

## **Policy Analysis on Cultural Conflict and Cultural Integration in the Joint Operation**

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**Abstract.** Under the new historical conditions, military operations such as joint operations required the coordination and cooperation of all forces. Due to the existence of certain cultural differences among different units of joint operation, it will result in cultural conflicts so as to affect the volatility of overall combat effectiveness if lacking the inappropriate guide. Cultural integration is thought the only way to solve cultural conflicts. This paper starts to analysis of the root of cultural conflicts. First, it is suggested to identify cultural differences and recognize their own limitations. Second, cross-cultural training should be carried out to enhance mutual trust and resolve conflicts in cultural running-in. Finally, common values will be created, and common organizational culture will be eliminated so that the negative factors of combat effectiveness can be eliminated. By setting up the above-mentioned "three-step" basic strategy, it will solve the cultural conflicts in joint operations, make sure the mutual recognition and fusion of the different units, and finally remold the new organizational culture to enhance the overall combat effectiveness.

### **Introduction**

Under the new historical conditions, a joint operation required the coordination of every force. In this process, a combat team can only complete the task if the army men from each unit work together with different cultural backgrounds, values standards and behavior patterns. Therefore, it is inevitable that there are all kinds of contradictions and conflicts, which is directly related to the quality for completing the task. As a kind of organizational conflict, cultural conflict will inevitably affect the efficiency of the task if people select blindly suppressing and evading. On the contrary, if there was a positive attitude towards cultural conflict, it will achieve the higher performance. How to look on the different cultures of the army men from different units in the team and eliminate the psychological distance among them with different cultural backgrounds, and how to deal with the cultural conflicts between the army personnel from different units and find effective ways of cultural integration, became a problem that all levels of organization leaders often had to be faced at present in the joint operations, and which was also the main content of this paper.

### **Overview of Cultural Differences, Cultural Conflict and Cultural Emergence**

In order to study the cultural conflict and integration of joint operations, it is necessary to ascertain the relevant concepts firstly.

## **Cultural and Cultural Differences**

Culture is a concept cited from the cultural anthropology. Because culture permeated almost field we lived in, anthropologists had a lot of definition for it. Among them, the cultural management expert Hofstede's definition of culture has got most widely recognition: "culture was a common psychological process of human in certain environment ". That means culture not stand for an individual feature, but a group concept. Significant features of a group different from another were values, beliefs, rules of conduct, customs and other aspects. Culture is also difficult to intuitively perceive, because these beliefs are almost innate and deep-rooted deep in people's subconscious. "Once these beliefs are challenged, people will feel the cultural impact, and consider it as a foreign invasion, then come into natural exclusion psychology. Cultural conflict is bound to be come with the heterogeneous culture concept breaks into it." [1] It was thought that cultural difference is the root of cultural conflict.

Cultural differences based on social group, because their "psychological process" and thinking formed through life, work and education for long time were totally different. One of the important factors for cultural differences is the geographical environment, and another is the cycle of accumulation because of historical traditions, education, legal system and religion and other cultural elements. Therefore, different cultural patterns were formed by the geographical division.

## **Cultural Conflict**

Cultural conflict referred to the process of confrontation and exclusion due to the dramatic differences among different culture forms or among cultural factors. It not only included the organizations conflict in the joint operation, but also included the team conflict as a result of soldiers with different cultural backgrounds.

Because of the diversification including cultural background, value orientation, goals, thinking ways and code of conduct norms for the soldiers, they naturally analyze and solve the problems they encountered according to their own values and mode of thinking. Once lacking the good communication, it was often prone to the fact that everyone acts as he pleases and goes his own way in the work. The phenomenon will inevitably come up with increasing the difficulty of organization and coordination so as to bring in the high management costs. It also can make the organizational structure not in a normal state, resulting in inefficient functioning of the organization, which even can affect the achieve degree of the operational objectives task. It can be said that cultural conflict is the biggest obstacle in the cultural management of joint combat units. Therefore, the core task of the cultural management in the joint operations was to resolve cultural conflicts and to form a new cultural integration.

## **Cultural Integration**

Cultural integration refers to the process of mutual combination and absorption among different cultural characteristics. In this process of integration, cultures transform and mold for each other, and cultural characteristics interact with each other and indispensable into the final integration [2]. This unified culture owned a strong stability, showing intelligence complementarity, knowledge complementarity and thinking complementary. Cultural integration was not only the process of resolving cultural conflicts, but also the process of cultural identity, and the latter is more important.

