

# **HUMAN BASIC INSTINCT ACCOMMODATION AT WORKPLACE TO RETAIN EMPLOYEES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK RELATED TO DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE IN INDONESIAN'S INSTITUTION**

Evi Thelia Sari\*

## **ABSTRACT**

To retain the employees to work in company in Indonesian's institution then to reduce and save some recruitment costs the company may try to listen and understand the dimension of cultures among its employees and their nature instincts to be accommodated well by the company. Once the company is able to accommodate the nature instincts, the employees will be retained because they are satisfied by the treatment from the company. The purpose of this study is to discuss how the human basic instincts accommodation will be able to retain employees related to dimensions of cultural by Hofstede's theory.

**Key Words:** Human instinct, employee retaining, cultural dimensions

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

While today, the employees are no longer being resources but more over as the assets of company. Meanwhile, it is not easy to manage employees with their different culture backgrounds and working motivations. However, to come up with the differences occurred among the employees, the company should understand what the general situations of employees as the human.

Generally, the employees, as human, have the similar nature instinct which must be understood and accommodated to ease the management. Fear, fear, anxiety, anger and frustration, depression, loneliness and boredom, and guilt are the general nature instincts of employees while they have to survive in their workplace whatever happened. If the company can accommodate them well, then for sure, the satisfaction of employees to work is increasing. Moreover, the work

---

\* Evi Thelia Sari is lecturer at STIE Mahardhika Surabaya

performance will also be affected positively when the employees are satisfied to work.

It's very important to satisfy the employees a company has because the cost to recruit, train and manage the employees are very expensive. If a company can retain their valuable the employees, as assets, it can get more profit and advantages from this human resource management issues. The ability to retain employees today not only come from company's ability to give them rewards, bonuses and opportunities, but also from how the company treats the employees and touch their deep expectations of working in the company.

However, understanding the employees motivation and deep expectations cannot be apart of understanding their basic nature instinct accommodation. These nature instincts are somewhat related to the cultural dimensions which are brought by the employees. In the case of cultural dimensions, the component that might be able to identify their human nature instinct in workplace are: Power distance, [Individualism](#) vs. [collectivism](#), [Uncertainty](#), avoidance index, [Masculinity](#) vs. [femininity](#), [Long term orientation](#) vs. short term orientation.

The cultural dimensions mentioned before are different regarding the macro culture of the employees, for example: Western employees will have different cultural dimension continuum than Eastern employees, then the nature instincts of both employee groups are quietly different in their definitions, although the component of nature instincts are still the same.

This paper is actually a conceptual framework about how the accommodation of human nature instincts of employees based on their cultural

dimensions will retain them to keep working at the company especially among Indonesian's institutions which involved in the high context culture as the macro culture of Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Human Nature Instincts Accommodation, Employees retaining, Cultural Dimensions

### **Objective**

The purpose of this study is to discuss how the human basic instincts accommodation consists of: fear, anxiety, anger and frustration, depression, loneliness and boredom, and guilt at workplace will be able to retain employees related to dimensions of cultural by Hofstede's theory, Power distance, [Individualism](#) vs Collectivism, [Uncertainty](#) avoidance, [Masculinity](#) vs Femininity, and [Long term orientation](#)

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are three main concepts and theories used in this article: human basic instinct, employee retaining and culture dimensions.

### ***Human Basic Instinct***

The literatures about human basic/nature instinct are various. But in this article we try to enlarge a review of 6 Types of Natural Instincts posted by Courtney Siegel (2011) in Information courtesy of the U.S. Army Survival Manual as cited from the website: <http://news.discovery.com/adventure/survival/6-types-of-natural-instincts.htm>.

The six types written in the article are fear, anxiety, anger and frustration, depression, loneliness and boredom, and guilt.

#### 1. Fear

Fear is defined as our emotional response to dangerous circumstances that we believe not only have the potential to cause death, injury or illness, but also the threat to one's emotional and mental well-being can generate fear as well. Fear can have either a positive function if it encourages someone to be cautious in situations where recklessness could result in injury or negative one as immobilize a person to become so frightened that he fails to perform activities essential for survival. Most of us will have some degree of fear when placed in unfamiliar surroundings under adverse conditions.

