

# Conflicting Values in Organizations: Local Versus Intruder Managerial Values

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## ABSTRACT

Developing countries are making great efforts to break out the cycle of underdevelopment, relying on a strategy of importing technology and management methods from Western countries. However, this did not produce the desired results, which pushed for the study of the reasons for this problem. The researcher has relied on collecting data for this paper through his past experiences in production and service enterprises. Several visits were carried out to enterprises and interviews were carried out with workers, supervisors, and managers, which led to the conclusion of the importance of cultural values in organizations. The divergence between imported management methods and the lack of training about managing cultural values are among the most critical obstacles to effective human resources management.

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## 1. Introduction

Developing countries generally experience problems of importing organization and management methods, as well as ready-made industrial devices. Machinery and equipment imported from industrialized countries can be used as they are, while imported methods of human management are difficult to apply. This is the result of social interaction and is closely linked to society's values, culture and civilization affiliations.

That is confirmed by Nyambegera et al. (2000, p.641), who pointed out that “*Major differentiating factors between First, Second and Third World countries are contextual, and there is growing support for the perception that country-based elements have a significant impact on international HRM*”.

Management theories have evolved in developed countries, mainly in the United States and Europe, where scientific theories have emerged explaining the behaviours and motivations of individuals, depending on the beliefs and cultural values of these societies. Experience has shown that imported management methods have failed because they have not succeeded in increasing the effectiveness of production enterprises and not being able to get developing countries out of the cycle of Backwardness.

The human dimension of management in developing countries has not been given its due importance, as the prevailing belief is that the machine produces while the worker is subordinate to it. If we do not take

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into account the needs, characteristics, and requirements of the worker, the sophisticated machinery remains unproductive, as is the case with most organizations in third world countries.

Managers in developing countries often fail to understand the motives of workers and to find adapted management methods to keep up with local social values that led to complex human problems in organizations. This paper is based on the result of the author's research and experience with the reality of managing institutions in a developing country (Algeria), that has known an intensive import of industrial enterprises, in the '70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with their management practices. This policy was doomed to failure, due to the use of inappropriate management methods which did not keep up with the current cultural values in the society.

## **2. Importance of the Study**

Cultural values are a sensitive area, which has been the subject of various international scientific meetings and conferences. This study is essential in several aspects:

- The understanding the cultural values and their importance in organizations from developing countries.
- Shed light on the impacts of cultural values on management practices in developing countries.
- Shed light on the dynamic and values' conflicts in organizations.
- Attract attention to the need for management methods, built on the facts of values prevailing in society.

## **3. Concept and Dimensions of Culture**

The concept of culture has been the subject of numerous discussions, probably due to their complexity and invisibility. Although some definitions are popular, almost every researcher has his definition of this concept. Among the much-cited phrase defining culture is the "collective programming of the mind" (Hofstede (1980).

While Schein (1992) presents a definition for culture as "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel concerning those problems".

Culture is related to a geographical area, a region or a country. The "national culture provides the set of rules to act, and the set of preferred outcomes to compare from before an action is taken. Employees are likely to prefer management practices that are consistent with their work values and may reject those practices that are not" (Nieves et al., 2006, 36).

Culture is looked at as a set of dimensions. Hofstede (1980) defined four dimensions of culture that described fundamental similarities and differences in human behaviour, attitudes, and decision-making for culture. The four dimensions were: masculinity/ femininity, power distance, individualism/ collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance.

On his side, Schwartz (1992) has defined three polar dimensions of culture mastery versus harmony, embeddedness versus autonomy, and hierarchy versus egalitarianism. These dimensions of culture affect the relationship of humanity to the natural and social world, the boundary between the individual and the group, and the responsible behaviour that preserves the social fabric (Schwartz and Bardi, 1997).

While Krech et al. (1974) divide culture in an explicit and implicit dimension, the specific part of culture consists of consistent behavioural patterns in a given situation. These patterns or arrangements are formed and influenced by both the physical environment (climate, geographical region ...), and other cultural groups (through exchange of ideas...). The implicit dimension is a manifestation of wants, interpersonal responses traits, attitudes, values, beliefs and norms, which together give meaning to explicit behaviour.