Cultural integration is an important way to resolve the cultural conflicts between

the joint operations. Collaborative parties must learn from and absorb foreign culture in the process of development, appropriately carry out self-transformation, win the recognition and acceptance of the other's culture, and then form a harmonious cultural exchange and dissemination, and finally achieve cultural identity. That is to say, in the different cultural groups of the joint operations, it is necessary to form a common cultural awareness, cultural sense of belonging and the value orientation as the goal so that it can be regarded as the cohesive forces of cross-cultural development cohesion and the binding agent between different cultural groups and achieve optimization for the overall combat effectiveness.

### **Analysis on the Root of Cultural Conflict in the Joint Operations**

As noted earlier in the cultural management of joint operations, cultural identification is the foundation, and cultural resolution is the key, and then cultural integration is the goal for cultural differences. Therefore, the root of cultural conflict was analyzed in order to provide some reference for the achievement of cultural integration.

So far, there were some theoretical and empirical research results for the cultural conflict, but not a unified view. According to the level and characteristics of the study on cultural conflict, drawing on the research results of cultural conflict, combined with the joint practice survey, the root of cultural conflict was also divided into individuality, values and communication.

### **Relationship between Personality and Cultural Conflict**

Personality refers to both unique mental outlook and psychological characteristic of individual which is different from another. It is the sum of individual psychological characteristics of a person shown in his lives or practical activities with relatively stable and certain tendency <sup>[3]</sup>. Everyone has his unique style which is formed based on the interaction between their own genetic basis and acquired life experience. Even solving the same problem, people will show the different attitude and approach due to the different personality. Therefore, the greater the individual differences, the less common point; the less the possibility of team members to cooperate, the more common the contradiction and differences. In the research, it was found that the army men in the joint operation more emphasized the personality than the common army men. The cultural conflict caused by personality in the joint unit were often unconsciously, and very difficult to be eliminated in a short time after formation.

### **Relationship between Values and Cultural Conflict**

Values are a series of basic beliefs for an individual. From an individual or social point of view, beliefs referred to a judgment about right and wrong for a particular type of behavior or existence state of an individual, which will strongly affect the attitude and behavior of the army men in the joint operations unit. <sup>[4]</sup> Therefore, the value can affect cultural conflict of the joint operations units as an important factor. While values are comprehensively influenced by experience, job category, economic conditions, social status, culture and other factors, the differences in values were outwardness among individuals as well as among groups. It will be easy to lead to controversy in terms of goals and beliefs. As values conflicts embodied the differences of the basic worldview, they were more widespread and difficult to be reconciled in the cultural conflicts of joint operations units.

## **Relationship between Communication and Cultural Conflict**

Communication is a process of information transmission. Low level of communication often can cause collaboration difficulties, resulting in cultural conflict. In the survey, it was found that the reasons for ineffectiveness of internal and external information transmission could be attributed to communication misunderstanding, communication disorders for cultural prejudice, communication difficulty for different cultures, and communication interruption for lacking of common language.

Communication misunderstanding is regarded as the most important reason. People often use their own cultural norms and standards as a frame of reference to evaluate somebody with another culture of thinking and behavior, so communication misunderstanding will be inevitable [5]. Cultural prejudice is also a common reason for communication disorders. Cultural prejudice was comprehensive influenced by the people's environment, and it was also a kind of mindset and preference formed by the accumulation through family training, early education, social propaganda, work experience, life experience and so on. Once people had accepted a certain cultural prejudice, they were too difficult to amend or give up. When they receive the information contradicting with their cultural prejudice, it is also very easy to lead to "partial general."

Different cultures came up with different communication styles which will lead to communication difficulty. That is to say, communication can not be carried out effectively. The lack of common language can trigger communication interruption. Because different historical, economic, political environment can create different organizational culture, which reflected in the exchange that someone from a unit generally like to discuss certain topics, and hate or taboo certain topics. When people from the different units began to communicate in joint operation, everyone should be clearly aware of the conflict so as to avoid it.

## **The Strategy to Solve the Cultural Conflict of Joint Operations**

### **Identify Cultural Differences, Recognizing their own Limitations, Respect for Cultural Differences to Run-in**

Because cultural conflicts arise from cultural differences among team members as well as individual differences under the influence of cultural differences, it is necessary to analyze and identify cultural differences. For example, the difference for army men from PLA and CAPF will not clear in their knowledge, technology, experience and so on due to similar work and living environment, and can be easy to change through learning and practice. But their values, cognition and mode of thinking were on the contrary, because these differences were closely related to the growth environment from young to old. Therefore, the command or management of joint operations must identify and distinguish both cultural differences and individual differences in order to take some targeted measures.

Firstly, it was necessary to guide people to correctly understand that any person's knowledge is limited, and there is no absolute knowledge authority. The basis of cooperation is a common knowledge among units as well as between among individual in the joint operations. Otherwise, the cooperative unit will lack a common language and had no normal communication. If the members from each unit in the joint operations can correctly understand themselves and identify their own limitations, it is conducive to carry out the mutual cooperation and communication and solve the root of conflict from the cognitive.

