Study on stereotypes and complex concept of culture management essay

Stereotype means generalizing or assuming about the characteristics of all members of a group who related to a particular race, nationality or sexual orientation. This oversimplification of a group ignores the diversity within the group. Thus assigning certain qualities to groups leads to discriminations. This type of generalization widely circulates in society that is why it is also known as social labeling. Stereotyping is especially prevalent — and problematic — in conflicts. Groups tend to define themselves according to who they are and who they are not. And " others," especially " enemies" or " opponents" are often viewed in very negative ways. The opponent is expected to be aggressive, self-serving, and deceitful, for example, while people in one's own group are seen in generally positive ways. Such stereotypes tend to be self-perpetuating. If one side assumes the other side is deceitful and aggressive, they will tend to respond deceitfully and aggressively themselves. The opponent will then develop a similar image of the first party and respond deceptively, thus confirming the initial stereotype. The stereotypes may even grow worse, as communication shuts down and escalation heightens emotions and tension.

Culture is a complex concept, with many different definitions. But, simply put, " culture" refers to a group or community with which people share common experiences that shape the way people understand the world. It includes groups that people are born into, such as gender, race, or national origin. It also includes groups people join or become part of. In such complex world each people is shaped by many factors, and culture is one of the powerful forces that acts on people. In other words, culture is central to what people see, how they make sense of what they see, and how they express

themselves. There are six fundamental patterns which make it difficult to understand other cultures; they are –

Different Communication Styles:

Communication varies across cultures. The language usage is one of the most important aspects of communication style. Some words and phrases are used in different ways from culture to culture. For example, even in countries that share the English language, the meaning of " yes" varies from " maybe. Another major part of communication style is the degree of importance given to non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes not only facial expressions and gestures; it also involves seating arrangements, personal distance, and sense of time.

Different Attitudes Toward Conflict:

Conflict is seen as a positive thing in some cultures, while other cultures try to avoid it. In the U. S, people often are encouraged to deal directly with conflicts that do arise. In contrast, in many Eastern countries, differences are best worked out quietly.

Different Approaches to Completing Tasks :

The ways of completing task differs from culture to culture, because of different access to resources; different judgments of the rewards associated with task completion, different notions of time, and varied ideas about how relationship-building and task-oriented work should go together. In collaboration cultures differ with respect to the importance placed on establishing relationships. Asian and Hispanic cultures tend to attach more value to developing relationships at the beginning of a shared project and

more emphasis on task completion toward the end as compared with European-Americans. European-Americans tend to focus immediately on the task at hand, and let relationships develop as they work on the task.

Different Decision-Making Styles:

Different cultures have different decision- making style. For example, in the U. S., decisions are frequently delegated, on the other hand in many Southern European and Latin American countries, there is a strong value placed on holding decision-making responsibilities oneself. When decisions are made by groups of people, majority rule is a common approach in the U. S.; in Japan consensus is the preferred mode.

Different Attitudes Toward Disclosure:

In some cultures, people are conservative to share about emotions, about the reasons behind a conflict or a misunderstanding, or about personal information. It is important to keep this in mind and trying to avoid it in a discussion, working with others or dealing with conflict, because it may seem intrusive to others.

Different Approaches to Knowing:

Notable differences occur among cultural groups when it comes to epistemologies — that is, the ways people come to know things. European cultures tend to consider information acquired through cognitive means, such as counting and measuring, more valid than other ways of coming to know things. Compare that to African cultures' preference for affective ways of knowing, including symbolic imagery and rhythm.

There are a series of steps required to destroy stereotypes as a problem in the workplace. The preliminary work will need to be done to ensure that the employer's policy on multiculturalism, workplace diversity and Equal Opportunity is unequivocally understood. This can be done with a simple issue of guidelines. Guidelines should state the employer's policy, and notifying staff that any grievances or disputes will receive attention from senior management. Beyond these guideline and rules managers and employees must try to eliminate stereotypes at individual level, which can be done in following ways –

Acknowledgement of having stereotype is the first step towards the removal of stereotype. It will help the managers and employees to be aware of the stereotype in the workplace.

Managers and employees must open themselves up to learn about different cultures. They have to question themselves and their stereotypes.

Finally updating, unlearning old perceptions, suspending judgments and redefine their experiences will remove the stereotypes from the work place.

