Cultural Differences with Respect to Work Ethics

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Today, diversity is evident in all forms of life as the technological advancements have increased the interaction of people. Organizations, employees, and their work settings have been significantly impacted as there is an increased flow of people, goods, services, money, and jobs across national boundaries. Businesses are now meeting with clients and suppliers that they have never done transactions before. The increasing migration and globalization have made it essential for companies to manage diversity. Today, organizations have a role to coordinate and ensure harmony in the diverse workforce. Globalization has enabled the interaction of genders, ages, races, and religious and ethnic groups and the management have to fit together these differences to ensure maximization of the talents and abilities of each worker. Mor-Barak (2017) states that diversity can be an economic advantage to an organization if it is efficiently managed. However, it sometimes can create a hostile environment and impact on the productivity of a workforce. The increased flow of resources, goods, and services across borders has resulted in massive changes in the political, social, and economic spheres. According to Lozano and Escrich, (2017) the trend of globalization is increasing, and cultural diversity is impacting workplaces as gender, language, and religious diversity becomes more visible. Multinational corporations have emerged with a more culturally diverse workforce which has affected their performance. Cultural diversity can transform a workplace environment in various ways, and this present paper focuses on the issues that are present in workplaces throughout the world.

Mor-Barak (2017) defines culture as a system of mutual behaviors, customs, values, and beliefs that members of society use to cope with the environment around them and with one another. Kaur (2014) defines it as a system of behaviors, values, and beliefs that influence the communication patterns that are shared within a group of people. There exist cultural differences

in how people dress, their traditions, how they organize themselves, and their language. Podsiadlowski et al. (2013) explain cultural diversity as the coexistence of individuals from the different cultures within a region or organization. The customs and values of a culture are passed from generation to generation. The increased rates of globalization and migration have placed management of diversity as an essential aspect of organizations.

McGuire (2014) argues that diversity involves how people perceive themselves and how they view others around them where these identities affect their interactions. Human resource experts need to handle concerns about changes, compliance, and communication in order to guarantee to function within an organization. Hamde (2008) states that diversity management involves a process where the leaders are focused on creating and maintaining a positive work setting where the similarities and differences between individuals are identified and appreciated. The concept involves respect and acceptance of diversity along the dimensions of race, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, physical abilities, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, political beliefs, or other ideologies. Therefore, diversity is inclusive for everyone as people are taught and learn from others who are different. They develop respect and dignity for all as they support the creation of an environment and practice that would encourage the learning and also capture the advantages of the diverse viewpoints.

Impact of Globalization and Cultural Diversity

The rapid globalization has impacted organizations and their labor force. It has created a diverse workforce where the effect if the cultural diversity depends on the strategy that a firm utilizes and the environment it operates. In this globalized era, the management of cultural differences is an essential aspect that organizations are focused on to create advantages and get a competitive advantage.

Globalization

Podsiadlowski et al. (2013) emphasize that people are part of a worldwide economy and they no longer work and live in a limited environment as they face competition from both local and international colleagues. In recent years globalization has resulted in cultural shifts around the world. The introduction and integration of technology have supported the interaction of people which has resulted in changes in the norms and values of culture as people shift into an open and modern culture. Organizations and individuals are more willing to expand and learn new cultures to fill the gap that exists between them and other parts of the world and also become more culturally diverse. The leadership must be ready to manage the differences within the organization to effectively succeed in the highly globalized world where differences in various cultural aspects are evident. They must understand the relationship that exists between people when they are developing a global mindset. Therefore, culture is an essential element as it affects the team decision-making, commitments, connection, and other social interactions.

The lowering of trade and investment barriers and the rise of transportation and telecommunication technologies have enabled companies to set up or outsource service delivery, research and development, manufacturing, and other business activities. McGuire (2014) states that globalization has restructured the demand and supply of services and products and businesses can access competitive global markets with ease and save expenses. Enterprises are facing challenges to develop a culturally sensitive structure that would build a learning capability for future. Still, globalization has resulted in an increasingly diverse workforce which when utilized well can be advantageous for organizations to improve their performance.

Workplace Diversity

A workforce is labeled as diverse when it is made up of personnel who differ in characteristics that they have based their social identity. Individuals may vary on either primary or secondary dimension. Hamde (2008) lists age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, physical or mental abilities, and gender as some of the primary influences while language, religion, family status, work experience, educational background, and income as the secondary dimensions. The primary factors have a significant impact on the workforce as they shape the self-image of an individual and their worldview.

Workplace diversity provides employees with the opportunity to learn from each other as they make efforts to understand the differences. Mazur (2010) comments that cultural diversity impacts management styles, staff retention, recruitment and retention, and decision making processes in businesses. In addition, it develops and improves workplaces through supporting learning experiences for both employers and employees. Organizations that have embraced diversity are guaranteed of success and have a competitive advantage over their competitors. Leaders are actively engaged in developing and implementing diversity plans. They also assess the handling of workplace diversity issues to improve the adaptability of their organizations. Personnel from different cultures help bring individual experiences, talents, and ideas in adapting to the highly dynamic markets. According to Martin (2014), an organization can efficiently provide services to the global market using a diverse collection of experiences and skills where the employees are inspired to perform their best abilities.

