

The influence of western management culture on the rest of the world



INTRODUCTION

My management education has been greatly influenced by the 'Western Academic Management Culture' and in as much as I disagree with some of its approaches to Human Resources Leadership Styles; I am also in support of some of its strategies and techniques.

Western academic management culture gives an insight to how Human Resource Management differs from one region of the world to another, depending on the lifestyles and beliefs of the people therein. The present world is increasingly emulating these western academic management styles, irrespective of its own unique regional beliefs and traditions which act as a core foundation to its territorial HRM style.

Citizens of these non-western countries look forward to attending schools in the western countries believing that the education system is better.

However, this may not help much if these students decide to return to their countries because some of the western cultures do not incorporate the cultural principles of the non-western countries in their teaching and therefore, these students will tend to eventually manage issues in their countries exclusively with the western HRM culture they have learnt, which may still result to problems within their organisations.

REASONS FOR DISAGREEMENT

The following sub headings are in disagreement with the fact that Western education management culture has misinformed the world with its Human Resource Leadership Styles; rather, they may have been a blessing in these aspects or the cultures of the developing countries have not accepted some <https://assignbuster.com/the-influence-of-western-management-culture-on-the-rest-of-the-world/>

of these western strategies, instead they have resolved to managing their organisations in their own cultural management styles. Organisations in non-western countries may tend to fail even after applying these strategies because they totally misuse them or completely neglect their own beliefs instead of strategically combining both, in a way that would best work for them.

Organisational Structure

Planning of an organisational structure is important to manage and coordinate tasks in order to guarantee the improvement and sustenance of organisational customs (Henderson 2008). The success of the European management style is based on its ability to handle diversity. Organisational structure needs integration and differentiation. Differentiation is about grouping personal job tasks while integration is synchronizing the outcomes of the personal tasks to produce a suitable merged product. Integration is more intense when differentiation is high. In an organisation, there should be an in-house upgrade to handle an increase in diversity in order to fulfil the same organisational objectives. Integration helps the organization avoid breaking down into different segments and it adds value to business (Boone and Vanden Bosch 1997). Organisational structure emphasises strategies and systems of an organisation to create employee awareness on the reporting structure within and what is expected of them to deliver. It also encourages them to work as a team (Elkin 2007). A well structured organisation in the non-western country will perform better. The Chinese management, which is more family-oriented however, does not see the need for an organisational structure. Employees report to one another based on

family position and importance and because individual job descriptions are not used, problems are frequently encountered (Singapore Institute of Management 2001). They need to structure their businesses to avoid problems.

Training and Development

Europe has commenced the teaching of leadership in some schools in the UK, one of which is Coventry University. Management ought to be aware that cultures differ and there are various opportunities for students to work all around the world, not necessarily from the regions they have come from to attend their studies. This training prepares individuals for the global challenges they are likely to face in the nearest future (Mellahi 2000).

European organisations, invests in the training and development of their employees because an employee's excellent performance yields high returns for the organisation. In Japan, employees are sometimes trained on how to smile to customers by putting a pen in their mouths. Whereas, as far as Indian management style is concerned, training and development to improve employee skills is hardly emphasized. Rather, the managers would prefer to be occupied with the personal lives of employees (Indian Institute of Bangalore n. d). Presently in Nigeria, most local business owners avoid investing in the training and development of their employees for fear of the employees leaving the company for multinational organisations. They fail to realise that the development of staff is a key element to business success. The investment in staff training by the western countries does not misinform the rest of the world, rather it promotes business brands.

Racial and Sexist Restrictions

HRM style in the United Kingdom for example, is fair as regards eligibility for job positions. When designing curriculum vitae in the UK, age, gender and place of origin are generally not required as criteria to be considered for a job placement and also female top executives are frequently found in organisations. However, in Nigeria, due to the paternalistic HRM style, age, gender and place of origin are highly required in a curriculum vitae design. The information determines whether you are eligible enough for the job because although sometimes unrevealed, employers prefer to employ staff from a particular ethnic group. Also, most male employees, find it odd receiving instructions from female superiors and therefore sometimes results in conflicts on the job. This aspect of the western culture is good and non-western countries should be encouraged to follow.

