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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: THE CULTURE PARADOX REVISITED

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Abstract. This paper proposes a methodology for Cultural Redesign, so as to be able to match or mismatch personality dispositions of individual agents with the prevailing Organizational Culture, in order to reinforce and embed or change and transform the present culture correspondingly in accordance with the strategic aims of the Organization. In order to do so:

- Identifies the combinations of in-born and socially acquired characteristics of individual organizational members and their relationship.
- Concentrates on the elements that are used to “whisper things” and guide behavior of and in organizations in an overt and indirect way, thus resulting to the culture formation.
- Identifies the culture paradox between the organizational culture and the learning organization.
- Focuses on the dyadic personality dispositions vis-à-vis the prevailing organizational culture character and the resulting matches or/and mismatches.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Change, Organizational Development, Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1970's several organizational theorists have become aware of the relationship between Organizational Culture, Management and Performance. The triggering cause of such an awareness has been the rise of Japan as an international player in the world markets. A nation with virtually no natural resources began to establish a solid reputation for quality, reliability, value added and service, becoming thus a crucial player in international markets. Most theorists have agreed that the culture and the way of life of that country have played a major role in that transformation.

Murray Sayle has offered an intriguing theory justifying the Japanese success. He believes that Japanese organizations combine and act upon the cultural values of the rice field solidarity with the spirit of service of the Samurai. (Sayle, 1982). The former helps to explain the solidarity of the Japanese worker in the factory, while the latter accounts for many characteristics of management and for the pattern of interorganizational relationships that have played such a vital role in Japan's economic success. As a result «culture» has become a very popular and mystifying topic in management since the early 1980's, forcing western management thinkers to look close into the causality relationships between their own countries' culture and organizational life (Sweeney, 1995).

In this article-irrespectively of the cultural value system under which the organization operates – we will focus on the imperative need for Cultural Redesign as the result of the need for change, amidst the conservatism of the cultural phenomenon and propose ways to alleviate the organizational rigidity under conditions of Hyper – Turbulence.

A SYSTEMIC EXEGESIS

Organizations are socio-technical systems which operate and perform as open systems in a particular societal environment. As open systems, they do not solely receive tangible inputs from their environment of operation, but intangible ones as well. So organizations utilize inputs in the context of material, financial and human resources so as to generate outputs that are fed back into the supra system. The last category of resources is the provider not only of the necessary skills, knowledge and information deemed necessary for a particular role, but also of certain intangible and covert ones like, norms, attitudes, beliefs and values and generally a particular way of thinking, feeling and acting. The type, breadth, pervasiveness, resiliency of the above «soft inputs» apparently originates from the societal value system in which the organization operates and performs. The implication of the above is that the organization is a part of the societal system in which it operates and evidently the «soft inputs» utilized come from, to a great extent, the values, beliefs and ways that the society of operation embodies espouses and practices.

The organizational «culture», however, should not be treated as phenomenon different from the national culture in which it operates. An organization is a social system of different nature from its suprasystem of operation; the organizational members usually have had a certain influence in their decision to join the organization and they are involved in it only during working hours and one day may leave the organization again; not so with their suprasystem.

According to Kluckhohn (Kluckhohn, 1951) culture-which may be defined in many ways-is quoted as follows: *"Culture consists of patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including the embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values"*.

Culture is to human collectivity what personality is to an individual. Culture determines those shared elements that give meaning and identity to the human group like personality determines the identity of an individual (Kilmann, 1985). The taken for granted set of assumptions that are held by the majority of members of an organization are the principal determinants of culture (Schein, 1996). Hofstede's definition emphasizes the values that are the building block of culture. *«Culture is the collective programming of mind which distinguishes the members of a human group from another»* (Hofstede, 1984).

These mental programs may be inherited in our brain-cells or/and may be the result of social learning and cannot be observed and overtly accounted for, because what it can be sensed is not itself as such, but its expressions in the form of behavior. A representation of mental programs and the combination of in-born and socially acquired characteristic which comprise the individual variables of every agent, may take the following forms (Figure 1):

The type 1 social system is characterized by the lack of any collectivity, on the basis either of the in-born or socially acquired characteristics and thus it cannot be of any interest for the study of the cultural phenomenon as a collective activity. The type 2 is identified by the collectivity of the socially acquired characteristics; the type 3 by the collectivity of the in-born ones, while the type 4 by the collectivity of both in-born and socially acquired characteristics. Apparently, the types 2, 3 and 4 fulfill the sine qua non condition of collectivity, which makes them subject of study for the cultural phenomenon. The resulting outcome of the above analysis is that the mental program of an individual may be completely unique (type 1), or partly shared by others (types 2, 3 and 4). We have discounted the extreme theoretical case of having complete identification of the in-born and socially acquired characteristics between two individuals.

