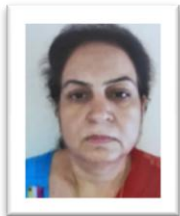


Work Culture in Indo-China Context

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze the work culture in the context of India and China. Considering a few definitions of organizational culture, we can try to extrapolate and arrive at a definition of workplace culture at a national level. For instance, Ravasi and Schultz (2006) characterize organizational culture as a set of shared assumptions that guide behaviors and also point out that "the pattern of such collective behaviors and assumptions that are taught to new organizational members as a way of perceiving and, even thinking and feeling. Thus organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders. In addition, organizational culture may affect how much employees identify with an organization".

If we consider the above definition at a national level, we could say that "a nation's workplace culture is a set of collective behaviors and assumptions that are taught or perceived by its workforce and which is reflected in the way various people and groups interact with each other within the country or with people or groups from a different country. In addition, it also affects how working people of a nation identify themselves both individually or as a collective and even how people of other nations would identify the workforce of the nation concerned".

Schein (1992), Deal and Kennedy (2000) and Kotter (1992) have advocated that organizations often have very differing cultures as well as subcultures. Although a company may have its "own unique culture," in larger organizations there are sometimes co-existing or conflicting subcultures because each subculture is linked to a different management team. Similarly, in the context of a nation, we can have varying subcultures within its own aggregate unique culture, because a nation undertakes various activities which are facilitated/regulated by different management teams, which could be due to different rules for different sectors (for instance, agriculture, industry and service sectors have different rules and regulations and are managed by different entities like different government ministries involved, different markets, different public/private participation and even different labour regulations).

Keeping in view the areas pointed to in the above formulated definitions, we try to analyze the work cultures of India and China by considering various data sources and reports that compare these underlying areas. Finally, we'll suggest any aspects that can be adapted from the Chinese side to improve the standing work culture on Indian side.

Keywords: India, China, Work-Culture, Organization.

Introduction

Work culture is a collection of attitudes, principles and actions that make up the atmosphere in a work environment. Healthy work cultures support employee performances and organizational policies with the overall objectives, considering the welfare of personnel. The employee's approach, work- balance, growing prospects and job contentment all depend on the culture of workplace. An organization is designed to accomplish definite objectives and aims by bringing individuals together on a common platform and encouraging them to provide their level best. It is important for the employees to appreciate at the workplace for them to develop a sense of faithfulness to it. Work culture plays a significant part in extracting the finest out of employees and making them stick to the organization for a longer period.

Aim of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the work culture in the context of India and China.

Methodology adopted

Data Collection: Secondary Data is collected from official websites.

Literature Review

Bikash Bhaduiy (1991) in his paper titled 'Work Culture: An Exposition in the Indian Context' stresses on the importance of social and cultural environment in determination of an individual's fundamental disposition to work, his sense of discipline and attitude towards regulated hours of work, rules, regulations and procedures, his activation level and intrinsic drive and his responses to challenges of responsibility. He further concludes that the development of a national work ethos requires coordinated efforts on many fronts.

Shalini Kumar (2018) in her paper titled 'Organizational Culture: The Indian Perspective', presents a conclusion that the Indian problem of organization is to be found at root level of personal dynamics, due to thousand years of slavery and political imprisonment has generated in Indian people. She further states that Indian Managers should return to their spiritual practices & raise their consciousness to develop themselves and that the development of organizational culture should start with an honest look at values and it should be aligned with organizational goals.

With regards to China, John Child and Malcolm Warner in their paper titled 'Culture and Management in China' point it out as a nation shaped by its history, and despite the transformation from a command economy to a market driven one, still the Chinese maintain that the changes brought over the previous decades have been adopted with 'Chinese Characteristics' implying a sense of continuity of the underlying norms rather than change, unlike India and several other Asian economies.

What is work culture?

Every organization has its own character and environment. There is not a definite set of features that describe work culture. When the persons of diverse backgrounds and principles come together, a culture simply develops. When we talk about "work culture" within an organization, what we mean is: a set of shared instructions, views, and approaches that command how things are completed and how people relate.

Every organization has its culture, whether legally accepted or not, and it is generally dictated by the management. Whether leaders are intentionally or inadvertently influencing the culture depends on how responsive they are of the effect their activities and plans are having on the persons around them. So, we can classify work cultures based on emotion and consequences to regulate if a work culture is constructive or destructive.

Work culture decides how well an individual fits into their atmosphere at a new job and their skill to build proficient relations with associates.

