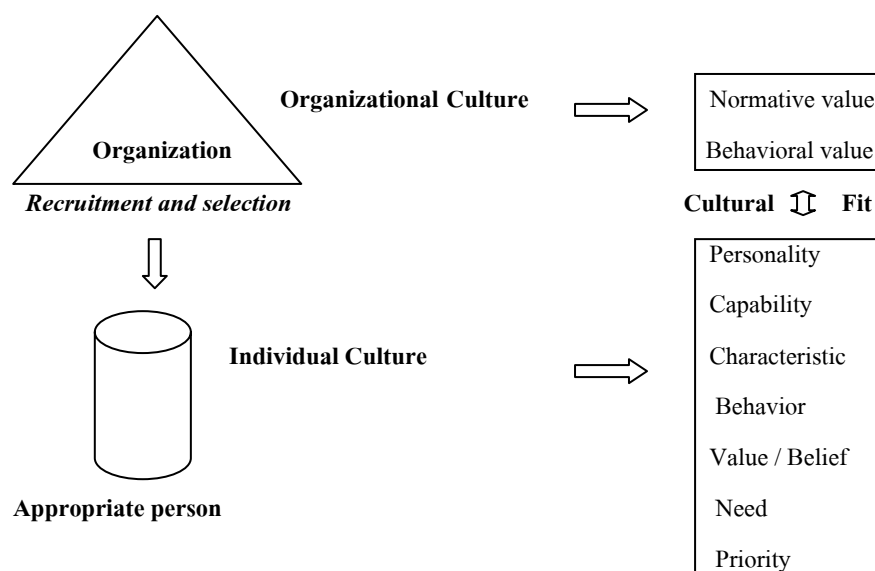


Diagram 2: Cultural-fit management

Source: Diagram by Jittaruttha, C., 2006 : 38

When conflicts arise, the solution is to consider the needs of the individual or group, and the needs of the organization. Cultural fit, which is at the heart of employee satisfaction and organizational success, requires that people and organizations really know what they're like and what they want to become. Best cultural fit, compatibility between what the organization requires and the employee desires, leads to high motivation, comfort, and success. On the contrary, bad cultural fit leads to discomfort, high stress, and failure. Employees will be stressful if they have to work at an organization with inconsistent values, unrewarding, even depressing at times. No matter how great the position and salary, if they're working in a caustic, understaffed and unethical culture, they'll feel unfulfilled. In the selection process, when recruiters or managers say that a candidate 'fit' or 'doesn't fit' to explain why a candidate should be offered a job or not offered one, what interviewers are really saying is the candidate fits or doesn't fit into the organizational culture (Bardwick, 2001; Neece, in Hardy and Taylor, 2005).

7. Decreasing of conflict in organization

Cultural congruence can decrease the conflict between individual due to (a) a well-fit person of bureaucracy organizational culture will be satisfied with the predictable work, exact role, steady task and power

of discretion, (b) an individual will be free from the values of organization for he/she can choose an organization that appropriate with her/his individual culture, (c) a free-will individual will not be aligned or deceptive from the problem of 'role ambiguity' in organization, (d) an individual whose individual culture matches with organizational culture will meet both of the same needs and goals, of which the same culture, which leads to goal achievements by appropriate means, and (e) culture will be adapted continually due to managerial context, so individual and organization need to adjust their values and behaviors to succeed in accomplishing.

8. Recommendation and conclusions

Both organization and individual need to be aware of the correct understanding in their own cultures, thus individuals are able to consider and find organizations where the culture and their values can coexist. Organizational culture should be studied and understood not only from the organizational side but from the individual dimension as well. Equilibrium point in the relationship between both parties is the right culture, the congruence of values and behaviors between individual and organization. The cultural congruence between both can decrease conflict of organization and lead to the success of both individual and organization. There's no one size that fits all.

The new paradigm is 'put the right man into the right place, then put the right job to the right person.'

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