

## **Disputing cultures in consultant and contractor organizations in construction**

Disputes are common phenomenon anywhere in the world. Construction has no exception, as it is a teamwork. In order to minimize construction disputes, it is essential to identify root causes of these disputes. This research paper focuses on the question of whether there is a

cultural difference between consultant and contractor organizations in Sri Lanka, which leads to construction disputes. In order to achieve this, cultural elements of an organization were identified together with the established culture types, according to the Competing Value Framework developed by Quinn and Cameron (1998). It was considered that the employees' perception regarding their organization is a valuable tool in measuring the culture type of the organization. Comprehensive case studies of a sample of 18 major building and civil construction organizations (9 consultants and 9 contractors) have been carried out using a structured questionnaire and direct observations.

Competing Value Framework establishes four different organizational culture types that are arranged in quadrants of a 2 x 2 matrix and named as Clan, Adhocracy, Market and Hierarchy. Each culture type has associated values of it. In order to represent organizational culture, six elements have been identified within the organization. Analyses were carried out to determine the cultural biases towards the identified culture type.

Findings indicate that contractors and consultants are having different attributes in all six cultural elements. Consultants show a bias towards Clan culture while contractors are biased towards Market culture. The main feature is that both categories of organizations show similar affinity in Hierarchy and Adhocracy cultures.

Study revealed that consultants believe their success lies in development of human resources. These organizations emphasize on loyalty and traditions and create participative and comfortable working environment. All of them believe that their success is highly depended on good relationships with customers. Further, they emphasize the importance of teamwork while encouraging discussions, participative decision-making and open communication. Contracting organizations on the other hand, are driven towards output maximization. Most work processes are carried out on established standard procedure. They emphasize on goal accomplishment achieved by smooth scheduling of activities. Both categories of organizations have almost equal commitment to risk, innovation and development and face situations where tasks are not clearly defined despite severe deadlines. Hence, both types of organizations agree with the importance of maintaining their internal system.