

## ALIGNMENT OF CULTURAL AGREEMENT PRACTICES IN A BRAZILIAN BASED COMPANY

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### Abstract

This paper reports the results of a case study research carried out in the Rio de Janeiro firm ARFCO, based on documentary evidence, interviews and questionnaires with the main objective to analyze the cultural agreement of an organization's subcultures, identifying the values (both extant and desired) perceived by the clusters (for both the leadership and the staff). The theoretical framework for the research is based on the theories on organizational management and change on the assumption that the search for clusters of similar perceptions is important for cultural alignment of subcultures.

After an overview of the theories, programs and approaches for cultural management and change, the research method and questions of research are formalized so as to guide the case study. Simultaneous was made to both a quantitative Q-methodology for the systematic analysis of subjectivity, which enabled the ideographic evaluation of organizational values, and a qualitative methodology, by means of study of the case. Results of the study indicate that although several elements of management and change capabilities are present, the organizational culture of ARFCO is predominantly defragmented. The existence of cultural fit among the subcultures of the leadership and the staff, with respect to desired values, offers us sufficient insight to suggest that cultural alignment within ARFCO is possible, as long as the current differences of perception can be attenuated.

**Keywords: Organizational Values; Cultural Fit; Q-Methodology**

### INTRODUCTION

Research studies on cultural fit have demonstrated its importance for organizations in a range of constructs. Optimistically speaking, cultural alignment can benefit the organization, increasing employee satisfaction and organizational efficiency (Lauer; Kristof-Brown, 2001), while reducing turnover and stress (Cable; Judge, 1996). It has also been ascertained that a lack of cultural alignment is commonplace in for-profit businesses, chiefly with respect to the discrepancy between the values desired by the leadership and by the rest of employees (LEWIS *et al.*, 2003).

The study of organizational subcultures is recent and can be identified in the work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Hofstede (1984), Trice and Beyer (1984), and Schneider (1987). These researchers have suggested that if an occupational group does exist, it will tend to have a different

culture (Teerikangas, S.; Laamanen, 2002), and subcultures emerge when a shared understanding develops within such a group.

In the studies on organizational culture organizations are normally perceived as sharing a dominant culture (associated with leadership) – one that is identifiable (Teerikangas, S.; Laamanen, 2002). There is, however, a conceptual debate (Freitas, 1991) surrounding whether organizations are monocultural (i.e., the culture of the decision-making elite) or multicultural.

The mechanism most used to understand shared understanding is usually referred to as cultural fit (also referred to as Cultural Agreement or Cultural Congruence, see (Hilal, 2002). Cultural fit is related to the way in which the members of an organization make sense of the organizational context and the factors that influence this process of understanding or comprehension of its meaning.

Implicit in this study is the idea that organizational culture – a system of shared values – is an invisible integrative

force that maintains organizational unity. Meanwhile, as Hatch (1993) notes, sharing can have two meanings. The first relates to common experiences and the second to the differences.

Organizations can be seen as a microcosm containing a range of cultural perspectives that can manifest divergence of perception, similar to the societies in which they are inserted. As such, subcultures often reveal themselves in complex and contradictory ways (Dowling, 2001:109).

In this sense, organizations appear to be culturally fragmented (Alvesson, 1994), demonstrating that the coexistence of multiple cultures is possible (Dibella, 1992). Subcultures can drive an organization, but at the same time, they can create conflicts with the dominant culture (Dowling, 2001).

Organizational research and studies have developed new instruments, methods and knowledge that can be used to characterize organizational culture, to identify scales of values, and to assess the degree of internalization and cultural fit of an organization (Igo; Skitmore, 2006). Among the more important instruments available in the academic literature, we can cite: the Organizational Profile Questionnaire of Ashkanasy, Broadfoot and Falkus (2000), the Organizational Culture Profile of O'Reilly *et al.* (1991), Personal, Customer Orientation and Cultural Issues, of Maull, Brown and Cliffe (2001), the Organizational Culture Inventory of Cooke (1995 in IGO; SKITMORE, 2006), the Culture Assessment Instrument of Cameron and Quinn (1999), and in Brazil, we find the Inventário de Valores Organizacionais (Inventory of Organizational Values) by Tamayo, Mendes and Paz (2000) and the Perfil da Cultura Empreendedora (Profile of Entrepreneurial Culture) of Tomei, Russo and Bottino (2008). This diversified group of evaluation models differs in terms of format and analysis, but all incorporate a set of qualitative or quantitative techniques to assess and compare the essential cultural characteristics of any organization.

As long as there continue to be methodological differences of opinion regarding how to measure cultural fit (Edwards, 1994), the preponderance of evidence convincingly shows that the similarity between the people and the organization – especially in terms of cultural fit – is associated with a subjective experience (Adkins *et al.*, 1996). Greater cultural fit has positive effects and the lack thereof increases the probability of negative results. The fundamental precepts for these effects are typically attributed to the fact that the better the alignment is of subcultures to the larger organization (with respect to values), the greater the level of attraction and the lower the possibility of conflict (Elfenbein; O'reilly, 2007).

Based on these assumptions and as a function of the dearth of empirical studies on the cultural alignment of subcultures, the objective of this article is to analyze the

cultural fit of an organization's subcultures, identifying the values (extant and desired) perceived by the clusters (leadership clusters and staff clusters) using a quantitative methodology (Q-methodology) for a systematic analysis of subjectivity that permits the ideographic assessment of organizational values.

