

## A Framework for Quality Culture Implementation

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**Abstract.** In this paper, we proposed a framework for quality culture implementation. It captures two dimensions of organizational culture, namely flexibility and trust. These dimensions have high relationship with quality improvement. The successful of quality improvement implementation is supported by flexibility and trust. Each of them has low and high continuum, than it will form four quadrants. The first is related to low trust and low flexibility, the second is related to high trust and low flexibility, the third is related to low trust and high flexibility, and the fourth is related to high trust and high flexibility. Quality culture implementation is considered as a process how to build quality in the context of flexibility and trust. The process of quality building will be analyzed by quality improvement programs or activities. The process will also indicate the construction of flexibility and trust.

### Keywords

Organization Culture, Quality Culture, Flexibility, Trust, and Quality Improvement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is an association between the quality concept and the corporate culture concept; about 50 years ago, Jurani (1958) proposed the application of the anthropological concept of culture to business organizations in order to create a beneficial change.

According to Watson & Gryta (2001), there are two important courses of action are needed to become superior in quality. First, to develop technologies, in order to create products and processes that meets or exceeds customers' needs and expectations, and secondly to stimulate a culture throughout the organization that continually views customer-focused quality as a primary goal.

It is widely recognized that one of the most common reasons that quality initiatives fail is a culture that does not support the effort. Tacit factors drive success and not quality tools and techniques alone; research shows that successful implementation is dependent on having improvement strategies embedded in cultural change (Cameron & Quinn, 1999)

However, bringing about a change of cultural style is generally much more difficult than implementing technical improvements. Compared with the plethora of approaches available to address the 'hard' issues of process improvement and problem solving, the lack of tools, techniques and methods for dealing with the softer issues of developing a quality-oriented organizational culture has been highlighted (Davison & Kadim, 2007).

A number of cultural change agents have been proposed, usually connected with management actions, that are thought to help develop an organization's culture towards one that supports quality initiatives – in other words, a 'quality culture'. However, little convincing empirical evidence exists to support these assumptions.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

The concept of organizational culture has been used in recent years to develop and understand the concept of culture in connection with the study of organizations (Hildebrandt et al., 1991). The term 'organizational culture' refers to

a set of properties in the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by the people who live and work there, and is assumed to influence motivation and behaviour (Davison & Kadim, 2007).

There are many definitions of organizational culture. A few examples will be given in the following:

‘Organizational culture can be defined as a set of commonly held attitudes, values, and beliefs that guide the behaviors of an organization’s members (Martin, 1985).

‘Culture can be defined as the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and norms that knit a community together’ (Kilman et al., 1985)

‘Organizational culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problem 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 in relation to those problems’ (Schein, 1992).

To measure organizational culture can be done through its dimensions or elements. Over the years, several measures of organizational culture have been developed (Xenikou & Furnham, 1996). Carmeli (2005) used five dimensions to measure organizational culture, namely: job challenge, communication, trust, innovation, and social cohesion.

Cameron & Quinn (1999) developed the competing value framework (see figure 1) which used two dimensions. One dimension differentiates effectiveness criteria that emphasize flexibility, discretion and dynamism from criteria that emphasize stability, order, and control. The second dimension differentiates effectiveness criteria that emphasize an internal orientation, integration, and unity from criteria that emphasize an external orientation, differentiation, and rivalry.

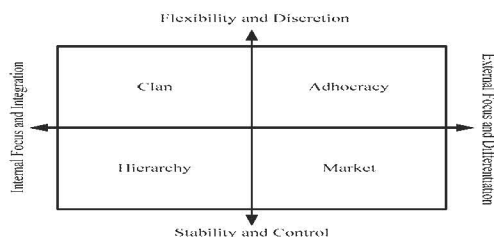


Figure 1: Competing Value Framework

### 3. QUALITY CULTURE

Quality culture is a subset of the overall culture of an organization (Cameron & Barnett, 1999). It reflects the general approach, the values, and the orientation toward quality that permeate organizational actions. Quality culture developed when some scholars have begun to investigate quality as a cultural phenomenon (see table 1) rather than as a set of tools and techniques (Cameron & Sine, 1999).