Task 2

Space, Time and Language differ from culture to culture so it is very important understand the cultural differences. Some key characteristics of the Space, Time and Language are given below –

Space: People handle space differently the way they do largely determined by the culture in which they are immersed. Edward Hall was concerned about space and people's relationships within it and his study of such space

is known as Proxemics. Hall proposed three categories of Proxemics description – Space, Distance and Territoriality.

Space: It has three aspects –

Fixed-feature – ways in which people organize activities like houses, buildings, cities, rooms, etc.

Semifixed-feature – which brings people together and stimulates involvement or keeps people apart and promotes withdrawal like furniture arrangement in public places etc.

Informal – distances people unconsciously maintain when they interact.

Distance: People have certain patterns for restrict the distance when they interact. Hall identifies four types of distances –

Intimate- the presence of the other person is unmistakable

Personal- small protective sphere that a person maintains between itself and other

Social- casual interaction-distance with associates

Public- space generally desired among strangers

Territoriality: It defines the social use of space. It means a geographic area that indicates ownership and defense of this territory against " invaders". The distinction is carefully made between private property, which is the territory of an individual, and public property which is territory of the group.

Time: The way people view time differs from culture to culture. Based on perception of time & priorities Edward Hall defined two types of culture – Monochronic time cultures and Polychronic cultures. Characteristics of the two cultures are given below –

Monochronic time cultures:

Do one thing at a time

Concentrate on the job

Take time commitments seriously (deadlines, schedules)

Committed to the job

Adhere religiously to plans

Concerned about not disturbing others; Follow rules of privacy and consideration

Show great respect for private property, seldom borrow or lend

Emphasize promptness

Activities are isolated from organization as a whole; tasks are measured by output in time (activity per hour or minute)

Polychronic cultures:

Do many things at once

Highly distractible and subject to interruptions

Consider time commitments an objective to be achieved only if possible

Committed to people

Change plans often and easily

More concerned with relations (family, friends, close business associates) than with privacy

Borrow and lend things often and easily

Base promptness on the relationship

Activities are integrated into organization as a whole; tasks are measured as part of overall organizational goal

Language: Language or communication shape and reflects the experience of people thus influencing the relationship with environment and other people. Edward Hall has defined cultural differences based on communicational context. According to him there are two contextual cultures – High context & Low context. Their characteristics are –

High context culture:

Less verbally explicit communication, less written/formal information

More internalized understandings of what is communicated

Multiple cross-cutting ties and intersections with others

Long term relationships

Strong boundaries- who is accepted as belonging vs who is considered an " outsider"

Knowledge is situational, relational.

Decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face relationships, often around a central person who has authority

Low context culture:

Rule oriented, people play by external rules

More knowledge is codified, public, external, and accessible.

Sequencing, separation–of time, of space, of activities, of relationships

More interpersonal connections of shorter duration

Knowledge is more often transferable

Task-centered. Decisions and activities focus around what needs to be done, division of responsibilities.

By understanding the Space, Time and Language differences across culture, Snack Fit will be able to operate their business across more effectively and with less cross cultural problems. US, the home country of Snack Fit, has Monochronic and Low context culture. On the other hand Bangladesh has Polychronic and High context culture where the new subsidiary of Snack Fit will be opening. As both countries' culture is totally opposite so it is very important for the company to understand the culture of this country. The above mentioned characteristics will help the company about what to expect

and how to deal with employees. The way of management and operation of the subsidiary will depend on these cultural differences. These will help Snack Fit to avoid many cross cultural issues.

Task – 3

Dr Geert Hofstede identified five distinct cultural dimensions that served to distinguish one culture from another. Among the five dimensions, ' Power Distance' and ' Uncertainty Avoidance' are two dimensions which play important role in determining differences across culture. These two concepts are described below –

Power Distance (PD): This refers to the degree of inequality that exists – and is accepted – among people with and without power. A high PD score indicates that society accepts an unequal distribution of power and people understand " their place" in the system. Low PD means that power is shared and well dispersed. It also means that society members view themselves as equals.

Chart: Dr Geert Hofstede's ' Power Distance' & ' Uncertainty Avoidance' index

Uncertainty Avoidance (UA): It focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society – i. e. unstructured situations. A High Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A Low Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a variety of opinions. This is reflected in a society that is less rule-oriented, more readily accepts change, and takes more and greater risks.

From the above description it is evident that a cultural difference is an important factor in international business. As Snack Fit is opening new subsidiary in Bangladesh so it is important to compare the cultural difference of Bangladesh and USA (home country) based on the ' Power Distance' and ' Uncertainty Avoidance' dimension.

