

LOYOLA-INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COLLABORATION

LOYOLA COLLEGE CHENNAI – 600 034

BBA-FRANCE – END SEMESTER EXAMINATION

THIRD SEMESTER – NOVEMBER 2024

BBAFR 337 – MANAGING DIVERSITY



Date: 13-11-2024

Dept. No.

Max. : 100 Marks

Time: 01:00 pm-04:00 pm

I. Give short answers:

(10 x 3= 30

marks)

1. Why is workplace diversity essential in today's 21st-century business environment?
2. What is the known and unknown in the Cultural Iceberg model, and how does it explain cultural differences?
3. How do Masculine cultures differ from Feminist cultures? Provide examples of each.
4. What are the differences between flat and hierarchical organizational structures?
5. Can having a multicultural team enhance workplace performance? Discuss.
6. What is power distance?
7. What is Transformational leadership? Provide examples to illustrate this leadership style.
8. What strategies can be used to resolve conflicts in an intercultural work environment?
9. Explain negotiation management in business situations and its importance.
10. How does employer- employee relationship vary across cultures?

II. Answer in detail: (Any 2)

(2 x 15= 30

marks)

1. Explain Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions in detail.
2. Discuss about the various leadership styles present in the corporate world.
3. Compare and contrast different business practices prevalent between Asian and American companies. Give examples.

III. Read the Cases below and answer the questions:

(2 x 20= 40

marks)

Case 1: 'Intercultural management in the Indian context'

India, one of the world's most culturally diverse nations, presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for businesses operating within its borders. With over 1.4 billion people, hundreds of

languages, multiple religions, and various regional traditions, managing intercultural dynamics is crucial for effective leadership and organizational success in India. For both domestic and international companies, navigating this cultural diversity is essential to thriving in the Indian marketplace.

Understanding Cultural Diversity in India

India's cultural diversity is often reflected in its workplace. Employees come from diverse regions with different languages, religious practices, and social norms. For example, the northern part of India, with states like Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, has a more collectivist culture that values group harmony and family ties. Meanwhile, the southern states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala place greater emphasis on individual achievement and education. Similarly, India's caste system, while diminishing in influence in urban areas, still impacts societal structures and workplace relationships in rural regions.

The "Cultural Iceberg" model is an excellent way to understand these differences. The visible aspects of Indian culture, such as food, festivals, clothing, and language, are only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath the surface lie deeper values and beliefs, such as respect for hierarchy, reverence for elders, and collective responsibility. A manager who understands these invisible cultural traits is better positioned to lead effectively in India.

India has a high power distance culture, meaning there is a significant gap between those in authority and subordinates. This is evident in most organizations, where decision-making is typically centralized at the top management level. Employees often avoid questioning their superiors out of respect for hierarchy. As a result, foreign managers or companies operating in India need to understand that communication may not always be direct, and employees may be hesitant to openly disagree or offer alternative solutions. A participative leadership style, commonly seen in Western cultures, may not immediately resonate with Indian employees, although younger, urban employees are increasingly open to more egalitarian management approaches.

Effective communication in India is a challenge due to linguistic diversity. While English is widely spoken in business settings, nuances in communication styles can lead to misunderstandings. Indians tend to communicate indirectly and avoid direct confrontation to maintain harmony, which can sometimes be confusing to foreign managers used to more direct forms of communication.

Multicultural teams in India, which may consist of people from different regions and backgrounds, offer immense potential for innovation and diverse perspectives. However, managing these teams requires sensitivity to cultural differences. For example, time orientation varies greatly. In northern India, people tend to have a more flexible view of time, while in southern India, punctuality is more valued. Managers must be adaptable to these regional nuances to foster collaboration.

Leadership in India is often seen through the lens of authority and respect. Charismatic leadership styles are prevalent, where leaders are expected to be decisive, knowledgeable, and somewhat paternalistic. Leaders

who can balance authority with empathy and cultural sensitivity often gain the trust of their employees. A successful leader in India must be able to navigate the complex dynamics of hierarchy, communication, and regional cultural differences.

