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A PATOP Study of Philosophy and Business Management: Western vs. Chinese Business Structures in Taiwan

Abstract: *Introduction.* Alignment between the philosophical value of the Western parent company and the structure of the local organization is essential to improve managing effectiveness and worker productivity. The alignment may need adjustment while considering whether a Western model is fitted into the Chinese workgroup. This study examines the philosophical value concerning business management within an organization and then explores which value is applicable to the modern Chinese structure in the context of Taiwan. *Purpose and methods.* The purpose is the holistic view of the Chinese model, as opposed to the separated approach of the West. It does not attempt to find the best philosophical framework of business management for local Chinese structure in Taiwan, as such a framework probably does not exist. Instead, it explores the specific phenomena considered during the process of emergence of business management framework when comparing philosophical value for both selected cases of Western and Chinese enterprises. The case study and PATOP model were used. *Results.* As a result, there has no single model that is absolutely appropriate to both business and people in one way or the other. Both Chinese and Western philosophical ways of doing business have merits and weaknesses, as illustrated. The implication of the results is the emerged PATOP model. The model indicates an ideal work environment where the Western approach is applicable to the Chinese structure in Taiwan. *Conclusions.* It concludes that the philosophical approach in doing business within the Chinese structure is erected in a way of “Middle of the Road” according to the PATOP emerged from the study. However, it should be noted that there will be drift as this emerged PATOP model used in the Chinese structure with western approach, indicating another issue “what an acceptable time for drift would be”?

Keywords: Business Management, Cross Culture, PATOP, Philosophical Value.

1. Introduction

The problem formulation. As modern Western multi-national enterprises expand their business scope to East and South Asian countries, there arise growing interests in how Western philosophy is in relation to business management within the Chinese structure. The central Western value of individualization and selfhood is emphasized in Western society (Whiteley, 2001). This philosophical thought is a basis for Western managerial style and then influences the interaction between managers and workers. With overseas branch companies, Western managers are concerned with how well the core value of parent company can fuse Chinese character of philosophy and personality traits of Chinese (Hu et al., 2017; Peppas, 2002; Quer et al., 2010; Yang, 1986).

State study of the problem. In particular, somehow, alignment between the philosophical value of the Western parent company and the structure of a local organization is essential to improve managing effectiveness and worker productivity (Rhodes et al., 2011). The alignment may need adjustment while considering whether the Western model is fitted into the Chinese workgroup (Hanson & Rothlin, 2010). Whiteley (2001) notes that values and strategy must be in accord with organizational structure and its appraisal system. In this sense, to provide an overall framework for how this study looks at reality from different perspectives, those arguments necessitate a systematic review of the nature of reality on philosophical worldview about business management both in Chinese and Western society.

Unresolved issues. This study considers the examination of an argument: Following the individualistic and self-centered approach of Western business would present no problems for Chinese enterprises (or structure), particularly for those in the Chinese context of Taiwan. As pointed out by Whiteley, Cheung, and Zhang (2000): Western people are free to debate and critically keep questioning until statements are proved. By contrast, within the Chinese business framework, power distance works to repress low-level workers and discourage them from self-expression and creativity (Ho, 1986; Hofstede, 1980; Hollebeek, 2018; Steenkamp & Geyskens, 2012). Serious relevant attempts to transplant Western business philosophy and the scientific method into Chinese business organizations have been observed within the last three decades; by either Western multi-national enterprises or modern local enterprises in Taiwan (Taylor, 1991). Nevertheless, not all of them are successful. This argument comes from the observation that because of inherent paternalistic characters, Chinese managers are still somewhat close-minded to their workers (Jacobs, Goupei & Herbig, 1995; Tjosvold & Sun, 2001; Tjosvold, Sun & Wan, 2005).

2. Purpose and methods

The purpose and research tasks. The objective of this study is the holistic view of the Chinese model as opposed to the separated approach of the West. It does not attempt to find the best philosophical framework of business management for local Chinese structure in Taiwan, as such a framework probably does not exist. However, it explores the specific phenomena that should be considered during the process of the emergence of the business management framework when comparing philosophical values for both selected cases of Western and Chinese enterprises. Research tasks are structured as follows. First, we describe the methodology and methods and then explain the findings. Next, we review the literature that bases discussion of the findings for the foundation of the emergent business management framework. Finally, we conclude with the emergent theory of business management in the Chinese context of Taiwan.

Methodology and methods. The methodological basis of the study – to explore how philosophical value influences a particular business (social) situation, role, or interaction (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1987), qualitative procedures were conducted. Ontologically, in the qualitative paradigm, the realities of things being investigated are mentally constructed and multi-subjective (Creswell, 1998). Following the assumption of epistemology, this study reports realities relying on languages (voices) and interpretations of informants involved (Firestone, 1987; Guba & Lincoln, 1988; McCracken, 1988). Furthermore, through continuous interactions, we seek different perspectives of informants and observe the realities by acting as an insider that has a subjective, interpersonal, and value-laden view (Leong, 2006).

Thus, methodologically, a qualitative approach that emphasizes authenticity, relevance, and contextual applicability was used. We used the case study method to explore the phenomenon of organizational conflicts and discuss whether the Western value applies to modern Chinese business society in Taiwan. To reflect the realities of participants involved in the research environment, field notes and the PATOP model were employed to guide the study and uncover critical issues from observations of the interaction between managers and workers whilst there have conflicts within an organizational structure (Silverman, 2000; Whiteley, 2001). Based on Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, through dialectic review with the literature, we seek for relevance and further constructs its theory that is a synthesis of Chinese and Western value.

Methods. According to Yin (2009), although there have traditional criticisms of the case study method, it is preferred in examining contemporary events within a real-life context. The case study method includes two sources of evidence: direct observation and systematic interviewing. Through these two distinctive characteristics of the case study strategy, it contributes uniquely to the knowledge of organizational phenomena (Yin, 2009). To avoid industry

confounding effects, this study focuses on the banking and insurance industry. Totally three cases in the Chinese context of Taiwan were selected. Two of them are from the banking industry: including foreign and private local owned financial service institutions. The third one from an insurance company was selected. Primary informants hold key positions within the cases and are well experienced and qualified to represent the structure where they live. Those are purposive sample sets to serve the research goal. *Table 1* displays the backgrounds of the informants. We also used the model of Philosophy (Values), Assumptions, Theory of Organizing and Practices; namely PATOP, as an instrument to investigate cases selected. PATOP model is a method of critical thinking and involves a hierarchy of questioning that allows this study to comprehend what informants were thinking about philosophical value and how they acted in certain critical events within Western and Chinese structure in the sample cases (Whiteley & McCabe, 2002). As Whiteley and McCabe (2002) argue, the PATOP model provides a useful strategic framework for reflective thinking and diagnosis in organizations. The PATOP model is a content-free, critical thinking tool that investigates the fit between organizational philosophies and activities as shown in *Figure 1*.