In order to analyze the issue, this article comprises the following parts: the first part describes the theoretical framework where we emphasize the importance of cultural fit for organizations and the role of shared values. The second part contains an overview of the referred-to methodologies, as well as the characteristics of the case study carried out at ARFCO (The organization has authorized the researchers to present these findings as long as the organization may remain anonymous). ARFCO is a fictitious name used to represent the organization. The third section presents the cultural diagnostic of ARFCO along with the identification of its organizational values. Lastly, recommendations are made regarding cultural fit with a focus on desired values, based on the premise that the search for clusters of similar perceptions on the part of the organizational leadership/the staff is important for organizational management and change.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Organizational Values

The concept of culture – and organizational culture in particular – has already been defined in the most diverse forms and with various focuses. Some of these definitions emphasize the strategic side, others the operational, and yet others, the sociological. According to Schein (1992, 1996) social entities of any size have a culture if they have had the opportunity to learn and establish assumptions about themselves and the environment. As Smircich (1983) has summarized, there are several schools of thought having different bases for and biases in their definitions of organizational culture.

Tomei and Braunstein (1994) have presented some of these definitions and their specific focuses. They divided them into two groups: subjective culture as meaning (how to interpret things) and culture as understanding (how things are done). These definitions speak to primary values, important values, expected behavior for success, series of beliefs shared by organizational members, rules that govern daily behavior, principles learnt, ways learned to deal with experience, and the series of coherent answers to deal with daily questions, amongst others.

Organizational beliefs in this study are defined as the pattern of organizational members' assumptions about the organization. Organizational members may share organizational beliefs to varying degrees. Of the

different types of organizational beliefs, organizational identity and culture beliefs are considered central due to their abstractness and their fundamental nature. They are also suggested as potential targets for managerial intervention. Organizational beliefs are linked to behavior and organizational performance through a learning process in which cognitive activity constantly shifts the level of abstraction of knowledge.

Values have received a lot of interest in the literature on leadership and in the popular press, as a managerial practice directed at influencing employee beliefs about organizations and (consequently) organizational performance. However, so far, academic research has failed to clearly separate the concepts of sociological values and values used as tools for managerial intervention (Agle; Caldwell, 1999; Schwartz, 1999).

In this study, values mean abstract, explicit, and often management-driven statements that represent ideal modes of conduct and ideal terminal goals that are used as a vehicle for managerial intervention in an organization. In general, values differ from organizational beliefs temporally by level of analysis, and in their level of abstraction and explicitness (Martinsuo, 1998). However, they are considered as a potential tool to influence organizational members' beliefs due to their ambiguity and conceptual connection

to organizational culture. In order to lead to hoped-for behavioral responses on the part of organizational members, values should represent ideals that are both in-use and desired; they must be simple, inspiring, and consistent with each other (O'reill; Chatman, J.; Caldwell, 1991).

Under the prism of social psychology, Rokeach (1973) defines values as "beliefs that guide actions and judgments across specific objects and situations and beyond immediate goals to more ultimate end-states of existence". According to the author, values are ordered according to their relative importance. Once internalized, values become (consciously or otherwise) a standard of criteria that guides actions, develops, and sustains attitudes to justify actions, to morally judge oneself as well as others, and to compare oneself with others.

There have been several conceptualizations of values. According to Cable and Judge (1996), an important aspect of people and organizations that can be compared both directly and significantly are values (Adkins *et al.*, 1996). For Neiva (2004:40) "making use of the concept of values helps to recognize, emphasize, and pose fundamental questions regarding the multiplicity and variation of preferences surrounding organizational behaviors and goals". In Table 1, we summarize some of the values that will serve as a starting point for this study.

Table 1. Main Value Concepts

Author	Concept of Values
Robbins (2005)	Basic convictions that contain the element of judgment that drives an individual's ideas regarding what is right, good, or desirable.
Lezana and Tonelli (1996)	A set of beliefs, preferences, aversions, internal predispositions and judgments that characterize the individual's worldview.
Klenke (2006)	The basis for the generation of behavior, which adjusts itself to the needs of groups, where different values have different degrees of importance.
Michailova and Hutchings (2006)	Base for organizational members to be able to understand the world around them and to be able to act.
Tamayo, Mendes and Paz (2000)	Principles or beliefs, organized hierarchically, relative to desirable states of existence or models of behavior that guide the life of the organization – the opposition between what is fundamental and what is secondary in the organization; what is essential and what is accidental; the desirable vis-à-vis the undesirable. Values reveal a kind of mental model that the employee has of the organization.
Meglino and Ravlin (1998)	Strongly influence the attitudinal and behavioral responses of individuals.
Cable and Judge (1996)	Intrinsic, enduring perspectives of what is fundamentally right or wrong.
Bhargava and Mathur (2002)	The cornerstone of organizational culture, providing a sense of direction for all and a guide for the daily behavior of the members.
Chatman (1989, 1991)	Enduring beliefs that guide individual attitudes, judgments and behaviors.

Adkins, Ravlin and Meglino (1996)	Beliefs regarding how people should behave. It is easier to predict the behavior of the other when values are shared. People with similar values should have: greater consensus regarding basic workplace behavior; reduced conflict associated with teamwork; and enhanced satisfaction, performance and communications.
Freitas (1991)	Defines what is important for the organization to achieve success.
DuBrin (2003)	Corporate philosophy is expressed through its values, and these guide behavior.
Nogueira and Machado-da-Silva (2003)	Preferences that are reinforced by effective behaviors, gradually internalized, that become the underlying assumptions of the organizational culture.
Schwartz and Bilsky (1987)	Concepts or beliefs that refer to psychological states, desired situations, or behaviors, capable of conditioning individuals in their selection or evaluation of behaviors or events.