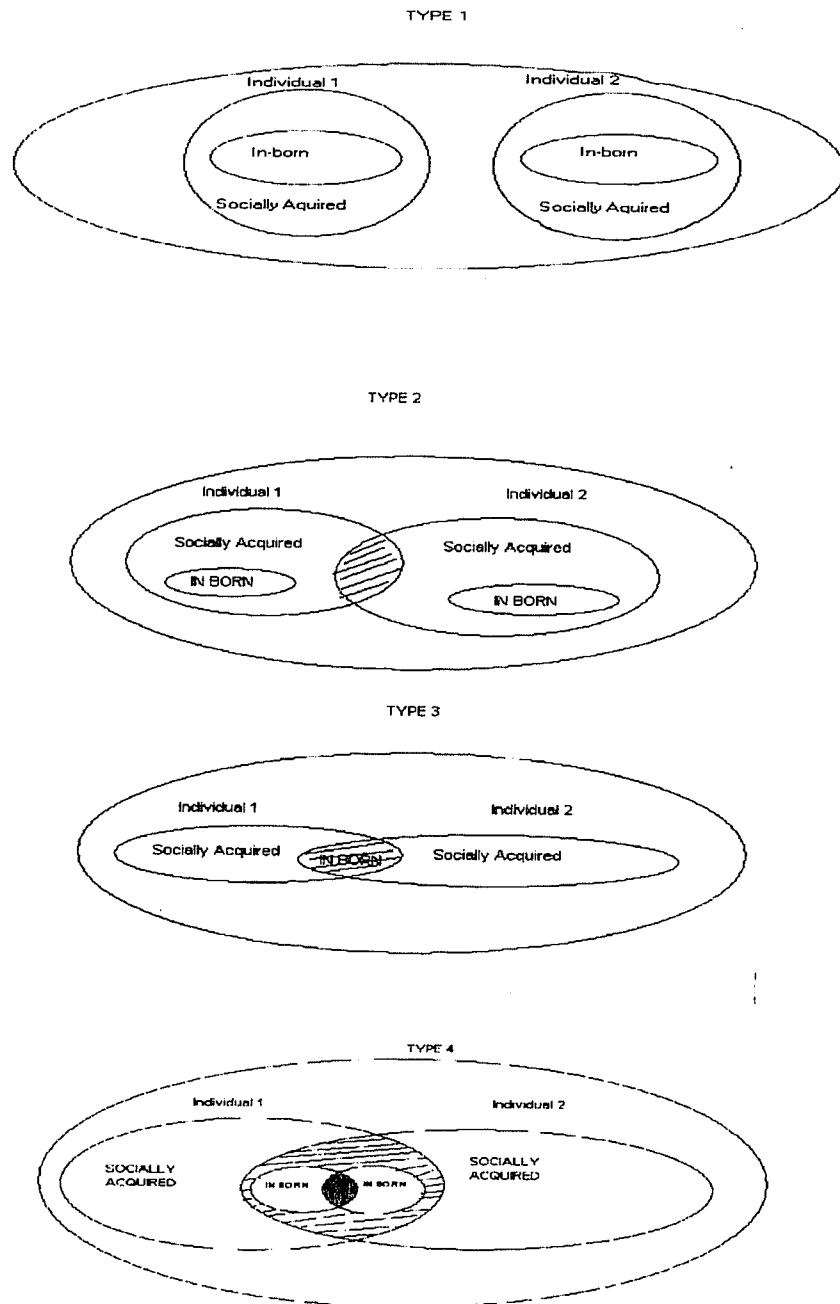


FIGURE 1
In-born and socially acquired characteristics

Hofstede distinguishes three levels of uniqueness in mental programming (Hofstede, 1984); the least unique is the universal level which is shared by all mankind; the collective level is shared by some people who belong to a certain category or group; the individual level is the truly unique part since no two people are alike. The individual level must be partly inherited, while the universal level must be totally inborn with, since it is part of our genetic code. The collective level is the one where most of the mental programming is socially acquired. The relationship among the different levels of mental programming and their corresponding sources may be expressed in the following diagram (Figure 2):

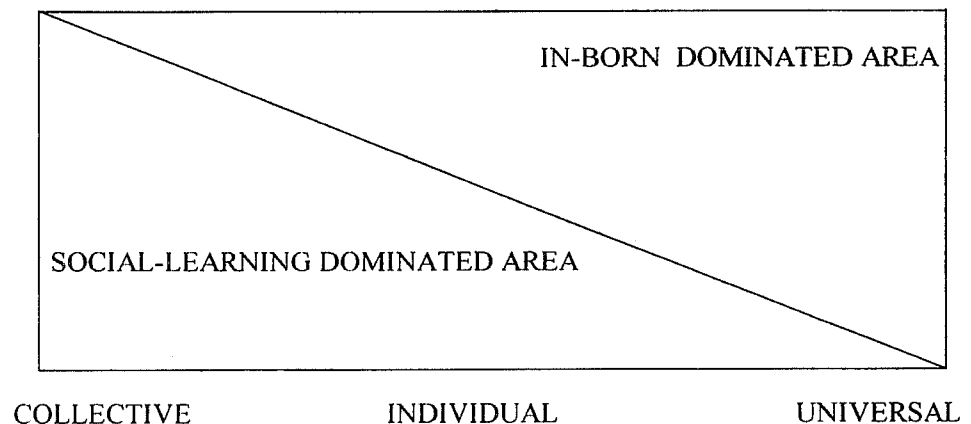


FIGURE 2

In-born/Socially Acquired Characteristics Relationship

The level in which we will be interested in is the collective level, since it represents the collective mental programs which guide people's lives as a monitoring mechanism. It is the level of integrated systems of mostly socially acquired values, beliefs and rules of conduct that define the limits of acceptable behavior in any given society.

The integral elements which describe Hofstede's mental programs are values and culture. It should be noted that values are an attribute of individuals and collectivities, while culture presupposes collectivity. One construct of such collectivity is the organization, which is the framework within which the social phenomenon of organizational culture is triggered, embedded and constantly reinforced and transformed (Hofstede, 1984) and which will be the focus of our analysis (Figure 3).

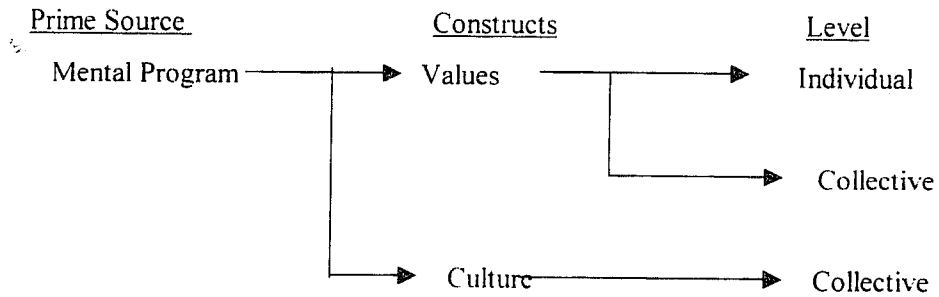


FIGURE 3

Constructs and their Corresponding Levels

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Cultural Considerations

It is beyond any doubt that organizations nowadays have widely proliferated and become pivotal, prompting Robert Presthus some years ago to suggest that we live in an «Organizational Society» (Presthus, 1978), thus making the study and the analysis of Organizational Culture an imperative for the Organization's success.

Generally, the organizational culture provides an organizational identity to the organizational member-exactly the same way personality provides identity to an individual- thus defining a vision of what the organization stands for. It is also, as a control apparatus, a pivotal source of stability, consistency and continuity to the organization, thus creating a sense of security to its members. Its knowledge facilitates the organizational members to interpret deeds, acts, feelings and thoughts in the organization, thus being able to navigate safely around organizational traps and ambiguities. Culture attracts attention to, conveys a vision for what is important; by recognizing and rewarding acceptable behaviors, which conform to the cultural priorities, culture over time reinforces those behaviors and identifies them as roles to emulate, while concurrently, penalizes the non – acceptable ones, making them extinct. Thus, we will be concentrating on the processes that result to the initiation, embeddedness reinforcement and transformation of all those collectively based guidelines of the organizational members' overt behavior.

