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Values in Managing a Contemporary Enterprise – the Perspective of Intercultural Management

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to define the role and importance of values in managing a contemporary enterprise, while taking into account the perspective of intercultural management. Values are a very important element affecting employees' motivation and commitment in achieving common goals, especially in a culturally diverse work environment. The first part of the article explains the essence of management through values. The next part describes the role of values in management and benefits stemming from managing by values. Next intercultural management and its dimensions are discussed, whereas the last part describes the challenges related to values in intercultural management.

KEYWORDS: values, managing by values, intercultural management

STRESZCZENIE

Wartości w zarządzaniu współczesnym przedsiębiorstwem – perspektywa zarządzania międzykulturowego

Celem artykułu jest określenie roli i znaczenia wartości w zarządzaniu współczesnym przedsiębiorstwem, z uwzględnieniem perspektywy zarządzania międzykulturowego. Wartości są bardzo istotnym elementem, który wpływa na motywację i zaangażowanie pracowników w realizację wspólnych celów, zwłaszcza w zróżnicowanym kulturowo środowisku pracy. W pierwszej części artykułu wyjaśniono istotę zarządzania przez wartości. W kolejnej części opisano rolę wartości w zarządzaniu przedsiębiorstwem i korzyści, jakie wynikają z zarządzania przez wartości. Następnie zdefiniowano

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zarządzanie międzykulturowe i przedstawiono jego wymiary. W ostatniej części artykułu opisano wyzwania związane z wartościami w zarządzaniu międzykulturowym.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: wartości, zarządzanie przez wartości, zarządzanie międzykulturowe

Introduction

The evolution of international business has continued to grow for several decades. This has resulted in the advent of the era of globalisation, which affects the way in which companies should be run, not only in terms of competition, markets and target audiences but also in the way in which human resources are managed, including culturally diverse workforce. A range of cultural challenges that multinational companies must cope with involve the synergistic approach to national cultural dimensions and leadership styles (Herciu, 2014).

Hence, cross-cultural differences have surfaced and cultural constraints in management theories have been widely discussed among scientists and practitioners. Hofstede's seminal 1980 work, *Culture's consequences: international differences in work-related values*, has become the earmark of the era that witnessed systematic investigations of cross-cultural differences. Values, assumptions, beliefs, cognitive and behavioural patterns that vary across cultures have been identified, as will be discussed in the next section. Managing cross-cultural differences has emerged as one of the key challenges for managers dealing with expatriation and culturally diverse workforce in both the global and local business contexts. In recent years cross-cultural differences are perceived less as a threat to positive organizational outcomes and more as an opportunity to leverage for organizational growth and learning (Aycan, Kanungo, & Mendoça, 2014).

Most cross-cultural studies focus on cultural values and cross-cultural management. Several studies devoted to cultural values analyze differences and similarities in value orientations amongst similar cohorts across different countries, for example, managers, employees, or business students (Zhang, Straub, & Kusyk 2007; Geare, Edgar, McAndrew, Harney, Cafferkey, & Dundon, 2014).

The study by Almond and Gonzalez Menendez (2014) is worth highlighting here as it provides a comprehensive review of how the cross-cultural research has dealt with ideas, values and norms. Almond and Gonzalez Menendez (2014) argue that the majority of the existing work is under-theorized—an observation the authors are inclined to agree based

on their own assessment of literature in this study. The fact that few studies included in this review has made their way into top ranking management journals may be indicative of this deficiency; however, it may also reflect a declining interest after a heyday in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Culture has been defined in more than 150 ways within many disciplines. Aycan, Kanungo and Mendoça (2014) refer to culture as a loosely coupled system of values, assumptions, beliefs, norms and behaviours shared among the members of a human group and differentiating it from other groups. When you visit a new country, you may almost immediately realize that you are in a different culture by observing driving behaviour, eating habits, dress code, greeting patterns, conversational styles and so on. However, it takes time to realize that a culture is different from your own also because people hold different assumptions, values, beliefs and norms.

Effective management of global workforce requires understanding and appreciation of cross-cultural differences in the subtle aspects of culture including values, assumptions, beliefs and norms (Aycan, Kanungo, & Mendoça, 2014).