Table 1. The informant profile

Case	Title	Function	Years at Work	Setting
A	Manager	Financial Service/Division Head	>10 Years	Foreign Bank
B	Senior Clerk	Operation Teller	>3 Years	Local Bank
C	CEO	Top Manager	>10 Years	Local Insurance Co.

Source: own development

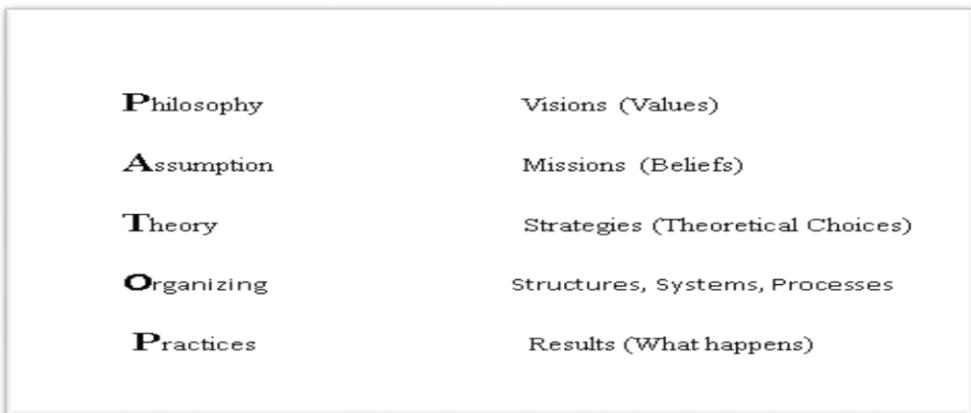


Figure 1. The PATOP model of the organization

Source: own development

Information base. Through interviews with key informants, based on their realities, this study observes the interaction between actors and counterparties while approaching problems as well as explore “how” and “why” of that phenomenon and conflict occurred. During the reviewing process, particular attention is paid to five parameters: value, mission, strategy, communication, and practice in each different case situation. The guiding information narrated by each informant is summarized in brief in the following.

Case A is about organizational change where shows an example of interaction between top and mid-level managers in the Western Structure of a foreign bank. According to the interview, our informant complained that // ...with no prior notice or communication, the retail banking organization changed. I was assigned to an outsourcing unit as division head. Since this is a very new function to the company, and there is not any similar function for other competitors in Taiwan, before we kick off this new game, my strategy is really to communicate with my executive vice president about its legitimacy and market acceptance. I feel frustrated because my boss responds slowly, and I am not familiar with her since I have never worked with her before. Resources are not distributed sufficiently. And all my members within the unit are distressed ...//.

Case B is about work performance where shows an example of interaction between worker, supervisor, and branch manager in the Chinese Structure of a local bank. According to the interview, our informant complained that // ...my supervisor keeps tolerating my colleague’s ineffective daily counter transaction performance for a long time. However, his annual appraisal result is rated “A”, the highest among all other tellers. The branch manager decides this annual appraisal report. My direct supervisor realizes my colleague’s performance is actually not satisfied and tries to discuss this situation with the branch manager. However, she has no written records to show the branch manager the reality. All my supervisor can say is “sorry” to us and mentions that she has already tried ..., and emphasize that “my colleague has a very good personal relationship with branch manager” ...//.

Case C is about customer reunion where shows an example of interaction between the CEO and customer relationship manager in the Chinese Structure of a local insurance company. The interview showed that // ...customer reunion is a big annual event. Every year, the company will hold a banquet for those customers who come for a reunion. The customer relationship manager has been responsible for arranging a banquet for many years. For past years, the banquet was a free charge to everyone. However, the CEO who expects to generate some revenue and reduce cost in terms of efficiency does not favor this. The customer relationship manager is somewhat dogmatic and insists on keeping the banquet free of charge. The CEO tries to persuade him to seek

for issuing a “meal coupon” instead of “free”. Avoiding directly rejecting his proposal and making him embarrassed, the CEO calls for a meeting and discusses this issue ...//.

3. Results and discussion

Each of the three cases demonstrates an overall subjective response to organizational conflicts, reflecting environmental and contextual factors that eventually determine the reality informants. Field notes and the PATOP model were used to critically interpret the findings (Ching et al., 2003; Silverman, 2000).

Specific demographic characteristics are ascribed to key actors’ profiles in each case. In the case of A, with over 15 years of foreign-held bank experience, the counterparty executive vice president is female, married, and at the age of 45. She attained an educational level at the local college. As for the middle manager (the informant), with ten years related experience in financial service, he received his Western master’s degree at age of 38. In the case of B, the senior teller (the informant), counterparties frontline supervisor, and branch manager are local college graduates and at the age of 28, 33, and 45, respectively. Their bank experience is three, eight, and 12 years respectively. In the case of C, the CEO (the informant) received his Master’s degree from the West and at the age of 50. In addition to management, he has experienced insurance administrative affairs for over ten years. The counterparty received a local master’s degree and at the age of 60, has been responsible for customer affairs for many years.

3.1. Bedrock of organization: philosophy, assumption and theory

Following the PATOP model, philosophy, assumption, and theory are key organizing principles related to a company’s vision, mission, and strategy (Whiteley, 2001). Regarding philosophical value (i.e., vision), it was observed that the affective and emotional needs of employees are accepted within all three cases. Namely, the terminologies of “respect”, “professionalism”, and “teamwork” are identified as central elements to describe this core value. With those descriptors, the assumption (i.e., mission) is to construct a harmonious superior-subordinate relationship with respect for each other, a well-communicated working environment where has multifaceted training program for all employees and proper decoding information transmitting channel between managers and employees (Milton, 1981), and a resource collectively distributed system where every member within the structure can share both benefit and obligation based on reciprocity.

To realize this assumption, theoretically (i.e., strategically), a training workshop for case B is occasionally conducted to reinforce its ideation not only for the clarity of the assumption but also to ensure if the communication and training are effective. In case A, an open communication system inc-

cluding training is erected within the human resource department where help employees reflect their thought about conflicts and arrange training workshops monthly. However, for case C, it was found there has no such process to implement the assumption. The value and assumption have remained as a conceptualization to members within the structure. *Figure 2* shows business philosophical value, assumption, and theory for all three cases.