Apparently, the underlying assumption, in the quest for understanding the sources of collectivity, is that the «excellence» of the organization is contained in the common ways by which each member has learnt to think, feel and act. The term «organizational culture» is a soft, highly intangible and holistic concept, with presumed hard and overt consequences. It's the intangible asset, the canvass upon which the organization operates and may well predict what will happen to the tangible assets of the organization in the years ahead. The wide use of the popular term "culture", since late 1970's, in order to identify the mental software of the organization, actually has repopularized the sociological view for the importance of the "soft elements" in organizations.

According to Schein, commonly used words relating to culture emphasize one of its critical aspects, the idea that certain things in groups are shared. The major categories of such overt phenomena that are associated with culture in the above context are

observed behavioral regularities when people interact, group norms and standards, espoused values, formal philosophy, rules of the game, climate, embedded skills, habits of thinking, mental models and/or linguistic paradigms, shared meanings and "root metaphors" or integrating symbols (Schein, 1992). The very fact that organizational members share or have in common all or most of the above concepts –which act as the dependent variable – implies that this sharing creates for that group a certain structural stability. The following diagram portrays in a simplified form the causalities among the different variables that lead an organization to a set of values, norms and practices which guide behavior (Figure 4).

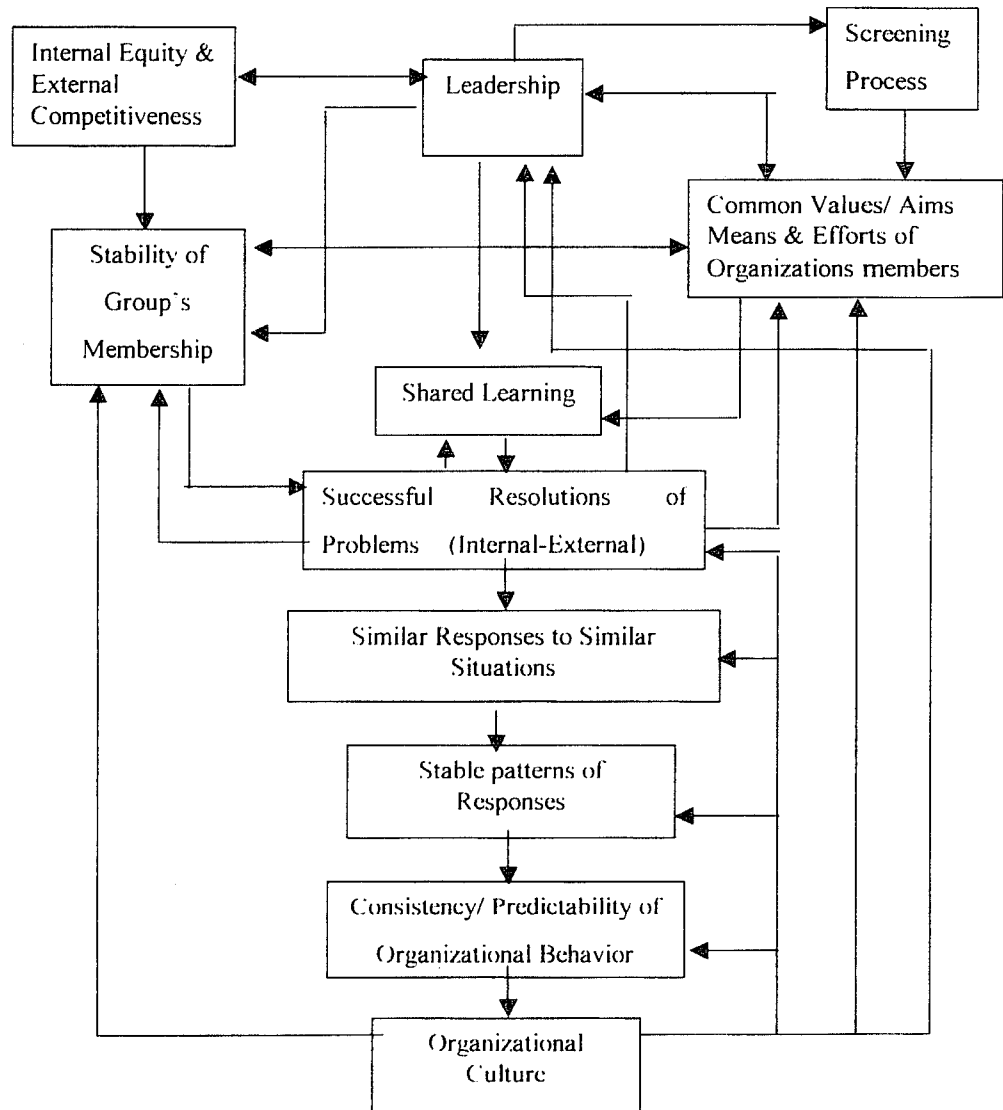


FIGURE 4
Organizational Culture Activity Flow

As it is illustrated in Figure 4 the organizational culture has to do with the collectivity of shared elements by most organizational members, which has provided, through time, valid and workable solutions to internal and external organizational problems. The shared learning becomes thus rooted in the group and ultimately exists independently of any individual group member, even though individuals are the carriers of culture (White, 1959). This cultural knowledge and experience can be categorized in the following broad knowledge-families:

- The knowledge of "What", which refers to what a problem is, what we pay attention to, what are the priorities, what is considered a reward, a promotion, a punishment, a praise, etc.
- The knowledge of "How". It refers to commonly held practices. It's about cause and effect relationships. Thus, the knowledge of how delineates the "how" of things, events and their processes. The how does not have a normative or prescriptive nature; it is rather descriptive and similar to Chris Argyris and Donald Schön theory of action (Argyris, 1978).
- The knowledge of "Should". It refers to prescriptions for remedy and improvement of situations. It defines the "shoulds" and defines certain actions for certain situations. It's of prescriptive nature and provides recipes for success perpetuation and survival.
- The knowledge of "Why". It refers to the why things happen, why a certain problem arose; it has to do with axioms that cannot be further reduced; The reasons and explanations of the final causes perceived to underlie a particular event.