The notion of shared values, where, rather than uniformity there is a coexistence with organizational values (when such differ from individual values), has been the object of study of several authors (Hofstede; Neuijen; Ohayv; Sanders, 1990). Enz (1988) considers shared values fundamental to the analysis of organizational culture. Jeminson and Sitkin (1986), also, use this concept to describe similarities between organizations, in terms of cultural organization.

Das and Teng (2001) believe in the importance of shared values because they permit the creation of a cluster spirit, where the sense of belonging to the same team can enhance conflict resolution and mutual confidence. This is an argument based on the belief that similar cultures and values can improve the organizational fit between partners. This idea was also defended by Inkpen and Currall (1998) who believe that similar organizational cultures can drive the development of trust. This is the underlying concept of Sako (1998) who notes that the values shared between partners create an alliance of values that no rule can affect; the idea can also be seen in the proposal suggested by Sitkin and Roth (1993) who state that shared values avoid the appearance of distrust.

### Different Approaches to Cultural Fit

The perspective of social identity or demography (Hilal, 2002) proposes that social identity, cultural antecedents, and an organizational member's values are the primary factors that influence the way in which the member is going to make sense of the organizational context. Organizational members with the same background will have greater probabilities of cultural alignment than will members of the same organization with different demographic backgrounds. One can see that the process of selection affects the constitution of cultural alignment in an organization, especially if we assume that occupation, professionalization and industry favor the demarcation of subcultures (Louis, 1980). From the structuralist point of view, the main factors

that influence the cultural points of view of the organizational members are structural differentiation and formal position. Consequently, the members of the organization who occupy similar organizational positions would be affected by the same organizational pressures and would have higher probabilities of developing similar cultural points of view, i.e., of having cultural alignment (Tomei *et al.*, 2008). The social-interactionist approach (Koene, 1997) assumes that the cultural points of view of organizational members develop as a function of their interactions with each other. Information exchanged in the interactions of organizational members enables them to make sense of the organizational context and to identify appropriate ways to act. By sharing information reciprocally, organizational members who interact frequently tend to develop similar points of view. Cultural alignment is, therefore, catalyzed by interpersonal relationships.

Consistent with the idea that human behavior is a function of the person-environment link, Kristof (1996:4-5) defined cultural fit as: "the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: "(a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both". This definition addresses person-organization fit as a whole instead of as a specific load (Kristof, 1996). This takes into account two types of relationships which can occur between an individual and an organization: (a) the organization and the individual contribute to meeting one another's needs (i.e., supplementary fit), or the organization and individual share similar characteristics (i.e., complementary fit).

The process of cultural alignment used as a theoretical framework in this study assumes a perspective that predicts complementary congruence, being more encompassing, conditioned on certain factors such as organizational context, structural differentiation, formal position, interaction between members, communications processes and interpersonal relationships (Tomei *et al.*, 2008).

## METHODOLOGY

### Choice of Model for Diagnostic Analysis

Understanding organizational culture to be a set of values shared among organizational members and accepting that there are several ways to conceptualize organizational culture, this paper attempts to identify organizational culture through organizational practices and values. In order to measure cultural alignment, a formal position was assumed consisting of two distinct clusters for analysis: leadership and staff.

The research approach is simultaneously qualitative and quantitative, and the empirical study concerns ARFCO, a state firm located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

During the course of the research, data was collected through a multi-method study that included document analysis, workshops, observations and individual interviews with open questions and questionnaires.

In the document phase of the research the following documents were analyzed: Company History, Company Philosophy, Human Resources Norms, Company Website, Human Resources Strategic Plan, Company Vision and Mission, Social Responsibility Actions, Employee Manual, Socialization Process, Communication Process, Organizational Structure, Organizational Research Climate.

The interviews ranged in length from thirty minutes to one hour. The primary purpose of the interviews was to identify organizational and attitudinal variables linked to the questionnaire.

The population of ARFCO was composed of six hundred fourteen collaborators in July 2008; the sample interviewed comprised eighty-two participants, (55% male, 29% aged between 46 and 55, 85% college graduates); the level of significance was 95% with a 10% margin of error.

The reliability of the study could be questioned due to the use of a convenience sample of interviewees and the fact that group interviewees were selected by ARFCO's Human Resources Department. However, reliability was improved by emphasizing the confidentiality of the discussions and the anonymity of respondents. In addition, due to the non-probabilistic nature of the convenience sample, the study's conclusions cannot be generalized.

### Collection and Treatment of Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire was applied in a similar way to the entire sample. The data collection technique used was Q sort, which permits the analysis of subjective data. The analysis was carried out using Q-methodology.

In order for the respondents to fill out the questionnaire, a set of organizational values was presented to them (Tomei

*et al.*, 2008). Right after, respondents were requested to sort the values along a continuous scale from "not important" to "very important" according to their own opinion. This technique captured the subjective assessments as manifested by the final order of the values. The greatest advantage of this method in relation to the traditional method (i.e. Likert scale) of attributing one value to each question is that it obliges participants to consider the problem as a whole, in contrast to the traditional method, which treats each question in isolation.

The answers to the questions regarding organizational values were tabulated and treated using statistical procedures available in SPSS 13.0 and PCQ 1.41. The procedures included:

1. Averages of frequencies to identify the relative importance of the values.
2. Exploratory Factor Analysis, for the purpose of convergent validation of the model with the profile of the enterprise culture. This statistical technique was also used to test the quality of the collected data.
3. Q-methodology to identify clustering of respondents. Variables showing high correlation may be considered to be similar, i.e., of the same cluster. The study enabled the number of different clusters to be identified. Consequently, the number of clusters is empirical and completely dependent on how respondents sort the variables. The clusters group gather those people who share a common concept. Q-methodology thus provides a framework for the systematic study of subjectivity. This characteristic makes it suitable for the study of subjective aspects of human behavior. The sorting of the variables utilized in Q-methodology is referred to as 'Q-sort'. The distinctive feature of the technique is that it requires participants to sort the supplied variables according to a predefined, quasi-normal distribution. Q sort provides a range of benefits, including: a) in-depth studies can be carried out using small samples; b) survey participants need not be selected randomly.