There are many definitions of quality culture. A few examples will be given in the following:

‘Quality culture is the pattern of habits, beliefs, and behaviour concerning quality’ (Watson & Gryna, 2001)

‘Quality culture refers to a culture which promotes, encourages, and maintains total quality’ (Sinclair & Collins, 1994)

‘Quality culture can be defined as the concentration of all people and resources in a never-ending quest for greater quality and service in every dimensions of the organization’ (Batten, 1994)

‘Quality culture is the culture of an organization committed to customer satisfaction through continuous improvement’ (Carji & Yui, 1997).

From some definitions above, it can be concluded that there are strong relationships between organizational culture and quality. It is suitable with statement of Cameron & Carole (1999) that quality culture is subset of organizational culture.

To measure quality culture can use some dimensions of organizational culture which promotes, encourages, and maintains quality. In this paper, the measurement of quality culture use trust and flexibility. As mention above, trust and flexibility are dimensions of organizational culture (see Carmeli, 2005; Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

#### 3.1 Trust

According to Urrabazo (2006) trust is critical component of culture. Beside that, Trust is seen as a vital element in well functioning organizations. Trust is necessary for the effective co-operation and communication which are the bases for productive relationships (Baier, 1985). Trust is a complex concept. It has been difficult to pin down

Table 1: Seven Major Definitions of Quality

Approach	Definition	Example
Transcendent	'Quality is neither mind nor matter, but a third entity independent of the two, even though quality cannot be defined, you know what it is' (Pirsig, 1974)	Innate excellence Timeless beauty Universal appeal
Product-based	'Quality refers to the amounts of the unpriced attributes contained in each unit of the priced attribute' (Ieffler, 1982)	Durability Extra desired attributes Wanted features
User-based	'Quality is fitness for use' (Juran, 1974) 'Quality consists of the capacity to satisfy wants' (Edwards, 1968)	Satisfies customers Fulfills expectations Meet needs
Production-based	'Quality means conformance to requirements' (Crosby, 1979)	Reliability Adherence to specifications Variation within tolerance limits
Value-based	'Quality means best for certain conditions... (a) the actual use and (b) the selling price' (Feigenbaum, 1983)	Performance at an acceptable price Affordable excellence Value for the money spent
System-based	'[Quality is] a system of means to economically produce goods or service which satisfy customers' requirements' (Japanese Industrial Standards Committee Z8101, 1981)	Utilizing accepted quality procedures Integrated approach Quality processes
Cultural	'[Quality] means that the organization's culture is defined by and supports the constant attainment of customer satisfaction through an integrated system of tools, techniques, and training' (Maskhin and Kiser, 1993)	Management philosophy Mind-set Lifestyle

Sources: Cameron & Sine (1999)

because it is based on many factors, varies with the expectations held in different kinds of relationships, and changes over the course of a relationship (Moran & Hoy, 1998). There are some definitions of trust. A few examples will be given in the following

'Trust is the decision to rely on a partner with the expectation that the partner will act according to a common agreement (Currall & Inkpen, 2002).

'Trust can be defined as an individual's belief or common belief among a group of individuals that another individual or group (a) makes good-faith efforts to behave in accordance with any commitments both explicit and implicit, (b) is honest in whatever negotiations preceded such commitments, and (c) does not take excessive advantage of another even when the opportunity is available' (Cummings & Bromily, 1996).

'Trust is one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is (a) competent,

(b) reliable, (c) open, and (d) concerned' (Mishra's, 1996).

'Trust is the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence' (Ganesan, 1994).

'Trust is expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community' (Fukuyama, 1995).

