

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN EUROPEAN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODELS

DEMYEN SUZANA
WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA
suzana_demyen@yahoo.com

Abstract:

Over time there have emerged a number of human resource management models, each with different characteristics and specificities. Starting with the Japanese model and up to the general European one, each has introduced a different perspective, not only into literature, but in practice also.

This paper addresses the European model of human resource management in terms of a critical vision, comparing countries at the most important features of national models.

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1. Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century has introduced a general management, and also a comparative approach regarding human resource management, a trend that has expanded taking into account some specific cultural and scientific aspects. And in the current context of globalization, a comparative approach to human resources is necessary and imperative binding, due to the internationalization of economic and socio – cultural criterias.

2. Comparative management and human resources practices

As defined by William Newman, international management deals with „similarities and differences in local management practices in different countries". Extrapolating this explanation to human resources in generally, we find that comparative human resource management outlines similarities and differences on personal practice of countries and contexts, but also can be applied in terms of different aspects within the same country, in the analysis of comparative aspects between different regions.

The definition given by O. Nicolescu is: comparative management represents the "science of management processes and relations in organizations that operate in different national cultural contexts, focusing on identifying and analyzing managerial similarities and differences in order to facilitate the international transfer of know-how and managerial increased functionality, efficiency and effectiveness of organizations. "

Comparative Management is a concept that requires the study of several aspects. The first argument which advocates a comparative approach is that over the years, between the countries all over the world there have been created a series of links and dependencies, both on the economic and the cultural side, social or informational, which are reflected in management processes. On the other hand, identifying cultural differences allows to set a series of values and standards, and makes an objective assessment of local or national issues.

In Cristian Virgil Marinas's vision, "the comparative study area was extended at each company functions and management functions" (Cristian Virgil Marinas, 2010, pg 13), it is therefore an appropriate moment to adapt this practice to the area of human resources, especially human resource management, in order to facilitate an adequate transfer of methods and practices.

Comparisons between different management culture help to identify and implement new practices of human resource management, by taking over new methods from international models, applicable under local management in order to increase resource efficiency.

Worldwide, during the recent decades, the economic competition has grown in all business areas and management tries to adapt its practices, processes and methods according to the general context. Therefore, human resources management must adapt to new requirements arising "as a result of the development of goods and services markets, especially as the regionalization process - globalization intensifies" (Cristian Virgil Marinas, 2010, pg 17) .

Statistics show that currently in the United States of America "from 1000 executive managers of large companies, 264 have core specialization in Finance, 217 in Marketing, 193 in engineering / technical field, 144 were company founders, 110 come from manufacturing field, 73 from legal area and 7 of planning field" (A.R. Webber, 2000).

3. Models of Human Resource Management

The background created by globalization, factor of dual role, generator, but on the other hand "partner" of labor migration, gradually led to the creation of a complex working environment, a multicultural one, sometimes unstable, encouraging element of a free movement of resources of any kind, and the internationalization of markets. Globalization has influenced business by determining the emergence of multinationals and the internationalization of management, "the location of firms, institutional homogenization and transnational cooperation."

European management is defined in the literature (C. Brewster, A. Hegewish, L. Holden, Cristian Virgil Marinas, 2010, pg 233) to be very complex, because of the cultural differences and social and historical past at the same time. HR systems differ from one country to another because each frame has its own political or territorial laws, regulations or systems, their own culture.

From the perspective of Eugen Burduş (2001, pg 300), European management is seen as a concept that takes into account the "problem of solving and decision making at all levels of organizations that would distinguish European identity strategies and planning, implementation and evaluation of change "(Cristian Virgil Marinas, 2010, 219).

The authors in literature, by the means of a comparative approach to European management characteristics and those specific for the United States and Japan, identify a number of specific features. Unlike the latter, the European model of management is primarily a flexible characterized by diversity. This refers not only economic, but also social influences, cultural or political values and specific beliefs.

The European space is not uniform, but is dominated by diversity and complexity, which is determined primarily by the different background of the component states. We cannot speak of a homogeneous continent, but rather a complex heterogeneity of a framework in which each country has its own characteristics in terms of management. The European Union principle, therefore the "unity in diversity", can be identified also at a managerial level.

Focusing attention on human resources management is a main feature of Europe. Unlike American management where attention focuses on managers and shareholders associations, European management focuses, in addition, on the employees and trade unions.

A more prominent approach regarding human resources has developed gradually, concerning a view from two perspectives, first as a mean of achieving investment and also object of investment, while on the other hand as the reason for it. HR strategy must be linked to the overall strategy of the company, taking into account first of all their efficiency, their use at a level of high performance while ensuring proper working conditions.

If we talk about Europe, in comparison with other management models, we can not speak of a "national identity management" (Marinas, pg 223), nor of a common language. It is instead required to gain additional knowledge of language and intercultural communication. There can be identified a much greater diversity and a high situational complexity.

Analyzing all the socio-cultural and economic characteristics, we can identify a Euromanagement, having well-established coordinates, which are different from the Japanese and American system. Ovidiu Nicolescu speaks about "Europeanization" while I Mihaș (2002, pg 34), includes the Euromanagement concept in the "mosaic model" category. Each region of Europe is characterized by a number of specific characteristics, the European Union is divided into a number of five types of managerial culture:

1. **Northern Group** (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands)
2. **German Group** (Germany, Austria, Switzerland)
3. **Anglo-Saxon Group** (UK, Ireland)
4. **Latin Group** (France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg)
5. **Eastern Group** (Greece, Turkey, Poland, Romania, Russia).

