

A Correlational Study of Professional Culture and Intraorganizational Conflict

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Abstract

This study is based on data from Sales and Accounting functions in three different organizations. We know that the contextual inputs to behavior in sales and accounting include professional, organizational and national culture. By holding national culture and organizational culture constant, this paper focuses on the influence of professional culture in conflict interactions. The data from this study suggest that both accounting and sales have strong and distinct professional cultures. The greatest cultural value differences occur with the dimensions of individualism and uncertainty avoidance. There is a significant positive correlation between dimensional variance and conflict frequency. The findings suggest that cultural dimensions with incongruent values between the two professions are positively correlated with interdepartmental conflict. Through better understanding of professional culture we may be more effective at managing conflict in the workplace.

Keywords: Professional culture, conflict, individualism

Introduction

This study compares differences in professional culture values for sales and accounting with frequency of conflict between these two groups.

Conflict is operationalized using specific defensive tactics that are categorized within each of five professional cultural constructs. Defensive communication tactics are defined as interactions that can be aggressive, attacking and angry, or passive and withdrawing (Nelson & Quick, 2006; Thomas, 1976). Eight of the major conflict tactics include: power play, put-down, labeling, raising doubts, misleading information, scapegoating, hostile jokes, and deception (Nelson & Quick, 2006; Robbins, 2003).

Professional¹ culture is described by Hochschild (2003, p. xii) as existing in a “shroud of salient ambiguity”. Pierre Bourdieu points out that people are not born into professions but acquire the “socially learned predispositions” of their professions (2004). Boyatzis tries to better define professional culture by suggesting that it is simply the behaviors that are appropriate and acceptable by each profession (1982, p. 20). Professional culture often appears under the heading of a “subculture”, not being acknowledged as important as national and organizational cultures (Scott et al, 2003; Hofstede, 1980; Degeling et al, 1998). The concept of managing the tribe as presented by Logan, King, and Fischer (2008) may be linked conceptually to what we mean by a professional culture. They suggest that the tribe’s guidance system for performance is programmed with a set of cultural standards: “Tribal Leaders focus their energy on building the tribe or, more precisely, upgrading the tribal culture”.

¹ Profession is synonymous with occupation in the context of this paper.

Professional cultural patterns that develop in organizations as a result of different functional specialties are constituted of taken for granted, seldom articulated patterns of every day action and belief. To parties in organizational conflict their own cultural patterns constitute the “natural” way to do things and serve as a common sense backdrop to every day life. Each culture is enacted mostly in commonplace, everyday unanalyzed actions that weave together a coherent life of career. In many organizations, this silo mentality results in highly competitive groups engaging in repetitive conflict and working against each other (Dubinskas, 1992).

There is a paucity of research that defines professional culture and analyzes its role. Much of the limited research in this area has been done by firms that have little incentive to publish their work. Consulting firms often conduct professional culture studies for corporate clients who want to use the research for their own internal purposes (Watson Wyatt, personal communication, 2007). Some professional groups, such as engineers (CCPPSE, 2007) and the US Navy (Krauss, 1996), attempt to verbalize their cultural values. There are few if any robust measurement scales for professional culture. Ned Hermann’s brain dominance instrument uses four dimensions to differentiate professional cultures using the construct of thinking style (Hermen, 1996). Ned Hermann and Ann Hermann-Nehdi used thinking styles as a differentiator between engineers and earth scientists in a study they completed with Shell Oil Company (1996).

But professional culture is really not a new construct. Even 30 years ago, Robert Edgerton (1971) studied the differences between pastoralists and farmers in four different African tribes. He noted these two groups differed prominently in their expressed attitudes toward authority. In all four tribes, the pastoralists expressed respect for authority more often than the farmers. This paper will define professional culture based on Hofstede’s (1984) definition of culture as “the collective programming of the mind”. The specific professional culture dimensions in this study were derived by Herkenhoff (2008) from the cultural research of Hofstede (1980) and Bond (1988) (Appendix 1).

Hofstede (1980) and others (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Laurent, 1986; Bond, 1988; Trompenaars, 1994; Newman & Nollen, 1996; Phatak, Bhagat, and Kashlak, R, 2005) have primarily focused on national and organizational cultures. Just as Hofstede notes that national culture is not genetically shared but is passed down between groups, the same holds true for professional culture. Consider the professor’s relationship with a graduate student or a judge with a law clerk. In these examples the senior participant shares the “rules of the road” in professional behavioral and protocols with the less experienced colleague.

Specifically this study will test the following hypothesis:

H₁: The frequency of conflict between professional cultures increases as the differences in their professional cultural values increases.

This study makes a unique theoretical contribution to the literature by linking the areas of professional culture and conflict. Specifically it provides a quantitative tool to explore the relationship between intraorganizational conflict and professional culture.