Case Questions:
marks)

(5 x 4= 20

1. How does the “Cultural Iceberg” model help managers understand the deeper aspects of Indian workplace culture?
2. Why is it important to understand power distance when managing in an Indian organizational setting?
3. How can multicultural teams in India be both an asset and a challenge for managers?
4. What strategies can managers use to handle communication barriers in a linguistically diverse workplace like India?
5. What leadership qualities are most effective in the Indian context, and how do they differ from leadership styles in the West?

Case 2: Managing Student conflict.

At IESEG Paris, a group of five students—Maria from Spain, David from the United States, Li from China, Ahmed from the UAE, and Priya from India—were assigned to work on a group project for their final business management course. While the task seemed straightforward at first, their different cultural backgrounds soon began to influence their work styles, communication, and expectations, leading to conflicts that had to be navigated carefully.

Cultural Differences and Initial Conflicts

The group’s project involved designing a market entry strategy for a new product. Early on, the students faced challenges due to their differing approaches to communication and teamwork. Maria, from Spain, was highly vocal and preferred brainstorming and sharing ideas freely, whereas Li, from China, adopted a more reserved and structured approach, waiting until she had well-formed thoughts before speaking. This led to tension as Maria felt Li wasn’t contributing enough, while Li thought Maria’s style was chaotic.

David, from the United States, embraced individualism and was comfortable with taking the lead, delegating tasks, and focusing on efficiency. However, Ahmed, from the UAE, came from a more collectivist and relationship-focused culture. He felt uncomfortable with David’s authoritative style, preferring consensus

and discussion before making decisions. Ahmed's discomfort escalated when David made unilateral decisions about the presentation format, leading to friction between the two.

Priya, from India, observed the rising tension but remained neutral for a while, unsure of how to navigate the cultural sensitivities. She noticed that Li's calm demeanor was being misinterpreted as indifference and that Ahmed's preference for harmony was clashing with David's more direct approach.

Escalating Conflict and Leadership in Negotiation

As the deadline for the assignment approached, the group was struggling with communication, deadlines, and roles. The students' diverse work ethics, including David's preference for tight schedules and Maria's more flexible deadlines, further added to the challenges. Ahmed, who placed significant importance on maintaining relationships, began to avoid group discussions, leading to a lack of involvement in key decisions. Meanwhile, Maria and David argued over the direction of the project, and Li's ideas were overlooked due to the louder voices in the group.

At this critical point, Priya decided to step in and take on a leadership role, realizing the team needed better coordination and understanding of one another's perspectives. She called for a group meeting, suggesting that each member express their concerns openly and respectfully.

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

In the meeting, Priya demonstrated empathetic leadership. She emphasized the importance of respecting each other's communication styles and encouraged the group to take a more collaborative approach to decision-making. By mediating between David's focus on efficiency and Ahmed's need for consensus, Priya facilitated a compromise where decisions were discussed openly but timelines were adhered to.

She also gave Li the opportunity to share her ideas in writing before discussions, allowing her to contribute in a way that aligned with her communication style. Maria, after realizing how her assertiveness was affecting others, agreed to tone down her approach, allowing for more inclusive dialogue.

Through these efforts, the group was able to resolve their differences, dividing tasks in a way that respected everyone's strengths and preferences. Priya's leadership and negotiation skills helped the team complete the assignment successfully, while also fostering mutual understanding among the group members.

Case Questions:

(5 x 4= 20

marks)

1. What cultural differences contributed to the conflicts in this group, and how did they affect communication and decision-making?

2. How did Priya's leadership style help resolve the conflicts within the team? What qualities did she demonstrate that were effective in this context?
3. What strategies could the team have adopted earlier to avoid the escalation of conflicts?
4. How did Ahmed's preference for consensus and David's individualistic approach lead to tension, and what compromises were necessary to manage these differences?
5. What role did cultural sensitivity play in the group's success, and how can it be applied to future multicultural teams?
