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## **THE SHARED CULTURE OF THE ASEAN COMMUNITY DECREASING POWER DISTANCE AND UPLIFTING THE CITIZENS' QUALITY OF LIFE**

### **Abstract:**

Organizational cultural theorists suggest that culture is the critical factor of the facts, derived from social values given as socially constructed realities. This research paper aimed to explore ASEAN citizens' perceived shared culture on the realm of decreasing power distance and uplifting the citizens' quality of life. It is conducted in order to investigate the following questions: (a) what level of power distance that ASEAN citizens in four countries (Brunei, Singapore, Philippines, and Thailand) perceived and why they do perceive like that by testing Hofstede and Hofstede's proposal (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, Jittaruttha, 2011) of power distance at three levels: 1) general level of social norms, 2) workplace relationships level, and 3) political or state relationships level, (b) what level of quality of life that ASEAN citizens in four countries perceived and why they do perceive like that by testing those concepts of quality of life in ten dimensions (Haq, 1990; UN, 1995; White, 2007; Helliwell, Layard, Sachs, 2012; UN, 2015; UNDP, 2015) (c) what key success factors lead to the shared culture of the ASEAN community, which is decreasing power distance and uplifting the citizens' quality of life. The methodology employed in this research is mixed methods conducted by analyzing academic works as well as a field survey. The article postulates that the perceived shared culture of 'power distance' of 2,880 people in four countries was low at three levels, excepts in Philippines that culture of 'power distance' was moderate at general level (mean 2.78). As for the perceived shared culture of 'quality of life' in four countries was moderate level in whole but slightly different. Brunei is the first order of quality of life measurement and Philippines is the first one of equality measurement. The conclusion confirms that participative culture is the shared culture of the ASEAN community, which is decreasing power distance and uplifting the citizens' quality of life. It also offers that there will be more participative culture if these four political culture indicators are strongly promoted: (1) cultural indicators; small power distance, (2) historical sociology indicators; reduction of obedience, freedom of decision, (3) organizational society indicators; participation, decentralization, and (4) political economy indicators; accountability, transparency. The recommendations give support to Hofstede's power distance concept, and that of House (2004) and Robbins (2004). It highlights that participative culture of ASEAN community will be sustained by reducing inequality from nepotism, patronage or spoil system and eliminating corruption.

### **Keywords:**

power distance, inequality, citizens' quality of life