Method

To test the hypothesis cultural values and conflict data were collected within the accounting and sales functions from three organizations, resulting in an aggregated response rate of 67%. These organizations were chosen based on shared values, access and availability. In order to hold national culture constant these organizations are all headquartered in the United States. To minimize the

effect of differences in organizational values, the organizations had similar industry/demographic profiles and espoused values. These are summarized in Appendix 2. The entire populations of accountants and sales employees within the headquarters of each organization were surveyed. The respondent sizes and response rates are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent data

Organization	Number of Respondents		Response Rate
	Accounting	Sales	
1	30	28	70%
2	80	92	74%
3	73	86	59%
Sub Total	183	206	
Overall	N= 389; Response rate = 67%		

Professional cultural values were collected using the PC08 survey tool (Herkenhoff, 2008). The survey questions are provided in Appendix 3. The PC08 questionnaire was developed based on a dimensional approach in which dimensions capture trends as a meaningful representation of the statistical data. The survey consists of 3 questions for each of the 5 professional culture dimensions. A 5-point Likert scale was used to collect quantitative results for each question. The three scores within each cultural dimension were summed. These cultural aggregate scores were calculated for each cultural dimension for the sales data and for the accounting data resulting in a group score for the accounting job family in each of the 5 dimensions and likewise a group score for the sales job family in each of the five dimensions. Absolute score differences (deltas) were calculated for each dimension by subtracting the sales value from the accounting value.

Participants understood that the PC08 results would remain anonymous. It should be noted that the professional dimensions in PC08 are defined in a global manner and as such are meant to apply within any national culture and any organization. There are no organizational or national culture biases in the questions. The strength of this instrument is that it is closely based on the Hofstede/Bond model. The survey is quick and easy to complete, which allows for higher response rates. The instrument is theoretically based and is not under copyright. PC08 is a reliable and valid survey instrument to measure professional culture.

Conflict data was collected by having participants report the percent frequency occurrence of conflict tactics within given contexts over the past 6 months during interactions between members of sales and accounting. The interactions could be experienced (experiential data) by the respondent or directly observed (observational data) by the respondent. Three contexts were provided within each of the five cultural constructs. The conflict scores were not separated by job family as the source of the reporting was not a variable in this model, just the actual conflict score independent of whether the respondent was in one job family or the other. This data was sorted by cultural dimensions and overall conflict-culture scores were calculated for each of the 5 dimensions. The conflict-culture constructs are defined in Appendix 4. The mapping of the PC08 constructs with the conflict constructs and the cultural differences (deltas) is provided in Appendix 5.

The variables were analyzed using a Pearson correlation matrix in SPSS 17.0. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation (SPRC) statistic was then applied to the paired data to determine whether

the associations between rankings on the two variables of interest, professional culture differences (Dx) and conflict (Cx), was statistically significant (Coakes & Steed, 1997; Cramer, 1998). The SPRC is essentially a Pearson's correlation on data that has been ranked. In this analysis it should be noted that the data consist of a random sample of n pairs of numeric observations at the group level.

Results

The age data ranged from 26 to 51 years old with an average age of 37.8 years old and a standard deviation of 4.6 years. The aggregated gender differentiation was 63% male. All PC08 subscales except Gender achieved an acceptable level of reliability as summarized in Table 2. Therefore Gender will not be included in this correlational study of sales and accounting data.

Table 2. PC08 Scale Reliability

Professional Culture Subscale	Cronbach Alpha
Power (P)	.70
Time (T)	.69
Risk (R)	.56
Service (S)	.66
Gender (G)	.15
Individualism (I)	.81

To test for non-overlapping content between the PC08 dimensions, a regression analysis was completed for each dimension, while entering the remaining four dimensions as the predictor variables. The resulting adjusted R sq value represents the systematic variance in each factor

Table 3. Independent Systematic Variance of Dimensions

Professional Culture Dimension	Systematic Variance
Power (P)	.53
Time (T)	.62
Risk (R)	.59
Service (S)	.51
Individualism(I)	.69

accounted for by its relationship to the other four factors. Subtracting each factor's R sq value from its alpha value yields the systematic variance of the factor that is independent of its relationship with the other four dimensions. These results indicate that most of the variance in each dimension is distinct from the other four (Table 3).

The resulting Pearson bivariate correlation coefficients for all relationships and the associated descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4. None of the within group results in the correlation matrix exceed 0.8, hence there was no indication of the existence of multicollinearity in the model (Bryman & Cramer, 1994). However two significant positive relationships are indicated

between Power (P) and Conflict- Power (CP), and between Risk (R) and Conflict- Risk (CR). Although this study explores the correlational relationship between conflict and *differences* (deltas) in culture, perhaps an additional requirement is that the culture value as a stand alone variable also holds a relationship with conflict. This analysis is beyond the scope of this paper but is worth noting for future research.