A thorough examination of the above different types of knowledge has been provided by S. Sackmann (Sackmann, 1992).

These above stated types of knowledge - in case they have been de facto valid in solving questions of organizational member's survival- they are "taught" to new organizational members who gradually internalize them. Thus, they become the fundamental cornerstone assumptions of the organization on the basis of which organizational members should perceive, think, feel and act in a certain way when faced with issues of internal integration and external adaptation.

The above learning process manifests a paradox which lies on the fact that while change and the resulting learning organization presuppose a constant self-diagnosis and whatever corrective actions are deemed as necessary (Hanna, 1998), the resulting culture requires repetition, reinforcement which lead to stability, predictability, replication and finally to "rigidity" for the sake of its own self - preservation (Figure 5). We don't imply that the culture does not change; what is inferred that the cultural rigidity and the paradox limit the speed of learning and change and consume large amounts of resources and energy, the more pervasive the culture becomes.

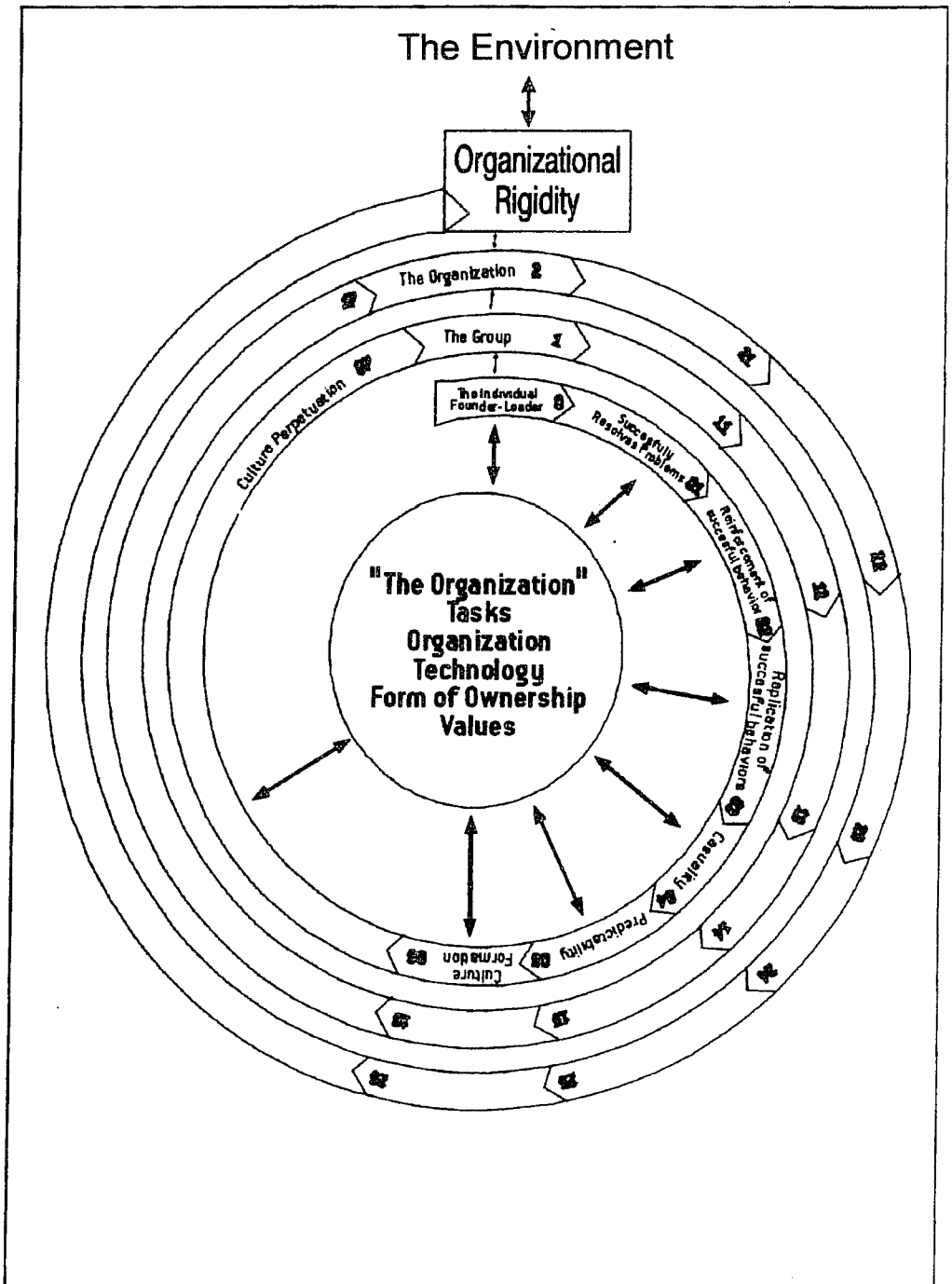


FIGURE 5

Culture Formation (Individual-Group-Organizational Level)

The Culture Paradox

Culture is a living and constantly evolving social phenomenon, through which organizational members collectively create and recreate the world in which they live in; it is this reality construction that allows them to perceive, feel, think and act on inter and intraorganizational stimuli in certain distinctive ways, on the basis of their values, cognition and personality, hierarchical level and occupational specialization. In order to establish collectivity it is imperative to mesh together the uniqueness that individuals bring into the collective arrangement; the need for integration it is a “cannot do without” situation for the establishment of collectivity.

The ‘established’ collectivity creates an “oneness” and similar patterns of behavior to similar situations, which depends on the capacity of the organization to learn and transmit new information and knowledge from one generation of employees to the next, i.e. a culture, which culture should be thought of as a stabilizer in the organization, a means of making things predictable over time, thus effecting causality. The function of a culture, however, as a stabilizing force is rather paradoxical vis-à-vis the turbulent organizational environment, which makes those two forces seemingly non-compatible and antithetical; the first strives for stability conformity, consent and predictability, while the latter for never-ceasing learning and change.

The following diagram (Figure 6) schematically depicts the “seemingly” contradicting variables of culture and the learning organization.