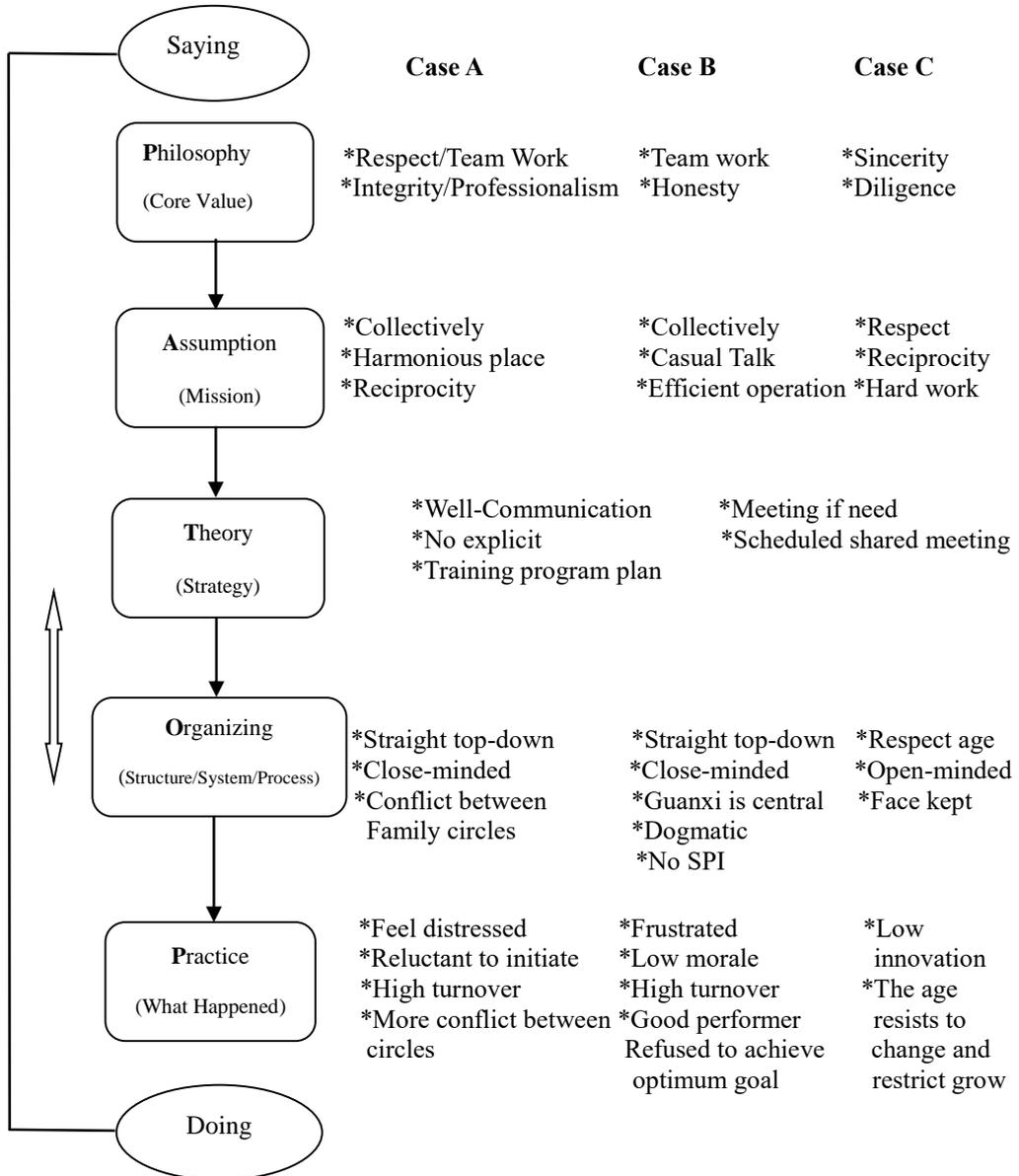


Figure 2. Key findings in the cases
Source: own development

Because of all three cases, what they are saying: philosophy, assumption, and theory centers on narrowing gaps between employees who use figurative and metaphorical language (Whiteley & McCabe, 2002) and managers who use formal language (Whiteley, 2001). Nevertheless, regarding strategy to implement their value and mission, the action plan for case A under the Western structure is more explicit than that for the other two cases B and C within the Chinese structure.

3.2. Practice: what happened in the workplace

A second major finding shown in *Figure 2* indicates what three cases do inside the workplace observed in terms of three elements: structure, system, and process. In the structure, we examined the patterns of decision-making, power status, and problem-solving. In Case A, it was found that the executive vice president conveys her message to employees in a very straight top-down way while deciding without communicating with middle-level managers and/or employees and explaining the “why” of a business decision. The supervision tends to be a high degree of power distance (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Hofstede et al., 2010). In case B, the branch manager makes a decision and is close-minded to the supervisor and employees (Jacobs, Goupei & Herbig, 1995). Thus, the status of supervision is hierarchical. As for case C, the management is seemingly open-minded while choosing alternatives. However, it was seen that the CEO indirectly tries to turn down the customer relationship manager’s idea by a way of peer review in the group. Interestingly, in all three cases within different settings, there is a common phenomenon that managers (or upper-level managers) avoid taking “problem-solving” as their responsibility. That is, the managers prefer to enjoy having “power” rather than seeking for “solution” collectively.

In the system, from the perspective of communication system, employees are explicitly encouraged to express what they think about their jobs and company policy formally, except for case C. Although this communication channel has been erected, it was found that employees tend to interact with managers by using informal transmission way. Regarding reward and control systems within the structure, case A shows a well-constructed incentive program and evaluation system by using the scientific method of MBO (i.e., Management by Objective) and performance tracking report (Fulk, Bell & Bodie, 2011). However, in cases B and C, there have no such reward and goal-setting criteria for performance evaluation. As a result, it was observed that good-performing employees cannot be recognized and are reluctant to pursue higher achievement. Training program and career map were found essential to employees in case A and B whilst there has no such arrangement for employees in case C.

The study shows that the lack of training programs and career planning result in low motives of employees and then may influence their capabilities. Moreover, in case A, we found that although within the same reporting line, no matter how much effort the mid-level manager tries to negotiate, the executive vice president distributes fewer resources to him simply because there has no previous work relationship in between.

In the process, it was found that “socialization” is central to an interaction between managers and employees. For example, particularly, in case B, the process of performance assessment tends to be human subjective and is conducted based on the point of view of the branch manager alone. That is because there has no standard performance indicator (SPI) that can be referred to within the structure. Interestingly the performance of employees heavily relies on how well they interact with managers during daily social life in the workplace although SPI may exist.

3.3. Review of the philosophy of doing business

3.3.1. Cosmogony and creation

The philosophical value tends to influence the behavior of an individual, group, and organization within a business structure. That ideology develops patterns of action and reaction as they respond to internal environmental changes such as leadership, conflict, and adjustment, and various external challenges coming from market competition and business innovation (Coetzer et al., 2018; Roepke et al., 2000; Wang, 2011). Perception, attitude, value, and motivation are central elements that determine the quality of interaction within the organization and then affect organizational effectiveness or performance (Milton, 1981). However, at its first stance, the philosophical view is of paramount importance and decides the principled approach of doing business. *Table 2* indicates differential features between Chinese and Western philosophy.