Table 4 Pearson Bivariate Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	s.d	Professional culture					Conflict (%) within each cultural dimension				
			P	T	R	S	I	CP	CT	CR	CS	CI
Power (P)	7.90	1.43	1									
Time(T)	12.21	1.72	0.349**	1								
Risk (R)	6.51	1.84	-0.481	-0.101**	1							
Service(S)	11.6	2.35	0.481**	-0.217**	0.029*	1						
Individualism (I)	6.35	1.01	-0.315**	-0.188**	0.033	0.432**	1					
Power Conflict (CP)	4.18	1.25	.521**	0.207**	-0.304**	-0.136*	-0.103	1				
Time Conflict (CT)	3.90	1.57	0.209**	0.067**	-0.201**	-0.153*	-0.175**	0.222**	1			
Risk Conflict (CR)	4.55	1.15	-0.258**	-0.068**	0.447**	-0.143*	-0.191**	0.253***	-0.081	1		
Service Conflict (CS)	3.97	1.73	-0.084**	-0.011	-0.183*	0.01**	0.318**	-0.097	0.011*	-0.239**	1	
Individualism Conflict (CI)	4.98	.899	-0.15*	.166*	.201*	.332**	0.50**	.097	.129*	-.120***	.01	1

N= 389 * p< .05, **p< .01, *** p< .001

Professional Culture

The relative rankings of the two cultures across all five dimensions are provided in Table 5. Each respondent completed the PC08 survey. These results were aggregated for each of the 5 cultural dimensions for accounting and for sales. The maximum score for each dimension is fifteen (3 questions on a 5 point Likert scale). The higher the power index the greater the role of hierarchies in the culture. The higher the time index the greater the long term focus in the culture. The higher the risk index, the more accepting the culture is in taking risks. The higher the service

index the greater the focus on the role of service in the culture. The higher the individualism index the higher the level of individualism in the culture.

The absolute value differences between sales and accounting scores were translated into percentage deltas for more effective understanding of the correlational results with the conflict data.

Table 5. PC08 Professional Culture Rankings

	Power	Time	Risk	Service	Individualism
Sales	11	10	12	13	2
Accounting	9	7	2	12	8
Sales – Accting (Dx %) = (Δ/15)*100	13 % (DP)	20% (DT)	66% (DR)	7% (DS)	80% (DI)

Table 6. Reported Conflict Occurrence within each Cultural Dimension

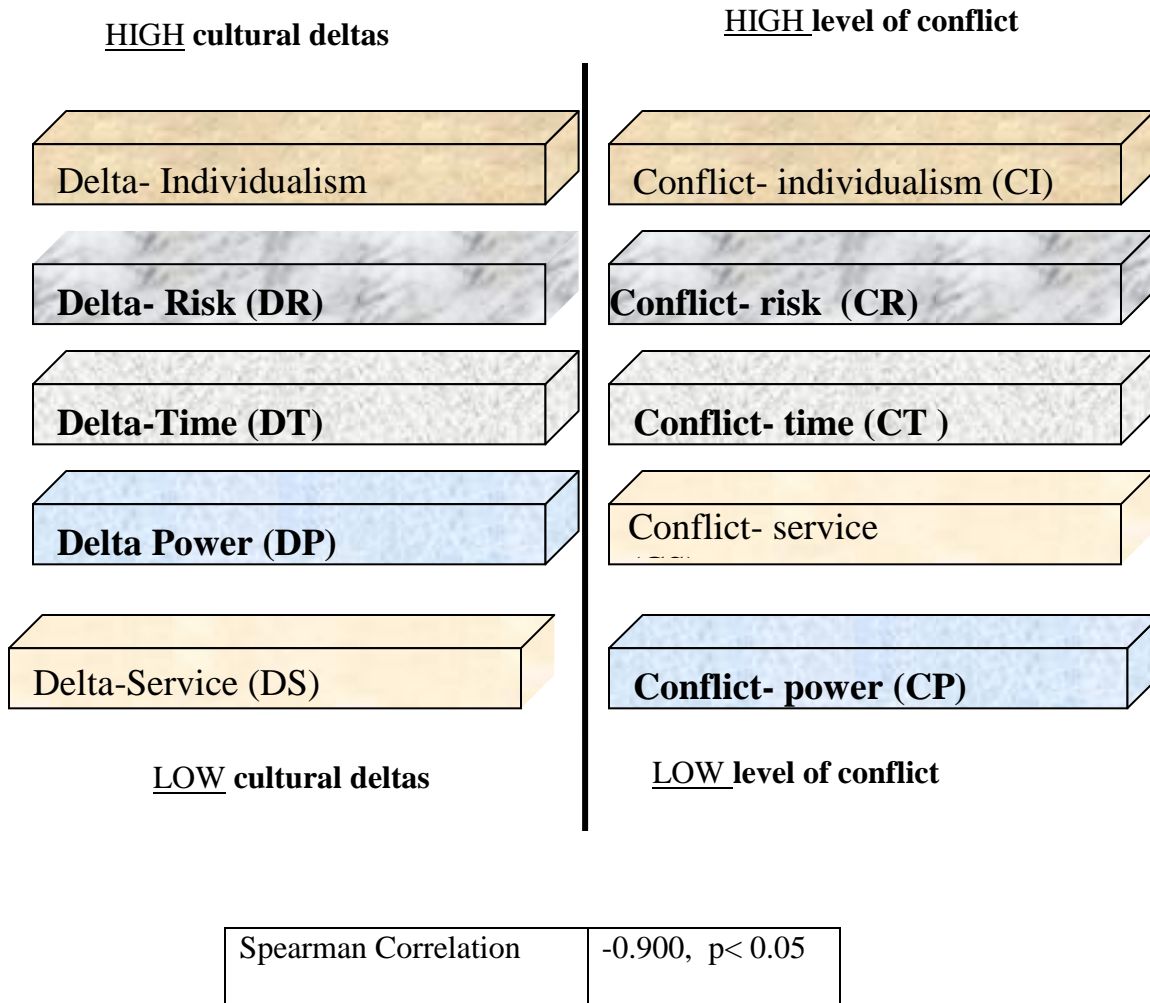
	Conflict sourced from Power (CP)	Conflict sourced from Time (CT)	Conflict sourced from Risk (CR)	Conflict sourced from Service (CS)	Conflict sourced from Individualism (CI)
Sales	7%	15%	60%	10%	80%
Accting	5%	15%	75%	5%	78%
Weighted Mean n_A = 206 n_S = 183	6%	15%	67%	7.6%	79%