Chart: Comparison of cultural difference between Bangladesh and USA based on the ' Power Distance' and ' Uncertainty Avoidance' dimension.

From the graph it is clear that Bangladesh has higher ' Power Distance' – 200% of the US and higher ' Uncertainty Avoidance' – 130% of the US. Comparison between the two countries are given below –

Comparison of Power Distance characteristics –

Bangladesh (High Power Distance)

United States (Low Power Distance)

centralized authority

autocratic leadership

paternalistic management style

many hierarchical levels

large number of supervisory staff

acceptance that power has its privileges

an expectation of inequality and power differences

decentralized authority and decision making responsibility

consultative or participative management style

flat organizational structures

small proportion of supervisory staff

lack of acceptance and questioning of authority

rights consciousness

tendency toward egalitarianism

Comparison of Uncertainty Avoidance characteristics –

Bangladesh (High Uncertainty Avoidance)

United States (Low Uncertainty Avoidance)

avoidance of risk

organizations that have clearly delineated structures, many written rules,

standardized procedures,

promotions based on seniority or age

lack of tolerance for deviants

strong need for consensus

need for predictability hence, planning is important

respect for authority

risk taking

tolerance of differing behaviors and opinions

flexibility

organizations with a relatively low degree of structure and few rules,

promotions based on merit

Influence on Management:

The above cultural differences will influence the management of the

subsidiary by Snack Fit in the following ways –

Clear and Explicit directions will be provided to employees.

Deadlines will be highlighted and stressed.

Expectation of low initiative taking by subordinates.

More authoritarian management style will be implemented.

Relationships with staff will be more distant.

Showing respect and deference to those higher up the ladder.

Expectation of encountering more bureaucracy in organizations and government agencies.

Task – 4

As SF decided to expand its operations internationally so they have to consider HRM function to make HRM more effective across cultures. The HRM function are divided into 4 segments they are –

Acquisition:

Human Resource Planning

Recruitment

Selection

Maintenance:

Safety and security

Labor relation

Motivation:

Job Design

Performance Evaluation

Rewards / Benefits

Development:

Training

Management Development

Career Development

From the above segments 3 of them, which are Acquisition, Motivation & Development, will be discussed below –

Acquisition: In this segment there are three major functions which are – Human Resource Planning, Recruitment & Selection. Details are given below –

Human Resource Planning: This occurs within the broad context of organizational and strategic business planning where it involves forecasting the organization's future human resource needs and planning for how those needs will be met. It is a systematic and continuous process which ensures that the right person is in the right job at the right time by analyzing the organization's HR need under the changing conditions – Competition,

Economic condition, Demographic changes, Political and Legal condition, Scio-cultural changes, Technological changes & Global condition. Finally to make it more effective across culture it is important to give more attention to the Demographic & Scio-cultural changes.

Recruitment: It is process of identifying, targeting and attracting a pool of suitable candidates for a vacant position in the organization. As Snack Fit is opening a new subsidiary so internal recruitment is not a viable option, they have to go for external recruiting. The identifying, targeting and attracting process includes following considerations –

Identifying: Job analyze and job description

Targeting: Type of employment – Permanent/Part-time/Short term contract

Attracting: Advertising – newspapers, magazines, universities & company website OR through agencies.

Selection: It is a process through which the best person is selected from the pool of attracted applicants. The selection technique hast to be both valid – measuring the ability to do the job and reliable – consistency of applicant's score. The selection technique has the following steps –

Application received: Application form has to be designed in such a way so that it provides information required for the job and also provides some personal views of the applicants so that cross culture issues can be minimized.

Ability Tests: The ability tests will be used to test both job-fitness – IQ test, work simulation test, medical test etc and organization-fitness – Cognitive test, personality test etc.

Interview: The interview process of Snack Fit should be combination of structured, non-structured and situational. Structured way interview portion will be focused on job related and non-structured & situational ways interview portion will be more focused on personality, values, judgment etc.

Selection: The best person for the job who can also match with organization culture will be selected from the candidates.

Impact of cultural differences: In a high uncertainty avoidance culture like Bangladesh, applicants are closely examined to identify successful work experiences, career stability and continuous academic achievements. On the other hand US, as a low uncertainty culture, focuses on relativism and empiricism. As collectivists people referrals plays a very important role in hiring people, promote loyalty and retention in Bangladesh. But for individualistic people of US, involvement with organization is calculative rather than moral.