#### 2. Anxiety

This instinct is associated with fear because it is natural for us to experience anxiety. Anxiety can be an uneasy, apprehensive feeling we get when faced with dangerous situations (physical, mental and emotional). The person who is in a survival setting reduces his anxiety by performing those tasks that will ensure his coming through the ordeal alive. As he reduces his anxiety, the person is also bringing under control the source of that anxiety-his fears. So, in this scene anxiety is good; however, anxiety can also have a devastating impact when it overwhelms a person to the point where he becomes easily confused and has difficulty thinking.

### 3. Anger and Frustration

The feeling such as frustration arises when a person is continually upset in his attempts to reach a goal. To achieve the goal of survival, a person must complete some tasks with minimal resources. Frustration and anger encourage impulsive reactions, irrational behavior, poorly thought-out decisions and, in some instances, an “I quit” attitude (people sometimes avoid doing something they can’t master). If the person can overcome the emotional intensity associated with anger and frustration, he can productively answer the challenges of survival. If not, he can waste much energy in activities that do little to further either his chances of survival or the chances of those around him.

### 4. Depression

Depression is closely linked with frustration and anger which comes from the frustrated person as he fails to reach his goals. If the anger does not help the person to succeed, then the frustration level goes even higher. Depression is an expression of this hopeless, helpless feeling. A destructive cycle between anger and frustration continues until the person becomes worn down-physically, emotionally and mentally. When a person reaches this point, he starts to give up and his focus shifts from “What can I do” to “There is nothing I can do.”

### 5. Loneliness and Boredom

Since humans are social animals, it means we enjoy the company of others. Loneliness and boredom can bring to the surface qualities people thought only others had that can be another source of depression.

## 6. Guilt

It is not uncommon for survivors to feel guilty about being spared from death or failure while others were not. If it is used in a positive way, it can encourage people to try harder to survive with the belief they were allowed to live for some greater purpose in life.

### ***Employee Retaining***

Nowadays, employees are no longer considered as resources, but assets. It's caused by the high cost of recruitment, complicated procedures in recruiting and the rare skills might be owned by employees which are needed by the company. However, company should try to retain the current employees, train them to improve their capabilities and give them the appropriate rewards.

Based on the research of Umer (2011), career development, supervisor support, work environment and work-life balance are the variables of the employee retention. While the result of his study showed that the result of this study shows that these variables have strong impact on employee retention (Umer, 2011). However, those variables will be more effective when they can meet the ideas of employees in doing their daily tasks at work.

Employee retention ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee\\_retention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_retention)) refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees. Employee retention can be represented by a simple statistic (for example, a retention rate of 80% usually indicates that an organization kept 80% of its employees in a given period). However, many consider employee retention as relating to the efforts by

which employers attempt to retain employees in their workforce. In this sense, retention becomes the strategies rather than the outcome.

Some of the obvious values of having an Employee Retention Model stated by Howatt ([www.howatthrconsulting.com](http://www.howatthrconsulting.com)) are:

1. Increased ability to find out how to increase employee satisfaction.
2. Increased employee satisfaction will increase employee retention.
3. Reduced costs of recruiting.
4. Increased customer service and profits.
5. Keeps the talent pool deeper. The very talented are less likely to be motivated to leave just for money when the workplace meets their needs and they see a positive culture.
6. Increased loyalty in employees when they know the employer is interested in their perceptions and values.
7. Increased company effectiveness. When implementing employee retention programs, companies discover their employees have many valuable suggestions to increase efficiency.
8. Provides a venue to offer staff valuable training to help them balance work and home to reduce their stress levels.
9. Enhanced communications in the workplace
10. Helps the leader of the organization see if employees have bought into their vision, and if not, what concerns and issues must be addressed. Knowledge is power and sometimes very helpful when employees are

given knowledge of what is happening and why so they feel empowered. Knowledge helps prevent hallucinating the worst.

