

Rationale for Adoption of Joint Consultative Council / Employees' Council by Sri Lankan Organizations: A Qualitative Research

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Abstract

Joint Consultative Council (JCC)/ Employees' Council (EC) is a widely employed, but less studied employee voice representation mechanism in many Sri Lankan enterprises, including the Board of Investment (BOI) enterprises. This paper explores the forces or rationale for the adoption of JCC/EC in Sri Lankan organizations, using the Institutional Theory as a theoretical lens. Based in the Interpretivism paradigm, the researchers have used qualitative methodology, in which, multiple case study research strategy and purposive sampling method were employed in selecting the organizations and respondents respectively. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were employed as data collection methods. Exploration into forces or reasons that led to the introduction of JCC/EC in organizations revealed that, identification of one force or rational is impossible. The forces were found to be both external to the organization and internal to the organization. Force from key customers, pressure of BOI, main decision makers' exposure in superior practices (Japanese practices), parental organizations' pressure were identified as external forces which led to adoption of JCC/EC by management of organizations that were studied. In order to be attentive to employee problems by filling a vacuum of a forum to redress sectional and common grievances, and to create a bridge that enable top management accessing employees' version of reality, were the internal urgencies or forces of management which lend to formations of JCC/EC. Thus, it was found out that all the three institutional isomorphism exist in connection to the introduction of JCC/EC in to organizations. Most importantly, the researchers identified a distinctive force, which is the combined pressure from external unionists and internal employees to form trade union, that does not come under Coercive, Normative and Mimetic isomorphism as explained in the Institutional Theory. The researchers labeled this distinctive force as 'Counteract Isomorphism'. Hence, in

conclusion it can be stated that organizations adopt JCC/EC practice not merely to secure mutual co-operation of employees and provide them with empowerment and voice, as expected by BOI. Rather, organizations initiate JCC/EC with various self-centered reasons as well as due to various external pressures.

Keywords: Joint Consultative Council (JCC), Employees' Council (EC), Isomorphism