Culture is transmitted consciously and unconsciously from one generation to another through the process of rationalization within the society.

#### **4. The Cultural Values and Values' Systems**

Attitudes are relatively lasting beliefs shared by members of a culture or civilization about what is good or bad, what is acceptable and what is unacceptable, and what is desirable or undesirable. Values are relatively stable, particularly in higher values, but they can change progressively.

Values are defined by Nobbs (1984, p.298) as "a set of ethical principles and controls, defining the actions of individuals and communities within certain pathways, as they are in a mould consistent with the customs, traditions, and customs of society". He also believes that "Values are publicly declared tendencies of – an individual or - a group to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (Hofstede, 1980).

On the other side, (Argandona, 2002, 2), defined culture in a comprehensive sense as "central desires or beliefs regarding final states or desirable conduct that transcend specific situations, guide the choice and evaluation of our decisions and, therefore, of our conducts, becoming an integral part of our way and acting, to the point of shaping our character". He pointed out also the presence of "a wide variety of values because of the different types of content: intellectual, emotional, esthetic, moral or ethical, social, political, economic, sensitive, useful vital, etc." (Argandona, 2002, 5).

While Krech et al., explain that "Values form an integral part of the implicit dimension of culture and is regarded as a set of beliefs which members of a society share and which they use to distinguish the desirable from undesirable of the good from the bad" (Krech et al., 1974, 350).

From this perspective, Beulah Viji explained that "Value, attitude, and behaviour are interlinked with each other. All these factors contribute to the personality of an individual. Values represent an individual's standard, faith ideals or even events and activity" (Beulah Viji, 2016, p116). These values are organized harmoniously and consistently in the form of a coherent form. It is a comprehensive view of the individual and determines his or - her - actions in all areas, leading to the formation of the worker's value system. The difference in factors influencing the individual's values from one community to another makes people's values of developing countries, different from those from industrialized and developed countries.

#### **5. Cultural Values in Organizations**

In order to better understand the role of values organizations, explained the organization as "a group of people whose actions are coordinated in order to achieve positive results in which they all have an interest, although not necessarily for the same reason. This justifies the existence of a management – structure, rules, culture,...-, which explains why the values implemented within the organization may not occur with those of its members." (Argandona, 2002, 6).

The actions and behaviours of workers are the results of the accumulation of a set of ideas, knowledge, and experiences that allow the individual to judge the material, social and cultural issues around him. Therefore, the result of the judgment depends on the nature of these ideas and cultural values.

When discussing values in organizations, we can distinguish between the personal values, the group's values, and the organizational values, although values always originate from people (Argandona, 2002, 6).

Cultural values can be seen in all the behaviours and decision-making in organizations, either by workers or managers. That is confirmed by (Argandona, 2002, 2), that "Values are reflected in decisions; the repetition of values in decisions shows the existence of virtue (and strengthen it); and the body of virtues shapes a character, which gives consistency to subsequent decisions until conduct is defined". While Smith (1992) argues that the existence of a linkage between cultural values and several organizational behaviours, such as norms of acceptable behaviour types of conflict, and preferred leadership styles".

Values have a double concept, including Personal values as beliefs that guide individual behaviours, and Organizational values as norms transmitted to employees who guide decisions and behaviour in the workplace. Its alignment plays a significant role in organizational commitment (Henriques, and O'Neill, 2016).

Meglino and Ravlin (1998) explained that firms and individuals would benefit from a better understanding of the relationship between the values of the employees and the corporate culture. Corporate culture is defined by the values of corporate managers and subordinates. An influential corporate culture is

possible only if the employees' values are in agreement with those of the firm (Nieves et al., 2006, 31).

The importance of the mentioned factors in determining workers' behaviour and attitudes towards work, encourages the identification of these factors and their impacts on management effectiveness. A much better understanding of how cultural values influence the management methods in organizations from developing countries is badly needed.

While Nieves et al. (2006) concluded that “in all, research has indicated how culture differs in their choice of, and the significance given to, values, and how superiors and subordinates differ in their values across cultures, as well as how values tend to remain and resist change in a specific national culture or society”.

