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Japanese management practices and attitudes of employees of companies with Japanese capital operating in Poland.

Abstract: *There is no doubt that Japanese companies are characterized by specific organizational culture and management practices. One might ask to what an extent Polish employees of companies with Japanese capital adapt to the promoted practices. I will attempt to give answer to this question, based on the results of the research conducted with employees in four selected manufacturing companies. The important criterion is the size of the company, which affects the efficiency of generating desired patterns among employees. The adaptation level of workers to these patterns can be observed at the level of employee attitudes that express a partial or full identification with current company practices.*

This paper aims to answer the question to what an extend Polish workers employed companies with Japanese capital, present on Polish market, adapt to the practices implemented in these organisations. The data used come from a PhD dissertation, and was collected within the time from October 2008 to May 2009 and reverified in 2011.

Keywords: management, attitude, *internalization, organizational culture*, small companies, large companies

Introduction

When discussing Japanese culture, the notion of collectivism (both national culture collectivism and organisational collectivism) comes to the fore.

Collectivism, or in other words communionship, is the belief that the group interest is of more importance than the interest of an individual. The manifestations of communionship are the following [Sułkowski 2004: 147]:

- 1) common interest as the principle value
- 2) the importance of social group cooperation
- 3) the importance of the sense of community

- 4) group cooperation and unity orientation
- 5) formation of a group working cult

'The constitution of collectivism in an organization is a progressively accumulative process rather than accomplished at one stroke' [Ke 2009]. Collective organisations are group-oriented and the workplace becomes the source of strong, group identification. The relationships between workers are to be harmonious, conflicts are to be avoided while the private worker life is closely linked to his/her professional life. Group management is an inseparable element of collectivism management. Group forms of working are highly emphasized.

A specific form of collectivism is grupism. In literature, grupism is mainly presented in the context of Far East collective cultures (mainly Japan and Korea). In Poland, the term grupism may be found in the works of Krzysztof Konecki [1994], who describes and analyses the group model of use to comprehend the social phenomenon in Japan in a macro and micro scale. Generally speaking, grupism involves the domination of the group over the individual. 'It is not the sacrifice for the group but being convinced that one's benefit equals to the interest of the group and the company' [Iwata 1982: 39-40]. Group participation processes and acting for the benefit of the company are the consequence of the legitimized order on a social and organisational level. Collective practices are an inseparable component of organisation functioning and the element of the 'programmed mind'¹

