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Anne MURRAY*

**Introduction to special section on
*Organizational Challenges in the Knowledge Society***

I am pleased to have been asked to serve in the role of guest editor for this special section of the journal. I was honored to have been awarded a Senior Fulbright Scholar Fellowship to teach and work in Bucharest, Romania for the academic year 2012-2013. My host university, Școala Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative, allowed me the enviable opportunity to have significant autonomy in my teaching and participation in other scholarly activities. As a result I learned certainly as much as I taught any of the graduate students in my classes. I am someone who has transformed my career several times, from clinical to consulting psychologist and from organizational consultant to academician. Always, people and their interactions with one another have been at the core of my interest.

When those of us in the field of organizational behavior identify ourselves as working in the “human side of business”, cynical receivers of that comment scoff at the existence of a “human side” to business. Surely the preponderance of emphasis on financial gain and the ‘bottom line’ suggests that often the financial accounting carries more weight than attention to the people who do the work in organizations. And yet, as the articles in this special section – and indeed the majority of articles in all journals devoted to organizational behavior – indicate, there is great need to attend to the people who communicate, learn, share knowledge and skill, emote, plan, and are or are not engaged in the business of the organization.

Any of the readers of this journal are well familiar with the history of human collectives – from agriculture/craft to industrialization to knowledge management. Readers are aware also of the transition in organizational emphasis from mechanistic, authoritative structures to more organic, participative structures. This evolution is certainly evident in the explosion of journal articles in the past decade on the topics of knowledge management, sustainability, transformational leadership and a host of other buzz words – all of which let us know we are talking about complex human interactions and complex systems of production. Despite our knowledge, schools of business “continue to treat the workplace and world as clockwork mechanisms too for the purpose of converting resources into shareholder value”. (Engdahl, 2005) And yet, as Engdahl impressively demonstrates, we do this 21st century a great disservice to ignore what we are learning and teaching.

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The field of Organizational Behavior (OB) has been built on human sciences of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. We know that people and their emotions, motivations, prejudices, skills, temperaments, experiences, attitudes, fears, etc. are the key components of our organizations. The articles in this special section each take a different approach to the topic of furthering our understanding of OB in a knowledge economy, but all address the core need to understand culture and behavioral principles of people. This common core of understanding organizations gets us back to attending to the people who work there.

Fellows, Goedde, & Schwichten (this issue) provide much in the way of overview material, summarizing a number of key contributions to the field. At times the language in the article is sufficiently esoteric and/or jargon-filled as to be a barrier to comprehension, but underlying information is worth the effort of slogging through. Fundamental to 21st century globalization is the contributing value of cultural intelligence and sensitivity.

Leovaridis & Cismaru (this issue) also provide an excellent review, with specific emphasis on the topics of organizational culture and climate. Their careful progression from historical overview to current results provides a strong foundation for continued empirical study, as they plan.

Wozniak's contribution (this issue) is the most focused of the three and yet still offers insights into the arena of corporate social responsibility (CSR), a concept unimagined by most a generation ago. As Wozniak's research demonstrates, understanding the contribution of CSR to the effective functioning of organizations is critical for continued growth and development.

Despite various claims that 'corporations are people' (James, Cosgrove & Hulsart, 2012; Totenberg, 2014), the preponderance of evidence suggests that approach is fallacious, especially as concerns OB. In the United States there has been significant the backlash to the *Citizens United* Supreme Court ruling-labeling corporations as 'people' for certain intents and purposes. (Totenberg, 2014) The vast research cited in only the articles in this issue demonstrates the necessary attention that must be paid to human characteristics of employees. However, we human beings have difficulty distinguishing between an organization as a legal/financial entity and the individual humans who are employees of that organization. To the extent we can learn to embrace the wholeness of people and what they bring into our organizations, to the extent we can internalize the strong interdependency of human characteristics with organizational processes and systems, to the extent we can continue to learn and to share our knowledge – only then can we develop effective, efficient, and human organizations.