To explore the root of two different philosophical approaches for doing business in Chinese and Western management systems, the fundamental ideas of Chinese and Western philosophies: and creation; need to be reviewed first. Mote (1989) notes that the Chinese philosophy regarded the world as uncreated and considered human beings as forming the primary features of a spontaneously self-generating cosmos where there was no God. In a sense, Chinese cosmological thinking explains that all components of the entire universe can be integrated into one whole and that they all interact as participants in one organismic life process (Ames, 2017; Chang, 2017; Mote, 1989; Sangren, 2012). Tu (1985) also argues that, in the Chinese worldview, all modalities of humans were organically connected. In that view, the spontaneously self-generating life process consists of three key factors: continuity through the ages, wholeness, and dynamism, which are organismic wholeness and interconnectedness (Whiteley, 2001).

Table 2. Chinese v. western philosophy

Dimension	Chinese	Western
Worldview	Cosmological No external ordainer Holistic/Inclusive Self-generating Organismic process	Created Demiurge Hebrew view/ Exclusive Judeo-Christian Relationship with God
Time/Space	Whiteheadian preference Continuous Synchronically Long-term relationship	Newtonian approach Discrete timing Chronically Short-term relationship
Relations to social group	Collective Cooperative Family-centered Interdependent	Individual Competitive Self-dependent
Humanity	Human-heartedness Good/evil Realized by cultivating social virtues and human-heartedness	Essence of goodness Moral character Truth be obtained by debating and arguing
Integration	Face/great respect for old age Dogmatic Formality/High social status	Little respect for old age Delegation Informality/Low social status
Intolerance of ambiguity (in terms of leadership)	More control Less innovation/ unapproachable Conflict undesirable	More risk taking More creation/Less emotional Conflict expected

Source: own development

Although the early Chinese people have a cosmos view that there is no creator or God, in fact, Chinese of all ages have accepted that spiritual beings exist and they somehow exist apart from normal human life (Mote, 1989). Vulgarly rather than philosophically, spirits sometimes begin to resemble gods (Hemmat, 2016). As of result, it may clarify why Chinese people can inject religions into ancestral worship (Hu, 2016). Whiteley (2001) also observes, “In some sort of strange way, the religious tenets become part of the self-generating cosmos” (p. 4). Thereby the significance of religion is following the spirit of the cosmos. Mote (1985) whereas argues that the concept is somewhat colored by vulgarized Buddhist notions of transmigration. An example is where Chinese people revere deceased ancestors because their spirits would continue to linger about no matter when finally they return to the otherworldly flux. That reincarnated concept also influences the interaction pattern of Chinese people in society. For example, in Chinese society, within the structure, some people would feel more obliged to tolerate repression from the upper echelons because of fatalism.

Western people have inherited the Judeo-Christian ideas about the creation of the world by a creator or God (Mote, 1985). It is in contrast to the Chinese worldview that the organismic process replaces the creator. Tarnas (1991) notes that Westerners believe in acts of God and the events of human experience constituted one reality. To some extent, he also expresses that the Hebrew vision is fundamental thinking of creating. In Hebrews' view, people experience themselves as the Chosen and believe that they exist in a direct unique relationship to the one absolute God (Tarnas, 1991). That is reasonably reflective of the very beginnings of Western individualism and exclusiveness of knowledge of the external world (Koller, 2016).

On the contrary, the Chinese worldview is more holistic. This can be evident that there are always Gods, but these are not deemed external, omnipotent, and monotheistic in the Chinese setting (Kuo, 2013). Furthermore, Chinese philosophy emphasizes the inclusiveness of all different views that may be partially true. An example is where there is basic differentiation between Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism; however, these philosophies all contribute the ideas and methods to create the imposing edifice of Neo-Confucianism (Hwang, 2016; Lin et al., 2013). This synthetic attitude leads to tolerance of the thoughts and behaviors of others in Chinese organizations (Hwang, 2016). Moreover, Koller (2016) reflects that different views and practices are to be tolerated and considered sympathetically to appreciate and complement their values.

In addition to the basic Western view of creation, Tarnas (1991) expresses that there are two significantly different aspects of the Western worldview. The one outlook is rapturously optimistic and embracing. This view considers Christianity as an already existent spiritual revolution and emphasizes Christ's self-sacrifice had initiated the basic reunion of humanity and the created world with God. The other side is sternly judgmental and a dualistic pessimism that focuses on the present alienation of man and the world from God. These two perspectives are inextricably united, however, not seen in the Western business framework (Tarnas, 1991). This is a big difference between Western and Chinese methodologies.

In sum, the Chinese worldview is Cosmo logician, and there exists no external ordainer to generate ordered harmony (Needham, 2004). Needham (2004) describes that the organismic Chinese cosmos is different from classic Greek cosmology, where a demiurge is necessary for existence. Whiteley (2001) also notes that the Chinese view is a self-generating whole resulting in continuity of the whole and dynamism within it. Thus, in practice, from the point of view of Chinese cosmology, within a business framework, workers tend to be more concerned with protecting inter-person relationships while there have conflicts in workgroups. These relationships are accorded by norms of humanity,

which entail both rights and responsibilities for each member of an organization (Fairbank, 1966). This harmony would be obtained if each member of the organization is conscientious in complying with the requirements of his or her role or job (Hwang, 2012; Hwang et al., 2017). Any failure to follow would endanger the relationship and disrupt the organization's harmony (Jacobs et al., 1995).

Nevertheless, Judeo-Christian is a basis of the Western worldview (Crist & Koprina, 2014). It claims that an ordainer external to the world exists and conceived master will have mediators such as priests, vicars, and preachers to intercede human life and their worship (Mote, 1989; Tarnas, 1991). As such, Tarnas (1991) points out that the duality of soul and mind played a significant role in the West. Specifically, Whiteley, Cheung, and Zhang (2000) note that the Western world is characterized by one having a view that the soul is God's work and on the other hand that the world is a rational and concrete place. However, they argue that in modern Western society, the religious or moral side of human life seems to have been neglected whilst the protestant work ethic of individualization and self-consciousness is emphasized.