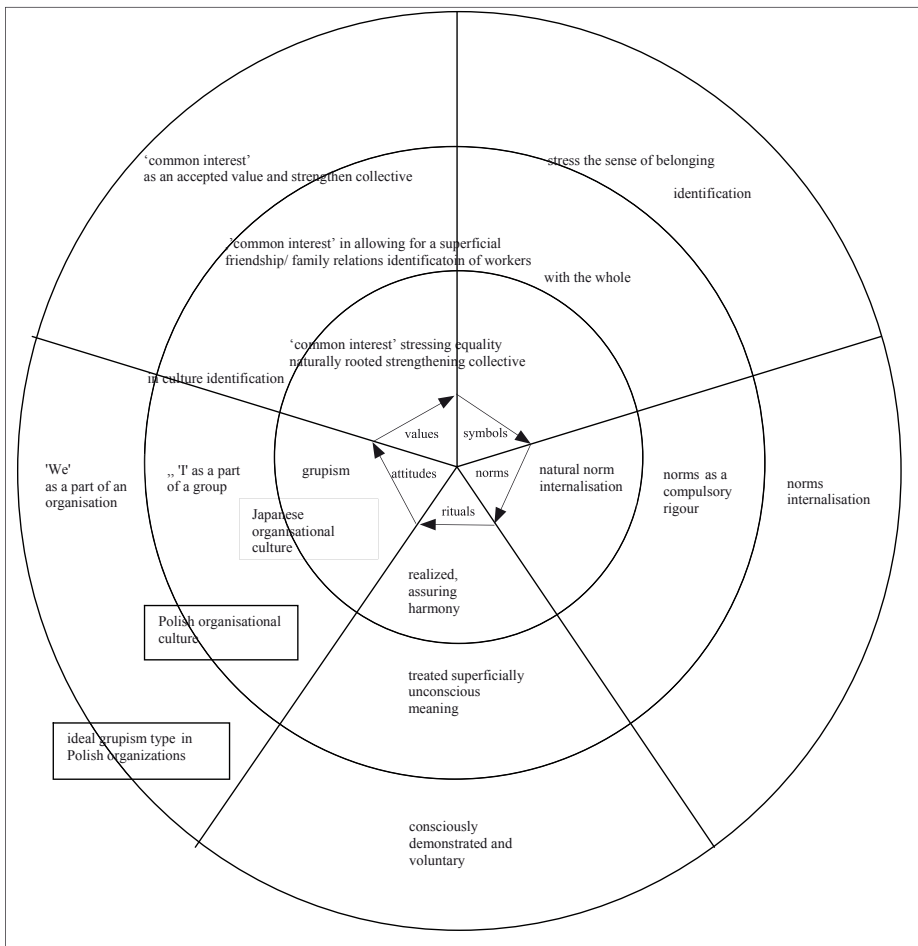
According to the author, it is possible to observe the phenomenon of grupism in companies with Japanese capital that operate in Poland. Obviously, Polish grupism is not identical to Japanese grupism as it does not originate from Polish national culture, of which familistic relations are more characteristic strengthened by citizens opposition of national collectivism from communism times. Thus, grupism would be a specific reaction of Polish workers to collectivistic, Japanese practices which are the part of organisational culture and are implemented systematically on workers. Therefore, grupism may be a coherent and consistent element of human resources management. The definition of grupism, accepted by the author, assumes that grupism is a high level of internalisation of collectivistic features by workers, resulting from ritual practices and originating from the company organisational culture. With reference to the terminology introduced by Max Weber, grupism is viewed as an ideal organisation type of practices, whose characteristics are defined in Japanese management and refer to companies with Japanese capital present in Poland.

¹ The term introduced by Hofstede to describe the functioning of individuals in a given culture.

Analysis model

The main research problem of the paper is the following: to what an extend do the workers of Poland based companies with Japanese capital, where collective organisational culture is implemented, adapt to the requirements and follow grupism behaviours?

Figure 1 The juxtaposition of model Japanese and Polish organisational culture characteristics with the ideal type of grupism generated in Poland-based companies with Japanese capital.



Source: private findings

In the research the organisational culture implementation model has been accepted that comprises the following interconnected elements: symbols, rituals, values, norms and attitudes.

The differences between Polish and Japanese culture are presented in a circular graph so that the differences can be still more apparent. Moreover, it is possible to describe Japanese collectivism standard characteristics and make a comparison with Polish organisational culture features. The differences are presented on the figure below. In the context of this paper, of great importance are the 2 circles - the inner one, presenting the Japanese collective culture and the outer one, explaining the understanding of grupism as a specific ideal type.

Human resources management in collective cultures concentrates on interpersonal relation quality and work organisation. As Jacek Miroński [2004: 33] notices, the examples used when Japanese companies are being described come from the examination and research of large Japanese companies which does not necessarily mean that these descriptions are appropriate for all situations present in companies in Japan. It is worth noticing that the paper describing Japanese company culture, assumes the standard concept as the point of comparison.

When considering the standard Japanese collectivism characteristics one may attempt to systematize them.

As far as values are concerned, the typical values are: being the part of the group and acting for the benefit of the company. According to Waters, 'in an average Japanese company the development of mutual trust as well as sharing responsibility are the key factors to be encouraged. The team as a whole must be stronger than the total strength of all individuals [1995: 49, my translation].