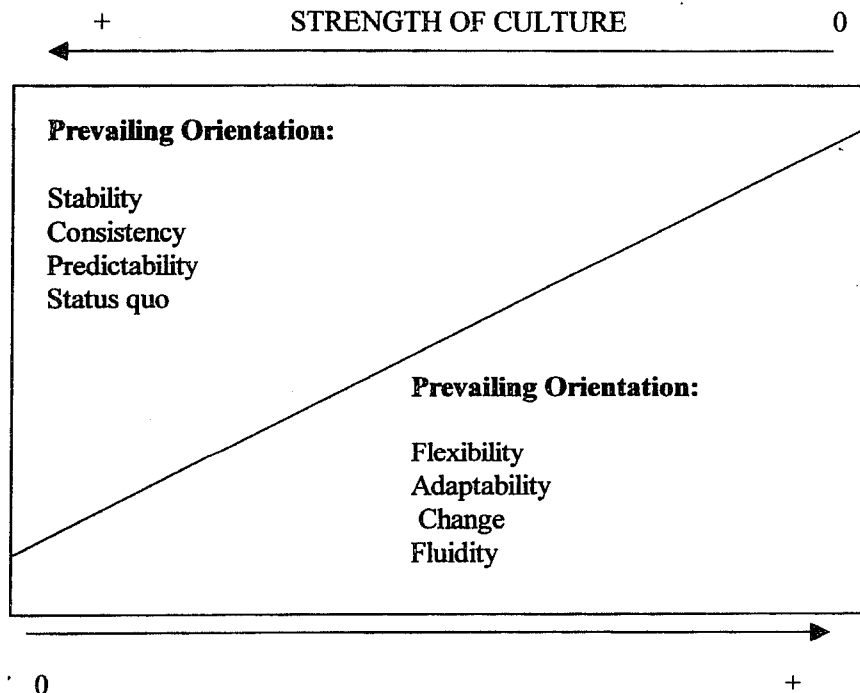


FIGURE 6

The Culture Paradox

The "non-compatibility" between the two above end-results may be resolved if we think of a culture not in the context of its collectivity of shared values, beliefs etc, but also on the basis of the *content* of these values. Thus, a possible way out of this impasse may be, for example, the generation of a culture emphasizing fluidity -through the reinforcement of those behaviors that manifest change, adaptability, flexibility and innovation. We need therefore to initiate, reinforce, establish and perpetuate these basic assumptions that value and focus on change and innovation. In practical terms we need to focus both on the content/direction of the culture and its strength/pervasiveness (Figure 7).

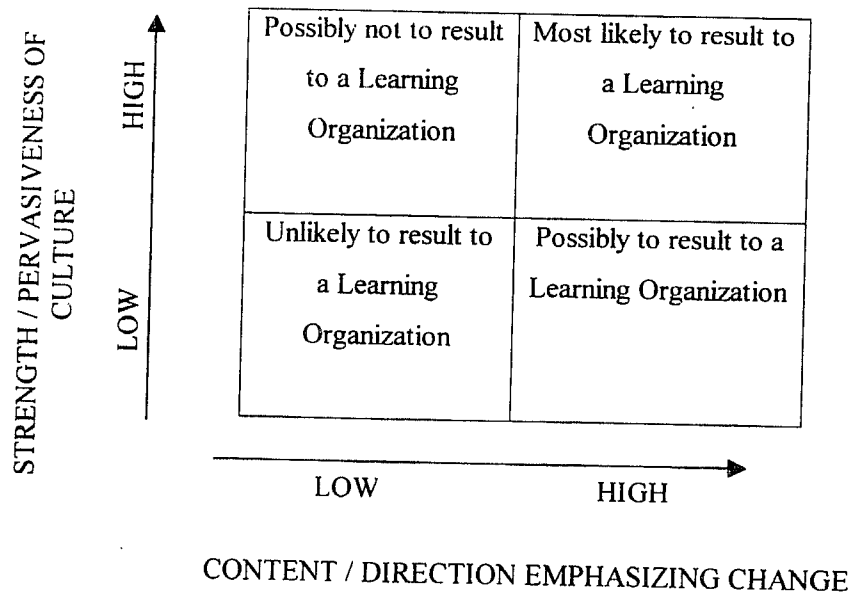


FIGURE 7

Strength and Content of Culture

The content / direction refers to the course that culture is causing the organization to follow. The axis of strength / pervasiveness refers to the degree to which the culture is dissipated among the organizational members and the resulting pressure the culture exerts on members, regardless of the direction. Thus the strength / pervasiveness may be pushing strongly or not so strongly the organization in either positive or negative direction / content in order to follow or not to follow the cultural guidelines of behavior.

High strength / pervasiveness of culture provides stability for the organization and the generation of similar responses to similar situations interpersonally and intrapersonally. Thus, we have patterns of behavior in organizations and of organizations dealing with external third parties. The individual members of the organization have internalized, collectively, the basic assumptions of the organization, the subsequent values and the operational practices stemming from the above. In other words every member embodies in herself what the organization stands for, i.e. the collective values, beliefs,

assumptions etc; the whole – the culture – and whatever it embodies is built into the part – the individual organizational member – and the part into the whole.

The Organization-Agent Complementarity

The concept of personality and culture are both pragmatic mechanisms – matched or mismatched – for describing, explaining and understanding human behavior. Both try to answer a number of questions about observed, predicted and controllable human behavior. Apparently they differ in their perspective in terms of the unit of analysis; individual agents possess personality, while organizations possess culture.

On an operational level the typical organizational member embodies within her all those elements of culture, that differentiate the organization distinctly from any other; she is a cultural agent and a carrier of it which she represents and perpetuates. The match between these two conceptually distinct but comparable constructs, individual agent and culture, is typically referred as person – situation fit (Edwards, 1994).

Congruence theories try to understand how individual and situational characteristics combine to influence a person's affective or behavioral response in a given situation. Different situations place different demands on individuals and those with the skills necessary to meet those demands are more likely to behave in predictable ways (Wright, 1987). On top of that, people in general are about to be happier when they are in settings that cater to their individual needs and/or are congruent with their dispositions (Diener, 1984). Thus, greater congruence between person – situation tends to increase the individuals' effectiveness in the particular situation, raising as well her tendency to pursue similar situations in the future. Consequently, greater fit between a person and her organization's culture results to certain behavioral outcomes, such as better job performance, greater commitment to the organization, lower turnover etc. (O'Reilly III, 1991). Some observers have suggested that the motivation of individuals to create their preferred environment on the basis on their disposition actually creates organizations with characteristics similar to personality types. Bridges (Bridges, 1992) proposes that the four MBTI dimensions provide a powerful construct to consider the "character" of organizations. Noer argues that the high individualism of the U.S. is in conflict with the confining aspects of culture (Noer, 1993). In a country that places the individual over the system, it would seem natural to find individuals attempting to change their needs and preferences. Also according to Chatman, the congruence between personal values and organizational structure has been shown to be a better predictor of performance, commitment, and length of stay, than either characteristic alone (Chatman, 1991).