Each of these countries has different characteristics in general management field and human resource management in particular. Cultural diversity is one of the main features of European management. Above mentioned countries have some similar characteristics within the same group, but may vary from one case to another, depending on economic, social, ethnic, religious or cultural specific.

Thus, states such as Spain, Italy or Portugal are characterized by a hierarchical system management, individualist system and relational approach.

For France, as in Belgium or Luxembourg, can be noted a higher degree of the states intervention in the economy, unlike the Northern countries, where we identify the opposite tendency. French management is an authoritative one, without promoting relational approach. Planning is not promoted and the emphasis are headed over education and literacy in general. French management has to take into account a number of issues, such as labor market developments, changes in the demographic structure of the country, interventionist principles, human resources practices. Staff recruitment and selection in French management include among other issues the graphological analysis system, while training is enhanced by specializations which are regulated by internal rules or national law.

Northern countries on the other hand promote liberalism, noninterventionist characteristics, flexibility, the concern for the quality of life of employees. Northern style has some similarities with the Anglo-Saxon one, there is a relatively small distance between hierarchical levels, focusing on general training.

The most popular management style in Germany is the participatory one and involves teamwork, discipline, punctuality, precision, promotion of performance. However, German style is represented by a low organizational control, unlike the

countries of Eastern Europe, where control is emphasized. Technical skills are considered essential in the German management, unlike the Anglo-Saxon or Northern style. Involvement of managers in making decisions and designing strategies is more pronounced, especially if we are talking about top - management, where the level of formalization is high. The same situation is seen within the Scandinavian countries, with the exception of Denmark where management department involvement is lower in magnitude. Recruitment methods aim the implementation of a whole process, from receipt of resumes, interviews support, other tests, candidates are selected based on educational preparation, professional recommendations and references, continuing professional development of permanent employees at work through specialized training, with a constant concern for the acquisition of new skills. Evaluation takes place according to the industry, the field in which the activity is developed and rewards are offered on some form of salary, on the other hand as bonuses based on performance.

Great Britain, on the other hand, promotes a short-term oriented vision, without offering attention to human direct relationships. Emphasis is placed on elitist education but also on education in prestigious institutions, the Anglo-Saxon group being closer to the American principles of leadership. British management culture is characterized mainly by discipline, respect, focus on results, clarity, stability, individualism.

As in the countries of Eastern Europe and those dominated by the Latin communities can be observed the existence of well-trained managers who have analytical skills, there is also a strong hierarchical system and centralization of decision level. It can be met a more informal communication and control inputs. (Schneider, Barsoux, 1993). In contrast, Germanic countries are characterized by decentralization, participatory management, functional organization and high degree of specialization. Also, results orientation is a landmark on the last group of countries.

In contrast, Northern countries, and those that belong to the Anglo - Saxon group have a high degree of flexibility, they use the principle of delegation, control of production with a high degree of decentralization. However, in countries such as Denmark, Sweden and Finland, as in the Netherlands and Norway, the public sector is more prominent, but also pursues the main objective with performance. On this last point it intersects with Germany, which has the same idea as the main target of achieving a high level of efficiency and performance. Labour flexibility is more popular in northern Europe, as well as part-time jobs, a high percentage of the population are employed in this scheme.

However, the level of economic development of a country indicates whether a country is rich or developing. The two categories of countries show differences in the degree of centralization of power, and of collectivism or individualism, collectivism being a common concept for developing countries. The difference between them is that the cultures that promote collective system, dominates a group membership, against personal opinions and ideas. Examples are Portugal, Turkey and Greece, which, unlike the Northern countries, Germanic or Anglo - Saxon ones do not accept individualistic system.

Some management systems, although apparently present a set of similarities, can also highlight differences from each other. About British or the northern one, is said to be similar, but management systems begin to differentiate from one another when we talk about gender issues. Northern management system, unlike the German, promotes the culture of feminine issue, but also supports highlighting a broad set of values, such as competitiveness, prosperity, efficiency and performance. Cultural dimensions of female/male type or not similar within the same group of countries, while there can be found different management practices within the same group. Male culture is the primary present in the Eastern European countries, the Latin, Greek and Turkish ones,

but unlike them, Spain, Portugal and France, although belonging to the same group of countries, promote female culture and individualism.

Conclusions

HR function has provided a number of advantages in the Union, which can be summarized as following:

- Increasing objectives: training, development, recruitment, human resources management improvement;
- Acknowledgment of system and legal framework related to human resources management;
- Integration and flexible employees;
- Advanced training for managers;
- Technical and technological alignment with international standards.

The biggest difference can be recorded in terms of professional training systems, criterion approached differently by each element separately and can not be generalized across an entire group of countries. These management practices among others affect the management and motivation of human resources in the countries concerned. Statistics show that the main motivational factors remain the need for achievement, safety and job security, wage levels, and the need for belonging.

HR practices are different in Europe, depending on the country or region where it applies. Mainly based on their cultural differences are found, a basis is also certain groups of countries.

The general trend across Europe in terms of human resources strategic approach is the vision of this section. The design of strategies, especially in international relations becomes more difficult as the structure is heterogeneous unions or regional groups through culture and vision.

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