The reported frequency of conflicts by category is summarized in Table 6. The conflict constructs are not mutually exclusive and the aggregated nature of the weighted mean data allows for the summated value across all variables to exceed 100%.

The Pearson correlation coefficient could not be used with the averaged data due to the issue of ecological inflation of the coefficient. Instead the Spearman Rank Order Correlation (SPRC) statistic was used to measure the association between the cultural deltas (Table 5) and the weighted

mean % frequency conflict data (Table 6). These results are shown schematically in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Rank Order of Differences in Professional Culture Dimensions with Conflict Occurrence



All relationships matched except for conflict-service (CS) which was ranked one step higher than its counterpart delta-service (DS). The resulting non-parametric correlation achieved significance ($\rho = -0.900, p < .05$).

Discussion

The first professional culture dimension is referred to by Spencer (1993) during his discussion of an individual's ability to understand and use power relationships. Jobs that are part of a structure usually have less autonomy and are part of a hierarchy. This dimension maps directly from Hofstede's VSM (Value Survey Module) instrument that measures the degree of acceptance a culture has for hierarchies (Hofstede, 1993). A high value on the Power dimension indicates a culture that readily accepts power differentials. This is often demonstrated via hierarchical structures

and processes, such as what we see in both the sales and accounting departments of organizations. In this dimension both sales and accounting share a similar set of values. Both of these groups have visible power differentials built into their cultures such as hierarchical job titles and reporting relationships. The two job families differ by only 13% in this cultural dimension. Likewise a minimal amount of conflict associated with the power construct is reported at only 6%.

Long-term orientation professions do not typically focus on immediate results and payoffs. Bond's (1988) long-term orientation dimension describes a culture whose values are primarily focused on the past and future. Short-term orientation cultures focus on the here and now. Bond's work was based on national culture data but the PC08 instrument has incorporated this construct in the Time dimension for measuring professional culture. A higher value on this dimension equates with a higher degree of long-term orientation. Both sales and accounting professions have a balanced position in this dimension. Both groups face daily problems that have to be fixed immediately as well as problems that may be longer term. Julia Chang (2003) suggests that managers of sales people often want them to think about longer-term goals, not one off deals. Accountants show a concern for timely responses with a fear of procrastination. They are comfortable with well-defined processes and regulations. Sales and accounting do not indicate any major differences in this cultural dimension (20%) and do not report any significant levels of conflict (15%).