## ARFCO: A CASE STUDY

### General Description

ARFCO, founded in 1967, grew out of the Brazilian government's need to technically and financially stimulate national studies and research as well as economic, social, scientific and technical projects and programs, in fulfillment of Federal Government sector goals and priorities.

Organizational practices entrenched over the years resulted in the group of interviewees identifying the current organization as having four shortcomings: (a) lack of organizational identity; (b) unclear organizational vision, i.e.,

not all staff are even aware of the specific goals to be met by the organization; (c) lack of clarity regarding relationships between rewards, sanctions, effort and performance; and (d) lack of equality of opportunities. The quotation below from an interview illustrates this aspect:

“ARFCO can be compared to a multitalented person. Discreet (because they deal with cutting-edge knowledge), versatile, indecisive, confused, quasi-schizophrenic. The company manages to work on several things at the same time. It’s like a split personality. Someone with no identity. Someone not wholly integrated.”

### Identification of Organizational Value Groupings

In order to identify the most important and least important values at ARFCO for the sample, we calculated the averages of the responses for the leadership and for the staff. After this, we compared the two averages (Graph 1).

The values ‘Individualism’, ‘Dedication’, ‘Resilience’, ‘Obedience’, ‘Versatility’, ‘Alacrity’, ‘Commitment’ and ‘Achievement-Oriented’ were found to be the values most highly rated by the leadership (of the 40 proposed values). In contrast, the values ‘Commitment’, ‘Flexibility’, ‘Resilience’, ‘Obedience’, ‘Professionalism’, ‘Innovation’, ‘Simplicity’ and ‘Perseverance’ were the values most highly rated by the staff (of the 40 proposed values). The values ‘Commitment’, ‘Obedience’ and, ‘Resilience’, were found to be highly rated by both groups interviewed (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Most Highly Rated Values

Values Rated Highest Leadership	Values Rated Highest Staff	Values Rated Highest Leadership/Staff
Individualism, Dedication, Resilience, Versatility, Obedience, Commitment, Achievement-Oriented.	Commitment, Flexibility, Resilience, Simplicity, Obedience, Enthusiasm, Perseverance, Professionalism, Innovation.	Commitment, Obedience, Resilience

The organizational values ‘Strategic Vision’, ‘Transparency’, ‘Self-Starter’ and ‘Results-Oriented’ are considered to be the least-rated values, of the 40 values proposed for leadership. ‘Autonomy’, ‘Strategic Vision’, ‘Communication’ and ‘Results-Oriented’ are considered the least-rated values of the 40 values proposed for the staff. The values ‘Strategic Vision’

and ‘Results-Oriented’ were not rated highly by either of the two groups interviewed (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Values Rated Lowest

Values Rated Lowest Leadership	Values Rated Lowest Staff	Values Rated Lowest Leadership and Staff
Strategic Vision, Self-Starter, Transparency, Results-Oriented.	Strategic Vision, Results-Oriented, Communication, Autonomy.	Strategic Vision, Results-Oriented.

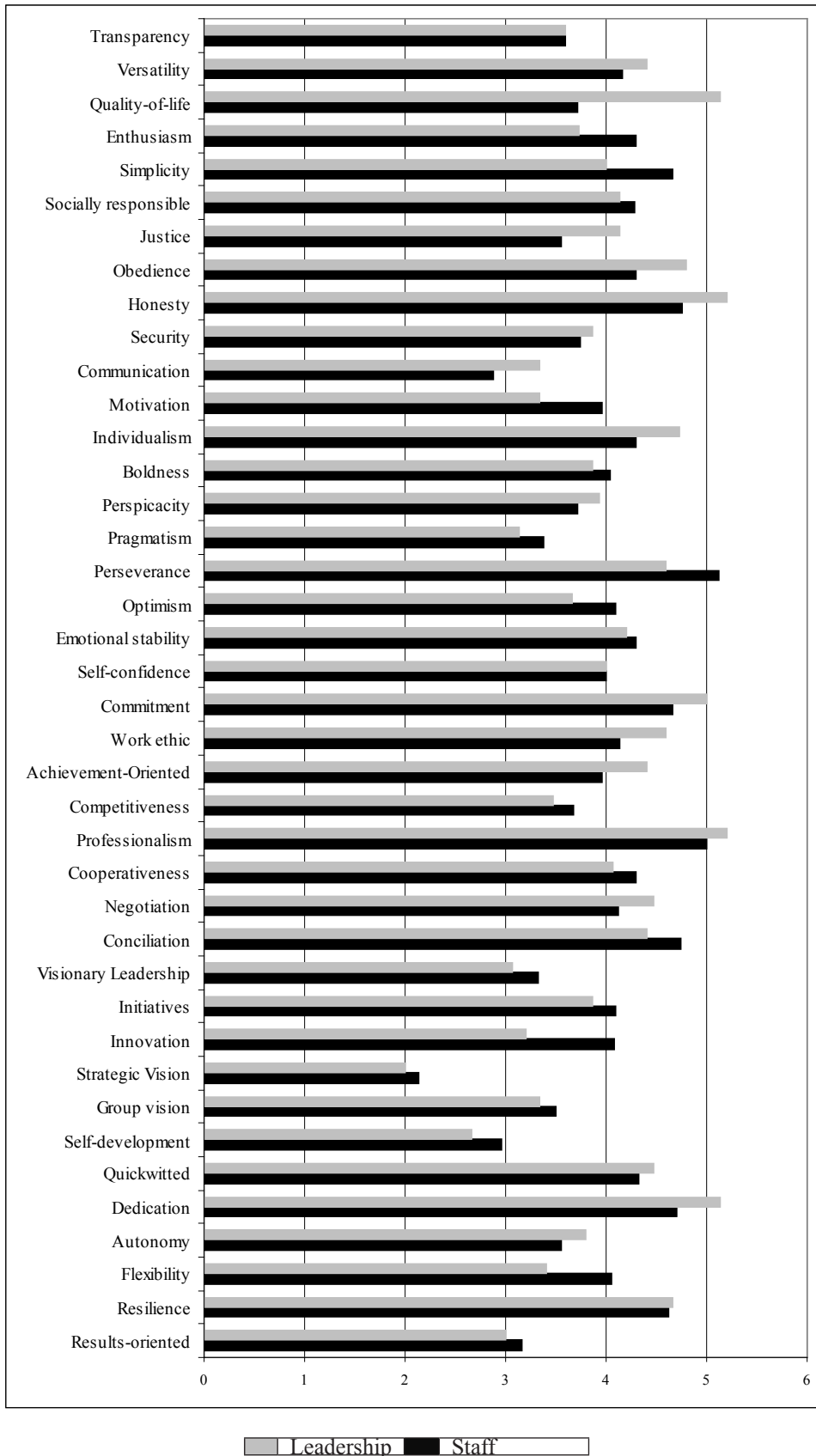
In effect, there is no strategically defined approach at ARFCO. Despite attempts to put in place a process of planning, the implementation of any policy whatsoever suffers from discontinuity with the change of leadership, as the following quote from a staff member illustrates:

“ARFCO’s biggest problem is the lack of continuity. With every new board, everything changes: the structure, the staff, etc. – without the board even knowing what’s there. ARFCO is like a ship without a compass: every new face treats us like a doormat.”

At ARFCO, the formal structures favor the centralization of power. Leaders tend to adopt the posture of the all-knowing “father” who acts as the almighty giver to “his flock”. Subordinates tend to wait for solutions from leaders. They wind up transferring the responsibility for their successes and failures to their superiors. Moreover, oftentimes, they wish their superiors would treat them differently, more personally, in relation to the group. The following interview quotation illustrates this point:

“At ARFCO we don’t have a clear stand, clear goals and rules. The administrators need to offer some sense of direction that might be useful to society; they need to provide orientation, training, to try to stem the morbid complaining about ARFCO.”

With respect to the decision-making process, the ARFCO management style vacillates between coercive authoritarianism and benevolent authoritarianism. Strategic decisions are concentrated with upper management and the administrative system delegates only routine affairs. This overloads managers, generating duplicated efforts, hampering managerial initiatives and reinforcing the negative aspects of the bureaucratic structure.



Graph 1. Comparison of Degree of Presence – Leadership and Staff

Characterizing the decision-making style by the groups interviewed, congruence could be identified with respect to questions such as: the putting-out-fires culture; casuistic decision-making, emphasis on decision-making instead of carefully assessing the alternatives and the issue; lack of a planning culture which might nurture more management of knowledge with respect to decision-making alternatives; the tendency to centralized decision-making; difficulty in delegating authority at all organizational levels; no view of the big picture; individualistic attitudes (oftentimes limited to one's own experiences); conformism; clinging to tried and tested solutions.

In both the interviews with the staff and leadership, the influence of ARFCO's feudalistic and vertical structure is manifest, as is its fragmented culture. This variable affects the decision differently, depending on the organizational level and the situation. It oscillates between an analytic/directed model with one with a more behavioral emphasis – albeit almost always focusing on the short-term. The following quotes bolster this view:

The process of communication was frequently questioned by staff and was the subject that generated the most polemics and differentiated interpretations. The group's perception that communication was the Achilles' heel of the organization was unanimous. The staff described the issue in various ways. The concept of "communication" was constantly confounded with information and integration. The groups were unequivocal in their observation that ARFCO has access to all formal channels of information and that there was, in fact, an overflow of information. However, disagreement was evident with respect to the evaluation of the timing of responses to problems considered to be strategic and, also, with reference to the silence met by questions of pressing importance. The communication system both reflects and is reflected by the decision-making process. Therefore, it can also be construed as being a system somewhere between coercive authoritarian and benevolent authoritarian – where top-down communications prevails. This system strangles the process of communication. And linked to a centralized, pyramidal, organizational structure, it hampers the flexibility, interdependence and coordination of the system, giving way to informal communications and making room for rumors and distorted information.

Many of the staff associated communication with the division of physical space, proposing "integrating solutions" using new facilities. The architectural design of the offices

reflects the hierarchical structure, where workspaces are parameters of power. The interview quotation below illustrates this aspect:

*"The information at ARFCO doesn't flow; the feeling of pride doesn't diffuse through the organization. There's a lack of standards and a lack of communication."*

The lack of fairness of Human Resources, which does not recognize potential, talent or extra effort, was associated with several frequently identified factors as negatively affecting staff satisfaction and motivation: (a) quality of the physical environment, (b) lack of feedback regarding performance and results expected, (c) distortions generated by the Performance Evaluation System, and (d) a lack of an integrated and continuous RH policy which might link the isolated initiatives of structured RH planning to a plan which is more strategic.