3.3.2. Time and space

Following the basic Chinese and Western worldviews stated above, the elements of time-space concepts are critical to examine Chinese and Western philosophies as they are utilized in business. In the Chinese view, Mote (1989) argues that the cosmos is explained in terms of people's awareness of their place in time and space. Needham (2004) notes that this is called the "Whiteheadian preference", where the cosmic process is a reticular relationship of events in the past and present. Yau (1994) also reflects that the time dimension for Chinese had two orientations: past-time and continuity, and further claimed that the cosmic process is one in which all stages are simultaneously present.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) suggest that the terminology of "synchronically" could be used to describe the view on "several things at the same time". Thus, under these points, it is evident that each member is an active element of the process during the cyclic cosmic time in the Chinese business framework and/or society (Lee & Dawes, 2005). An example is where business is a part of life, and once the relationship is established, it can hardly be broken in Chinese society (Wu & Yong, 1998). This observation of long-term continuity comes from that the relationships with past classmates, work fellows, and business partners still remain tightly as long as they are found presently (Lin & Ho, 2010). Therefore, to allow people to stay interconnected and contribute to cosmic development, any discrete timing must match the journey of life here and now (Ferraro, 2010). Consequently, in the Chinese felt, it is seen that the cosmic process deeply affects one's life within it.

However, the Western mind is influenced by the Newtonian approach (Louth, 2011), which explains that the universal process is a “series of causal events” in terms of business (Mote, 1989). Contrary to Chinese cosmological thinking of time concept in which there exists no “beginning point-Year one” (Sivin, 1966), Western cosmology regards time as a process being developed chronologically around a particular event. In that sense, short-term rather than the long-term relationship is more emphasized by the Westerners (Ferraro, 2010). For example, in the West, the business relationship can be seen from beginning to end whenever the business contract is valid. The weakness of this single focus relationship will be the lack of efficiencies of shared activities and inter-connections because of the Western pattern of a series of discrete events linked in a causal chain (Brake et al., 1995). However, compared with the Chinese implicit expression of the time-space concept, Western thought of chronological time framework appears to be more explicit and obvious in the business practice (Ferraro, 2010). An example is where the Westerners view time as a limited resource and keep a daily schedule precise. Time to them means efficiency (money) and then is carefully budgeted to achieve personal and organizational goals (Kubátová, 2012; Ravishankar, 2015).

Fan (1995) argues that it is in contrast to the ancient Chinese mindset that looks at time as a process of eternity. Whiteley (2001) also indicates that this Chinese philosophy focuses on quality of life that could be made natural and palatable. As of result, there has no point to keep such a rigid schedule. For example, in traditional Chinese society and/or business framework, people take a looser, more relaxed approach to time and regarding schedules and deadlines as expressions of intent rather than obligations (Ferraro, 2010). Ferraro (2010) argues that people from cultures with relaxed notions of time see those who deal with time very precisely as being rude because they are willing to cut off social relationships for the sake of keeping their next appointment. Thereby, from this point of retaining social relationships, with little punctuality and the concept that time is plentiful, again, it is seen that Chinese people are more concerned about a long-term relationship where once is established, both parties will do their best to keep their relationship by reciprocating benefits (Wu & Yong, 1998).

3.3.3. Good or evil

The philosophical view on human nature orientation may influence the managerial style and workers’ correspondence to their superiors (Ferraro, 2010). An example is where managers who believe that human being is inherently good by nature are prone to adopt the people-oriented management and the eclectic open-minded communication system. While those considering workers innately

bad, they tend to use stringent task-oriented controlling and punishment systems within the organization. Similar to low-level workers, they may somehow adjust their work behavior into positive or negative direction simply based on how much compassion their managers may express (Bond, 1991). For instance, workers are encouraged when managers are kind, forgiving, and courteous to them. In that respect, confused by a common question: human nature is good, bad, or a combination of the two and dealing with how to interact within or cross-level in a business framework, managers and workers are to emphasize the character of innate human nature.

In the Chinese view, there have outlines of two different aspects of human nature characteristics. The one outlook claimed that human nature is basically good. This proposition is advocated by Mencius, a follower of Confucius who explicitly argues that human-heartedness (Jen) is the basis of all human relationships and the source and foundation of all goodness and virtue (Koller, 2016). Additionally, it is argued that human perfection could be realized through cultivating human-heartedness and social virtues. And the way to achieve the development and manifestation of human-heartedness is Propriety (Li), advanced by Confucius (Kim, 2017). On the other hand, Hsun Tzu took the view that human nature is originally evil and lacks virtues claimed by Mencius (Kim, 2017). According to Hsun Tzu, through social organization and culture, people can become good (Koller, 2016). Koller (2016) further notes that in social organization, “moral goodness was brought about as a result of the regulation of human conduct required for social living” in which mutual cooperation is emphasized (p. 265). Eventually, both Mencius and Hsun Tzu considerably agree to human nature that one should practice virtues stressed by Confucius (Kim, 2017).

As to the Western thought of humanity, according to the depiction in Plato’s dialogues, Socrates believed in moral character and the essence of goodness (Whiteley, Cheung & Zhang, 2000). Whiteley, Cheung, and Zhang (2000) note that he also emphasized that goodness could be and/or should be rationally moral. That benevolence in humanity makes people possess a penchant for categorizing all virtuous acts, classifying their qualities, and specifying words to describe the elements of truth through dialectical analysis (Jacobs et al., 1995; Whiteley et al., 2000; Zhang, 2016). Following Socrates’ view of goodness, Plato also reflects that “absolute truth” could be obtained by using skeptical and critical analysis. Therefore, by examining arguments from the Chinese and Western view on innate human nature, it is observed that from Mencius is taken emphasis on utilizing the correctness of actions as a means to develop humanity and from Hsun Tzu is taken emphasis on following rules of behavior for cultivating human nature (Koller, 2016). To the Westerners, however, through the process of critical questioning, arguing, and debating, goodness can be realized (Whiteley et al., 2000).

Nevertheless, based on Whiteley (2001), in real business practice, several questions come out: can this explicit dichotomy of innate human nature be guides for managers to evaluate what workers really think and adjust their managerial style accordingly? What if there generate conflicts that would influence harmony or productivity when managers and workers have different thoughts about humanity? Or in fact, good and evil can coexist in one human nature. If that is true, then will the trust between all levels be well erected by adopting both Chinese views internally (conscience-good) and externally (social rules-evil) within the Western business framework, which allows people to freely debate and criticize? The answers cannot be absolute one, and the questions could have remained as universal problems for which both cultures must find solutions (Petракis, 2011).

3.3.4. Individualism and collectivism

To focus on international business issues, managers emphasize an aspect of an individual's relation to his or her social and/or workgroup. Several scholars have used the dimension of individualism-collectivism as a key concept of how different philosophical values may affect workplace dynamics (Hofstede, 1980). In the Western measures, for example, using survey research applied between 1967 and 1978 within foreign subsidiaries of IBM, Hofstede (1980) emerges the model of individualism, as opposed to collectivism, to represent a preference of people to belong to a loosely versus a tightly knit social framework. Latane, Williams, and Harkins (1979) also observe "social loafing" based on its relation to individualism-collectivism. Gundlach, Zivnuska, and Stoner (2006) further use the construct of individualism-collectivism to examine the impact of the context of a social relation on individual and team performance. As for the Eastern measures, in the Chinese Value Survey, moral discipline-individualism is utilized to focus on keeping oneself under control concerning others (Bond, 1991). Moreover, some scholars such as Sae (2011) adopt "group orientation" to emphasize ties of kinship and close personal relationships when dealing with business in an organization. Moreover, Kim (2019) recently uses the construct of individualism-collectivism to examine the impact of a social context on individual knowledge sharing and performance.