Trust has relationship with quality in the modern and competitive organization. According to Peterson (1998), organizations should work on building cultures of trust, not cultures of distrust, for their own continuing wellbeing. Trust has definite and bankable value. Without trust, a true quality system cannot work. Look at the chart in figure 1 as follow.

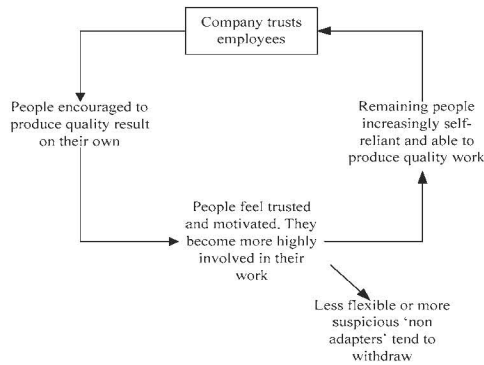


Figure 2: The Quality Trust Cycle

The chart above shows that if company trusts employees, they encourage to produce quality output. Then they feel trusted and motivated, and become more highly involved in their work. With their own, they increase ability to produce quality work. Great impact more they did the best, company would give big trust to employees.

Trust performance can be classified into low trust and high trust. Fukuyama (1995), in his research, stated that there is society with high trust and society with low trust. With this analogy, trust performance in the organization can be also classified into low trust and high trust with different characteristics. According to Lewicki *et.al.* (1998), high trust characterized by hope, faith, confidence, assurance, and initiative. Meanwhile, low trust characterized by no hope, no faith, no confidence, passivity, and hesitance.

### 3.2 Flexibility

The rapid and discontinuous change that occurs in the environment has a direct impact on the way in which businesses are managed (Koornhof, 2001). Several researchers have recognised that flexibility is an essential characteristic of successful organization in a highly competitive and rapidly changing business environment (Volberda, 1998). Because of it, flexibility is one of organizational culture dimensions which has impact to quality performance (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Prasad & Tata, 1998).

In the relevant literature, there are several definitions and explanations of flexibility. Anshoff (1965) described two types of flexibility: external and internal flexibility. External flexibility is considered to be positioning of the organization by “not putting all one’s eggs in a single basket”, whereas internal flexibility is seen

as seeking to provide a cushion in response to catastrophe.

Volberda (1998) classified flexibility into internal flexibility and external flexibility. Internal flexibility defined as the capacity of organizations to adapt to the demands of the environment, while external flexibility is the capacity of organizations to influence their environment and thereby reduce their vulnerability. Koornhof (1998) defined flexibility as the ability and capacity to reposition resources and functions of the organization in a manner consistent with the evolving strategy of management as they respond, proactively or reactively, to change in the environment.

From some definitions above, it can be concluded that flexibility is an organization capability to response quickly the changing demands of the environment.

Flexibility has relationship with quality improvement. Prasad & Tata (1998), in their research, stated that flexibility influence the success of total quality management (TQM) implementation. Besides that, according to Cameron & Quinn (1999) the competing value framework is helpful in organizing the various aspect of TQM.

Flexibility characterized by adaptability and involvement (Denison *et.al.* 2004). Adaptability is focusing on an organization’s ability of adapt quickly to the signals from the external environment, including customers and the market place, while involvement is about building employees capability, ownership, and responsibility. To be adaptable organization, it should create change, drive organization by customer, and gain knowledge from the environment. To increase involvement in the organization, it should empower the people with real responsibility, work cooperatively toward common goals, and develop capability of employee.

Flexibility performance was classified into low flexibility and high flexibility. In the competing value framework of Cameron & Quinn (1999), stability referred as low flexibility. Low flexibility and high flexibility have different characteristics. The characteristic of low flexibility and high flexibility can be explained in table 2 as follow.