Finally, we also noted that interpersonal relations provoke mistrust and segregate people into fiefdoms (clusters) that reinforce corporatism, hamper the process of delegating authority and fostering cooperation and team spirit, as supported by quotes from staff interviews below:

*"In the evaluation process, there is a homogenization... Ranking is just for the sake of appearances.... Everything revolves around a policy of personal favors fueled by personal agendas".*

Despite the existence of subgroups with differentiated cultures, Q-methodology can discern whether there is consensus among the leadership and among the staff vis-à-vis organizational values (Table 4).

Table 4. Consensus Values

Consensus Values Leadership	Consensus Values Staff
Initiative, Negotiation, Cooperativeness, Emotional Stability, Justice, Socially Responsible.	Perspicacity

Using Q-methodology, we ascertained the presence of subgroups (clusters) at ARFCO. There were five clusters in the leadership that shared the same subjectivity. The most highly rated values for each cluster can be seen in the following table (Table 5).

Table 5. Values Rated Highest – Leadership Clusters

6 staff	5 staff	2 staff	1 staff	2 staff
1	2	3	4	5
Dedication	Strategic Vision	Flexibility	Self-confidence	Results-oriented
Achievement-Oriented	Self-development	Enthusiasm	Commitment	Pragmatism
Individualism	Pragmatism	Strategic Vision	Honesty	Self-confidence
Quality of life	Simplicity	Optimism	Perseverance	Flexibility
Professionalism	Competitiveness	Transparency	Simplicity	Resilience



The staff formed nine groups. The most highly rated values for each cluster can be seen in the following table. The value 'Strategic Vision' appears in 4 of the 9 subgroups and the values 'Flexibility' and 'Resilience' appear in 3 out

of 9 subgroups. Despite the differences between these subgroups, certain values are more highly perceived than others (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Values Rated Highest – Staff Subgroups

9 staff	8 staff	6 staff	3 staff	7 staff	4 staff	6 staff	2 staff	5 staff
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Versatility	Strategic Vision	Strategic Vision	Commitment	Perseverance	Self-development	Flexibility	Socially responsible	Strategic Vision
Honesty	Flexibility	Obedience	Quality of life	Resilience	Group vision	Results-oriented	Justice	Motivation
Resilience	Transparency	Group vision	Socially responsible	Professionalism	Individualism	Autonomy	Quality of life	Obedience
Flexibility	Pragmatism	Pragmatism	Optimism	Optimism	Innovation	Strategic Vision	Resilience	Self-development
Conciliation	Innovation	Results-oriented	Communication	Individualism	Versatility	Communication	Emotional stability	Comparativeness

Correspondingly, the leadership formed five subgroups that shared the same subjectivity for the least rated values, as seen in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Values Rated Lowest – Leadership Subgroups

6 staff	5 staff	2 staff	1 staff	2 staff
1	2	3	4	5
Strategic Vision	Versatility	Obedience	Transparency	Honesty
Self-development	Conciliation	Individualism	Motivation	Quality of life
Visionary leadership	Resilience	Quality of life	Strategic Vision	Commitment
Innovation	Dedication	Professionalism	Individualism	Perspicacity
Pragmatism	Obedience	Boldness	Communication	Professionalism

In the 9 subgroups formed by the staff, the lowest-rated values for each subgroup can be seen in the following table. The values 'Obedience', 'Innovation' and 'Honesty' appear

in 3 of the 9 subgroups. Despite the differences between these subgroups, certain values are more highly perceived than others (Table 8).

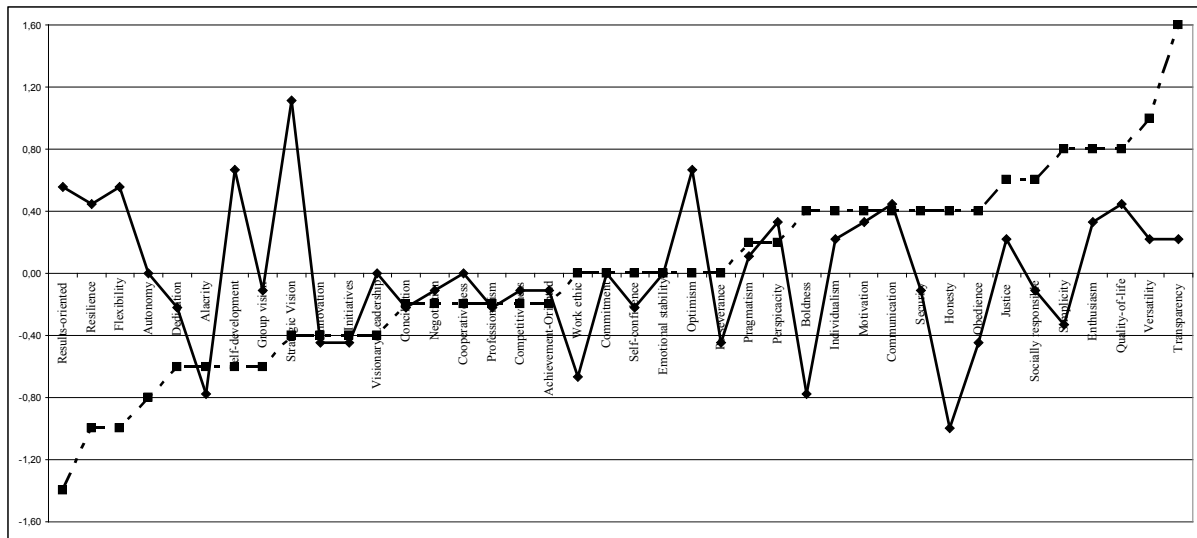
**Table 8.** Values Rated Lowest – Staff Subgroups