In the Chinese social perception, Whiteley (2001) argues that the bedrock of Chinese philosophy placed a high value on cooperation, which emphasizes family-centered and group interdependence. In ancient China, the family is the fundamental production unit (Jacobs et al., 1995). Jacobs, Guopei, and Herbig (1995) argue that the family organization is a mixed blessing and ensured higher agricultural productivity through cooperation and coordination. Therefore, according to that family concept derived from ancient China, Triandis (1988) proposes that in the Chinese family, positive values of sharing common inte-

rests and traits and non-competitiveness are stressed. An example is where purchases for individuals in a household are made with collective savings, and those with wealth and power have obligations to share jobs with less fortunate relatives. In support of arguments from Whiteley (2001), Koller (2016) note that family is one immediate social environment of the child. In that sense, the virtue of family can influence one's social behavior that tends to work collectively outside of the family circle and have a strong sense of responsibility to the group (Ferraro, 2010; Hofstede et al., 2010). For example, people in Chinese collectivistic society spend much time encouraging children to engage in cooperative activities that benefit their earlier success and take many obligations to others (Earley, 1993).

As a result of the Chinese time concept, based on its long-term continuity (Wu & Yong, 1998), Triandis (2014) argues that in the Chinese collectivistic society, in-groups often extend inclusion from family members to distant relatives, schoolmates, co-workers, and members of political and religious groups. Ferraro (2010) also reflects that the Chinese culture encouraged people to place the interest of the group above their own, maintain strong ties and obligations to group members, and value long-term social relationships above short-term accomplishments. By contrast, Western philosophy values competitiveness, which focuses on individualism and self-dependence (Zohar & Marshall, 1994). Following the virtue of Socrates' philosophical search conceptualized by individualistic and skeptical behavior, Whiteley, Cheung, and Zhang (2000) also argue that the central value of Western philosophical thought is selfhood, self-control, self-awareness, and self-reflection. An example is where the Westerners such as the United States, Canada, and England emphasize autonomy, independence, and the worth and dignity of an individual over the group (Hameed et al., 2019).

Compared to the Chinese culture, family ties tend to be relatively unimportant for the West (Ferraro, 2010). An example is where the Westerners divide their time between family and social groupings, including church, labor union, and a host of voluntary organizations. Regarding parental attitude, inside the Western family, parents place more emphasis on the child's expression of opinions, independence, creativity, and personal development. In the Western family, parents allow children to participate in adult conversations and encourage them to compete with other children (Ho, 1986). This is in contrast to the Chinese parental attitude that focuses on the strictness of discipline and proper behavior, which are correlated with Confucian Five Cardinal Relations (Guba & Lincoln, 1988).

3.3.5. Femininity and masculinity

The philosophical concept of how to value success and in what way workers think about their life concerning the work is a crucial element for managers to motivate them within an organization. Several scholars have

differentiated this philosophical thought by several different terms pertaining to “the extent to which a culture prefers achievement, assertiveness, power, competition, and material possessions versus nurturing, social relationships, and cooperation” (Ferraro, 2010).

For example, Hofstede (1980) uses the terms “masculine” and “feminine” to distinguish this value. Brake and colleagues (1995) recognize the tough-tender dimension that includes different levels of competition. In support of the tough-tender dimension, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) also add elements of the “ascribed” and “achieved” distinction into the model. The terms “doing” and “being” are also used to value the dichotomy between emphasis on completing tasks and emphasis on social relationships (Koller, 2016).

Because of Chinese philosophical thought of relationship orientation, Chinese people are tenderer in society and tend to define “success” in terms of good *guanxi* (Alton, 1989; Kirkbride et al., 1991; Zarnet & Buvarnick, 1986; Hwang, 2012; Zhao & Ha-Brookshire, 2018). For example, within the workplace, workers emphasize affiliation, character, personal nurturing, quality of life (Whiteley, 2001), and maintenance of social relationships (Ferraro, 2010; Wu & Yong, 1998). That is in contrast to the Western thought of “success” in terms of material accumulation and well-rewarded jobs. An example is where the Westerners place value on doing and achieving measurable goals and mainly concerned with self-efficacy (Earley, 1993; Ferraro, 2010).

Regarding the Chinese Mindset, Fan (1995) argues, “Chinese minds were akin to femininity in many respects” (p. 18). An example is where Chinese people may solve problems by using more synthetic, intuitive, and integrated ways. On the contrary, Western logic tends to be masculine where has analytical, linear, orderly, and explicit substances while approaching problems. An example is where the Westerners always first identify problems and then implement and control the available feasible options with explicit plans and schedules.

3.3.6. Equality and hierarchy

For members within society or business framework, a question is always raised to argue: With different levels of power or status, how should people interact with one another? Different philosophical views would have various answers for that. In response to this argument, the measure of an indicator of the degree of centralization is developed. For example, Hofstede (1980) focuses on the “power distance” dimension to identify the appropriate degree of power distance between a manager and a worker. Bond (1991) proposes the term “integration” to represent the extent of social stability and tolerance for others. This “integration” also places importance on being trustworthy and enjoying a close friendship. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) use a series of triangles illustrating various levels of social distance. By the equality-hierarchy

dimension, Ferraro (2010) further observes the degree of informal relations between people of high and low status. He claims that there is a high level of delegation of authority in egalitarian oriented society.

In ancient China history, the long existence of the centralized monarchy has generated a strong sense of order and relationship (Jacobs et al., 1995). Bond and Hwang (1986) note that, in the Confucian view, Wu-Lun (Five Cardinal Relations), namely, those between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband, and wife, and friend and friend, are accorded a position of paramount importance. To maintain this established social order, Confucianism advocates propriety (Li) as the basic doctrine that every member in society should behave according to rank (Feuchtwang, 2016; Jacobs et al., 1995; Schaberg, 2005; Wong, 1998). As of result, social harmony is achieved. In support of that argument, Fairbank (1966) claims these relationships, even those between friends, are constructed in hierarchical form by the order of nature itself.

Compared with hierarchy in Chinese society, informality is emphasized in the West, especially in the United States. There has little social distance between the various levels of society (Ferraro, 2010). An example is where Western managers can be questioned, and power can be diffused to many people with low-status differences. Because of rank-oriented influence, “Face” is of central importance for interpersonal relations among Chinese (Yau, 1988). Lockett (1988) argues that each class in Chinese society has a different “face”. He claims that is because “face” is essentially the recognition by others of one’s social standings and position. Wu and Yong (1998) also argue that, based on the Confucius virtue of respect, someone with authority, often elderly and with a good reputation can ask for favors of others or enjoy special prestige. That leads to a need to order relationships by status and to respect the order of the status.