Motivation: Employee motivation is a key function of HRM. This includes three functions which are described below –

Job Design: It is the combination of all the tasks that needed to be performed. There are 6 methods of job design, they are –

Job Specialization: Standardized work procedures and repetitive, precisely defined & simplified tasks

Job Redesign: Introduction of new work processes, equipment or technology.

Job Rotation: Moving employees around a range of jobs greater task variety.

Job Enrichment: Increasing responsibilities and more meaningful tasks.

Job Enlargement: Increasing the scope of a job by adding similar level of tasks.

Job Morphing: Combination of the job enrichment and job enlargement.

Performance Evaluation: It is very important to measure the performance of the organization and the employees of the organization. It is the responsibility of the HRM to conduct the evaluation of the employees' performance. It is important because – it provides information based on which bonus, promotion and salary decisions are made; it gives the opportunity to overcome deficiency of the employees and it also helps in career plan as it shows the strength & weakness of the employees. There are several ways to evaluate the performance of the employees, some of the techniques are – Graphic Rating Scale Method, Alteration Ranking Method, Paired Comparison method, Forced distribution method, key performance indicator etc. Snack Fit can use the simple and effective method which is Graphic Rating Scale Method.

Graphic Rating Scale Method: It lists a number of traits with a performance for each. Here traits should be set based on Key Performance Indicators (KPI), which is quantifiable measurements, agreed to beforehand, that reflect the critical success factors. Finally this evaluation method should also

incorporate work related behavior so any cross cultural issues can be identified.

Rewards / Benefits: Rewards or benefits are one of the prime factors which motivate employees of the organization. There are many ways to provide rewards / benefits. Snack Fit can use the following rewards / benefits –

Performance Related Pay: Pay is determined on the basis of individual / group performance.

Merit Pay: Annual salary increase with higher performance level.

Other: Vacation, flexible hours, membership, free tickets, time off, coupons etc.

Social Rewards: Praise, recognition, positive feedback, greetings, complements, company/social gatherings, nonverbal signs.

Status Enhancement: Office size, location, promotion, furniture and fixtures, " hall of fame", company crests, etc.

Impact of cultural differences: High uncertainty avoidance culture of Bangladesh means people are unwilling to take risks and want security above all. So job enrichment might not be an effective motivational tool but on the other hand in a low uncertainty avoidance culture like US, this will be very much effective. In this collectivist culture a formal appraisal process is difficult because of the close relationship and often performance is measured by relationship unlike individualist culture where performance is judged on productivity, timeliness, quality of output, job-specific knowledge and

proficiency. The reward system also focuses on social & status enhancement reward as collectivist people's identity depends on social system rather individual.

Development: It has three functions which are targeted towards the development of the employees. They are –

Training: It is the process of providing employees with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to successfully perform their current job. There several training programs that can be implemented by the Snack Fit, some of them are –

On the job training: learn a job by actually performing it.

Job instruction: listing each job's basic tasks, along with key points, to provide step-by-step training for employees.

Coaching: one-on-one guidance, ' Show how'.

Mentoring: Share experience, knowledge and skills with an experienced employee.

Lectures: a quick, simple and cheap way of providing knowledge to large groups of trainees.

Simulated training: learn on the actual or simulated equipment while off the job in a risk free environment.

E-learning: learning by electronic technology.

Training is very important factor for Snack Fit as they are opening a new subsidiary in this country. Importance of employee training are given below –

Increase job satisfaction and morale among employees

Increase employee motivation

Increase efficiencies in processes, resulting in financial gain

Increase capacity to adopt new technologies and methods

Increase innovation in strategies and products

Reduce employee turnover

Enhance company image, e. g., conducting ethics training

Risk management, e. g., training about sexual harassment, diversity training

Management Development: It is the process of providing necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to the managers or people aspiring to management role so that they can successfully perform the management role. This type of development program includes –

Job Rotation: Potential employees are moved from department to department to broaden their understanding.

Work-based Learning: Learning occurs on the job rather than classroom.

Management Coaching & Mentoring: Learning from experienced people in the organization.

Action Learning: Analyzing and solving problems in other department.

Case Study: Diagnose and solve problem of a written organizational problem.

Management Game: Making computerized decisions about realistic but simulated companies.

Role Playing: Enactment of a scenario where participants play different roles.