11. Increased clarity in the workplace. The business is a living process, and it is not good enough to adhere to a static set of goals; employees need to know the day-to-day changes in direction. It is important that employees have a process where they are obtaining clarity on a daily basis (high priorities, accountability, strategies to overcome barriers, conflicts with others need to be resolved, leadership needs to be adjusted to meet the needs of the day, daily evaluations of communication and ways to improve both inter and intra-communication). This is the legacy employee retention models want to leave behind: the ability to obtain clarity.
12. Increased team building and self-leadership, so more employees can take responsibility for themselves and work more effectively as part of a team.

### ***Dimensions of Culture***

The situation within organization cannot be separated from the issues of personal and organization cultures. The effects of personal cultures toward the organization culture are as shown as Figure below.



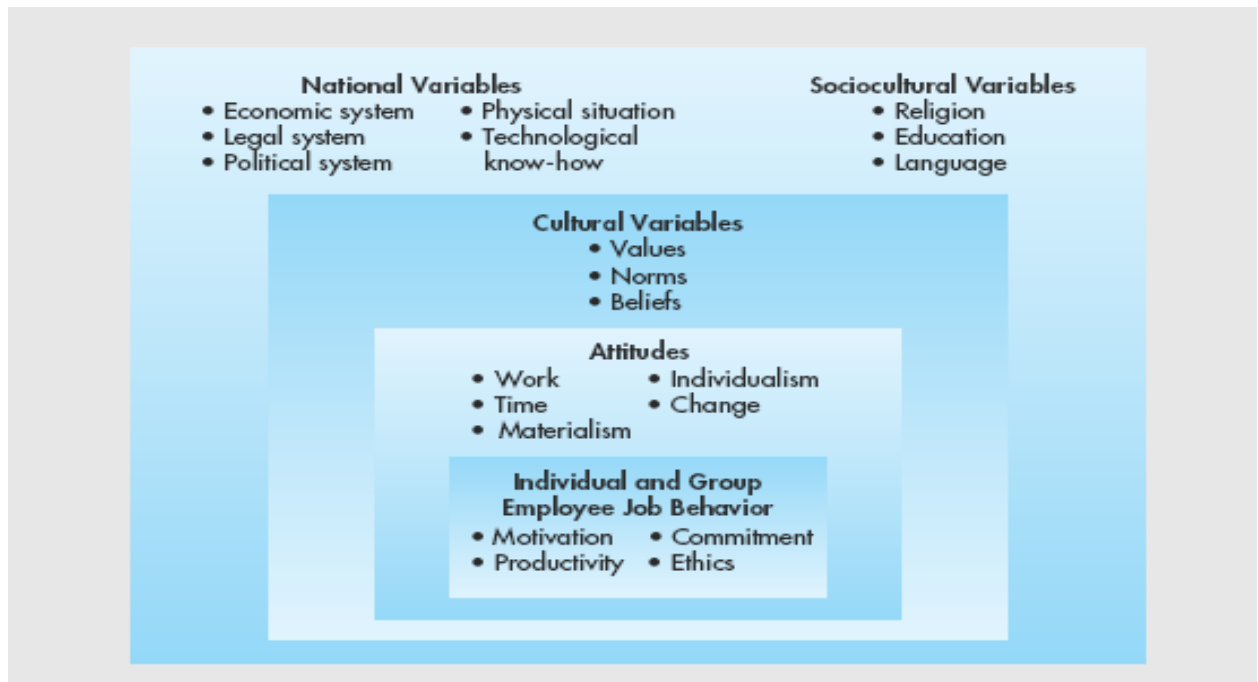


Figure 1. Culture and Its Effects on Organizations

Source: Deresky, 2008

There are differences in the behavior of individuals and groups within that organization result from the societal, or sociocultural, variables of the culture, such as religion and language, in addition to prevailing national variables, such as economic, legal, and political factors. National and sociocultural variables thus provide the context for the development and perpetuation of cultural variables which determine basic attitudes toward work, time, materialism, individualism, and change. Those attitudes affect an individual's motivation and expectations regarding work and group relations, and they ultimately affect the outcomes that can be expected from that individual as well. (Deresky, 2008).

