

Book Review

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International Organizational Behavior – Transcending Borders and Cultures

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In the Globalised business environment employees need to move across borders, interact and be a part of diverse workforce. Doing this requires both, a sophisticated understanding of cultural difference and stock of skills to maintain the team cohesiveness and efficiency. This book discusses conceptual framework required for a transcendent understanding of cultures and ways to deal with issues arising from same under organizational behavior.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I deals with “The role of culture in Organizational Behavior”. Part II focuses on “Leading people and teams across cultural boundaries”. Part III describes topics related to “Building and managing a global workforce”.

PART I: THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

The first part lays the foundation for understanding organizational behavior across cultural boundaries. It introduces the concept of culture and tries to place it through Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and GLOBE cultural framework. The description of various factors that shape work related perceptions and attitude is expressed in a clear and concise manner. Workplace issues like cross cultural communications which are crucial

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in international business scenario have been explained in detail in this section. Conflict, which is a major OB issues is dealt with different types and styles to manage same in international business scenario. However addition of sufficient examples discussing real workplace issues would have further enhanced the section.

PART II: LEADING PEOPLE AND TEAMS ACROSS CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

The second part discusses the concept of motivation and applies universal western theories across various cultures. This section also touches upon the functional approach on managing cultural diversity issue, synergetic multiculturalism, which involves being open to the positive aspects of all cultures and leveraging cultural differences in ways that benefit the organization. Addition of cases similar to that of Vineet Nayar from HCL in transnational leadership would have helped. The author discusses the challenges of multicultural teams and approaches to handle them effectively while stating examples from PWC and IBM. The section describes various types of international partnerships and alliances and organizational issues to be dealt with concise guidelines.

PART III: BUILDING AND MANAGING A GLOBAL WORKFORCE

The first part in this chapter clearly states guidelines to be considered while recruitment, selection and performance evaluation of international or expatriates employees. The discussion regarding the tradeoffs and challenges associated is a good read. The author suggests several methods to structure the compensation and rewards for employees with international assignments. However the components of international remuneration are covered in a unstructured manner and a more elaborate description is required. This section also handles discussion related to international career path and options for staffing foreign operations like HCNs, PCNs and TCNs. The last chapter in this part talks about building relations between management and employees in the international setting which is quite relevant in time s of global business setting.

The Book fairly covers all aspects related to international organizational behavior issues. It can be used as a text book for understanding the cross

cultural issues in managing international employees and teams. Case studies of companies like Teknovus, SAP Labs, General electric, and PWC etc makes the concepts clear and relevant to the subject discussed. The book covers transnational business norms in different countries like Russia, China, South Korea, Mexico, and India with suitable examples. The point where the book lacks is fundamental correlation of suggested solutions to OB theories. The initial chapter discusses certain motivation theories but overall suggested solutions to international OB issues have been dealt without relating them to any theoretical base. In future edition the author can include correlation of OB theories to OB challenges in business in a manner that is effective in international settings. Overall the book covers the listed topics in a justified manner. For HR practitioners and students the book could prove to be good read to understand the international OB scenario.