Hofstede captures this construct within his uncertainty avoidance index (UAI). His UAI measures the degree to which a culture accepts uncertainty. A high score on the PC08 Risk dimension suggests a culture that values and expects its members to take risks. Spencer (1993) refers to "concern for order" which reflects the underlying drive to reduce uncertainty; this may be demonstrated in PC08 with a lower risk dimension. Based on his work a professional culture might reduce uncertainty by having clear roles, functions, processes and rules. Jobs with higher day-to-day predictability such as accounting minimize uncertainty. Other professional cultures such as sales reward taking chances. Occupations in which creative thinking or "out of the box" ideas are desired, usually support risk taking. In this study the sales employees indicate a higher level of risk taking than their accounting counterparts. Accountants are expected to dutifully follow all rules and avoid risk. Sales personnel are often rewarded for taking risks and "thinking out of the box". This cultural dimension achieves a significant difference (66%) and has the high reported incidence of conflict at 67%.

Hofstede's Masculinity dimension has two subscales in the in the PC08 and refers to the amount of service and the degree of machismo associated with the profession. Service tends to be associated with more matriarchal culture. However a low gender differentiated, or gender-neutral professional culture, can still be highly service based. Service refers to the degree of customer service associated with the profession. There also appears to be an association between male dominated professions and machismo. For example jet fighter pilots are typically male dominated and demonstrate a high degree of machismo, whereas the gender-neutral teaching profession does not. The machismo subscale failed to achieve an acceptable level of reliability therefore for purposes of this study only the service construct will be quantified. The two job families did not display any significant differences in this cultural dimension at 7%; both groups strive to provide high quality service to their customers. The conflict associated with service is only 7.6%.

Individualism measures the degree to which the individual needs and desires are primary to those of the collective (Hofstede, 1980). Accountants are considered as individual contributors whereas sales professionals often value the needs of the collective ahead of their own personal needs. The individualism dimension suggests that the sales group is a more collectivist culture while

accountants are more individualistic. The sales have a lower degree of individualism than accountants. Sales people often have team-based bonuses but accountants are often evaluated solely on individual performance. Accountants may work in teams but typically think of their individual needs ahead of the collective. Most occupational cultures have both individualistic and collectivist values but one set of these values is usually more dominant than the other. A professional culture that scores high on this dimension is more individualistic in nature. The differences between the 2 professional groups in this cultural dimension are the greatest at 80%. The associated conflict is also the highest score at 79.1%.

The Spearman Rank Order analysis achieved significance with only service mismatching by one rank order. This may be due to the fact that sales is more externally focused on service while accounting is more internally focused. The general concept of service is shared but the operational definition maybe different in both groups. The overall rank order association supports the hypothesis.

Conclusions

The results from this study inform the theoretical and practical understanding of the ecological level relationship between professional culture and conflict in the workplace for sales professionals and accountant. The results indicate that as the differences in professional cultural values increase, the frequency of conflict sourced from those cultural dimensions increases. In general, the greater the level of incongruity between cultural values the greater the level of conflict.

If employees understand how culture shapes their subconscious thinking about right or wrong, they are then better equipped to more consciously analyze and remedy situations where conflicts develop. Professionals in different functions (finance, sales, marketing, operations, accounting) literally think with different neural connections (Rock & Swartz, 2006 p. 8). Studies reveal that repeated, purposeful and focused attention to what is considered important creates specific perceptions, expectations and a strong personal evolution. People become accountants by paying attention to exact differences in numerical data and balance sheets and as a consequence will develop perceptions about what will bring a good result. They will in fact feel physiological discomfort when things quite literally “don’t add up”. A salesperson focuses on numbers as well but in a different way. He will create success by focusing attention on influential, persuasive relationship management and will achieve results with less precise measures than will the accountant. This difference in focus and attention may explain why accountants are significantly less comfortable with risk taking behavior than are sales people and why sometimes while interacting both groups will feel that something is not right with the other.

For example when the sales representatives deal with the credit department they can perceive all kinds of reasons why clients need more credit or more time to meet their obligations including earthquakes, typhoons and floods. Their attention is not as clearly on credit but on the close. Accountants must pay attention to the odds of actually collecting payment and may not want to depend on good intentions. Their stringent rules can feel oppressive to a sales manager and lead to conflict.

From a statistical standpoint, the association between frequency of conflict and differences in cultural values achieved significance, thereby supporting the hypothesis.

Limitations and Future Research

There is a need to better understand the unspoken assumptions that guide attitudes and behaviors and form the stable substrata of professional culture. There needs to be more research in this area to engage conversation between methods and findings of qualitative and quantitative approaches. In several countries, the term “professional culture”, refers to tradesmen and laborers. In future research outside of the United States this term will be replaced with “occupational culture” to avoid further confusion about excluding any occupational group.

The organizational culture could be measured using a survey tool that measures the enacted values not just the espoused values.

The Hofstede MAS dimension needs to be better translated in the PC08 Gender dimension to improve reliability of this construct. This dimension needs to quantitatively measure the degree of machismo in a professional culture, in addition to collecting it through observational gender role differentiation data. Modifying MAS to include a measurement of the relationship with the workplace environment may also be worthwhile. This modified dimension will require statistical validation before being accepted as part of the PC08 survey instrument.