Symbols help to create organisational culture as they emphasize the equality among the organisation members [Waters 1995: 50]. Identical clothes are to facilitate the formalized relationships between workers and supervisors. The same clothes help to increase the sense of belonging to the organisation as the similarity is highlighted. Apart from clothes, another important symbol is the flag of the company.

When discussing norms, of great importance is following the task organisation scheme, organisational loyalty and respecting company rules and regulations. Norms, in Japanese organisational culture, are respected and accepted by workers on both formal and informal level. Kaizen serves as a management strategy. It involves a continuous development and refers to all company workers, directors and managers. Although Kaizen is a technical term, it reflects in the society and culture. Kaizen originator, Masaaki Imai, believes that this method of management may be used anywhere as it is the

company mentality that is of great importance and not any national traits or characteristics. The implementation of kaizen involves the following grupism-related values: cooperation and group forms of working. Work organisation, with reference to production, can be expressed by the following phrase: *just in time*. Production is closely linked to kaban idea, which acts as a group egoism reducer enabling to eliminate the hierarchical structure and coordinate group mechanisms.

Rituals are the next culture element. The ritual model is one way of analysing Japanese society and is correlated with the organisation functioning. Konecki [1995: 123] distinguishes 6 main ritual types. It is worth to emphasize the exceptional role of integration rituals, designed to provide the sense of stability and harmony for the members of the organisation and ensure the sense of belonging to the working community. These rituals comprise activities performed both, inside and outside the workplace including spending free time together after work. Generally, the common characteristic of Japanese organisation rituals is the possibility to save face by workers (new ones as well as already employed). 'Face' is a positive social value, (...) a person saves face if his/her actions corresponds to his/her inner coherent person image proved by other interaction participants' [Konecki 1994: 42, my translation].

The last culture element is the attitude presented by a worker. The desired attitude is of grupism character, i.e.: the concentration on the group and mutual trust reinforcement as well as workers bond forming. Collective identification involves the workers' perception of themselves as 'We'. In case any undesired attitude is present, 'a nail that stands out is hammered back' [Waters 1995: 50, my translation].

When discussing Japanese organisation culture one may refer to a specific scheme. Similarly, the same can be done with Polish organisation culture. As it is not the subject matter of this paper, the author focuses solely on the standard characteristics of Japanese collectivism and is in the search of the grupism manifestations in the context of organisations present in Poland.

With reference to organisational culture components, there can be attitudes expressing different grupism adaptation levels: a coherent attitude (the closest to the ideal type) and a mixed attitude. The attitude is understood here as a stable and learned tendency to judge events, people or ideas in a positive or negative way [Zimbardo 2004: 734]. With reference to its components it is possible to describe people's emotions and feelings associated with the attitude object (emotional component), beliefs related to the attitude object (cognitive aspect) and actions taken with regard to the attitude object (behavioural aspect) [Aronson, Wilson, Aekert 1997: 314]. Thus, the attitude becomes the indicator of the organisation culture implementation success.

Detailed criteria are presented in the table below.

Table 1 Attitude type of worker and the adaptation level with reference to grupism requirements .

Criteria	Consistent attitude	Mixed attitude
Organisational norms attitude	known, accepted, internalized	known, partially accepted, obeyed
Workers' attitude with reference to their autonomy and individual position	'We' category, deindividuation	'the category of 'I' as a part of the group
Attitude with reference to organisational rituals	rituals are accepted and are of special importance for workers	rituals are accepted and are of moderate importance for workers
The attitude with reference to values present in a company	recognized	declared
Following work discipline and procedure routines	high	average
The attitude towards company policy attitude – organisational loyalty	high, unconditional acceptance of all management actions performed inside and outside the company	conditional acceptance – the accepting the company functioning inside the organisation and expressing one's dissatisfaction outside the company

Source: private findings

Research sample

The research sample involves 4 production companies with Japanese capital. The tested subjects were chosen intentionally. They specialize in production for automotive industry. Selection criteria, apart from the capital, was the size of the company. It has been assumed that grupism manifests differently in a large and a small company. The research involved 2 small companies (the number of employers: 40-70) and 2 large companies (with over 250 people employed). The companies have been present on Polish market at least since 2007.