People are becoming more self-segregated and distancing themselves, socially and physically, from groups that exhibit different cultural traits, which can encompass political views, religious beliefs, and lifestyle choices. The

uncertainty resulting from the rapidly changing world order and upheaval of traditional social structures is creating a high degree of uncertainty among many people. In reaction to these changes many millions of people believe that their best haven of certainty and security is a group based on ethnic similarity, common faith, economic interest, or political like-mindedness. In other words, as people struggle to adapt to the dynamics of modern social life, identity is becoming an important factor in how they live their lives and with whom they associate. (Samovar, et al., 2007).

To get more understanding on how the culture can influence the stability and work in business and within organization, this paper is then linking to the five dimensions by Hofstede (1984) is remaining widely used in many domains of human social life, and particularly in the field of business. Practical applications were developed almost immediately. In fact, when it comes to business, promoting cultural sensitivity will help people work more effectively when interacting with people from other countries, and will participate to make sure transactions are successful. The five dimensions used in this paper are:

- a. Power distance index (PDI): "Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally." Cultures that endorse low power distance expect and accept power relations that are more consultative or democratic.
- b. [Individualism](#) (IDV) vs. [collectivism](#): "The degree to which individuals are integrated into groups". In individualistic societies, the stress is put on

personal achievements and individual rights. People are expected to stand up for themselves and their immediate family, and to choose their own affiliations. In contrast, in collectivist societies, individuals act predominantly as members of a lifelong and cohesive group or organization (note: "The word collectivism in this sense has no political meaning: it refers to the group, not to the state"). People have large [extended families](#), which are used as a protection in exchange for unquestioning [loyalty](#).

- c. [Uncertainty](#) avoidance index (UAI): "a society's tolerance for uncertainty and [ambiguity](#)". It reflects the extent to which members of a society attempt to cope with [anxiety](#) by minimizing uncertainty. People in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance tend to be more [emotional](#). They try to minimize the occurrence of unknown and unusual circumstances and to proceed with careful [changes](#) step by step planning and by implementing [rules](#), laws and regulations. In contrast, low uncertainty avoidance cultures accept and feel comfortable in unstructured situations or changeable environments and try to have as few rules as possible. People in these cultures tend to be more [pragmatic](#), they are more tolerant of change.
- d. [Masculinity](#) (MAS), vs. [femininity](#): "The distribution of emotional roles between the [genders](#)". Masculine cultures' values are [competitiveness](#), [assertiveness](#), [materialism](#), ambition and power, whereas feminine cultures place more value on [relationships](#) and [quality of life](#). In masculine cultures, the differences between gender roles are more dramatic and less

fluid than in feminine cultures where men and women have the same values emphasizing modesty and caring. As a result of the taboo on sexuality in many cultures, particularly masculine ones, and because of the obvious gender generalizations implied by Hofstede's terminology, this dimension is often renamed by users of Hofstede's work, e.g. to Quantity of Life vs. Quality of Life.

- e. [Long term orientation](#) (LTO), vs. short term orientation: First called "Confucian dynamism", it describes societies' [time horizon](#). Long term oriented societies attach more importance to the future. They foster [pragmatic values](#) oriented towards [rewards](#), including persistence, saving and capacity for adaptation. In short term oriented societies, values promoted are related to the past and the present, including steadiness, respect for tradition, preservation of one's face, [reciprocation](#) and fulfilling [social obligations](#).