The essence of Managing by Values—concept and goals

In recent years, significant changes have been taking place in models of people management. We have gone from models focused on the results (management by objectives), to those focused on what people should know how to do (management by competencies) and finally, to those which recognize the role played by corporate values (management by values).

Shared values are a necessary condition for a human group to be as solid and stable as possible. This observation leads to a new model of management based on corporate values. Values are lights that guide people's behaviour. We all possess them, although they do not have to be the same, nor do we have to share the same criteria of their importance. However, corporate values are the guidelines that should guide the behaviour of those who make up an organization. Employees will feel comfortable within an organization if an important part of their personal values coincide with organizational values. Our behaviour (inside and outside the company) is—should be—consistent with values we profess.

An organisation, as an institution, does not itself possess or create its own internal values (Stackmanet, Pinder, & Connor, 2000). Organizational values are the product of internal and external culture-creating factors and the social environment from which the employees of a given organisation come. These values can also have a historical or religious basis. This way

of defining values is, in the authors' opinion, highly relevant from the perspective of cross-cultural management.

Management by values is a strategic management model based on the development of cultural factors within organizations. Management by values does not neglect the importance of objectives or the need to offer people opportunities to improve their professional skills. The strength of the model lies in reflective conversations (on any relevant professional topic) on how particular behaviours or outcomes (of an individual or a team) fit into the values of the organisation. These conversations represent an opportunity to share and reflect on the interpretation of corporate values and the impact they should have, among others, on daily decisions, on relationships between colleagues or with clients, and on the setting of priorities.

These conversations can be collective or individual and should be geared towards obtaining commitments and—if necessary—changes. It will be necessary to take note of the commitments made and, within the agreed timeframe, resume the conversation with the aim of assessing the degree of achievement of what has been agreed on.

More concretely, values can be defined as those principles, virtues or qualities that are perceived as positive or of great importance to a social group. They are normally applied to people, but it has been two decades since the importance of shared values as a guide for decision making in companies was acknowledged. Such values do not only allow for harmonic interactions between employees but also facilitate the achievement of more ambitious objectives and, therefore, increase a company's competitiveness.

The term *management by values* was introduced to management by Ken Blanchard and Michael O'Connor (Blanchard & O'Connor, 1997).

Basically, this type of management substitutes norms with values, incorporates ethics in the management of companies and seeks to align personal fulfilment with the objectives of the organisation in such a way that benefits are maximised through the empowerment of employees. The characteristic features of management by values include:

- It does not seek to replace traditional management, but to take from it those elements that are useful and to incorporate them into management based on other priorities.
- It is a form of focused leadership that allows an individual to act according to the company's values.
- It exerts a special influence on the transformation of people, on the change of their attitudes and behaviour, without focusing too much on the transmission of information.
- It facilitates the management of change by drawing up a strategic vision that leaves aside the short-sighted vision of roles.

- It encourages the development of skills rather than mere training.
- It focuses on employees' motivation as the main driver of productivity.
- It structures the recruitment and selection of talent on a more humane basis.
- It defines values as the heart of an organization that integrates and shapes its identity.

The most relevant factors for a successful implementation of management by values include:

- Active involvement of senior management.
- Defining a shared vision through common values.
- Empowerment of collaborators.
- Boosting creativity.
- Fostering internal communication, positivism and a good working environment.
- Flexibility to adapt to changes.
- Recognising a job well done.

Although each company or organization must define the values that characterize it, some of the most common embrace respectful treatment, clear and honest communication, work responsibility, competitiveness and innovation, perseverance and discipline, excellence, honesty, closeness, teamwork.

Obviously, the values have to be real, shared by all and implemented in everyday practice.

If we are looking for people and teams which are autonomous, responsible, with a high level of involvement and aligned with the values (which must be taken into account in the priorities) of an organization, it is advisable to opt for a management model based on values.