For example, in the traditional Chinese business framework, workers are reluctant to present ideas, since they have to maintain managers’ “face”. If workers have to share ideas that may lead to business improvement, they would rather give this credit to senior workers or managers. That is in contrast to the Western society where little respect for senior people has (Ferraro, 2010). Moreover, Qi (2011) and Filieri, Chen & Lal Dey (2017) argue that “face” is important to a Chinese manager than to a Western one well as being recognized by others is relatively crucial than in the West.

3.3.7. Uncertainty avoidance

According to Hofstede (1980), uncertainty avoidance refers to the lack of tolerance for ambiguity and the need for formal rules and a high-level organizational structure. Wilson and Dalton (1996) use the terms “dynamic” and “stable” to contrast distinction in these philosophical differences. Brake and

his colleagues (1995) use the dichotomy of “order” and “flexibility” to discuss these significant components in the model.

There is no definitive answer for which philosophical value is more tolerant of ambiguity. In the finding of Hofstede (1980), the Western people (e.g., The United States) are slightly higher than the Chinese people (e.g., Hong Kong) in uncertainty avoidance (Loiacono & Lin, 2005). However, it finds that U.S managers are more tolerant of ambiguity than their Hong Kong counterparts (Ralston & Gustafson, 1993). Nevertheless, in terms of “leadership” or “power distance”, it finds that the Chinese business framework with more control or power distance has a higher level of uncertainty avoidance than the West (Ferraro, 2010; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

3.4. Discussion

In examining an argument of “Western approach presents no problems for Chinese structure”, this study does not attempt to make comparisons among the three cases but to discover philosophical value in response to the interaction between managers and workers within different settings and then explore which value applies to the organization. Eventually, despite case A being a Western structure where has Western value and emphasis on scientific management, it is somehow observed that the majority of workers living within all three cases are Chinese people. In that sense, Chinese philosophy is the key to influencing interaction.

Consequently, to apply the Western approach to the Chinese structure, the alignment between the chosen Western philosophy and Chinese organization is essential. However, either in Western or Chinese structure as shown in the findings, apparently there lacks alignment between what they are saying (value and strategy) and what they are doing (structure and system). When organizations do not match that theory of alignment, there would have organizational conflicts existing inside the so-called Westernized structure, not to mention purely Chinese structure. Through the findings, several features concerning Chinese Philosophy are discussed below.

3.4.1. Relationship

One of the findings shows “continuous relationship” is of paramount importance no matter where is in Chinese or Western setting with Chinese workers. This finding is supported by Chang (2008), Ellis (2009), Kim and Hubbard (2007), Tu (1985), Mote (1989), Yau (1994), Wu and Yong (1998), and Whiteley (2001). As the Chinese worldview depicted in this study, “family circle” is a basis where can be extended to co-workers and managers. From the observation, even within one Chinese workgroup, different family circles can

be formed based on whether they have the same characteristics of background, work relationship, value concept, the image on each other, religion, education, and other shared experience. In their family circles, resources and information are collectively shared.

In support of this proposition, based on case A, apparently, middle manager is not a family member of the executive vice president and therefore obtains fewer resources than other in-group members. Furthermore, case B shows branch manager grants favorable appraisal results to the person having poor performance simply because he is a member of the family circle. In spite of arguing and debating with management, workers tend to protect the long-term relationship with harmony and tolerate such situations by using passive and informal communication. Furthermore, interestingly, this study finds that executive vice president in case A always gives favors to in-group members, however, she is close-minded to those in an outside family by strictly enforcing scientific management without considering human being is emotional and autonomous. Again, that supports the importance of “relationship”.

Because of this relationship-oriented interaction, “trust” is the key. Chinese people value “trust” based on relationships. With such a “trust” relationship, it is expected that there will be reciprocity with one favor repaid by another. Moreover, this trust relationship can be referred to as “connection” (Lockett, 1988; Ping & Yan, 2013) or “guanxi” (Chi & Seock-Jin, 2017) that is critical to social life at work. The use of guanxi to obtain wanted resources is endemic within the Chinese structure. And the cultivation of guanxi is cited as the reason why those members within the family circle are so successful, reflecting the prevalence of relationship-oriented as opposed to a performance-oriented evaluation in the Chinese setting (Lee & Anderson, 2007; Luo & Yeh, 2012). This is consistent with the finding in case B. In a sense, a long-term social relationship is emphasized.

3.4.2. Collectivism

Following the concept of “family circle”, Chinese people work collectively. Within the family circle, members place group interest above self-interest and will pursue group goals (Li & Fu, 2000; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Rhee et al., 2017). However, through the findings, it is also seen that there have conflicts between different family circles when competition for a limited resource. Therefore, in terms of “in-group”, it is reflected that there has a phenomenon that “work collectively in the group” but “compete with the outside group as an individual way”. Although much study has already differentiated values between individual-oriented and collective-oriented frameworks, a question of to what degree should people pursue their self-interest rather than contributing to the welfare of the larger in-group will be asked by both Western and Chinese

managers (Rhee et al., 2017). The answer may be varied depending on how important their philosophy values individualism and collectivism respectively in the social system (Oyserman & Lee, 2008).

3.4.3. Power distance and face

The findings in cases A and B show that the sense of hierarchy is strong in traditional Chinese management (Farh & Cheng, 2000). The findings are also supported by the research in the Chinese setting that shows a higher power distance between top management and workers (Farh et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2003). That power distance often disrupts the harmony of participation that is essential to the progress of the business framework (Białas, 2009). Because of the dogmatic trait of Chinese managers and paternalistic system, it also finds that workers are hesitant to present ideas that may lead to operation streamline and business improvements, such as in cases A and B. In that sense, the decision-making process is not open to low-level workers or even mid-level supervisors, especially when encountering issues regarding daily practices that go against accepted practices or contradict their assumptions and beliefs (Huang et al., 2003). Workers tend to be discouraged from independent, active, or even creative activities. That leads to innovation seemingly not necessary and then might influence productivity.

“Face” is important in social interaction. This can be seen in case C, where the president respects the age because of not letting him feel “loss of face”. In support of this finding, the research reflects that Chinese philosophical values such as face are closely related to the creation and development of business networks (Wu & Yong, 1998). Recent research indicates that loss of face is an important element in interpersonal relations in Chinese organizations (Su, Sirgy & Littlefield, 2003). Consequently, the loss of face occurs when group expectations are not met. Losing “face” will lead to dire social consequences in Chinese society.