Much of the debate on Personality /Culture has been focused on their causality relationship. Some have reasoned convincingly that the organization 's culture determines and shapes over time the nature of its members, while others have debated just as convincingly that the organization 's members create the culture. Schein from one hand argues that the impact of culture on behavior has been rather discounted. "We did not grasp that norms held tacitly across large social units were much more likely to change leaders that to be changed by them. We failed to note that "culture" viewed as such taken-for-granted, shared, tacit ways of perceiving, thinking and reacting, was one of the most powerful and stable forces operating in organizations" (Schein, 1996).

Schneider from the other hand states: "... organizations are the people in them ... people make the place... we have tried to change organizations by changing their

structures and processes when it was the people that needed changing. With changes in people, the necessary changes in structure and process will occur" (Schneider, 1987). The argument about the relationship between the two will probably go on indefinitely because of the complexity of both entities and their interactions.

The theoretically possible situations between the personality and the organizational culture match/mismatch may be Cooperative/Individualistic, Cooperative/Collectivist, Noncooperative/Individualistic and Non-cooperative/Collectivist correspondingly.

Noncooperative (individualistic) organizational members are pursuing activities leading to potential individual achievement and excellence and realization of self-centered goals generally. Thus, they are more concerned with their personal aims and attitudes, self-centered in expecting the others to behave similarly with them and as a result less flexible and fluid in their responses to others behavior.

Cooperative individuals, in contrast, gain satisfaction from collective action, which means they uphold the prevailing social norms, are more willing to second their own personal interests and aims to the aims of the group (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai and Luca 1988), which means they are satisfied by the group interaction. Since they uphold the social norms, we may surmise, that if these norms do change, then our subject would be willing to respond on the basis of these changed norms. They are of cooperative disposition, which is a precondition, which allows them to be such both in a cooperative organization (cooperation is called for by the situation) and in an individualistic one (cooperation is called for by their personality).

The combinations of the two variables result to:

- A match between personality and organizational culture (Cooperative/Collectivist, Non-cooperative/Individualistic)
- A mismatch between personality and organizational culture (Cooperative/Individualistic, Non-cooperative/Collectivist)

Personality – Organizational Culture Match

The first case of match is represented by the situation where the personality of the organizational member is highly cooperative performing in an organization of collectivist culture. In this case cooperative behavior should be higher than it is with any other combination of personality and organizational culture emphasis and thus non-cooperative behavior should be at its lowest.

The second case of match refers to the situation where the personality of the organizational member is non-cooperative (individualistic) and the organizational culture is highly individualistic. In this case cooperative behavior should be lower than it is with any other combination of these characteristics and non-cooperative behavior at its highest. People tend to be happier when they are in environments that meet their needs or that are congruent with their dispositions (Diener, Larsen and Emmons, 1984). The result of higher person –situation fit is the increased individuals' effectiveness in the specific situations and their tendency to pursue similar situations in the future. Generally, greater congruence between a person 's values and her organization 's culture is associated with behavioral and affective outcomes such as a better performance, longer tenure and greater commitment to the company (O' Reilly, Chatman and Caltwell, 1991). According to Chatman, the congruence between personal values and organizational culture has also been shown to be a greater predictor of performance, commitment and length of stay than either characteristic alone (Chatman, 1991).

Personality-Organizational Culture Mismatch

Usually, in cases of a mismatch, there is a tendency to treat personal and cultural characteristics as additive; the better the fit the happier and the more competent the employee (Joyce, 1982). Thus the resulting level of cooperative behavior would be the same for those with a high disposition to cooperate in individualistic cultures as well as for those with low disposition to cooperate in collectivist cultures.

An apparent question that relates to the above prediction of cooperative behavior has to do with the relative degree of cooperativeness –in case of a mismatch- between cooperative and non-cooperative organizational members. In other words, is the cooperative individual, operating in an individualistic culture more expedient to cooperate than the non-cooperative individual operating in a collectivist culture or vice versa? Cooperative individuals display cooperativeness not only in highly supporting situations, i.e. in collectivist cultures, but they are also bound to adjust their behavior much more than non-cooperative individuals in order to accommodate the norms imposed by either an individualistic or collectivist culture, because of their cooperative nature.

Research has also shown that cooperative individuals, compared with non-cooperative ones, are more concerned about fitting in and are more willing to get along with others (Argyle, 1991). That promptness to “fit in” and get along with others helps to explain why individuals of cooperative nature would be more responsive and adjustable to organizational cultures, than non-cooperative. Thus, these cooperative organizational members are bound to be more cooperative in organizational cultures that emphasize cooperation, than in cultures that emphasize individualism. In other words, individuals with high disposition to cooperate, if they operate within a cooperative culture, they will adapt to it; if they operate in an individualistic culture, they will be again adaptable to the cultural imperatives, but they will be less cooperative, than in the case of performance within a cooperative culture. In both cases they are more adaptable, than the non-cooperative individual whose lack of cooperative behavior will vary less across the board to the cultural conditions (individualistic ↔ cooperative). That simply means that non-cooperative individuals, display more or less the same level of individualism on both cultural conditions, i.e. individualistic and cooperative cultures; their behavioral responses are rather consistent with their personality disposition, while subjects with a high disposition to cooperate are consistent with situational norms. A detailed exposition of the relationship between personality cooperation levels and Organizational Culture is provided by Chatman and summarized in the following Table 1 (Chatman, 1995).