9 staff	8 staff	6 staff	3 staff	7 staff	4 staff	6 staff	2 staff	5 staff
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Pragmatism	Obedience	Boldness	Simplicity	Communication	Obedience	Innovation	Obedience	Honesty
Boldness	Commitment	Innovation	Perseverance	Justice	Socially responsible	Honesty	Enthusiasm	Initiative
Self-development	Emotional stability	Flexibility	Professionalism	Strategic Vision	Dedication	Visionary leadership	Commitment	Alacrity
Group vision	Professionalism	Perseverance	Dedication	Obedience	Work ethic	Simplicity	Innovation	Competitiveness
Self-confidence	Conciliation	Alacrity	Versatility	Self-development	Pragmatism	Individualism	Honesty	Socially responsible

In a subjective comparison of the results of the leadership subgroups with the staff subgroups, we can observe the values which are more or less similar between the two groups, i.e., the values most highly perceived, and the values least perceived, for each of the groups.

each of the groups, there are some values that are little-perceived by the leadership but highly-perceived by the staff (see Graph 2, left side); other values are highly-perceived by the leadership and little-perceived by the staff (see graph 2, right side), as detailed below. Table 9 shows the most-perceived and the least-perceived values of Graph 2.

Of the values most-perceived and least-perceived for



Graph 2. Analysis of Subjectivity – Leaderships/Staff Comparison

Graph legend (left to right): Results-oriented; Resilience; Flexibility; Autonomy; Dedication; Alacrity; Self-development; Group vision; Strategic Vision; Innovation; Initiatives; Visionary Leadership; Conciliation; Negotiation; Cooperativeness; Professionalism; Competitiveness; Achievement-Oriented; Work ethic; Commitment; Self-confidence; Emotional stability; Optimism; Perseverance; Pragmatism; Perspicacity; Boldness; Individualism; Motivation; Communication; Security; Honesty; Obedience; Justice; Socially responsible; Simplicity; Enthusiasm; Quality-of-life; Versatility; Transparency.

Dotted line = Leadership

Normal line = Staff

Table 9. Most- and Least-Perceived Values

Least-Perceived Leadership Most-Perceived Staff	Most-Perceived leadership Least-Perceived Staff
Results-oriented, Resilience, Flexibility, Self confidence, Self-development, Strategic Vision, Optimism.	Boldness, Honesty, Simplicity, Versatility, Transparency.

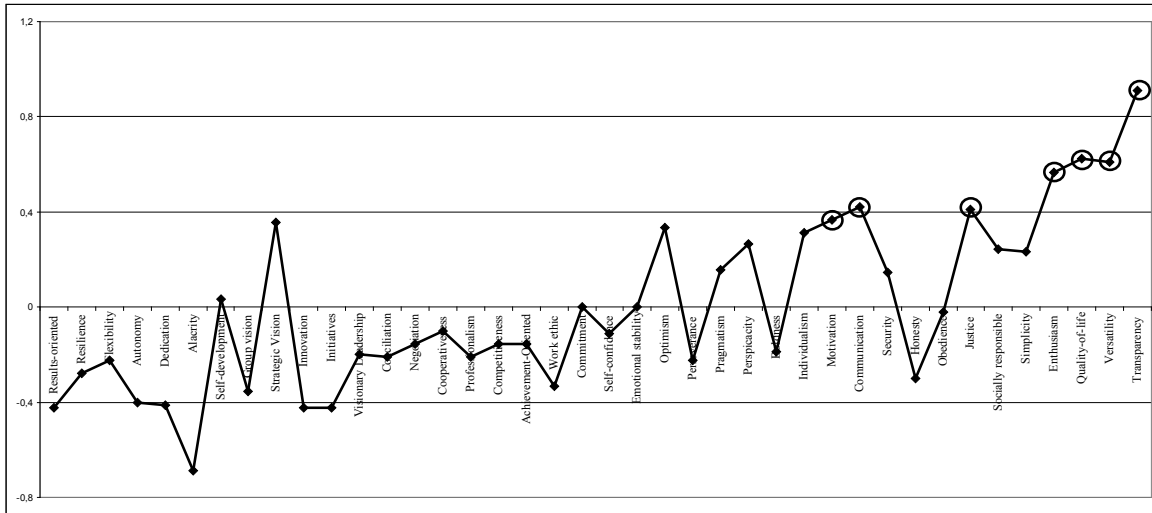
To sum up, given the number of subgroups that were formed, especially with respect to the Company leadership, we can say that the current organizational culture at ARFCO is predominately fragmented. As a function of the organizational fragmentation, the staff also manifested multiple subcultures. Also as a function of this fragmentation, the final result suggested that certain organizational values were predominant in the collective psyche (Graph 3): ‘Transparency’, ‘Versatility’, ‘Quality of Life’, ‘Justice’, ‘Communication’ and ‘Motivation’.

Despite the differences in the perceptions of the groupings and the subcultures in the identification of the

most- and least-present values at the present day ARFCO, the outlook of the sampled leaders and staff shows a strong correlation (Graph 4).