## **6. Factors Contributing to Shaping the Worker's Value System:**

A combination of historical, cultural, economic, political and personal experiences, contribute to determining the value pattern of workers, thus affecting their attitudes towards work. It also defines ways in which they treat with their colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and human management within organizations.

That is confirmed by (Felipe et al. 2017), that “The impact of cultural values and principles in the organizational agility level is influenced by a complex set of factors that includes not only internal but environmental factors.”

The factors contributing to determining the worker's value pattern can be identified in a range of factors, the most important of which are: cultural, historical, social, political, economic and organizational factors, which affect the worker and determine his behaviours, and management methods.

### *6.1. Religious factors*

It is about sanctifying and respecting the worker's sanctities, as the most crucial cultural base of the worker is his religious beliefs, which is his religion. Religion is a source of legislation and guidance for the behaviours of individuals in all social and professional fields. It is not surprising, therefore, that the worker is affected by this valuable stock in his career. Worker's behaviour is influenced by the solver and the forbidden, the ensuing punishment and reward, which contributes to determining the value of the individual and his attitudes towards work.

### *6.2. Historic factors*

People from developing countries have suffered from Western colonialism. They worked hard to earn their livelihood. The workers under colonization were doing their best to satisfy their bosses. This is why workers under colonialism, were known for their hard work, patience and endurance, and their high productivity both at home and abroad. They participated in building various structures and facilities in the colonial states and contributed to the prosperity of the colonial industries.

### *6.3. Political factors*

Political factors have an impact on determining how organizations are politically, socially and economically managed. Thus, it is politics that determines the nature of the economic system, whether socialist, capitalist or liberal. The nature of the political choice and the practice of democracy are reflections on the organization of work and the employees' behaviours.

### *6.4. Social factors*

Each society has its customs and traditions that appear and develop through ages, and therefore it is a social phenomenon to which individuals are subjected and contribute in turn to enforcing its respect through various social pressures. One of these customs and traditions in developing societies is the perception of women's work and gender mixing in workplaces.

### *6.5. Economic factors*

The economic dimension affects the value of individuals and their professional behaviour, as this has an impact on the environment as a whole. Economic expansion and high demand for labour make the worker less severe in his work. Expelling or leaving a job does not affect him as long as work is available elsewhere while the economic crisis leads to the rise of unemployment, which leads the worker to maintain his job position, which prompted him to adapt his professional behaviour to the new reality. Hence, we conclude that the value system of the worker is the result of a combination of overlapping factors, from the economy, politics, history, culture, social and cultural environments and level of development and urbanization.

## **7. Organizations as sites for values frictions**

Before addressing the types and effects of the values within organizations, we need to learn about the concept of organization and the values interacting within it. The organization is a social entity with permeable boundaries, through which various internal and peripheral factors interact. The organization consists mainly of individuals working towards common goals. While values are the result of interactions of a range of ideas and experiences, resulting in a pattern of consistent judgments and opinions, towards different aspects of life.

The importance of values within organizations lies in its role in determining opinions, behaviours, and actions, which affects the functioning of the organizations. The reason we focus on values within the organization is the fact of their presence in one place, and at the same time, under the same circumstances. They interact with the pressures of work and production, which may lead to a range of problems and difficulties. If the organization has nothing to do with determining the values in its surroundings, it receives the effects of its interaction and its implications and affects its effectiveness and the degree to which it achieves its objectives.

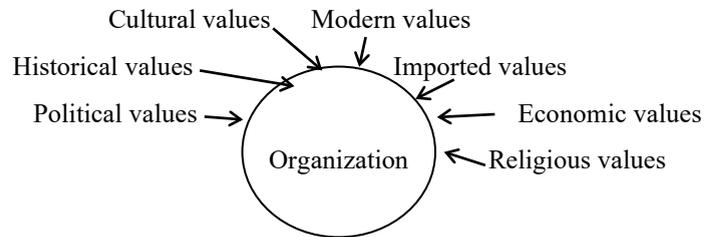


Figure 3: Impacts of the prevailing values on organization

All economic, political, cultural and social factors, whether authentic or alien, have valuable effects on society members. The coexistence of various factors within organizations demonstrates their importance and their role in influencing the success or failure of an organization.