In house & Outside training: Training from in house development centers and outside seminars conferences.

Career Development: It is the process of giving employees assistance to develop goals and the opportunities to realize them. Some of these assistance and opportunities are described below –

Avoiding Reality Shock: Carefully supervising new employees so that they can easily adjust their naïve expectation with the realities of the organizational life.

Challenging Initial Jobs: Challenging initial job is one of the most powerful means of aiding the career development of the new employees.

Realistic Job Previews: Providing realistic job previews in recruiting so that employees can understand what to expect once they start working.

Periodic Job rotation: It is the best way for the new employees to test themselves.

Carrere-oriented Performance Appraisals: Supervisors need to concentrate on information about subordinates desired career path.

Career Planning Workshop: Organize periodic career planning workshop for the employees.

Opportunities for Mentoring: Experience employees should provide career advice and also help to steer around political pitfalls.

Impact of cultural differences: As a collectivist culture employees are dependent on organization and belonging to the organization is ideal. This is why there is intensive training in this culture especially for entry level employees. Managing and career planning depends on the long term relationship rather individual initiative. Promotion is based on seniority and relationship. And because of the high context culture feedback are given in an indirect way.

These are the main 3 segments HRM function where Snack Fit must consider cultural differences for making it effective across culture. As a collectivist and high power distance culture, the organizations have vertical hierarchy structure where power holders are entitled to privileges and decisions are made centralizing way where leaders follow autocracy. But in the US, individualist and low power distance culture, organizations are decentralized, empowerment is a common practice and leaders follow participative management. It is logical to involve locals for strategy formulation and often the original policies have to be adapted to the local culture.

Task 5

There are two views of strategy in the context of cultural differences. They are – Rational and Dynamic views.

Rational Views: This view assumed that the organization is objective realities and can be perceived & analyzed by intelligent managers. But still those managers find themselves confronted with environmental uncertainty, ill-structured problems socio political process while making a decision. But it can be argued that the organizations are subjective realities rather than objective where realities are perceived different ways. This means managers see different things create different realities and act accordingly as a result multiple interpretations and responses to similar situations are likely.

This rational view also assumes that managers make strategic decisions by following a similar route, gathering all relevant information, generating all possible alternatives, evaluating the cost and benefits of each alternative, choosing the optimal solution and then acting upon it. But it is widely acknowledge that managers are limited in their capacity to digest all the information and thus rationality in decision making is limited.

Dynamic View:

The dynamic view assumed that truth and reality are different and reality cannot be determined by simplistic theories of cause and effect. It is assumed that strategy emerge informally, sometimes gradually, sometimes spontaneously, usually in a collective process. Based on this view managers have less control over their environments which are difficult to know and taking action does not necessarily make things happen. Strategy unfolds in

response to current events, within the historical and organizational context as a result the intended strategy and emergent strategy may be different. Strategies are thought to emerge and to evolve over time as a pattern in a stream of decisions.

Based on the above two views there are two models of strategy which are controlling model and adapting model. They are described below –

Controlling model: This is a centralized and formalized model where top management may take help from expert consultant or may setup formal strategic planning units for developing the strategy. Environmental events are scanned deeply for obtaining necessary information where information tend to be quantitative and objective. Information is analyzed by forecasting, econometric models and structured scenarios and based on this information and analysis the top management takes the decisions which are implemented by thorough planning, setting goals & objectives, precise communication, continuous follow-through and linking performance.

Adapting model: Unlike the controlling model this is more decentralized and informal where responsibility of strategy development is diffused through the organization and information scanning is broader & less systematic. The information is qualitative & subjective and information is interpreted through intuitive models. The strategic decisions are reached in a consensus through intense discussion involving many people from all levels of the organization. Implementation is determined locally where adjustment can be made to unforeseen events and responsibility is assigned to the collective.

As Snack Fit is opening their first subsidiary in this country so it is evident that they will face some uncertainty in the course of expansion. As a third world country, there are high external environmental business risks like (political, economic, social and technological) in Bangladesh. So it will be wise for the Snack Fit to follow the ' Dynamic view' and ' Adapting model' for their expansion.

Task 6

It is very challenging to work in multicultural teams. There are two strategies to overcome the difficulties, they are – Task strategies & Process strategies. Process strategies come to play in managing team works. The 3 key aspects associated with process strategies are – Team building, Choosing how to communicate and Resolving conflict. These aspects are described below –

Team building: The way of building a team varies across culture. Cultura