The material presented in this papers includes:

- 151 surveys (71 and 80 from small and large companies respectively)

14 interviews with managers (7 + 7)

30 interviews with production workers(18 + 12)

35 internet forum entries added by the workers of the tested companies (15 + 20)

Groupism sources and organisation practices

When searching for grupism sources (considered as a specific organisational order), the main focus was the aspect of managers' deliberate promoting practices and introducing values. The key question was to what an extend grupism was present in the tested companies.

The respondents from the companies with Japanese capital (large and small) showed that the fundamental task when creating a company in Poland was the an attempt to transfer the management model as well as values and behaviours present in the original company.

So that this transfer is possible, in each tested company there were at least two workers (small companies) and over a dozen of workers(large companies) who had been trained in the original companies in Japan. The trainings were necessary to familiarize workers with the secrets of production techniques. However, as some respondents state, the visits allowed to feel the atmosphere and relations present in the company.

As far as managers are concerned it is necessary that the standards to be transferred are implemented in the greatest possible number and in a complete form.

Table 2 Standards to be transferred to companies present in Poland (according to the managers)

Importance according to the number a given standard was designated	Standard name
1.	Japanese management model - Group forms of work organisation - KAIZEN, TQM - Emphasis the bond with a company
2.	Prioritisation of work, emphasis on the internalisation of norms

3.	<p>Group-oriented (workers' attitude to their autonomy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stressing the importance of the group and the sense of belonging to the group via communication in terms 'We' and the group forms of work - obligatory participation and speaking during meetings as well as participation in integrative meetings very often of a family character.
4.	<p>Transferring the mission, values and symbols present in the original company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emphasis on the mission, values and their active implementation by managers, - both, the flag of Japan as well as the flag of a company is located outside the building - uniforms identical to uniforms worn in the original company
5.	<p>'Japonization' of attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - personnel wear identical uniforms - work is performed in silence - cleaning the factory (small companies – no cleaning company hired, workers clean the whole company; large companies – a worker is responsible for cleaning only his or her workplace)
6.	The importance of good atmosphere in the company
7.	<p>Stressing the uniqueness of the company and motivating to organisational loyalty.</p>
8. (small companies)	Gifts exchange and the participation of company members in one's private life

source: private findings

Differences can be found between small and large companies in relation to the strictness of rules implementation from the original companies. The rule to clean the company by workers has been altered in large companies. Workers opposed to the introduction of the cleaning rule and protested against the obligation to clean the company by themselves. The managers accepted the demand and limited the cleaning of the company to shareable areas and leaving one's workplace clean and tidy. Another difference involves obligatory speaking during the teams meetings - large company managers decided that there is not always enough time for this rule to be followed.

The phenomenon of exchanging gifts between workers and managers is not present in large companies (in contrast to small companies where it is a common behaviour to invite the members of the company for family events). It is hard to say, if it is done purposely. As far as the author is concerned, it results from a spontaneous behaviour of workers.

As the survey results show, the efforts to implement the standards are noticeable by workers. With reference to the tested companies, no considerable difference concerning this issue has been found.

Grupism - limiting organisational culture

One of the signs of a limiting character being the part of the organisational culture is the necessity to follow the work discipline and procedure routines by workers. No considerable differences have been found related to informing about the company regulations once the worker is employed.

There are no discrepancies when it comes to the knowledge level on punishing measures for not following the regulations by the worker. In all company types over 90% of the workers know what kind of punishing measures would be applied in the event of failure to comply with the company regulations. The worker were asked about the rules, they would not accept if it was not necessary. The respondents answers are presented in the table below.