Values in business management—benefits

Management by values is a social process. It results from interactions, and management systems provide opportunities to enhance social interactions, which play a vital role in motivating employees to work effectively. Hence, especially in cross-cultural management, the task of managers is to integrate employees around shared values, which means convincing people to accept and apply shared values in organizational practices (Knap-Stefaniuk & Burkiewicz, 2021).

Some of the most important benefits of values in business management include:

- This orientation adapts to highly dynamic and changeable contexts in which organizations develop and seeks the commitment and

responsible autonomy of all individuals who make up the organization to be effective.

- Management by values does not replace other traditional management models such as Direction by Objectives, but complements them with contributions from the fields of anthropology and sociology,
- Management by values reinforces the coherence between the organization's image, structure and effective personnel policy and its vision (where the organization wants to go). The daily tasks are thus framed in the effort to achieve this final strategic vision.
- Management by values promotes the inclusion of ethical and ecological principles in strategic management and the activities of the organizations. It starts from the premise that every organization, whether public or private, has a dual mission (the reason for its existence): economic and social.

Intercultural management—its essence, definitions and dimensions

Intercultural management is the combination of knowledge, insights and skills which are necessary for adequately dealing with national and regional cultures and differences between cultures, at several management levels within and between organisations (Burggraaf, 1998).

Any 21st century company whose workforce is multicultural should raise their employees' (especially managers') awareness of the impact of culture on people and their professional performance.

Companies must identify personal needs related to work, and develop effective strategies for identifying and understanding the differences between their own cultural values and those of others. They also should enhance multicultural communication skills, develop leadership and influencing skills in multicultural contexts, as well as teach employees how to manage conflicts arising from multicultural relationships. Their human resources planning should account for multiculturality and accordingly develop their policies for recruitment, selection, integration and development of multicultural human resources, using adequate resources and tools.

As for the definitions of culture in organizations, it can be understood as a shared system of meanings about the world in which workers live. Individuals in a group share the structuring of their world and see things in the same way. This unites them as a group and creates a sense of belonging to the group.

On the other hand, culture is relative. There are many different cultures and subcultures, and each perceives the world differently. It is important that a company and managers understand that no one is "truer" or "better" than others. The phrase "common sense" reflects what "all members of the group know." What is common sense in one culture might seem "very uncommon" in another, which is something companies must take into account.

In addition, culture is learned. Culture is not something genetic. You are not born with values and assumptions. They are learned in a very subtle way, while coexisting with other members of one's group. That is why it is also said that culture is a group concept. It is perceived as a generalization of the group, but it does not define the individual. Each person has different layers of cultural programming.

There are three dimensions of culture in a company:

- Relationships: This dimension refers to the company's internal and external relationships, and includes how the company values relationships and how they develop. Family, social support, stereotypes, relationships between functions, departments and cultural groups and gender are valued. Consideration is also given to whether one works in a group or individually, whether one tolerates emotions, whether one is open, or private and reserved. The company's attitude towards nature is also considered, among other aspects.
- Time: This dimension is related to the passage of time and to whether the company makes short-term or long-term plans. It also takes into account whether employees are aware of their evolution and the evolution of cultures in the organization.
- Communication: This dimension refers to information and how it is passed. In this dimension the dominant language is taken into account, as well as other linguistic models and other accepted methods of communication (e.g. acronyms).

Through values, organizations transmit to their employees information on what shared assumptions are desirable and communicate them what is expected of them. Some of the values present in Spanish companies are the following (Ventosa, 2012):

- AENA. People management.
- BSH Electrodomésticos España. Our customers can trust us. We are leaders in innovation in our sector. Our collaborators are the basis of our success. We enhance the value of our company. We are committed to with the environment and society.
- CEMEX. We seek excellence in our results and forge long-lasting relationships, based on trust, in order to live our lives with intensity. Our core values are collaboration, integrity and leadership.