### 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

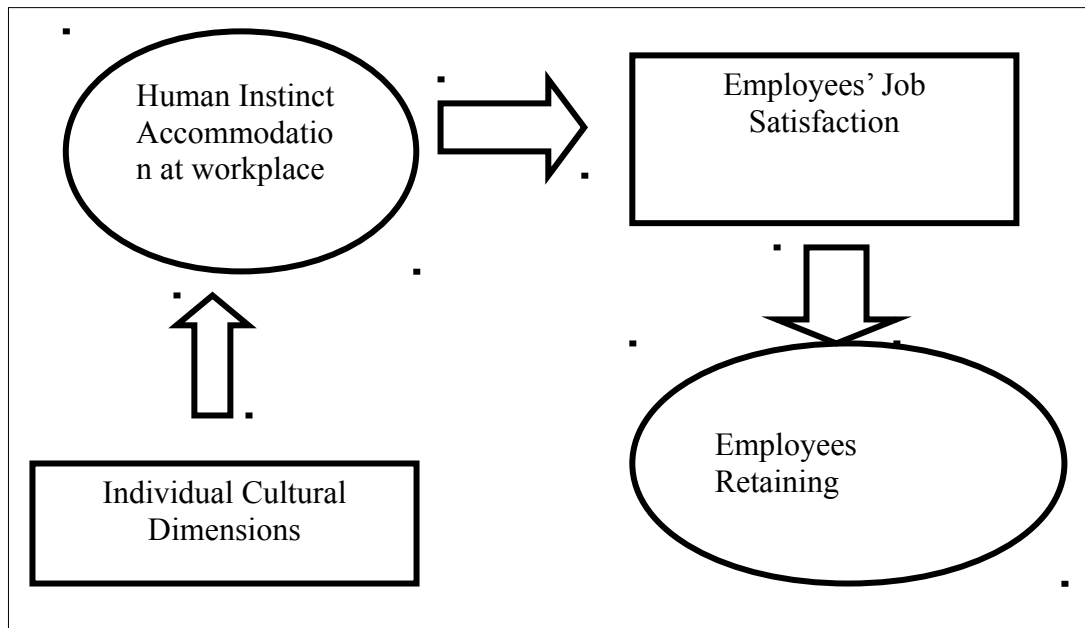


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Source: The author

The conceptual Framework shows that human instinct accommodation at workplace in this paper are based on how cultural dimensions as shown in Hofstede's theory influence the human nature instincts. The accommodation of human nature instincts will result in employees job satisfaction and will create their retention to work in the same company.

### 4. DISCUSSION

Based on Hofstede's theory, Indonesian can be defined as below

#### 1. High power distance

Indonesian is highly dependent on hierarchy, has unequal rights between power holders and non power holders, superiors in-accessible, leaders are

directive, management controls and delegates. Power is centralized and managers count on the obedience of their team members. Employees mostly expect to be told what to do and when. Control is required while managers are respected for their positions. Communication usually is indirect and hides negative feedback. High Power Distance also means that Indonesian co-workers would expect to be clearly directed by the boss. (<http://geert-hofstede.com/indonesia.html>).

## **2. Collectivism than individualism**

Indonesian has a high preference for a strongly defined social framework in which individuals are expected to conform to the ideals of the society and the in-groups to which they belong. (<http://geert-hofstede.com/indonesia.html>).

## **3. More in Femininity than masculine**

Indonesia is more feminine means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. In Indonesia status and visible symbols of success are important but it is not always material gain that brings motivation. The focus in workplace for feminine country, like Indonesia is “working in order to live”, managers strive for consensus, people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favored. (<http://geert-hofstede.com/indonesia.html>).

#### **4. Uncertainty avoidance**

Indonesia on this dimension and thus has a medium low preference for avoiding uncertainty it means that there is a strong preference in Indonesia toward the Javanese culture of separation of internal self from external self. When a person is upset, it is habitual for the Indonesian not to show negative emotion or anger externally. They will keep smiling and be polite, no matter how angry they are inside. This also means that maintaining work place and relationship harmony is very important in Indonesia, and no one wishes to be the transmitter of bad or negative news or feedback. (<http://geert-hofstede.com/indonesia.html>).

#### **5. Long term orientation**

The long term orientation dimension is closely related to the teachings of Confucius and can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue (<http://geert-hofstede.com/indonesia.html>). Indonesia is not really clear on this dimension, but since the dealing with society is based on Confucius, Indonesian then more short term orientation, whose values promoted are related to the past and the present, including steadiness, respect for tradition, preservation of one's face, [reciprocation](#) and fulfilling [social obligations](#).