Table 3 Rules that would not be accepted if not demanded

Company type		Rules that would not be accepted					Total
		No data	YES	RATHER YES	RATHER NO	NO	
little	No.	0	3	5	13	50	71
	%	0	4.2	7.0	18.3	70.4	100.0
large	No.	7	12	15	13	33	80
	%	8.8	15.0	18.8	16.3	41.3	100.0

source: private findings

In small companies, there are rules that are accepted and would be accepted even if not pressured by the supervisors. In large companies several respondents state that they respect some rules out of necessity.

Values and rituals

The division of values into declared and accepted used in this paper has been taken from Ossowski, who apart from those two values distinguishes also sensed values. Declared values are those that are explicitly expresses by workers in direct communication (S. Ossowski 2000). Declared values are also accepted values if workers express them implicitly on the internet, where workers can feel anonymous and may express one's true point of view on companies practices.

If actions for the company interest are regarded as valuable - its consequence is mutual aid and behaviour that helps to keep a good name of an organisation. It is related to organisational loyalty which ought to be present inside and outside of the organisation.

Firstly, the workers were tested to what an extend they declare following the values related to the common interest. One of the questions in the survey inquired if the worker would give help to other member of the company if such help was needed. This issue correspond to the behaviour contributing to the interest of the company. The answers are presented in the table below.

Table 4 Consent to provide help to the member of the company.

Company type		Would you provide help to your co-worker?		Total
		no	yes	
little	No.	0	71	71
	%	0	100.0	100.0
large	No.	1	79	80
	%	1.3	98.8	100.0

source: private findings

The results has been juxtaposed with data provided by production workers interviews, who were asked about their assessment on their work contributing to the common interest in the organisation, e.g.: achieving the goals of the company by means of cooperation in the group identified not only with the working community but the company as a whole. All respondents from small companies stated that acting with regard to the common interest is of importance. The respondents declared that the company was important for them and the values present (stressing quality, collaboration and working for the interest of the whole company) were considered as top priority. In 12 large companies 8 respondent out of 12 stated that the values present in the company were important and followed by workers. There were also four people who stated that the values present in the company are impractical and two of them claimed that the values are not necessary in the company.

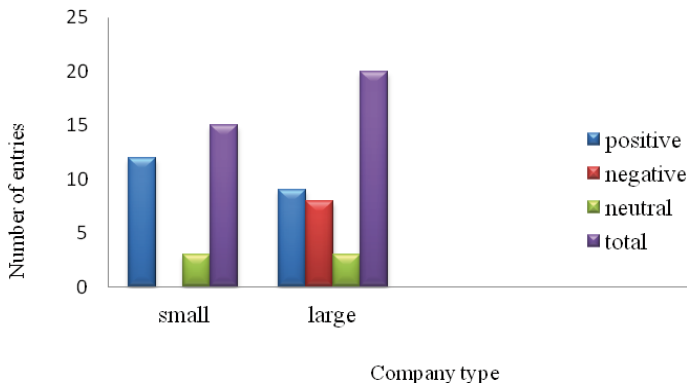
As presented, the majority of the tested people declared following the values. Respondents' declaration were checked to what an extend they correspond to the anonymous entries on the internet.

35 entries were analysed: 15 entries were added by the employers from small Japanese companies and 20 were made by the employers from large Japanese companies.

The entries were preliminarily divided into positive, negative and neutral feedback. The latter included no assessment implication and discussed such information as the number of employers or the company profile.

Figure 1 Entries and its assessing character added on internet forums by the workers employed by the companies with Japanese capital.

The data listed according to the number of entries in a given category.



source: private findings

The highest number of entries was noted with reference to small companies - no negative entry was added. The entries discussed mainly the clear rules present in the company, good atmosphere in teams or the fact that workers can influence the functioning of the company. The authors boasted the high quality parts produced by the company. The majority of entries started with the expression: 'in our company...', which corresponds to 'We' category self-description. The workers answered the questions from people interested in working in the company, describing the company operative regulations expressing one's acceptance and summarizing them as 'the right' ones.