### 8. Conflicting values in organizations

Organizations in developing societies are defined by a range of problems with cultural and value-based causes. These problems are the high rates of work accidents, absenteeism, low morale and low level of occupational satisfaction, widespread rumours and the dominance of informal organization, and negativity in facing problems and withdrawal from work. While these problems are undeniable, they are difficult to relate to their exact causes. For example, it is often difficult to link cultural values to certain types of problems and contradictions within the organization because of the complexity of value areas and their impact on individual behaviours.

There is an active interaction process, from contradiction, conflict or harmony, between cultural values and norms within organizations. Its stark images are the difference sought by cultural and behavioural aspects between managers and workers, and between different ideological currents and workers' cultural affiliations.

There is a tangle of values and overlapping economic, political, organizational and cognitive aspects, and their impact on individual behaviours, making the task of researchers complicated in this area.

#### 8.1. Divergent values in organizations

Values within organizations can be traced back to four patterns in the form of contradictory couples: old-fashioned values versus modern values and local values versus extraneous values.

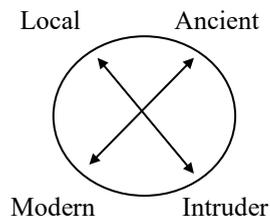


Figure 4: Patterns of opposing values within organizations

### 8.1.1. Ancient values

This category includes a set of values, the most important of which can be limited to the following:

- *Historical values*: The historical development of a society leads to the entrenchment of specific ideas as a result of individuals falling under different influences for long periods, leading to the formation of certain ideas and specific trends.
- *Religious values*: The origin of the divine teachings, which have substantial effects on the individuals' souls, prints their opinions and behaviour with distinct moral values.
- *Cultural values*: Cultural values are the result of interactions of a group of elements from history, religion, and politics, as a result of their stability and interaction with various peripheral elements.

### 8.1.1. Modern Values

In addition to the ancient values inherited, there are modern values that are continually emerging as a result of interaction and cultural renewal. It is also contemporary to the reality and concerns of societies, which can be limited to the following:

*Political Values*: They are values that politicians aim to promote and consolidate in society, and are linked to the political parties that control the government. There are conservative and labour parties, a third for the environment, and other parties with different orientations, which leave their mark on the attitudes and perceptions of individuals.

*Economic values*: Economic policy determines the trade, industry, and nature of the current services, which affects the individuals' values and their professional and economic behaviours.

*Social values*: The dominant values in society are the sum of the interactions of shared values among society members. The reality of intergenerational conflicts is an expression of the difference between the ideas and values of elders and youth, which illustrates a contradiction between the two groups of values.

### 8.2. Local versus intruder values

There are differences and conflicts between different civilizations that have to live side by side in a single organization, represented by local and extraneous values. Local values are the result of interactions and developments of internal elements in a particular environment, in line with the realities, problems, concerns, and aspirations of a society. The extraneous values have emerged and developed in foreign, eastern or western civilizations, with their values, concerns, and objectives. It moves to another society despite the different environments, civilizations, and characteristics of the two communities. One of the extraneous values is what we find in management and organization methods, imported with technology. Differences and conflicts between civilizations are therefore transmitted into organizations, which become a field of friction and contradiction, and an arena of conflict between opposing values.

The increased difference between the objectives and the effects of these values affect the effectiveness of organizations negatively.

## 9. Impacts of contradictory values within organizations

Value discrepancies lead to a range of organizational problems, whose value causes are often difficult to identify. Workers' poor adaptation to the cultural and value realities of organizations, by pushing them into a range of processes, ranging from the degree of contradiction and the strength of pressure, from simple mal-adaptation to poor human relations, conflicts or withdrawals, and the most reliable and most dangerous reaction is sabotage.

### 9.1. Adaption difficulties

The strength of contradictions and differences between values within organizations leads to adaption difficulties and an inability to withstand the pressures of different opposite values. The more differences and contradictions, the more difficult it is to adapt and lead to broader and stronger repercussions.