4. Conclusions

The concluding remarks are three-fold:

1. In Chinese structure or even within the Western structure with Chinese members, the Chinese character is inherently embedded in Chinese managers and workers. Hierarchy, *guanxi*, and face are central elements to cultivate socialization in the Chinese workgroup. The tradition of these Chinese characteristics provides an ordered collectivity that is harmonious. The extended family is important in Chinese society. Within the family, the resource can be shared, and group goals can be achieved. In the meantime, it is seen that the authority and decisions of managers cannot be questioned. As of result, the

dogmatism of Chinese managers sometimes hinders business innovation and restricts growth in terms of size and globalization

2. The scientific principles used by Western structures are contributed to enhance their productivity and encourage workers by economic reward. Promotion and performance are achieved by the element of competition. It values that the human is controllable as long as the economic reward is given. Within the Western structure, it might have high efficiency in terms of human resources, operation flow, sales process, and even decision making. That systematic structure is moving mechanically and shows little acceptance of the affective needs of employees. It somehow also ignores the basic nature of a harmonious environment, reciprocity, and long-term relationship.

3. Synthesis of Western and Chinese values applies to both business and people. Specifically, adopting scientific management based on considerate Chinese characteristics of respecting for the age, maintaining “face” in the public, and emphasizing long-term social relationships (even between family circles) is the key to successfully implementing that emerged rule. Ideally, reasonable Western performance competition with more compassion within the Chinese structure may be attractive to workers and gain loyalty. Practically, even within a foreign-held company, to construct a harmonious and efficient workplace, the key to the effective business operation is that managers need to adjust their Chinese characters toward more open-minded and turn into high receptivity of different ways of doing business through respecting for each other according to the rank and reciprocity. The effectiveness of managers’ adjustment may be varied according to whether their mind is much inherently rooted in traditional Chinese characteristics, whether their belief in human nature is innately good or whether their education or training has Western influence.

The scientific novelty. The key contribution of this study is when alignment in the following emerged model is practically realized, workers may follow instructions and would be treated as joint partners in terms of “take ownership” inside the business organizations. Each of the workers is essential and is cared for by each other within the structure. Family-centered becomes the basis of shareholder value.

The significance of the study. The significant implication of the above-mentioned concluding remarks is the emerged PATOP model shown in *Figure 3*. The model indicates an ideal work environment where the Western approach is applicable to the Chinese structure in Taiwan. For the levels of Philosophy and Assumption, it indicates that workers are somewhat respectfully repressible. It creates an environment with conformity. In that environment, every member respects each other. Under that respectful situation, workers can tolerate arguments and debate on daily routines works and dominant sales demand from managers. It will also establish a learning environment where workers can share feelings and expectations with mid-level managers and the top management. The communication is efficiently smooth and educated.

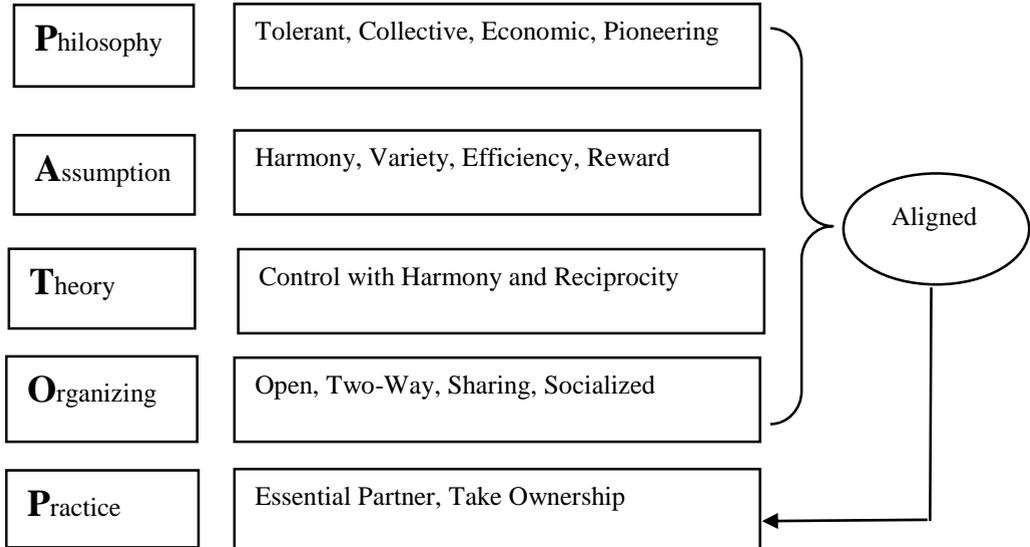


Figure 3. Emergent ideal PATOP for the Chinese structure with Western approach

Source: own development

Moreover, workers like to form a group where they share their own personal feeling about expectations and value concepts for the job assigned. A variety of job functions will be erected for works so as to let them perform pioneering spirit and achieve a goal. In a group, social interaction is very critical to evaluate inter-person skills and be accepted by the counter-group. The faction may exist if there have arguments both in job and personal life concepts. The goal of human work can be achieved by monetary rewards and back-end support with recognition. Compensation programs should be flexible and various for positive competition. And workers are characterized as owning a pioneering spirit when there have new assignments they like to try. They can forges ever onward to obtain an optimum economic contribution as long as they are admired and respected between parties. The approach taken here needs a combined way of Chinese value and Western philosophical thinking as well as adds Taiwanese adventure spirit into the model.

As for the levels of theory of organizing and practice, it indicates that workers are willing to be dominated by the authorization only when they are respected, which means “give them face” and “don’t humiliate them in the public”. As long as this management concept is erected, organizational learning and motivation to share experiences can be exercised effectively with mutual benefits under a scientific management system. In the structure, the supervision is open. Each member has equal status. Function title is the only differentiation.

In that sense, all workers should work as a group. Brainstorming with related functions of workers is performed while making decisions. The expectation and ideas from the workers are emphasized and translated by their direct managers to the Top. And through two-way communication, considering all aspects of task and business daily issues effectively can solve the problem.

The social interaction between managers and workers is essential to improve a status relationship. The information and comments will be shared through an informal and casual meeting. In the system, since workers will receive respect on the job or daily life, stringent control and performance-tracking strategy will be accepted to push them to achieve a goal. A compensation plan will be established based on both the financial plan and workers' expectations. To enhance innovation, a job transfer system will be constructed for pursuing high productivity. In the process, managers and workers will do performance evaluations mutually. Managers understand issues through coaching as well as workers contribute feedbacks to managers.

Prospects for further research. However, it should be noted that there will be drift as this emerged PATOP model is used in the Chinese structure with the Western approach. This addresses further research issues "what an acceptable time for drift would be", given the organization's ability to manage change, whether a secure commitment to decisions and how well communicate with those managers for implementations.

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