Organisational Culture and Project Partnering performance

The influence of the organisational culture of an architect and contractor on project partnering performance with design and build contracts.

**Problem statement**

The traditional, confrontational and opportunistic culture that is rooted in the construction industry is subjected to a change towards a more collaborative culture (Deloitte, Ibr et al. 2008). This change causes problems in the implementation of project partnering, due to cultural clashes between organisations (2005a: 1082) and cultural clashes between wider organisational attributes and a project-based team (Brensen and Marshall 2000b: 830; Brensen and Marshall 2002: 504). Incompatible organisational cultures of the different companies inhibits the forming of successful project partnering teams (Brensen and Marshall 2000a; Kumaraswamy, Ling et al. 2005a) (Figure 1). The chance of cultural clashes between architect and contractor is larger, due to the varying organisational cultures (Ankrah and Langford 2005: 602). To support the new collaborative culture a change in the culture of the construction industry is necessary. Not every contractor and architect has generated the change towards this more collaborative culture yet. Therefore it is necessary to assess the organisational cultures of companies within the construction industry in order to identify their partnering ability (Crane, Felder et al. 1997: 58) and to form successful project partnering teams. Although the relationship between organisational culture and project partnering performance is implied, the exact impact of organisational culture on the contractor and the architect regarding project partnering performance, is unclear.

**Objective**

The focus of the research is on the theory and its purpose is to further explore the theory (Van der Voort 1998: 10). It should explain a possible relationship between the variables: organisational culture and project partnering. The research should identify what impact the variables of organisational culture have on the variables of project partnering. Whether these variables are correlated will not be determined. The practical implications for the research can be of interest for the contractor and architect due to the varying organisational cultures. Whether these variables are correlated will not be determined. The practical implications for the research can be of interest for the contractor and architect due to the varying organisational cultures (Ankrah and Langford 2005: 602). To support the new collaborative culture a change in the culture of the construction industry is necessary. Not every contractor and architect has generated the change towards this more collaborative culture yet. Therefore it is necessary to assess the organisational cultures of companies within the construction industry in order to identify their partnering ability (Crane, Felder et al. 1997: 58) and to form successful project partnering teams. Although the relationship between organisational culture and project partnering performance is implied, the exact impact of organisational culture on the contractor and the architect regarding project partnering performance, is unclear.

**Main Research Question**

What influence does the organisational culture of an architect and a contractor have on the project partnering performance within design and building contracts?

Figure 1 conceptual model of problem definition

Figure 2 Theoretical framework for proposition 1

Figure 3 Theoretical framework for proposition 2

Figure 4 Theoretical framework for proposition 3

Figure 5 Theoretical framework for proposition 4

**Conclusion**

The influence of the organisational culture of the architect on project partnering performance

In both case studies the basic assumption, integral design of the architect, indicated a positive influence on the win-win attitude in the construction projects. In addition to this, the basic assumption, integral design, was provided as an indicator for a positive influence on mutual trust in the case study De Brug and effective communication in the case study BioPartner Accelerator. Due to the similarity in the case studies and the fact that the basic assumption was provided as an indicator for a positive influence on the project partnering variables twice, proposition one (P1) can be formulated. Figure 2 shows the representation of the proposition. The grey marked boxes reflect the similarities between the two case studies. In both case studies the basic assumption, functional and technical concept design, indicated a positive influence on mutual trust and in the case study De Brug on long term commitment. As the basic assumption was provided as an indicator for a positive influence on project partnering variables twice, proposition two (P2) can be formulated Figure 3 is the illustration of the proposition.

The influence of the organisational culture of the architect and contractor on the project partnering performance

In both case studies, the flat organisational structure of the architect and the contractor, indicated a positive influence on the effective communication in the construction projects. Due to the similarity in both cases, proposition three (P3) can be formulated. Figure 4 reflects the visual representation of the proposition. In both case studies the basic assumption, repeated collaboration with the same partners by the architect and the contractor, indicated a positive influence on the mutual trust in the construction projects. Furthermore, the basic assumption, repeated collaboration with the same partners, was provided as an indicator for a positive influence on a win-win attitude and a conflict-resolution strategy in the case study BioPartner Accelerator. Due to the similarity in both cases and the fact that the basic assumption was provided as an indicator for a positive influence on project partnering variables twice, proposition four (P4) can be formulated. Figure 5 represents the illustration of the proposition.