Table 1

Personality/Culture Match/Mismatch and Resulting Behaviors

S/N	OC	I	FIT	B
1	COL	COO	Match	COO
2	IN	COO	=	Adapts to the cultural conditions, because of the subject's disposition which is cooperative. He is less cooperative than No1 situation.
3	IN	NC	=	Individualistic, does not cooperate. Personality disposition prevails.
4	COL	NC	≠	Adapts to the personal disposition. Individualistic, does not cooperate and varies less than No2 across cultural conditions/imperatives

OC: Organization Culture

IN: Individualistic

B: Behavior

I: Individual

COO: Cooperative

COL: Collectivist

NC: Non Cooperative

=: Match

≠: Mismatch

Cultural Redesign

The very fact that individualistically inclined people rather adjust their behavior on the basis of their personal disposition, instead of the cultural situation, may denote that their behavior is rather much more consistent and predictable across different situations, even if situations demand cooperative behavior. By the same token, people with personal inclination to be cooperative are bound to behave not on the basis of their disposition, but on the basis of the cultural situations they find themselves in.

Thus, mismatches between a culture which emphasizes creativity and risk taking and people that are less creative; will the people become more innovative in those type of cultures or will creative people become less innovative when the culture discourages new ideas and risk taking? Also mismatches between "honest" people and rather "crooked" organizations which may allow us the identification of the situational and personal characteristics that predict how their combined impact will influence behavior. Taking into account the potential personality dispositions impact on organizational culture -- either matching on mismatching it -- and the corresponding appropriate organizational inputs such as leadership, resources, rewards, job design and structure, we may venture on a model which uses personality as the main variable -- ceteris paribus everything else -- to design or redesign organizational culture.

The proposed model rests on the assumption that individuals in a group situation influence one another through direct communication over time, thus providing

information resources, emotional resources and identity support. On an organizational level, the groups may improve organizations through the coordination of joint activities, the promotion of specialization and the facilitation of organizational learning, which is directly related with the culture formation, perpetuation and differentiation and which lies at the very foundations of it.

Some psychological theories tend to project people's behaviors onto social wholes as magnified versions of individual phenomena. The direction of influence thus runs from individuals to "societies". Holistic theories in contrast, consider the direction of influence to be reversed. According to this view, societies exhibit emergent properties and have autonomous goals, needs and interests such that they mold the behaviors of constituent members (Haines, 1988).

In these two extreme positions, structuration theory advocates that there remain useful referent constructs for both individuals and collectivities and the causality can run both ways; it is reciprocal. The social systems are ongoing and reciprocal patterns of relationships, structures, generative rules and resources (Giddens, 1984). Thus social norms guide individual actions within an organizational context and individual actions can reinforce, perpetuate or over time, at least theoretically, re-direct social norms and generally the social canvass upon which individual and group thinking feeling and acting are taking place. According to Handy (Handy, 1992). Social structure may be *"...a common law, language and currency-a uniform way of doing business"*; a common law which in essence can become a substitute for formal controls, which echoes Baker's thoughts on the subject (Baker, 1993).

The validity of the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the collective entity, in which she belongs, allows the possibility of Cultural Redesign. The accessible direction of influencing the culture of the organization runs from the individual to the organization. Thus, we may, through proactive initial placement, deterministic promotion and transfer policies, be able to impact upon the overall culture, diachronically, either in reinforcing, propogating and perpetuating the existing culture or changing and redirecting it to new knowledge landscapes.

The less dynamic the environment of operation – irrespective of a culture being collectivist or individualistic – the easier it becomes to reinforce such an organizational culture. Reinforcing entails perpetuation, reproduction and maintenance of the status quo; culture after all is a form of social control which clarifies which behaviors and attitudes are more or less appropriate for members to display, and thus strengthening the status quo is rather appropriate and supported (O' Reilly and Chatman, 1996).

Correspondingly, the more dynamic and turbulent the environment becomes, the more difficult and resource demanding it becomes to maintain the status quo; lack of cultural fluidity in turbulent times it may lead to stagnation, through the organizational homophilia (cultural self-feeding).

The more dynamic the environment becomes, the easier it becomes to initiate the necessary changes, than to maintain the existing cultural status quo in the long run. Correspondingly, the less dynamic the environments becomes, the more difficult it becomes to initiate changes, than to maintain the existing cultural status quo. Environment in our understanding embodies the independent and non – controllable by the organization variables on the basis of which certain changes must be initiated so as to establish the internal integration which is necessary for external adaptation.

In pursuing the cultural redesign, Human Resources Selection Processes seem to be very critical. On such an account Pratt states: *"...Cultural values of British Accountants working in Britain reflect the cultural values of U.S. accountants.*

Additional analyses suggest that selection, as opposed to socialization is the dominant process..."(Pratt, 1993). Generally, organizations with strong homogenous culture tend to hire persons with values close to the organization's as heterogeneous organizations, in this respect, favor multiculturalism.

Prerequisites or questions that need to be dealt with for the above redesign interventions are considered to be:

- The determination of the strategic direction/aims of the organization.
- The identification of the present organizational Culture's attributes.
- The degree of incompatibility or congruency between the strategic orientation of the organization and Culture.
- The interactions which reinforce and perpetuate the culture.
- Review, screen and select those individuals who would be acting through their personality disposition vis-à-vis its fitness or lack of it with the culture we try to perpetuate or transform diachronically.
- Determine the agents' level of entry into the hierarchy (through transfer, promotion or hiring).
- Monitoring.

The following Figure 8 depicts the basic logic of the proposed culture transformation. From the above activity flow diagram, we may surmise that irrespectively of whether the fit between Strategic Aims and Organizational Culture is primarily attained or as a result of an a posteriori intervention, the need for Cultural Redesign in order to establish internal integration is always present.

Thus, the organization in case of:

- An organizational culture, primarily collectivist, that it needs to reinforce, enhance and support, it should:
 - Place in the appropriate critical positions individuals with a cooperative personality disposition.
- An organizational culture, primarily individualistic, that it needs to reinforce, enhance and support, it should:
 - Place in the appropriate critical positions individuals with an individualistic personality disposition.
- An organizational culture, primarily collectivist, that it needs to change into an individualistic, it should:
 - Redesign the culture by placing in the appropriate critical positions individuals with an individualistic personality disposition.
- An organizational culture, primarily individualistic, that it needs to change, into a collectivist culture it should:
 - Place in a number of critical positions individuals with a cooperative personality disposition. The effort and consistency of cultural practices should be sustained for a considerably longer period than the third case above, due to the fact that cooperative individuals are cooperative across the board, irrespectively of the cultural disposition of the organization. That is in an individualistic culture cooperative individuals "cooperate" with the prevailing culture, thus the effort and the resources should be substantial, in order to effect the change diachronically. Appropriate critical positions are considered those positions, which entail decisions with far needing organizational magnifications in terms of the organizational members' thinking, feeling and acting.