Secondly, to guide people facing communication barrier was in a correct way. In the joint combat units, communication barriers also exist and it was hard to make the effective communication. So team members can not understand and support for each other, which can lead to cultural conflict. In order to achieve effective communication, the correct communication concept must be established to overcome the communication barriers.

Thirdly, establish the correct communication concept, and improve the initiative to communicate consciousness. Cultural conflicts in joint units were often rooting from inadequate or inappropriate communication, which result from the lack of proper communication and active communication among members of the joint operations unit. The goal of the joint unit culture is to solve a common task. If lacking correct communication ideas and active communication awareness, the entire project research process will be result in difficult to achieve research objectives. Good communication requires several basic elements, including sincerity or superficiality, mutual trust and mutual understanding, and these elements form the foundation of the communication pyramid. Although the idea is simple, it was not easy to identify and stick for most team members, and needed to be continually enhanced and verified by practice for a long time.

Finally, strengthen communication training, improve communication skills. Most managers have recognized the importance of job skills training, but the lack of attention to training of management communication. For army men, the knowledge and skills are very rich, but they lack training and experience how to communicate effectively with others in the team. Therefore, it is an urgent task for the joint operation units to strengthen the communication training. Especially the leadership of the command layer, if they do not have some communication skills, it is difficult for qualified leadership positions.

### **Intercultural Education, Mutual Trust, and Conflict Resolution in Cultural Interventions**

Multicultural education is designed to reinforce people's ability to respond to and adapt to different cultural traditions. It can also promote communication and understanding among people with different cultural backgrounds, including cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity training, language learning, management for cross-cultural communication and conflict, and regional environmental modeling.

In the experience of successful cultural integration, a very important aspect is the mutual trust between the command or command as well as between command and base course. If there is misunderstanding and suspicion because of lacking of mutual understanding and trust, it will inevitably come up alienation and distance, resulting in inefficient management, formation of contradictions and conflicts, and even failure.

Trust is a complex social and psychological phenomenon, which generally refers to the positive expectations for words, behavior and commitment of a person. Team cohesion is closely related with trust, which can enhance team cohesion and reduce conflict so that promote team performance. In the survey, it is found that good trust play a key role in reducing cultural conflicts for three aspects: high trust is conducive to information sharing and sincere cooperation among team members, thus effectively stimulating dissent. In the case of high trust, sense of security for team members was stronger, they will be less worried about colleagues from the negative emotions or attacks, and they can provide more constructive feedback based on the views of colleagues; high trust among members of the team will reduce the possibility of its attribution, that is to say if members do not trust each other, they might tend to view

colleagues' dissent as motivated or deliberately provocative. In fact, at all stages of the cultural work process, the level of team trust affects the type and level of cultural conflict. Therefore, multi-cultural education, enhance the trust between numbers is the inevitable way to resolve the conflict.

### **Establishment of Common Values, Shape the Common Culture, in the Cultural Remodeling to Enhance Combat Effectiveness**

Through the identification of cultural differences and cross-cultural education, army men have improved their ability to identify and adapt to culture. Although owning different cultural backgrounds, they also have some exchanges in the process of education. On the basis, new common values and a strong culture can be established in accordance with the environmental requirements and the principles of organizational strategy development so as to reduce cultural conflicts. Everyone can combine his thoughts and actions with the organization's mission and purpose, and make the combination of the team more closely and enhance combat effectiveness.

Organizational values are the basic beliefs, general view points and guidelines to judge something and guide them. In the effective construction, the core organizational values should be pay attention to some aspects: army men of joint operations really believe in it; the highest goal (organizational vision) of the party and army were in step with it; The command values of society was adapt to it; it reflected the values of leadership and combine with the personal values of the joint operations. The research confirms that organizational values that meet the above points often lead to a stronger organizational culture and stronger combat effectiveness.

In addition, the common values need establish a reasonable performance evaluation system and an effective incentive mechanism to be implemented after it was proposed. The evaluation system is used to evaluate whether the behavior meet the requirements of the values; the incentive mechanism is used to give positive incentives to the people who meet the requirements, and negative incentives to contrary.

### **Conclusion**

The study on cultural conflict and integration of joint operations belongs to a relatively new subject with a high research value, and it was divided with three stages as the basic strategy to solve cultural conflicts, the identification of cultural differences and awareness of their own limitations, cross-cultural training and enhancing mutual trust in resolving cultural conflict, and the establishment of common values with shaping the common culture. Finally, the combat effectiveness was high enhanced in the cultural remodeling.

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