Table 2: The Differences between High Flexibility and Low Flexibility

High Flexibility	Low Flexibility
Joint Specialization: Employees work together and coordinate tasks	Individual specialization: Employees work separately and specialize in one task
Complex integrating mechanisms: task forces and teams are primary integrating mechanisms	Simple integrating mechanisms: Hierarchy of authority well-defined
Decentralization: Authority to control tasks is delegated. Most communication lateral	Centralization: Decision-making kept as high as possible. Most communication is vertical.
Mutual Adjustment: Face-to-face contact for coordination. Work process tends to be unpredictable	Standardization: Extensive use made of rules & Standard Operating Procedures
Much verbal communication	Much written communication
Informal status based on perceived brilliance	Informal status in org based on size of empire
Organization is network of persons or teams. People work in different capacities simultaneously and over time	Organization is a network of positions, corresponding to tasks. Typically each person corresponds to one task

#### 4. CONSTRUCT A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY CULTURE

As mentioned above, the dimensions of quality culture proposed in this paper are flexibility and trust which each of them has continuum low and high. Together these two dimensions form four quadrants. Each continuum highlights a core value that is opposite from the value on the other end of the continuum, that is: high flexibility versus low flexibility and high trust versus low trust (See figure 3).

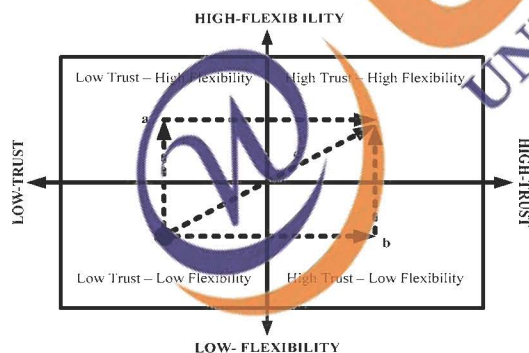


Figure 3: Framework of Quality Culture

Each quadrant in figure 3 has not been given a specific label to distinguish them. The first quadrant is in the lower left, formed by low trust and low flexibility, the second quadrant is in the lower right, formed by high trust and low flexibility, the third quadrant is in the upper left, formed by low trust and high flexibility, and the fourth quadrant is in the upper right, formed by high trust and high flexibility. The ideal one is the fourth quadrant, characterized by high trust and high flexibility.

#### 5. IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY CULTURE

In this paper the framework for quality culture implementation is introduced and developed for the better understanding of way quality manifest itself in companies. Quality culture implementation is considered as a process to build quality in the context of flexibility and trust.

As noted in figure 3, there are three patterns of quality building. The first pattern, noted by (a), is quality building from the first quadrant to the fourth quadrant via the third quadrant, the second pattern, noted by (b), is quality building from the first quadrant to the fourth quadrant via the second quadrant, and the third pattern, noted by (c) is quality building from the first quadrant to the fourth quadrant directly.

Quality building, in this research, will be analyzed by evident of quality improvement programs. The Quality improvement program will be researched in the interval of time. We will research a process of quality building. To understand about it, the use of a process approach and case study research are valuable.

In the pattern (a), quality improvement program indicated that there is construction of high flexibility for the first, and then followed by constructing high trust. Meanwhile in the pattern (b), quality improvement program indicated that there is construction of high trust first and then followed by constructing high flexibility. Finally, in the pattern (c), quality improvement program indicated that there is construction of high flexibility and high trust does together. Quality improvement programs that is considered to be researched are communication, decision making, teamwork, and empowerment

## 6. CONCLUSION

A framework for quality culture implementation proposed can be used to research quality building in the context of culture. The pattern of quality building can be showed by evident of quality improvement programs. By researching with case study strategy, three patterns of quality building will be yielded. The first indicated construction of high flexibility, and then followed by high trust. The second indicated construction of high trust, and then followed by high flexibility. The third indicated construction of high flexibility and high trust in the same time.

Practically, this research is very useful for organization to improve their competitiveness by constructing high flexibility and high trust through quality improvement. Flexibility and trust in organization can drive continuous improvement, customer focus, and involvement of people.

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