Cultural Orientation

The culture of an establishment is made up of its beliefs and shared values as a group and it is essential for the entire team to be aware and understand what these values are because lack of awareness may lead to lack of originality and decline in performance. The relationship between managers and employees is a factor of cultural orientation. An employee will perform better if there is a close understanding relationship with a manager. In the western countries managers generally share a business and non-personal relationship with employees. They consider close personal relationships as interfering in the privacy of an individual. However, the Indian culture encourages managers to be involved in the personal lives of subordinates. Subordinates assume managers care for them and this promotes lasting

relationships although this is sometimes likely to be at the expense of the job (Indian Institute of Management n. d). Managers ought to positively add value by using real life instances alongside job techniques as Morrie did in the movie, Tuesdays With Morrie where he taught his former college student how to learn to love and be loved in return, give to his community and accept life the way it should be, to be at peace with himself. The positive impact Morrie had on his student who had become a successful high profile journalist, made him to neglect his job to be with Morrie at the point of his death and in return, learnt how to live a better life (Winfrey and Forte 2006). There should be a moderately close shared relationship between an employer and employee, without compromising the job, in order to encourage performance.

Time Management

In Africa, keeping to time has been an issue since time past. Late arrival to events as is commonly termed 'African time' means that guests begin to arrive for an event at approximately three hours past the event start time. Whereas the western countries, people keep to time. The opportunity of having branches of international companies in Africa improves the African insight on time management because local businesses have the opportunity to add value to these international companies by doing business with them. This means, early arrival to meetings and events. In some Nigerian organisations that operate from 9am to 5pm, employees are still found at work by 7pm for fear of leaving the office while their superiors are still working. All this is fast changing and thus, the western countries have a

positive impact as regards time management and cannot be identified as a disadvantage.

Motivation and Incentives

The western countries have introduced the necessity for employee incentives and benefits to non-western countries. Prior to this, employees earned only their salaries even if they worked overtime. Presently, awards and benefit unique to the job types are given to productive employees to encourage them work harder. NTPC supported its staff whose wife suffered from a terminal malady by contributing money for her treatment in the US (Chaudhuri 2010). This will encourage the employee to put in his best to ensure that the company achieves its goals.

REASONS FOR SUPPORT

There are also ways in which western management culture has misinformed non-western countries in terms of its HR leadership styles without putting into consideration the management culture of such regions. This is harmful to organisations because just because it is effective in a western country does not make it equally effective for them.

Foreign Teaching Methods

Non-western countries invite foreign guests to deliver seminars and conferences in their countries to educated citizens. The confirmation that these special guests are visiting is seen as a privilege. However, when they arrive, their lecture styles and pattern may not relate to the living and learning patterns these people are used to. In Nigeria, there was a case of a westerner who came to deliver a lecture and taught in foreign techniques

that the people were not familiar with (Uba 2010). His theories could not be related to the African culture and while this lecture was not useful to some attendees, others may tend to apply his teachings and may still not yield positive business results.

People / Business Management Style

The relationship between employees and the executives of an organisation with relation to how choices affect these employees, as part of the entire organisational team rather than as mere job holders, is referred to as 'peoples management' (Henderson 2008). During the early years in America, employees did not have a chance to share their views with management even if they thought contrary to management's decisions. In the documentary *The Century of the All-Consuming Self*, employees could not go contrary to a decision made by Edward Bernays and anyone who tried to do so, was termed as 'being stupid' (Curtis 2002). The management style was more performance oriented than people oriented. The business territory in a certain region must be understood before strategies can be developed in order to function effectively. In the *Imperative of African Management Style*, a successful managing director who had been very productive abroad, was posted to Nigeria to apply his skills to a branch of his company, unfortunately, he was unable to succeed because he did not understand the business environment and applied the same strategies exactly as he did in his territory (Uba 2010). Whereas, the Ubuntu management style, promotes communication between personnel and their managers because an open shared structure and dialogue on issues arising, is encouraged. In this way, they develop their own policies of living and working together, through times

of team work and crisis (Karsten and Illa 2005). Some companies in Nigeria have begun to emulate the American culture where employees do not have a say in matters that arise, thereby, ignoring the Ubuntu management style.