### 9.2. Adaptation failure

At this stage, there are failures in three manifestations:

9.2.1. *Poor human relations*: There is a difference in nature and the degrees of cultural values and composition between workers and managers. Traditional values overcome workers' mentalities, while modern values overcome and affect managers' behaviours. This contradiction and difference may amount to the tension of human relations within organizations, especially between workers on the one hand and supervisors and managers on the other.

9.2.2. *Low occupational satisfaction*: Poor human relationships lead to reduced occupational satisfaction among workers, lack of incentives and motivations for achievement, indifference and low morale.

9.2.3. *Mental and physical stress*: Work problems, reduced occupational satisfaction, and contradiction of values lead to fatigue and stress as a result of psychological pressures experienced by the worker, leading to situations of mental stress and physical fatigue without exerting a justified effort for such fatigue.

## 9.3. Confrontations

The difficulty of organizing and the inability to keep pace with change and respond to professional requirements lead to the emergence of defensive mechanisms, which can be limited to three types of behaviours: withdrawals, conflicts, and sabotage.

### 9.3.1. Withdrawal: It is manifested in two forms:

The first is to leave work permanently, especially in cases of economic prosperity that allows the worker to find a job in another institution. The worker may prefer unemployment than working under an organization's pressures and living values contradictions. The second form of withdrawal is that of staying at work with the adoption of negatives practices, such as arriving late at work, intentional absence, avoidance of work and laziness in the performance of tasks, and producing the least that can be produced.

9.3.2. *Conflict*: It is to confront situations more violently, in the form of labour conflicts, unrest, and apparent differences. Other reasons may arise and are considered scapegoats to justify conflicts whose values and real motives are rarely recognized by managers.

9.3.3. *Sabotage*: As a maximum stage, the worker is pushed to sabotage his machines to get rid of it and finds an acceptable justification for stopping work even for a while.

From the above, the causes of some of the experienced problems related to cultural values in organizations, usually have severe consequences for production and management effectiveness, and difficult to be identified.

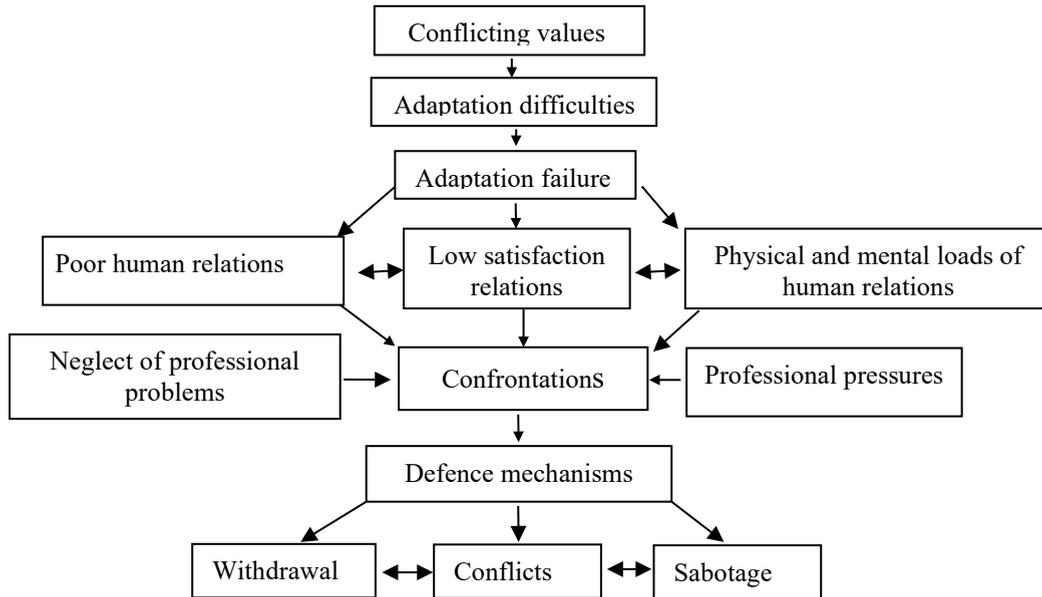


Fig. 5. Implications of ill-adaptation to different values in organizations.