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What's your CQ? A thought leadership exploration of cultural intelligence in contemporary institutions of higher learning

Abstract

Globalizations' impacts continue to permeate the present rhetorical moment in time. Impacts are evidenced in contemporary organizations across workforce internationalization, expanding market reach, and globalized competition. Subsequently, parallel increases in demand for individuals with intercultural competence manifest. Concurrently, universities face equitable attention provision to a tripartite mission of (a) knowledge creation, (b) student learning, and (c) the social charter. Cultural competencies' critical role in contemporary organizations is clearly evidenced. The current thought leadership article explores organizational dynamics and influence variables including identity, transformational leadership, and organizational communication within institutions of higher education. The authors propose Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as an ideological platform to engage universities, business organizations, and students in meeting cultural competence development while remaining consistent with organizational business, academic, and social charter missions.

Keywords: Organizational Communication, Cultural Intelligence, Transformational Leadership, Identity, Globalization.

Identify your limitations. Turn them into advantages. Adapt.
(Veach & Kirsch, 2012)

1. Introduction

From inception, organizations form to achieve a specific goal (e.g., provide a commodity or service). These organizations are comprised of individuals who facilitate the necessary production in order to achieve the organization's goal. Throughout this process, the organization and associated stakeholders (e.g., employees; stockholders; customers) are metaphorically consolidated into a mass audience – a machine operating as one unit rather than a grouping of individual living organisms. Movement through the business life cycle stages fuel continuous examination of performance indicators and heighten focus on the organizations' goals while rhetorically consolidating the resources necessary for continued operation.

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In this mechanical view of organizations, dysfunctional behavior is deemed a symptom when it detracts from or inhibits progress toward organizational goal attainment (Kahn, 2012). Comparable with atypical functioning of a machine, these dysfunctions are symptomatic of a mechanical problem. In organizations, as with a machine, an expert (e.g., leaders; consultants) confirms the existence of the symptom, gauges the relevance of the symptom to overall performance, and recommends resolutions (e.g., repairs) to ensure continued functionality.

Inherent to this perspective is the oppressive state of being that manifests from a context devoid of a core factor – human beings are not machines and mechanically based (process driven solutions) examination fails to integrate individuality and associated variance. Rather, acknowledgement of each individual's identity provides a framework of exploration to guide the co-construction of solutions within the current reality.

The contemporary marketplace concurrently impacts and is impacted by a spectrum of influence variables that create an interdependent web across organizational contexts. Factors such as globalization, multiculturalism, and technological advancement coalesce to shape the context the organizational machine exists within. As the context metamorphoses organizations and individuals engage in a delicate interplay of commitment to authenticity and fluidity to sustain and thrive.

The perpetual flexibility required is paradoxical when a mechanistic view (of both organizations and individuals) is entrenched. The perception of a machine as a fixed entity may fail to reflect the need for and capacity of organizations to evolve. In this regard, evolving is a choice. Survival is not mandatory. Recognizing a distinction between instinctive response (e.g., biological survival instinct) and thriving (e.g., growing, developing) harmoniously in a context highlights the transposition of organizations as a machine (e.g., inorganic) to an organic entity. The role duality becomes pronounced when organizations or individuals identify a skill (tool) necessary to fuel sustainability. For example, as internationalization permeates organizational contexts increased focus on cultural competence, cross cultural communicative prowess, and intercultural experiences/immersion surface as key components in the metaphorical organizational toolbox.

The fundamental deficiency of this viewpoint/approach, however, is the mechanistic view. If individuals are trained to identify cultural indicators (e.g., behavior; appropriate verbal or nonverbal communicative style) then successful interaction will manifest. Learning, or perhaps memorization of scripts, occurs. Yet, is growth and development occurring as well? Why do some organizations and individuals thrive while others dissipate?

Higher education institutions are in the nexus of the paradox. By extension, Universities reflect an optimal specimen to scrutinize/diagnose/diagnostics and serve the role of influencer and influenced. The current paper argues the inorganic machine – organic entity paradox is influenced by three key variables including identity, leadership, and globalization.

The current thought leadership manuscript explores institutions of higher education through the theoretical lens of Systems Thinking (Conrad & Poole, 2012). Three key influence variables – globalization, identity, and transformational leadership – are examined as they relate to Universities' tripartite mission fulfillment. The authors propose Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as an ideological platform to engage universities, business organizations, and students in meeting cultural competence development while remaining consistent with organizational business, academic, and social charter missions.