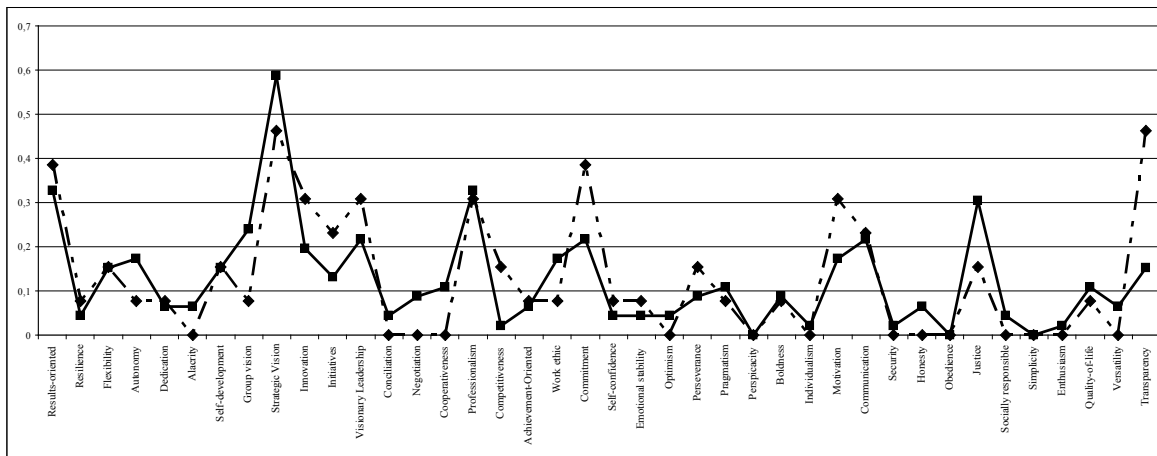
There is a strong cultural alignment between the leadership and the staff in as much as they both esteem ‘Strategic Vision’, ‘Professionalism’, ‘Communication’ and ‘Results-oriented’.

In addition to these four values that characterize the ARFCO desired by the group, we have three other sought-after values: ‘Commitment’ for the leadership group and ‘Justice’ and ‘Autonomy’ for the staff group.



Graph 3. Predominant Culture at ARFCO

Graph legend (left to right): Results-oriented; Resilience; Flexibility; Autonomy; Dedication; Alacrity; Self-development; Group vision; Strategic Vision; Innovation; Initiatives; Visionary Leadership; Conciliation; Negotiation; Cooperativeness; Professionalism; Competitiveness; Achievement-Oriented; Work ethic; Commitment; Self-confidence; Emotional stability; Optimism; Perseverance; Pragmatism; Perspicacity; Boldness; Individualism; Motivation; Communication; Security; Honesty; Obedience; Justice; Socially responsible; Simplicity; Enthusiasm; Quality-of-life; Versatility; Transparency.



Graph 4. Desired Values – Comparison of leadership with Staff

Graph legend (left to right): Results-oriented; Resilience; Flexibility; Autonomy; Dedication; Alacrity; Self-development; Group vision; Strategic Vision; Innovation; Initiatives; Visionary Leadership; Conciliation; Negotiation; Cooperativeness; Professionalism; Competitiveness; Achievement-Oriented; Work ethic; Commitment; Self-confidence; Emotional stability; Optimism; Perseverance; Pragmatism; Perspicacity; Boldness; Individualism; Motivation; Communication; Security; Honesty; Obedience; Justice; Socially responsible; Simplicity; Enthusiasm; Quality-of-life; Versatility; Transparency.

Dotted line = Leadership

Normal line = Staff

In the comparison of the values being examined (highest ranking and lowest ranking), of the two groups (leadership and staff), looking at the design values, it is possible to perceive that the search for a ‘Strategic Vision’ and ‘Results-oriented’ creates a void which must be managed in the

process of organizational change (Table 10). The two values are considered desirable by both groups for a future ARFCO, although they are the little-present in the present-day ARFCO (Table 11).

**Table 10.** Values Rated Highest and Lowest

	Values Rated Highest	Values Rated Lowest
<b>Leadership</b>	Individualism, Dedication, Resilience, Versatility, Obedience, Commitment, Achievement-Oriented.	Strategic Vision, Self-Starter, Transparency, Results-Oriented.
<b>Staff</b>	Commitment, Flexibility, Resilience, Simplicity, Obedience, Enthusiasm, Perseverance, Professionalism, Innovation.	Strategic Vision, Results-Oriented, Communication, Autonomy.
<b>Leadership and Staff</b>	Commitment, Obedience, Resilience.	Strategic Vision, Results-Oriented.

**Table 11.** Most Highly Desired Values

Desired Values Leadership	Desired Values Staff	Desired Values Leadership and Staff
Commitment, Strategic Vision, Professionalism, Communication, Results-oriented	Justice, Autonomy, Strategic Vision, Professionalism, Communication, Results-oriented	Strategic Vision, Results-Oriented, Professionalism, Communication

## CONCLUSION

The value-based diagnosis instrument for organizational culture used in this research, applied concurrently with Q-methodology, enabled light to be shed on the existing groupings within ARFCO. We found that the organizational culture of ARFCO is predominantly defragmented. The existence of cultural fit among the subcultures of the leadership and the staff, with respect to the values desired, offers us sufficient insight to suggest that cultural alignment within ARFCO is possible, as long as the current differences of perception can be attenuated. In this respect, cultural management in the current commitment process of organizational change can be developed by drawing up an action plan that maximizes benefits and minimizes costs of a diversified work task force.

Due to its potential for the systematic study of subjectivity, Q-methodology is suitable for studying aspects related to human behavior and is, therefore, an important instrument in the search for multicultural organizations.

In this work, we have presented our recommendations regarding cultural fit, with a focus on desired values, based on the premise that the search for clusters of similar perceptions on the part of the organizational leadership/the staff is important for organizational management and change. This premise does not mean we can ignore the line of research beginning with Argyris (1964) where it was noticed that incongruence between the individual and the organization is inherent, and while incongruence can be empowering, it can also produce lethargic and unmotivated individuals.

In spite of the numerous ways to conceptualize, measure, calculate and operationalized cultural alignment and its elements, we do not have in the literature any agreement

regarding a better way to manage the question. Criticism of the use of indices that seek similarities must be taken into consideration and are fundamental for propelling future research. Only by studying the subject further may we better understand the questions that are important in the determination of organizational culture that might enable the articulation of competitive strategies to serve evermore complex environmental necessities.

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