## 10. Interventions contributing in managers' / subordinate's values convergence

The contradiction and difference of values are negative phenomena, whose effects can be mitigated through a range of interventions and actions, the most important of which are:

*10.1. Limiting the cultural interference and value factors in the organization:* The first step to be taken is to limit the cultural and value factors that can influence the professional behaviour of the worker within the organization.

*10.2. Cultural and value heritage classification:* That can be done through a process of separating positive values that must be preserved and strengthened, and the negative values which must be adjusted and adapted to organizational reality.

*10.3. Identification of cultural roots of different management methods:* It is an act of identifying the cultural motives of some extraneous management techniques, which are not in line with the reality of local organizations. That can help to understand the nature and cause of the organizational problems. Thus, we can replace some of the imported management techniques with the local cultural methods in line with the cultural reality of the local environment.

*10.4. Creating an organizational culture:* An organizational culture can be developed, focused on its objectives. This is done by adopting training and internal media, promoting positive values, and repeated meetings aimed at improving communication and raising the level of affiliation feeling among workers.

These measures, if followed up by regulatory development specialists, can contribute to reducing value contradictions within organizations. It also contributes to laying the foundations for organizational culture, based on the unity of objectives, the sense of belonging and the need to combine efforts to embody goals

and ambitions.

Cultural values are sensitive topics that have a severe and vital impact on organizational effectiveness. However, it is a relatively neglected topic, as this area still needs serious studies and scrutiny of value realities and work to control and adapt to it, and to find management methods in line with the value reality of society.

## **11. Discussions**

Despite the importance of the human aspect in organizations, this aspect has remained neglected, as factories are usually imported ready, with the required methods of structuring work, organization, and management. Behaviours and attitudes of workers are influenced by the historical stages that society has gone through the country's development. The transition from colonialism to independence contributed to the formation of workers' attitudes towards work and the determination of their value system.

The literature distinguishes between positive and negative values. Developing countries went through periods of colonization, underdevelopment, and mismanagement in public institutions, and the adoption of a paternalistic, socialist and social policy in employment, have led to the emergence and expansion of negative values, Lethargy, absenteeism and habits at work. This has led to increased economic and social problems, and even to the politic crisis that most developing countries are experiencing currently. Therefore, professional values and work traditions must be reviewed, and healthy values promoted, based on the diligence of work, and the respect for time and encouragement of efforts, all of which help to promote the values of love of work and the integrity of professional, commercial and social relationships for the benefit of the society.

Workers from developing countries have demonstrated their abilities, achievements, patience, and dedication to work. However, after the independence of their countries, these same workers became lazy, complacent, slow in fulfilling their tasks, neglecting their responsibilities, and increasing their demands. The majority of managers embrace Western culture and the use of foreign language, while illiteracy is common among workers who tend to speak the local language. All these manifestations provoke sensitivities, and managers and researchers avoid provoking them, hiding profound intellectual and contractual differences behind them. This leads to poor communication, different perceptions, expectations, and values, and also lead to difficulties in coexistence within organizations and several problems and contradictions.

Research in human problems and the desire to address them, help to build adapted management methods appropriate to the cultural and value realities of society. That is confirmed by Henriques and O'Neill (2016), who pointed out that values' mismatch can be an excellent opportunity to promote participative transformational changes, through a values-based approach: identifying and solving existing gaps; promoting values' congruence and assimilation; thus (re)addressing the basis of culture.

## **12. Conclusions**

Management practices cannot be transferred from one society to another, as individuals' actions and perceptions of work are affected by the local social culture. This illustrates the failure to transfer management models between countries belonging to different civilizations without adaptation or modification.

Professional behaviour has cultural motives that must be identified and categorized. In this way, it is possible to fight negative values and act to modify them, and to promote the motives of positive behaviours, to contribute to raising the workers' efficiency and management effectiveness for the interests of organizations and the full economy.

Therefore, we must review our professional values and work traditions and promote positive values, based on the love of work, diligence, and mastery, respect for time and encouragement of effort, all of which help to promote the values of work and the integrity of professional, commercial and social relations

for the benefit of society.

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