The entries in large companies concentrate mainly on the atmosphere in the working teams. Entries with a negative feedback relate to the company operative regulations described as: 'labour camp regulations'. Criticism and dissatisfaction with general working conditions regulations or participation in the rituals of the organisation are a dominant element in the internet discussions. As one of the worker noted on the internet: 'With each month everything is getting worse and worse, each time something new is forbidden, all the time there are some reprimands...' Another worker stated that 'it is impossible to work normally: uniforms, no radio, bare feet... Commanding, banning or consequences.'

The analysis of entries from the internet forums indicates the coherence of expressed values (both explicitly and implicitly) by the workers of small companies with Japanese capital. Consequently, it can be stated that in those types of companies the values are accepted and even deeply felt by the workers.

When it comes to large companies with Japanese capital, there is a noticeable difference between values declared unanonymously (survey) and internet entry opinions. Generally speaking, it can be assumed that the organisation values are of a declared character.

The next question was the following: what does the following of organisation rituals mean to you? So as to answer the question the data gathered from the surveys and interviews were used.

The answers from the workers of small companies clearly present that there exists the acceptance for company rituals - both those taking place at the company premises and outside the company. When asked about the meaning of clearly defined and repetitive activities rooted in the company culture the interviewees answered that 'it is inseparable part of the company reality' and 'rituals are viewed as something natural' or 'participation in the rituals favours the integrity of the company'. The attitude to rituals in large companies is not of a uniform character. The vast majority of workers accept the company rituals: 'it is just an element of the company culture', 'if they exist it means they are necessary'. As far as the meaning of the rituals present in the companies is concerned, they are viewed as duties to be fulfilled. 'The participation and speaking during meetings is important as it saves production-related troubles and facilitates the process of communication' On the other hand, 'if there were no meeting the workers would not insist on their restoration'.

Thinking patterns

It was assumed that one of the elements of grupism is the manifestation of the thinking pattern involving the perception of oneself as a part of a group not an autonomous individual.

When examining the thinking patterns of oneself present among the interviewees, the following main categories were distinguished:

- 1) thinking in terms of 'We'
- 2) thinking in terms of 'I' placing the individual in the working group

The first step was to analyse workers assessment of the relations in the working teams. The answers were the following: small companies: 57,7 % workers characterized the team relations as very good, 31% as good, 9,9 % as average and 1,4 % as unfavourable. Large companies results were the following:

28,7% workers characterized the team relations as very good, 48,8% as good, 16,3% as average and 6,3% as unfavourable.

The next step was to collect the self-descriptions of workers related to the perception of one's workplace. In small companies the workers used the pronoun 'We', which can be viewed as one of the indicators of the presence of a high level of grupism adaptation in the companies. This form of communication is correlated with a grupistic thinking pattern concentrated on the organisational 'We', not considering oneself as an autonomous individual.

The situation in large companies is slightly different as the vast majority of workers describe oneself in terms of 'I' placing oneself the same way within the group indicating similarities to other team members. There are also few answers with the perception of oneself in terms of 'We'.

Workers attitudes

This point tries to characterize the types of attitudes presenting the level of grupism acceptance common among the workers in the tested companies. The analysis conducted is of a general character. Detailed description would require more thorough research. With the data from the previous paragraphs and the considerations on different companies types in mind it was assumed that the following two types of attitudes may be distinguished: an attitude coherent with the grupism culture and a mixed attitude. The proportion of these two attitudes present in the tested companies is not defined - the aim is to indicate which attitude is dominant.

With reference to the chosen criteria of the attitude towards values, norms, work discipline, rituals and workers self-description there are two attitude types (the most common) that can be distinguished in the tested companies.