- Endesa. People, occupational health and safety, teamwork, ethical conduct, customer orientation, innovation, results orientation, community and environment.
- Ericsson Spain. Professionalism, respect, perseverance. Respect covers three aspects: "empowerment," "citizens of the world" and "diversity." The definition of the value of respect implies that "when we show respect to others, new possibilities open up for them to learn thanks to sharing knowledge and skills. We have different backgrounds, but we are part of the same team. Our diversity and global awareness make us better valued by our customers." Diversity is perceived as an added value that enriches us as people and as a company.
- FCC Commitment. Efficiency, excellence, innovation, integrity, responsibility and teamwork.
- Adecco Foundation. Social spirit, commitment to the foundation and people, professionalism and respect for diversity.
- Mahou-San Miguel Group. Openness, vocation for service, commitment, collaboration, integrity, excellence, trust.
- Iberdrola. Ethics and Corporate Responsibility, results economic, respect for the environment, sense of belonging and trust, safety and reliability, orientation towards the environment, and customer.
- ISS Facility Services. Honesty, initiative, responsibility and quality.
- MRW. Commitment, efficiency, transparency, passion and innovation.
- NH Hotels. Orientation to people, innovation, environmental responsibility, sense of responsibility and sense of business.
- Orange. Closeness, creativity, honesty, dynamism and simplicity.
- PortAdventure. Passion for the customer, own identity, commitment, team spirit.
- Red Eléctrica de España. In relation to people: respect and interest, ethical behaviour. In relation to the environment: respect for the environment, visible commitment to society. In relationship with businesses and markets: creativity and innovation, pride in belonging, orientation towards continuous improvement, quality and service to stakeholders, shared vision and objectives, responsibility for actions taken.
- Vodafone Spain. Speed, simplicity and trust through a certain obsession with the customer, a hunger for ambitious innovation and competitive, a global company with local roots.

The table below presents examples of organisational values declared by the largest companies in Poland (Table 1).

Table 1. Organisational values declared by the largest companies in Poland[1]

Company	Declared organizational values
PKN Orlen S.A.	Responsibility, development, people, energy, reliability [Orlen, 2012]
PGNiG S.A.	Responsibility, partnership, reliability, quality [PGNiG, 2013]
PGE S.A.	Cooperation and openness, passion and determination, safety and responsibility [PGE, 2015]
Grupa Lotos S.A	Cleanliness, openness, innovation, responsibility, professionalism, respect, transparency, cooperation [Lotos, 2015]
KGHM S.A	Safety, cooperation, results orientation, responsibility, courage [KGHM, 2015]
Tauron S.A.	Responsibility, openness, consistency, professionalism, customer orientation [Tauron, 2015]
PZU S.A.	Wisdom, imagination, simplicity [PZU, 2015]
Eurocash S.A.	Responsibility, reliability, teamwork, transparency, profit sharing, customer orientation, job satisfaction, entrepreneurship [Eurocash, 2015]

Source: Ceglinski, 2016, p. 132.

Many of the values declared by companies in Spain and Poland coincide.

The authors would like to refer to a report that seems particularly pertinent in the discussion on values and value management. The report presents the Eurotolerance Index which, in connection with a questionnaire on people's attitudes, is based on three measures derived from the global values survey[2]:

- Attitudes index: an indicator of attitudes towards minorities based on the result of the Eurobarometer survey. It presents four categories, the percentage of the Eurotolerance Index corresponds to the last two, passive and actively tolerant:
- Intolerant
- Ambivalent
- Passively tolerant
- Actively tolerant
- Securities index: measures the extent to which a country reflects certain values, according to their tendency to be traditional, modern or secular, based on items related to religion, family, divorce.

1 According to the 2014 Forbes list; http://www.forbes.pl/100-najwiekszych-firm--w-polsce--2014,ranking,175066,1,1.html

2 The World Values Survey (WVS) is a global network of social scientists who investigate value change in the world and its impact on social and political life. It was conducted in 97 countries from 1981 to 2007: www.worldvaluessurvey.org

- Self-expression index: measures the extent to which a nation values individual rights and self-expression, the capacity to be one in that nation.

A table presented below demonstrates that the countries that occupy the top five positions in the Index of Eurotolerance, are also at the top of the global ranking of competitiveness (Table 2).