The sample can be improved by collecting data outside of the United States and by including a larger range of professional cultures. Group level statistical analysis such as the one in this study is data intensive and requires additional professional group level data to improve the robustness of the model. The influence of professional culture on various workplace behaviors beyond conflict should be explored to better define the complete influence of professional culture in the workplace.

Conflict data could be more accurately reported by requesting participants to keep a daily log of conflict rather than depending on historical self report data. However to motivate employees to do this would require managerial support from within the organization. A more thorough analysis of the variance in conflict may be obtained by building a structural equation model in LISREL at the individual level that includes several other factors such as age, gender, number of years experience, highest level degree, etc. Additionally analyzing all three levels of culture with conflict in an HLM (hierarchical linear model) would greatly expand our knowledge of conflict in the workplace.

Managerial Implications

“The more employees are aware of differences in each other’s professional culture, its communication style, customs, values and traditions, the more they can build a productive partnership, teach and learn from one another and develop new knowledge and skills.” (Tanner et al, 2003).

One potential implication for managers is to consider professional culture as an important component of organizational success. Professional culture is important and may help organizations achieve goals by forming cohesive groups of employees that help to advance both their interests and those of the company if managed properly. It is important to be aware of how your actions as a leader, though acceptable in one professional culture, may be ineffective when dealing with another.

Tanner et al (2003) suggests that when conflicting cultures work together stress levels increase due to differences in communications and expectations. Perhaps through the analyses outlined in this paper stress can be better managed leading to a healthier workplace.

Better understanding differences in professional cultures may help managers predict areas where cross-cultural coaching and training can improve communications and processes between

professions. It is not sufficient to simply believe that common organizational culture values will provide an adequate foundation for effective inter-departmental work relationships.

Reynolds and Kalish (2002), organizational consultants in conflict resolution, note that managers spend at least 25 percent of their time resolving workplace conflicts. This affects the productivity of both managers and associates employees and can have a far-reaching impact on organizational performance. Understanding where professional cultures may not share similar values and beliefs may assist managers in indentifying potential sources of conflict. Educating employees about differing value systems may help them work more effectively with one another.

If managers recognized the power of professional culture to influence perceptions that create conflict, they might structure interactive events or experiences that would provoke thought. They might cultivate moments of insight that would allow them to expand attitudes and expectations and discuss how to make things better.

Management practices that reinforce professional culture are more likely to yield predictable employee behavior and high performance (Helmreich & Merritt, 1998).

National culture values are frequently acknowledged within organizations by way of diversity programs and various national culture employee clubs. Many resources are dedicated to the development and communication of organizational values. But even within strong organizational cultures, professional culture may still be a significant influence. This study suggests that managers need to make themselves aware of the various professional cultures they manage and interact with, both inside and outside of their organizations. By understanding where the cultures may have incongruent cultural values may provide opportunities to develop more effective relationships.

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Appendix 1

Professional Culture Dimensions

Hofstede/Bond	Professional culture dimensions	Professional culture definition with examples
Power distance	Power (CP)	<p>The degree to which power differences are accepted within the profession.</p> <p>Example: Monks accept the hierarchy of the catholic church whereas professors do not prefer working in organizations that are inherently hierarchical.</p>
Long term orientation	Time (CT)	<p>The degree to which the occupational group is long term focused. This may include reward systems and personal relationships. Example: A minister may be more long term focused in his relationships with people than a shoe salesman. Rewards for the day trader are more immediate versus a longer term pay off for the researcher.</p>
Uncertainty avoidance	Risk (CR)	<p>The degree of risk taking associated with the profession. Example: Deep-sea divers are highly risk averse. They work hard to avoid risk. Whereas professional gamblers accept a higher degree of risk in their transactions.</p>
Masculinity	Gender (CG)	<p>The degree of gender based role differentiation in the profession. We know highly male dominated professions often show higher levels of machismo. Example: Jet fighters are predominantly male while professional orchestra musicians have negligible to no role differentiation.</p>
	Service (CS)	<p>The degree to which helping others is part of the job. Service focus tends to be associated with cultures that are not male dominated (Low MAS) Example: Nurses have a high level of service but data entry workers do not.</p>
Individualism	Team (CT)	<p>The degree to which personal needs and desires are primary to those of the collective. Example: Professors have a high level of individualism while firefighters are more collective in nature.</p>

Appendix 2

Organizational Profile

	Organization 1	Organization 2	Organization 3
Headquarters	USA	USA	USA
Global Operations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry	Energy	Energy	Energy
Sales and Accounting Populations in headquarters	Started with 201 but final count 83 (workforce reduction affected these groups before this study was completed)	232	269
% Males in Accting and Sales	62	72	69
Mean age in Accting and Sales	35	39	38
Top three espoused organizational values	People are our most important asset. We value diversity. We value the environment and support green efforts.		