Since the human nature instincts parameters are correlated to the situation in work place, the parameter "Fear" in this paper refers to "fear of being fired/demoted", anxiety in this paper refers to "process of taking a leave", Anger and Frustration will refer to "how the work under super ordinate/boss", depression in this paper refers more on the workload, loneliness and boredom are

about the employees will be able to have good communication especially informal communication and how the company provides the facilities to release the employees from loneliness and boredom and the last is guilt, which in this paper is more about how an employee will feel after doing something inappropriate either in their own accord or under pressure of super ordinate/boss.

#### **a. Fear**

Regarding the conceptual framework, the fear in this paper is about fear of being fired/demoted/termination. Then based on the Hofstede's theory, although Indonesian has a medium low preference for avoiding uncertainty it means that when a person is upset due to the uncertainty, they will keep smiling and be polite, no matter how angry they are inside. This also means that maintaining work place and relationship harmony is very important in Indonesia, and no one wishes to be the transmitter of bad or negative news or feedback. But however, it depends on how they can come up with the situation and how the company minimizes the uncertainties to reduce the individual's internal conflict that might be results in uncomfortable situation, causes the decrease of performance than in the last, after the employee does not longer persist, he quits the job.

#### **b. Anxiety**

The anxiety felt by employees in this paper is more on about taking a leave for some personal reasons. Example: leave for documents arrangements (KTP/SIM, etc), sickness of family member, pregnancy and so on. However, most



companies in Indonesia accommodate this nature instinct in a company procedure. So, whatever the position in company, all employees must follow the regulation.

It is also applied to other issues about anxiety within the company, especially about the procedures, the standards (example: salary standards) and other facilities provided by the company.

The more strict the standards, the less anxiety the employees feel towards the workplace environment. When everything is set in standards, the employees will work better and do not need to waste time to worry, anxiety and even get confused. More companies in Indonesia set and follow the standards set by governments for example about labor law, labor union insurance and safety programs.

### **c. Anger and Frustration**

The anger and frustration of employees in workplace are commonly caused by the conflict against others. In this paper, anger and frustrations, among Indonesians in their workplace are surprisingly not explicitly shown. Collectivism and femininity of the Indonesian people are correlated to this idea. Even though, an employee gets angry and frustrated because of his boss or colleagues, they will keep silent and keep things in harmony. They are really good at controlling their emotion. However, the boss, the company and all people in company, must try to keep themselves from making harms to others.

If an employee can resist the conflict and keeps his positive attitude and the company can avoid and facilitate the problem solving, the employee will feel comfortable to work and retain to work.

#### **d. Depression**

The depression in the workplace is mostly occurred due to the overload in daily tasks. When feeling depressed, employees only feel sad and give a deep thought about the workload, so the hopeless and helpless feeling is not true in fact. No negative impacts are resulted from the depression for employees take it as “try more harder getting your tasks done.” Although Indonesia is not really clear on long term orientation and means that the value of Confucius cannot be detected, but Indonesian then more short term orientation, whose values promoted are related to the past and the present, including steadiness, respect for tradition, preservation of one's face, [reciprocation](#) and fulfilling [social obligations](#). So, their reactions towards the overload jobs are “keep quite and just do it”.

However, the company should understand about this possibility once happened in their workplace by stating clear job descriptions and avoid overlapping of tasks to specialize the employees in their skills. The major cause of resignation is mostly about the overload tasks and the employee cannot persist.

#### **e. Loneliness and Boredom**

Loneliness and boredom can bring to the surface qualities people thought only others had that can be another source of depression. Indonesian is collectivist

rather than individualist, so the togetherness and communication with other people are very important for them. The family oriented as the implementation of collectivism should be accommodated by the company by involving the employees' family in some events or giving special attentions especially providing scholarships, congratulating the new born babies, and so on.

Nowadays, more companies also hold some outing programs to entertain the employees by bringing them out of the workplace for some days and giving them special treatment to get refreshed for free of charge. These are the ways of how companies try to accommodate the nature instinct of their employees.