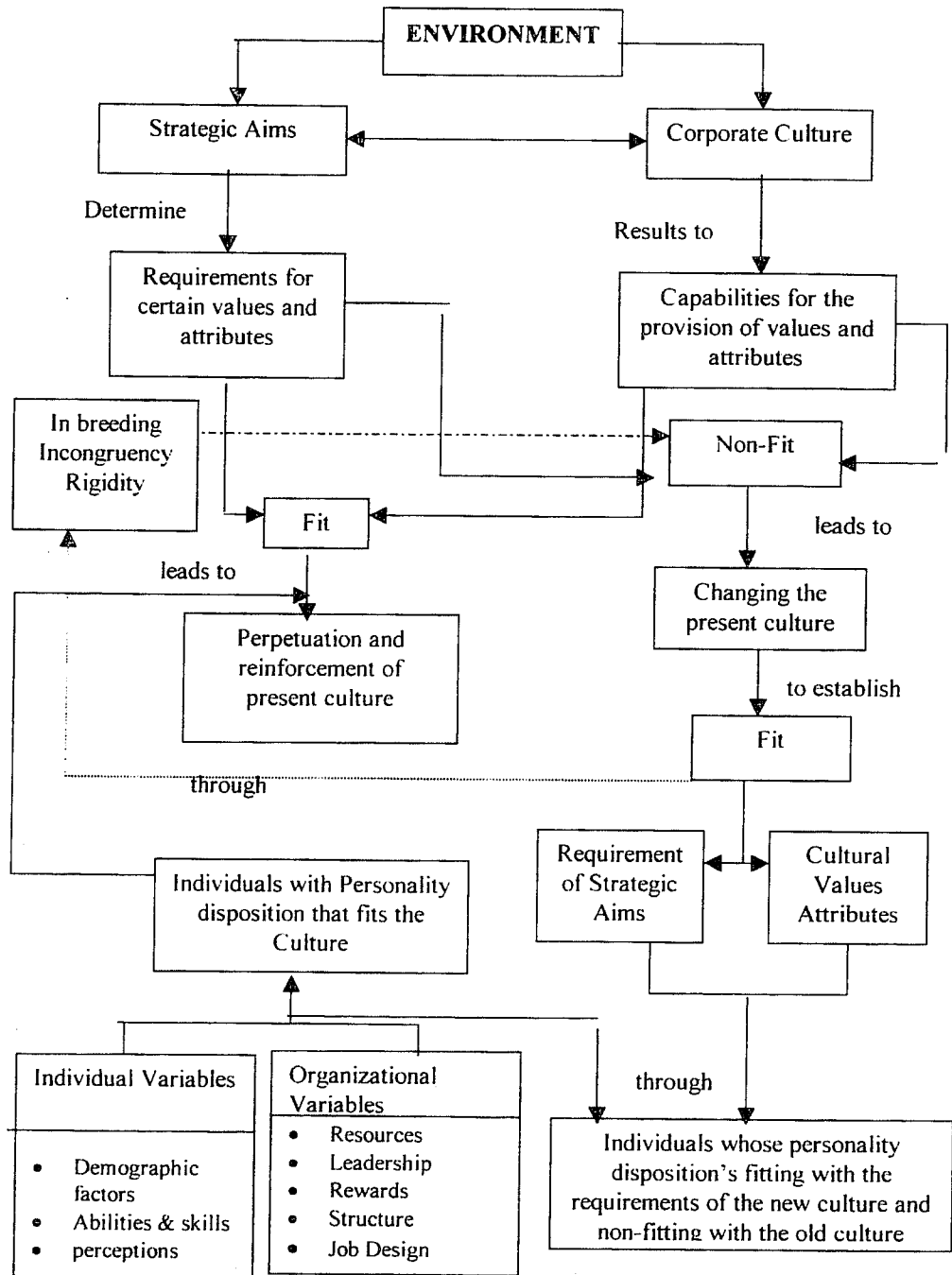


FIGURE 8
Culture Reengineering Activity Flow

It is taken for granted that the whole organization on a top down basis, for all proposals above, will be aligned, not on an "as designed basis", but also on an "as practiced", with the strategic choices of the organization for cultural redesign, which will generate the congruency between the Strategic Aim and Culture at a specific point in time.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The organizational culture as a living social phenomenon, functions concurrently as a dependent and as an independent variable; thus it is being formed, reinforced and perpetuated by its wider contextual framework of operation, while it is impacting upon the behavior of organizations and in organizations correspondingly. The organizational culture through the above formulation of beliefs, values, norms and practices and their enforcement, facilitates the generation of behaviors that are consistent over time and therefore predictable. The consistency and predictability of those behaviors results to a uniform organizational identity and shared learning among the members of the organization.

This apparent congruency between the values of the organizational culture and the values of the individual agents may not need to be congruent through time; in other words the conformity, consistency and predictability may all lead to an organizational rigidity which disallows and discourages or even punishes change and organizational learning. The culture encourages and rewards patterning, uniformity and integration, while the latter presupposes flexibility, fluidity, adaptability and change, which phenomenon leads to the "culture paradox"; i.e. the "so called contradiction" between culture and the learning organization.

The culture is a rather conservative force, which tries to maintain the status quo ante, while the environment imposes the prerequisites of flexibility and adaptability. The challenge lies on the provision of an organizational culture whose stable elements are institutionalized learning and tacit knowledge, adaptation, innovation and change; it is necessary to embed a culture characterized by change and innovation as intergal elements of the culture itself.

In order to be able to instigate planned change and adaptability, so as to create, embed and sustain the appropriate culture, we may exercise a form of "Cultural Redesign" which may match or mismatch the individual agents through initial selection, placement, promotion or transfer on the basis of their personality disposition vis-à-vis the organizational culture-, so as to effect over time the desired culture aligned with the strategic aims of the organization.

An area of research, so as to support the conceptual design conclusions, would be the validation that cooperative individuals adjust themselves to the requirements of individualistic organizational culture, while individualist employees do not adjust as readily to the requirements of a collectivist organizational culture.

Another area of research would be the elaboration on the “gray” area of the changeover and cut off between the cooperative and the individualistic employee and the impact of the hierarchical level – in which an employee is promoted to or/and the level in which an individual is initially placed – on the organizational culture given the match or mismatch between person and culture.

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