Appendix 3

Professional Culture Survey (PC08)

Cultural Index	Scoring	Question Number	Related Survey Question
1.Power	reverse	1	My job is part of a hierarchy (chain of command)
		2	My job is very autonomous
		3	Titles are important in my profession
2. Time	reverse	4	My job requires long term professional relationships
		5	My job requires immediate results.
		6	Results in my job have a longer time investment
3. Risk	reverse	7	In my job I get rewarded for taking risks
		8	My job has a high degree of predictability
		9	I have a high degree of personal risk associated with my job
4. Service		10	My job has a strong service focus
		11	I need to adapt to the needs of others in my job on a regular basis
		12	My job requires significant amount of cooperation with others
5. Individualism	reverse	13	My job is more about individual contributions than team contributions
		14	My job has a strong team focus
		15	I often need to inhibit my personal needs in place of team needs

Appendix 4

Conflict-Culture Constructs

Defensive Communication Tactics: power play, put-down, labeling, raising doubts, misleading information, scapegoating, hostile jokes, and deception

Question: During the past 6 months how often did you observe or experience any of the above tactics in the following contexts during interactions between members of sales and marketing. When you consider all of the conflict related situations in the work place what percentage occurred in each of the 5 cultural dimensions listed below?


Cultural Dimensions:

- 1: Power: Reporting relationships, Upward communications, Power plays _____%
2. Time: Long term focus issues, Time taken to make decisions, Time deadlines_____%
- 3: Risk: Taking risks, Managing risk, Value/risk tradeoffs _____%
- 4: Service: Service delivery, Internal vs. External customers, Managing customer expectations _%
- 5: Individualism: Shared resources, Personal accountability, Teamwork_____%

Appendix 5

Construct Mapping

Mapping of the conflict dimensions (C) with the cultural dimension differences (D); *not provided to the respondent, only for analysis purposes.*



Professional culture dimension	Conflict context	Cultural dimension delta
Power (P)	CP	DP
Time (T)	CT	DT
Risk (R)	CR	DR
Service (S)	CS	DS
Collectivism (C)	CC	DC

English Abstract

A Correlational Study of Professional Culture and Intraorganizational Conflict

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Abstract

This study is based on data from Sales and Accounting functions in three different organizations. We know that the contextual inputs to behavior in sales and accounting include professional, organizational and national culture. By holding national culture and organizational culture constant, this paper focuses on the influence of professional culture in conflict interactions. The data from this study suggest that both accounting and sales have strong and distinct professional cultures. The greatest cultural value differences occur with the dimensions of individualism and uncertainty avoidance. There is a significant positive correlation between dimensional variance and conflict frequency. The findings suggest that cultural dimensions with incongruent values between the two professions are positively correlated with interdepartmental conflict. Through better understanding of professional culture we may be more effective at managing conflict in the workplace.

Keywords: Professional culture, conflict, individualism

French Abstract*

A Correlational Study of Professional Culture and Intraorganizational Conflict

Une étude de corrélation entre cultures professionnelles et conflits intra-organisationnels

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Résumé

Cette étude est basée sur des données concernant les fonctions "ventes" et "comptabilité" dans trois organisations. On sait que les cultures professionnelles, organisationnelles et nationales sont des variables contextuelles qui influent le comportement dans ces fonctions. En prenant constant les cultures nationales et organisationnelles, cet article se concentre sur l'influence de la culture professionnelle sur les interactions lors d'un conflit au travail. Les données de cette étude suggèrent que les fonctions "comptabilité" et "ventes" ont chacune des cultures professionnelles fortes et distinctes. Les différences les plus importantes se produisent au niveau des dimensions culturelles "individualisme" et "réduction de l'incertitude". Il y a une corrélation positive entre la variance dimensionnelle et la fréquence des conflits. Les résultats suggèrent que les dimensions culturelles avec des valeurs incongrues entre les deux professions sont corrélées avec les conflits interdépartementaux. Par une meilleure compréhension des cultures professionnelles, on peut avec plus d'efficacité gérer des conflits sur le lieu de travail.