In small companies with Japanese capital, the most common attitude is the one described as coherent with grupism culture. People with the attitude coherent with grupism culture are characterized by a specific attitude to organisational norms. They not only know and accept the norms but consider them as their own. Thus, it can be stated that the attitude is linked with norm internalisation. The key element of the discussed attitude is the type of self-perception in terms of 'We' reflecting the level of workers deindividuation. People with the attitude coherent with grupism accept the rituals present in the company and consider them as significant so that the identification with the company is sustained. The same applies to the issue of values approved by an individual, which as a consequence leads to the acceptance of these values and their implementation in mind of representative of a discussed attitude. Moreover, the worker displays a high level of compliance with the principles

of procedure and work discipline. Additionally, the company course of action (inside and outside the company) is accepted unconditionally.

The other attitude type, the mixed type, is the most common in large companies. It is very common for workers to be familiarized with company values but accept them partially. They depict oneself frequently in term of 'I' as a part of a group, which indicates a high level of identification with the team. However, it is not marked by a group deindividuation. Presently, the rituals in the company are accepted but are of average importance for the workers. Values are of a declared character which indicates that workers representing this type of attitude are willing to follow them but not necessarily act in the name of these values. The workers with mixed attitude follow work discipline which is the result of formal and obligatory duties acceptance. The organisational loyalty is average with a noticeable lack of coherence between the declared and true actions, involving information circulation in the company.

Summary

The examination of the companies allows to notice different levels of the discussed phenomenon - starting from highly intense in small companies with Japanese capital and an average in large companies. If viewing the phenomenon of grupism as a perfect type of organisational order it can be stated that the closest to the standard type is the phenomenon present in small companies with Japanese capital that were tested. As the research show, even in Polish national culture conditions it is possible to transfer numerous patterns with its source in a different cultural area.

There are certain conditions to be met. Firstly, it is necessary that the rules and norms present in the original company are reflected as faithfully as it is possible. Moreover, Polish workers need to have the sense of being an important part of the whole organisation, in other words that they are absolutely necessary for the company to function efficiently. It turns out that even minor concession made in the interest of workers arouse the senses of having a real impact on the rules present in the company - which very often leads to demands to limit the collectivistic rituals and rules.

The next condition to be fulfilled is the low numbers of workers as it is far easier to stimulate the group processes and use the adaptation potential of every team. The high level of integration of particular members is very common. Grupism-related organisational regulations are ridiculed in large and well-developed organisations. It is the consequence of guaranteed anonymity and the lack of identification which permits the existence of so called 'second outer-organisation cycle'. Numerous symbols and ritual practices strengthen

the sense of identification with the company and the conviction of they are being useful and valuable of all the rituals followers.

The worker adaptation lever to grupism practices can be observed when taking a closer look at work attitudes. The highest level of collectivistic norm internalisation is present in small tested companies, where workers attitude can be described as coherent with the grupism culture. The consequence of losing one's 'I' by an individual and accepting the company operations is workers' thinking and acting in terms of 'We' - which proves the successful implementation of the organisational culture. Collectivistic forms of grupism became an effective regulator especially when the company managers can encourage working team to motivate mutual interpersonal control. The individual may perceive the sense of belonging as gratifying and satisfying. The strong collective identification of people with the attitude coherent with the grupism culture allows to find 'one's place' in the organisational reality.

The mixed attitude is characterized by an average level of adaptation and presents selective acceptance of cultural regulations stressing the collective values introduced by managers. Worker with mixed attitude are flexible in combining the realization of grupism demands of the organisation team managers with the preservation of one's independence. Company workers are familiarized with the company norms, accept them to a certain extend and follow them. They perceive oneself as an integral part of the group without deindividuation as in the small Japanese companies. Grupism with its mixed form maybe the form of a pragmatic and instrumental adaptation to collectivistic practices - a type of game played by the worker with the organisation he is employed in.

The author of this article realizes that describes grupizm only in the context of four of the companies with Japanese capital. This study may be only a prelude to further exploration manifestations of the phenomenon on a larger scale and deepen the discussion on the issue signaled.

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