Table 2. Eurotolerance and competitiveness index

Países ordenados según Índice de Eurotolerancia	Índice de Eurotolerancia				Informe Global Competitividad 2010-2011
	Puntuación	Actitudes	Valores	Autoexpresión	Ranking Competitividad
1. Suecia	15,00	14,81	15,00	15,00	2
2. Dinamarca	12,09	12,47	10,41	13,24	9
3.Países Bajos	11,42	12,66	7,59	13,85	8
4. Finlandia	9,49	13,83	7,50	7,03	7
5. Alemania	9,45	10,32	10,59	7,30	5
6. Austria	7,76	11,10	2,06	10,00	18
7.Reino Unido	7,70	11,30	2,44	9,26	12
8. Francia	7,38	10,91	4,59	6,55	15
9. Bélgica	7,35	9,35	4,50	8,11	19
10. Italia	7,17	13,44	1,69	6,28	48
11. España	6,57	15,00	0,84	3,78	42
12. Grecia	5,58	5,65	6,84	4,19	83
13. Irlanda	4,22	12,66	-8,63	8,58	29
14. Estados Unidos	3,07	n.a.	- 4,97	11,08	4
15. Portugal	1,99	11,10	-8,34	3,18	46

Source: Eurotolerance index.

Sweden, with the highest Eurotolerance Index, ranks second in competitiveness and Germany, fifth in Eurotolerance, ranks exactly the same in competitiveness. Although these conclusions are merely an observation, in the absence of empirical analyses that validate or not such a relationship, the data do not cease to be illustrative, with the United States being the only exception to the trend observed throughout the table: the higher the score in the Eurotolerance Index, the better the position in the ranking of competitiveness.

Cultural integration and values

The internationalisation of the work environment is increasingly influencing management processes that take place in modern organisations. It should be emphasized that intercultural interactions is a category inseparably linked with intercultural management. Such interactions should be

understood as mutual influences exerted by a person from one cultural background on another person or persons from a different culture.

When applied in different contexts, HRM practices will have a different meaning and thus will not necessarily lead to the desired behaviours. The design of the elements comprising high-commitment strategies is dependent on contextual knowledge which covers, among others, knowledge of local organizational structures, cultural values and labour regulations. In order to provide insight into the process of creating such strategies and the applicability of HRM across borders, it is worth having a look at the studies that illustrated them through a direct comparison of practices used in the same sample of different enterprises as in the study by Verburg et al. (1999), in which companies from China and the Netherlands are compared. Verburg's study reveals considerable differences between China and the Netherlands in the use of rewards, performance appraisal and career development in industrial enterprises. Also, the organizational culture of the companies studied varies distinctively between both countries. These variations are in line with the expected differences on the national cultural level. Hierarchy and discipline are clearly reflected in the way personnel is appraised, rewarded and managed in Chinese industrial enterprises.

In order to achieve effective organisational climate, it is necessary to recognise the importance of cultural differences. Doing so helps managers to better understand employees, international partners, competitors and stakeholders, and thus leads to improving their managerial skills and, ultimately, to the advancement of the organisation (Ganapathi & Panchanatham, 2013).

In the study of Jayasundera and George (2017) senior business executives of a multinational business process outsourcing conglomerate with branches in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Turkey and Egypt were interviewed on the cultural dimension of internationalisation. The results obtained suggest that organisational values reflect national culture and that employee performance is positively influenced by cultural factors. Cultural diversity of employees can benefit an organisation in various ways, including lower absenteeism and turnover.

People work effectively when they share a sense of achievement. Such a feeling builds a set of common values, which is most often implemented in an organisation by its managerial staff. Therefore, it is worth emphasising that a well-prepared manager who is aware of the importance of values knows how to unite his subordinates around common values and how to convince them to apply these values in practice. Only then can values contribute to increasing employees' motivation and commitment, which is especially important in cross-cultural management (Barnett & Karson, 1989).

Challenges related to values in intercultural management

Intercultural management is a difficult and responsible process involving both dialogue and clash between different cultures, which poses a number of challenges for today's employees and managers, especially in the area of values of a given company. Nowadays values are embedded in various codes of conduct of employees, managers, teams and organisations. Thus, they exert a great impact on people's ability to adapt to and develop in the constantly changing market conditions (Knap-Stefaniuk & Burkiewicz, 2020).