Mots-clés : culture professionnelle, conflit, individualisme

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Spanish Abstract*

A Correlational Study of Professional Culture and Intraorganizational Conflict

Un Estudio de la Correlación entre la Cultura Profesional y el Conflicto Intraorganizacional

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Resumen

Este estudio está basado en los datos de ventas y contabilidad de tres organizaciones. Sabemos que los inputs del contexto en el comportamiento de las ventas y la contabilidad incluyen los aspectos de la cultura profesional, organizacional y nacional. Manteniendo las dimensiones de cultura nacional y cultura organizacional constantes, este trabajo se centra en la influencia que la cultura profesional ejerce en las interacciones de los conflictos. Los datos de este estudio sugieren que tanto la contabilidad como las ventas tienen una fuerte y clara evidencia de la cultura profesional. Las mayores diferencias en valores culturales ocurren con las dimensiones de individualismo y el control de la incertidumbre. Existe una correlación positiva y significativa entre la varianza dimensional y la frecuencia de los conflictos. Los resultados sugieren que las dimensiones culturales con valores incongruentes entre dos profesiones están positivamente correlacionadas con los conflictos entre departamentos. A través de una mejor comprensión de la cultura profesional podremos ser más efectivos en el manejo de los conflictos en el lugar de trabajo.

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German Abstract*

A Correlational Study of Professional Culture and Intraorganizational Conflict

Eine Korrelationsstudie zu “Professional Culture” und „Intraorganizational Conflict”

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Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie basiert auf Daten zu “Sales and Accounting functions” in drei verschiedenen Organisationen. Die Autoren unterstellen, dass der kontextabhängige Input von Vertrieb und Bilanzierung professioneller, organisationaler und nationaler Kultur unterliegt. Dadurch, dass nationale und organisationale Kultur konstant gehalten wird, fokussiert dieser Beitrag auf den Einfluss der professionellen Kultur in Konfliktsituationen. Die Daten dieser Studie lassen vermuten, dass beides Vertrieb wie Bilanzierung stark und spezifisch professionellen Kulturen unterliegen. Die größte Kultur und Werte-Differenzen sind im Bereich Individualismus and Risikovermeidung zu finden. Die Studie weist eine signifikante positive Korrelation zwischen „dimensional variance and conflict frequency“ auf. Die Ergebnisse weisen darauf hin, dass ein besseres Verständnis der professionellen Kultur beim Verständnis und u.U. der Vermeidung von Konflikten am Arbeitsplatz helfen kann.

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Italian Abstract*

A Correlational Study of Professional Culture and Intraorganizational Conflict

Uno studio sulla correlazione fra cultura professionale e cultura intra-aziendale

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Abstract

Questo studio si basa su dati raccolti relativi alle funzioni Vendite e Contabilità di tre aziende diverse. Sappiamo che gli input contestuali che influenzano i comportamenti nelle vendite o in contabilità includono la cultura professionale, aziendale e nazionale. Mantenendo costanti le variabili di cultura nazionale e organizzativa, questa ricerca si concentra sull'impatto della cultura professionale nelle dinamiche di conflitto in azienda. I dati raccolti nel corso di questa ricerca evidenziano che sia le vendite che la contabilità hanno culture professionali forti e marcate. In particolare le differenze di cultura professionale fra i due gruppi riguardano due variabili: individualismo e volontà di evitare l'incertezza. E' presente una marcata correlazione positiva fra il grado di differenza un merito a queste variabili e la frequenza di conflitti. La ricerca di mostra che l'incongruenza fra variabili culturali delle due professioni e' positivamente correlata al conflitto fra le due funzioni aziendali. Attraverso una migliore comprensione della cultura professionale possiamo essere più efficaci nel gestire conflitti all'interno dell'azienda.

Parole chiave: cultura professionale, conflitto , individualismo

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Arabic Abstract*

A Correlational Study of Professional Culture and Intraorganizational Conflict

دراسة الترابط بين الثقافة المهنية والصراع داخل المنظمات

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خلاصة

تستند هذه الدراسة إلى بيانات من وظائف المبيعات والمحاسبة في ثلاث منظمات مختلفة. نحن على علم أن المدخلات الظرفية في السلوك في المبيعات والمحاسبة تتضمن ثقافة مهنية، مؤسسية ودولية. يركز هذا البحث على تأثير الثقافة المهنية في تفاعلات الصراع، مع ابقاء الثقافة الدولية و الثقافة المؤسسية ثابتة. تقترح البيانات من هذه الدراسة أن كلا من المحاسبة والمبيعات يمتلكان ثقافتين مهنتين قويتين ومتميزتين. تنشأ الاختلافات الأكبر في قيمة الثقافة مع بعدي النزعة الفردية وتجنب ظروف اللايقين. هناك ارتباط إيجابي كبير بين التغيرات المرتبطة بالأبعاد و تكرار حصول النزاع. تشير النتائج إلى أن الأبعاد الثقافية ذات القيم المتعارضة بين المهنتين ترتبط إيجابيا مع النزاع بين الدوائر. يمكن لنا ان نكون أكثر فعالية في إدارة النزاع في بيئة العمل من خلال الفهم الأفضل للثقافة المهنية.

الثقافة المهنية؛ النزاع؛ الفردية. : الكلمات الرئيسية

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