Characteristics of a Positive work Culture**Empowering Personnel**

A positive work culture empowers the employees to take decisions regarding their work at all levels, i.e. lower, middle and top level. It may

support to provide a sense of pride and honour among the employees of the organization.

Teamwork

Another characteristic of positive work culture is teamwork. Healthy organisations know how to improve teams that co-operate to achieve collective objectives. Teams should deal to each other to meet organizations goals.

Clearly defined Organizational Policies

Organizations generate and implement clearly defined organisational policies that are readily accessible to their employees. Healthy organizations follow the rules and regulations of local, state, national and international standards. When personnel break policies, the matter is to deal immediately and in a proficient manner.

Recognizes Risks and Uncertainties

Organizations recognize the risks and uncertainties that are open to and take the necessary steps to protect them against them. When such an event occurs due to organizational risks or uncertainties, a strong organization learns to use precautionary measures and understand that such risks and uncertainties are essential to facilitate progress of the organizations.

Two-way Communication

Two-way communication is one of the most important things for a healthy work culture. Supervisors shouldn't make them unapproachable but should give frequent feedback to their employees on performance. Employees should also be encouraged to communicate with each another and organization must provide them proper tools to do so. All communication should have three principles: being clear, well-mannered, and positive.

Recognitions and Rewards

Recognizing and rewarding the good work is an important morale booster. It helps to encourage employee commitment. Employers must have a formal recognition and reward system in workplace. Informal rewards—like records, special occasions, or assistances—can also make employees feel appreciated without affecting an organization's bottom line.

Ethical Values

Creating a sense of ethical values among the employees is a key component for any organization. Building a healthy work culture starts with a set of core ethical values that are reflected in the organizations long-term objectives. Organizations ethical values should be merged into every employee. Ethical values give employees a clear reason for their effort and can also help to uplift the organization at large.

Stress on health, Safety and Welfare

Organizations with healthy work culture give their preference on health, safety and welfare of their employees and their families. Apart from the necessary provisions mentioned in the Factories Act, 1948 the organizations can offer the facilities like health insurance and other provisions are required from time to time and according to need of the hour.

Kindness, understanding and respect

Kindness, respect and understanding prevail when employees experience challenges such as mishaps, diseases, personal misfortunes, and natural tragedies. Employees will go the extra mile for others when they're treated well and with deep understanding, kindness and respect.

Training and Development Opportunities

Organizations with healthy work culture provide training and development opportunities for their employees to improve their work-related abilities. Organizations bring in individuals to provide necessary training to their employees. Organizations also offer opportunities for certification and continual education programmes to their employees.

Opportunities and Changes

Healthy organizations know how to recognize and seize good opportunities. Healthy organizations always look for opportunities to grow. They also know how to adapt to technological or operational changes. They try to stay ahead and align and keep pace with changes in the industry and business environment.

Work Culture in India

A diverse work culture can be seen from one workplace to another. Selecting and retaining a work culture to endeavor the organization and the employees towards brilliance are very essential. India is one of the most powerful developing economies with the world's second largest population. Situated in South Asia, it has land boundaries with Bhutan, Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. As the world's 7th largest country, there are many differences across the land, including businesses, Geographical sections and culture.

Chain of Command

In India there is high power. It is totally acceptable for Chain of Command to occur in most Indian organizations. They have high requirement of Organizing connections, with a goal to attach a set of duties and opportunities to a person in a senior post. Usually, the manager is accountable for taking care of his or her employees, and in return, the juniors will be expected to show great faithfulness to him/her without any questions on his/her power. India is a big nation, carrying the slogan 'unity in diversity' for a purpose, so organizational structures can be diverse from the north to the south.

Policymaking

Policy making procedures should be expected when it comes to working with Indians. Indians are somewhat comfortable with uncertainty, so postponements in policy-making generally take place lest making a policy has become completely urgent. Most of the decisions are prepared by senior administrators. Staff members are occasionally encouraged to take decisions at their levels. Responsibilities and tasks are divided into small and manageable units, so that the management can easily keep way and control.

Time Awareness

Indian persons are flexible when it comes to regularity. Coming late in the meeting is a routine. It is not that persons mean to feel removed; it is their

working style that being firmly on time is not told as necessary. This practice should be taken into account when setting targets for an assignment. In India, we usually get late to work and have to stay into our workplaces till late night to cover up the time. Many of us consider work to be our first importance while it should be of equal meaning to our individual life.

Schedules/Meetings

It is unusual to fix an appointment to meet a teammate employed in the same organization, if that person is on senior management level. Persons expect you to be available for a meeting.