Manipulation of Employees for Management Benefit

The manager, whose employees trust and look up to, unknown to the employees, may tend to influence them to act on issues based on his own selfish interest. Curtis (2002), in the documentary *The Century of the All-Consuming Self*, showed that Edward Bernays manipulated the masses, to his own benefit. He enabled them have access to money from banks in order to purchase shares from companies he symbolised. These citizens, by adhering, yielded more profit for him. The United States of America also intended to manipulate citizens to purchase goods they did not require, and Mr. Bernays devised a means to persuade citizens to act unreasonably by connecting products he was associated with, to their emotional cravings. Another example was making the smoking of cigarettes by the female gender socially acceptable; by convincing them to think that the cigarettes made them influential and free (Curtis 2002). On the contrary, the Chinese management style, associates fairness, compassion, thoroughness etc. with an excellent leader. Manipulation is hardly involved with Chinese management (Singapore Institute of Management n. d). In Nigeria, local business owners have begun to practice manipulation especially with the introduction of contract staffing, whereby they employ personnel to work excessively by constantly keeping them under stress and strain but at a rather cheap rate due to the lack of available jobs.

Performance Analysis

Western countries set up the performance appraisal process to evaluate employee performance on the job. It is a good process because it encourages employees to carry out their tasks thoroughly. Appraisal structure and style vary across countries and organisations, depending on its exclusive goals and objectives. In Nigeria, local businesses have imbibed the performance appraisal process and in some cases, the process is abused because, superiors may see it as a chance to intimidate their subordinates whereas, it is the duty of these superiors to ensure that their subordinates are following the right path. Therefore, as the time for the appraisal draws near, employees lack confidence. It is the duty of managers to bring out the best in their employees and not discourage them. In the movie, *Akeelah and the Bee*, Akeelah Anderson was motivated by her tutor Dr. Joshua Larrybi to be confident and believe not only in her dream but in herself as well, to make it through the Spelling Bee competition. In as much as his management style was strict, he discovered her inner strength and unique technique of keeping time, used it to tutor her and she eventually made it to the top (Lionsgate and 2929 Production 2006).

Spirituality

In Nigeria, religious belief is important for the growth of a business. Some organisations take it as far as having short morning session of prayers before business begins or attending thanksgiving services when high profit is made. Some integrate spirituality and their jobs to restore performance obligation (Neal 1999). However, this has drastically reduced because of the influence of the western countries where these acts are rarely found.

IMPACT OF WESTERN ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT CULTURE

Advantages

Provision of better strategies for business growth.

Disadvantages

It demands that non-western countries communicate with the English language without a reciprocal effort of learning a different language (Gouttefarde 1996).

Non-western countries forget to apply their traditional strategies.

Students that study in Western countries are unlikely to add value in their countries.

CONCLUSION

This report critically analyses and evaluates the influence of Western management culture on the rest of the world. Non-western countries have begun looking up to the Western region. Europe has in turn started considering the cultures of other parts of the world, in their management styles.

RECOMMENDATION

Diversity in the workplace is a high determinant of organisational success therefore; management of organisations should strive to take into account the cultural diversity in the working environment during significant resolution making.

Every culture should look within its traditions and beliefs and discover what works for them best before sourcing for substitute management styles from other regions to support theirs.

To achieve strategic goals and objectives, employees as the vital assets of an organisation, should be considered while developing Human Resource Management Policies.

A balance between male and female employees should be practiced during employment and task assignments.

The western education system should endeavour to inculcate the teaching of real life issues in classrooms, as is presently done in the HRM lecture for the MBA students in Coventry university, to equip these students with the skills to tackle global issues in the future (Bowden and Mulnix 2005)

The HR Leadership Styles in the western countries are being emulated by the non-western countries because the western world creates awareness about its HRM styles through various means such as writing books (Chaudhuri 2010). Therefore, non-western countries should endeavour to create awareness about its management styles in order for the western countries to follow. Due to this lack of management awareness, thorough researching may prove that some of these leadership styles assumed to be created in the west, originated from the non-western countries.