The values shared in a given company are important especially because they promote loyalty, ethical behaviour, motivate for hard work, facilitate understanding of expectations, and develop effective teamwork (Knap--Stefaniuk & Burkiewicz, 2021). These elements are particularly important in a cross-cultural work environment.

Cross-cultural management researchers and theorists (i.e., Edward Hall, Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars) have developed cultural value dimensions, frequently used when comparing national cultures (see Table 3). Today, many of these terms are used to explain cross-cultural differences in the workplace.

Table 3. Cultural Value Dimensions

Cultural Value Dimensions		
Edward Hall (1966)[7] ▪ High- and low-context cultures ▪ Concept of time	**Geert Hofstede (1980)[8]** ▪ Power distance ▪ Individualism ▪ Masculinity ▪ Uncertainty avoidance ▪ Long-term orientation	**Fons Trompenaars (1993)[9]** ▪ Universalism vs. particularism ▪ Individualism vs. collectivism ▪ Neutral or emotional ▪ Specific vs. diffuse ▪ Achievement vs. ascription ▪ Passage of time ▪ Relationship to the environment

Source: Loockwood (2008).

Studies devoted to cross-cultural perspectives on careers provide information regarding similarities and differences from the perspective of cultural and national contexts. Career development, a part of human resource planning, is an HRM strategy within talent management. However, Western

career attributes and definitions, which dominate the career development literature, are not always representative of how people in other cultures view and formulate careers (Lockwood, 2008).

The study conducted by Asparuhova (2011) investgates how leaderships style influences the communication between Danish managers and their Japanese colleagues in Danish subsidiaries in Japan. The Japanese form a hierarchical society and Danes should also expect authorities when operating in Japan. Sometimes decision-making in the Danish subsidiary in Japan can be a hierarchically structured process. The Japanese would make a decision independently while the Danish would discuss it with their staff. Thus, when a Japanese has the final word, a Dane should trust it. In Japan, a given word is a strong commitment and dishonesty is severely punished, bringing the business relationship to an end.

Despite many positive outcomes value-based management can bring, it must be borne in mind that implementing values by force, especially in conditions of cultural diversity of employees, can have the effect quite contrary to the one intended. Instead of integrating employees around shared values, acting "by force" may lead to disintegration of teams, conflicts, and a decrease in motivation (Knap-Stefaniuk & Burkiewicz, 2021).

One of the challenges of working in an intercultural environment is introducing and promoting values in such a manner which allows for avoiding conflicts and misunderstandings caused by cultural differences. These phenomena adversely affect employees, disintegrate and weaken teams, negatively affect the atmosphere, communication and cooperation at a workplace, reduce work quality and employees' motivation. It should be noted that as a company develops, its organizational values are shaped by all its employees and by those events that affect its functioning (Gorenak & Ferjan, 2015). And the values held by employees and managers affect the effectiveness and efficiency of teams, the effective realization of objectives, and people's ability to function effectively in difficult market conditions.

Conclusions

As the globalization processes continue, it is increasingly important for HR to understand the implications of HRM in a changing world. Not all HRM strategies will fit every situation. Communication styles and cultural value dimensions need to be taken into consideration when establishing or changing HRM strategies, policies and practices. Whether in domestic or global business environments, HRM must adapt to cross-cultural factors for the success of the organization and its people (Lockwood, 2008).

According to the authors, values are necessary to effectively manage people, especially in companies in which cultural diversity of employees is a stable element in their functioning. Nowadays values are one of the priorities of modern management. They support managers in achieving company objectives, which directly translates into the way in which people and teams are managed. In an intercultural environment values are particularly important as they integrate employees and teams, which positively affects their innovation, creativity, knowledge sharing, and joint problem solving based on diverse experiences.

Summing up, it can be said that, especially in intercultural management, values affect the building of relationships with employees from other cultures as well as the formation of relations and communication with them. Both in the case of employees and managers, values create a certain organisational order, often indispensable for effective functioning and management of a company. This is because values link employees and managers to the organisation and support achieving objectives and undertaking new challenges.

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