Uniform

The Indian uniform is somewhat unplanned. Male employees wear jeans and collared shirts to work place. A coat and a tie can be added when required or for the more senior managers. Often woman workers wear a colorful *salwar kameez* and on the management level female managers mostly dress *sarees*.

Teammate Association

In India, we are to get to level of professionalism. We tend to do a lot of courtesies for each other. We become open in no time, and then there's no ending to our physical and open activities towards each other. In some cases, this also has an encouraging side. It helps in becoming relaxed in the workplace and creates an inspiring atmosphere, leading to better output.

Rest Intervals

In India, we take 1-hour rest intervals where we go for long walks on the locations. We take 15-20 minutes tea/coffee breaks that are small assemblies between all employees in either inside or outside of the office premises. This is time-consuming, but it has a benefit too. It energizes everyone's temperament and reduces the stress.

Workplace Environment

India is now catching up with conduct of psychological assessments and group development activities. We believe in group building activities. Taking employees to yearly tours to encouraging mental health by giving health vouchers, offices are showering employees with incentives. It makes the work environment comfortable and creative.

Work Culture in China

Differences in workplace culture are experienced in China. It can be something as small as taking a rest during the work day or something as severe as being forced into unpaid overtime.

Overtime

One of the standout features of China's working environment is that people are usually familiar to working overtime, which often is not compensated. The Chinese government does have a law that orders that employees are made to work only for 8 hours per day. Only 36 hours of overtime is permitted. Working beyond normal working hours, especially in companies in the technology sector, is considered normal and many times companies, in the hiring phase, ask the interviewee if he/she is available to work overtime.

Dress Code

The Chinese dressed very conventionally. Men are expected to wear suits. Women have more freedom, but blouses and tops should have high necklines and dresses should not be too extreme. For both men and women, it is important for clothes to be clean and neat.

Relationships

Guanxi is a vital concept in China. It can be translated as “network, connection”, and it is common to see this in the workplace.

Generally, when colleagues do you a favor, you should repay back. And it is important to show that you are included into the team, and ready to be part of it and working together to complete results. When you reach at your workplace, you will be expected to know everyone well ultimately. Co-workers often hang out after office hours, drinking, eating out at restaurants, or even visiting other places.

Decision Making

Decisions are often made through consent and persons are expected to follow the group decision. It is considered to be a high honor to be involved in a conversation and asked for your view.

Contractual flexibility

In China, there is always a flexibility in contracts. Everything is negotiable in this country, and no one can make any decision till all the parties have left the meeting. In China, people are willing to be flexible. In case you find that something needs to be added to a contract, talk to the other party. If what you ask is reasonable, they will agree to the changes.

Appointments

Appointments in China are made at very small notice. In China, it is wise to check your appointment a day before to ensure that it won't be missed. Being late for an appointment is measured a severe insult in Chinese business culture.

Nap Time

In China, it's very much the norm. Co-workers will rush to eat up their lunches so they can get back to the office as soon as possible. It's the norm in Chinese company culture that co-workers are expected to respect lunch time as the time when people sleep. Lights are turned off, curtains are drawn, and if anyone makes noise – from talking to seeing videos – they will be punished by their co-workers and even their superiors. Naps outside of lunchtime are also common. This might come as a surprise to many — napping is considered okay in China.

Time Perception

Regularity is very important in China. The Chinese are hardly late and will be insulted if you are

late. However, they do not deal with the burden of time.

Relationship with Government

In China, relationship with Government is the top significance for businesses, which means that everybody needs to remain on good terms with Government. Depending on the type of work and government rules and directions, some industries might need to keep in continuous touch with the government in order to stay in the industry. Being a controlling state, the government keeps a check on everything in the country, including businesses.

Hierarchy

Everybody in the Chinese workplace has a social rank. All are expected to know where they fit into this tight hierarchy and to behave within the suitable protocol. For example, seating during professional meetings is always arranged according to rank. At dinners the guest of honor will always be given a seat facing the door.

Conclusion

Points which can be adopted from Chinese Culture.

Today, we observe that the Labor Ministry is contemplating following a 4-day work week policy, but how that policy pans out in the real cases remains to be seen. While theoretically we limit our work time to 48 hours a week, in the absence of adequate enforcement mechanisms and the presence of contractual flexibility in our organizational culture, it'll probably serve as a catalyst paving the way for longer working hours per week.

One thing that we can learn from the Chinese example is cultivating better relationships at work. In India, the general trend in Private sector companies is a competitive one – someone's loss is another's gain. However, we can learn from the Chinese example of fostering a cooperative and collectivist environment.

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