#### **f. Guilt**

Guilt is more caused by doing something unethical either under pressure or on their own accord. No one want to do something guilty and even feel guilty. Especially, for Indonesian, their social obligations, their focus on community and their efforts to keep things in harmony can avoid them from doing something unethical.

#### **Employees Retaining**

To have satisfied and effective employees, they must want to be in the workplace. There are no 'silver bullets.' There is no one model that will work for all situations. It is important to seek to understand the needs of the corporate vision, as well as the needs of the employees, and work to align them to create an

environment that is synergistic and on course. With all the competition and world change, companies need to be proactive.

([www.howatthrconsulting.com](http://www.howatthrconsulting.com)).

Some of the obvious values of having an Employee Retention Model stated by Howatt ([www.howatthrconsulting.com](http://www.howatthrconsulting.com)) about increasing employee satisfaction in link closely with this paper discussion are:

- a. Increased loyalty in employees when they know the employer is interested in their perceptions and values.
- b. Provides a venue to offer staff valuable training to help them balance work and home to reduce their stress levels
- c. Increased clarity in the workplace. The business is a living process, and it is not good enough to adhere to a static set of goals; employees need to know the day-to-day changes in direction. It is important that employees have a process where they are obtaining clarity on a daily basis (high priorities, accountability, strategies to overcome barriers, conflicts with others need to resolved, leadership needs to adjusted to meet the needs of the day, daily evaluations of communication and ways to improve both inter and intra-communication). This is the legacy employee retention models want to leave behind: the ability to obtain clarity.

An Employee Retention Model stated by Howatt is a philosophical and newly touted theory. It states that to keep employees, we must understand what they like and do not like. What they do not like we need to address, focusing on the masses' needs. We work to meet the overall big picture first. Once we have the

process in place, we have more chances to help employees meet their individual needs. We can never satisfy all employees, but if we have a workplace that is driven to help all team members feel good about what they do, employees will more likely want to stay in this culture.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The paper can be concluded that to retain the employees to work in company, especially in the Indonesian institution, then to reduce and save some recruitment costs, the company may try to listen and understand the dimension of cultures among its employees. The dimensions of culture among Indonesian as studied in this paper, are considered as values on how the employees will confirm whether their human nature instincts are accommodated well by the company or not. Once the company is able to accommodate their nature instincts, the employees will be retained because they are satisfied by the treatment from the company.

### **Limitation Of The Study**

1. This study is a conceptual framework which needs further and deeper research to get the empirical data.
2. This study discussed human instincts accommodation as one of the factors to increase the employees' satisfaction and retain them to work in the same company.

3. This study used one of cultural theories, based on Hofstede's theory and skipped the other theories, such as Hall's and Strodbeck's theories.

## REFERENCES

- Deresky, Helen. 2008. *International Management: Managing Across Borders and Cultures, Text and Cases*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Pearson International Edition.
- Dessler, G. & Tan, C.H. (2009). *Human Resource Management – An Asian Perspective (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Human Nature and Instincts Make Us Psychologically Green, Editor Post | July 1, 2013** Read more at <http://livinggreenmag.com/2013/07/01/lifestyle-choices/human-nature-and-instincts-make-us-psychologically-green/#UjGuh> lwA606iuxHv.99
- Hofstede, Geert (1984). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills CA: SAGE Publications. ISBN 0-8039-1444-X.**
- Howatt, William A. Employee Retention: A Discussion Model. <http://www.howatthr.com/images/pdf/pplmgmt/Employee%20Retention%20A%20Discussion%20Model.pdf>
- Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel. (2007) *Communication between Culture*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Thomson
- Siegel, Courtney. 6 Types of Natural Instincts, Sep 10, 2011**, Information courtesy of the U.S. Army Survival Manual, <http://news.discovery.com/adventure/survival/6-types-of-natural-instincts.htm>
- The Hofstede Center. <http://geert-hofstede.com/indonesia.html>
- Umer, Muhammad and Muhammad Akram Naseem. 2011. Employees Retention (Human Capital) in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry in Pakistan. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*. Volume 11 Issue 3 Version 10 March 2011