According to Martin (2014), employees who subscribe to dissimilar cultures have different ways of viewing, thinking, and doing things which help them analyze issues at hand from a variety of perspectives. Mazur (2010) argues that this is difficult to realize whenever the personnel belongs to the same culture as they share the same experiences and perspective.

Therefore, a diverse workforce provides an organization with a vast knowledge base as they interact in their workplace. Cultural diversity is essential particularly for groups that are planning to expand into other markets and countries and become international. The employees can overcome culture shock as the company makes a global expansion. Martin (2014) states that entering a new country requires the gathering of information regarding the risks, customs, and local laws of the overseas country as they design strategies to overcome identified risks. However, businesses that operate with a diverse labor force can employ the knowledge and information of their personnel to achieve the outlined goals as they overcome the barriers. A company that operates in the United States and has a diverse workforce can use information about a new market they have identified in Germany from their German employees regarding applicable tax regulations and other laws that are relevant to their type of business.

Several strategies can be executed under a diverse workforce to ensure a higher productivity, profit, and returns on investment. Knowing how to manage cultural diversity helps understand why people act or behave in different ways and minimizes the risks of misunderstandings. Kaur (2014) states that organizational dynamics have shifted due to globalization. Management is finding techniques to overcome the cultural differences and also to manage a cross-cultural workforce. Cultural diversity has impacted organizations positively as they make a smooth integration of the overseas culture into their structure.

Diversity can also result in issues of time, cost, and efficiency if they are not appropriately managed. Lozano and Escrich (2017) state that inability to attract and retain employees, loss of business performance, and productivity can arise due to increased conflict. There can also be unhealthy tensions between management and employees and inability to retain valuable employees which result in loss of investments. Diversity in the workplace may create

language barriers that give rise to ineffective communication and cause confusion, low morale, and lack of teamwork. Mazur (2010) agrees that there are workers who are not ready to accept that the cultural and social in the workplace is changing and they are not prepared to take new ideas which hinder organizational progress. In workplaces where there exists cultural diversity, some individuals indulge in interpersonal conflicts as they have different customs, trends, beliefs, traditions, opinions, values, thoughts, and norms. Lozano and Escrich (2017) state that in the individual identity towards dimensions such as politics, religion, and culture come up with time. These personal qualities offer the actual essence of diversity, and they can hinder the achievement of a goal mainly where mutual efforts and collaboration are critical.

Cultural diverse workers develop differences in opinions and other variables that break development of unity. Employees may be involved in a conflict with each other on issues that are not related to the work at all such as national football matches between two countries and other unrelated matters. These interpersonal conflicts in work result in the growth of negative emotions among workforces and loss of productivity. Businesses have expanded across the border to create a competitive advantage. However, operating in several countries is more difficult as it presents a challenge to manage more than the local market only. Cultural differences that exist between markets cannot be controlled using a unified approach. One requires a perfect knowledge regarding a host country's values and norms to understand the behaviors of residents. According to Mazur (2010), globalization has resulted in cultural differences that have limited the communication processes and hinder employees to adapt to each other and also caused dissatisfaction in the workplace. A dissatisfied workforce leads to a lower performance level. In addition, cultural diversity has resulted in miscommunication, dysfunctional adaption behaviors, and creation of barriers.

Conclusion

Globalization has enabled organizations to have a diverse workforce. Companies are shifting from their local and regional markets into global markets where they serve different customers. They have engaged a diverse workforce to achieve a better understanding of the economic, social, political, legal, and cultural requirements of the foreign country. A significant number of employees have understood and adjusted to the workplace diversity as the organizations continue to increase inclusiveness. The management is training their employees to be sensitive to cross-cultural differences. In addition, others are encouraging their workers to accept tasks that are assigned across borders and offering foreign language training. This paper has focused on the positive and negative impacts of globalization and how it has supported a diverse workforce. The diversity issues are important especially with the increased movement of people and ideas that have promoted differences in the population of many countries. Diversity has the potential to improve the productivity of an enterprise while maintaining a higher competitive advantage against rivals. Therefore, companies and businesses that are aiming to expand into new global markets must focus on diversity and adopt strategies that guarantee a total inclusivity. Organizations through the management should take measures to manage diversity in their workforce to yield the maximum potential of employees and gain a competitive advantage.

Recommendations

Woods et al. (2011) comment that diversity determines the levels of openness to dissimilarity characteristics that are available amongst the members, work groups, and culture. Individuals must be ready to confront one another on a person-to-person basis and overcome stereotype and language barriers. The human resource personnel should widen their recruiting

base by utilizing numerous recruiting tools such as online platforms. This approach guarantees a diverse workforce as recruits are chosen from different geographic areas with different cultures. Woods et al. (2011) give another recommendation as supporting employees to learn new languages through providing them with opportunities. Companies that are focusing on expanding into the global market should introduce training programs as this would enable the business to recruit personnel from a more extensive base as the language barriers are eliminated when considering applications.

Organizations should conduct systematic learning to study the cultural differences that exist in a market and how businesses are done in the country. This strategy leads to inclusivity in the structure as employees have already learned of the cross-cultural differences and the sensitive values and norms within the overseas areas. Information on the host country and their culture improves the ability of the employees to work with a diverse workforce. Companies that implement the above strategies are guaranteed to enhance the strength of the workers to perform within a different culture.

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