A brief discussion on the differences in human resource management between Chinese and Bulgarian companies

Zhang Ting*

Economics and Business Administration
Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski
Address Sofia, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Sreet
E-mail: zhangting140307@gmail.com

**Corresponding author*

Abstract: *Human resource management is often a complex process. In addition, its implementation depends on purely national characteristics that determine the chosen management style. The topic of this study is human resource management in Chinese and Bulgarian companies and the main differences between the two countries in this regard.*

Keywords: *resources, leadership, management, motivation, productivity*

Introduction

Human resource management is often a complex process. In addition, its implementation depends on purely national characteristics that determine the chosen management style. The topic of this study is human resource management in Chinese and Bulgarian companies and the main differences between the two countries in this regard.

The methodology for researching the topic is based on a theoretical review. For this purpose, five articles have been selected that illustrate the differences in human resource management in Bulgarian and Chinese companies. Based on the information from the articles, relevant conclusions and findings about the differences in the two types of management are proposed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first article is devoted to the problems and challenges of human resource management in Bulgarian business. It is entitled "Low employee motivation is the biggest risk for business" and was published on the economy.bg website in 2010. The article contains some very interesting comments from experts. For example, Borislav Ignatov, CEO of the consulting company SeLLeX, says that one of the main problems facing businesses is the lack of motivation among employees. This statement is supported by a survey.

Another well-known business leader, Kalin Kostov, CEO of the Life Insurance Department at the insurance company Euroins, describes a possible solution to the problem of low employee motivation. According to him, it can be overcome by improving the working atmosphere and increasing employee engagement by setting targets to be met, but without this leading to increased stress in the office. The Bulgarian managers who shared their views in the article agree that democratic management of employees is the best solution. At the same time, however, the company must always be able to keep its employees motivated.

The second interesting article related to human resource management in Bulgaria was published on the economy.bg website in 2021 and is titled "How does Adastra Bulgaria

measure efficiency and productivity in remote working conditions?" This is an interesting interview with Ms. Milka Racheva, Director of Human Resources at the company. According to Ms. Racheva, who is undoubtedly an expert in the field, the most effective way to manage human resources in Bulgaria is to set key indicators for the company that employees must meet. She emphasizes that these indicators are very objective in terms of an employee's performance at work and are compatible with virtually any management style.

Another important aspect of human resource management, according to Ms. Racheva, is to always seek feedback from customers. She believes that customer attitudes toward the service provided are another objective indicator of how well an employee is performing. The human resources specialist interviewed actually calls for the company's attitude toward the employee to be a function of the indicators covered by him or her and customer attitudes toward his or her work. In this sense, the approach to managing their career in the company, such as promotions, penalties, etc., should be based entirely on objective indicators that measure their own contribution to the business.

The third article is devoted to Chinese experience in human resource management. It was published on the website of Deloitte, a company that has a branch in China, Chinese subcontractors, and many clients among large Chinese companies. The article was published in 2020 and is titled "Staff wellbeing becomes critical business issue in China."Perhaps the main advantage of this article is that it presents an outside perspective on human resource management in China from a recognized international company. The analysis is based on a large-scale report that presents the results of two studies of 800 millennials and Generation Z representatives in China—an initial study conducted before the outbreak of COVID-19 and a "pulse" study conducted as the full impact of the pandemic was becoming apparent. Job and career prospects are the biggest sources of stress and anxiety for respondents, and to a much greater extent than in the pre-COVID-19 era, especially among Generation Z. In the initial survey, only 30% of stressed Gen Z respondents in China said that job and career prospects were their biggest concern, but that figure rose to more than 55% after the pandemic. COVID-19 also raised awareness among respondents about stress as a factor in their workplace performance, an area where millennials are most affected.

The study found that more than 70% of Chinese millennials who took time off work told their employers that it was due to stress, compared to 45% in the initial study. COVID-19 has clearly changed the attitudes of millennials and Generation Z toward their employers—companies in China will have to work harder to retain staff. Although they generally feel more optimistic about the future than their peers elsewhere, millennials and Gen Z in China still want to be less stressed and have a better work-life balance. Parents in particular want the option to work from home and want to feel able to reveal their "true selves" at work.

The fourth article is devoted to the challenges faced by Chinese companies in managing their staff. It is titled "More than half of Chinese employees are under tremendous pressure and, fortunately, are willing to talk about their mental health issues at work" and was published on the Chinese version of the Chinadaily website in 2021. The article is based on a large-scale study. It shows that more than half of Chinese employees are under pressure at work at least once a week. This data comes from the Global Workforce Perspective 2020 research report, which examines employees' attitudes and views about their current workplace, as well as their expectations and hopes for their future workplace.

The report surveyed 1,910 employees of Chinese companies, and 53% said they felt pressure at work at least once a week. Compared to the average of 60% in the Asia-Pacific region, the proportion of Chinese employees experiencing stress is slightly lower. The study also found that Chinese people are the most likely to discuss mental health issues at work in the Asia-

Pacific region. About 84% of respondents say they are willing to discuss their mental health issues with colleagues, with their only hesitation often rooted in some of the authoritarian habits of local managers. The Chinese publication does not openly discuss human resource management style. Rather, the author's approach is to focus on the challenges and advantages of human resource management methods.

The fifth article is entitled "How human resources staff protect the mental health of employees during a crisis."It was published in 2020 on humanresourcesonline.net, a popular specialized website in China and around the world, and focuses specifically on human resources management and the challenges facing Hong Kong businesses. Despite growing awareness of mental health issues in the workplace in Hong Kong, there is still much work to be done. Stress and burnout have always been considered two common mental health problems, but the devastating effects of anxiety and depression are also attracting more attention in the Hong Kong workplace. Given that Hong Kong has faced the dual pressures of demonstrations and the novel coronavirus epidemic in recent months, post-traumatic stress disorder (also known as post-traumatic stress) may become another common mental health issue. Poor mental health in the workplace will result in losses for both the individual and the company's bottom line and should not be taken lightly. Targets are often high, and managers employ authoritarian approaches.

One of the biggest obstacles to effective action is the continuing stigma surrounding mental health issues in workplaces across Asia, which makes employees reluctant to report their mental health issues and prevents companies from addressing and supporting the concept of workplace health. A comprehensive report, "Working in Asia-Pacific: Human Resources and Management Priorities," published in 2019, confirmed that Asian employees are reluctant to express their feelings at work when faced with mental health issues. More than half of those interviewed in Hong Kong and Singapore Some people feel uncomfortable discussing mental health issues with their boss or colleagues. One way for human resources staff to meet the health needs of their employees is to enroll in mental health first aid courses.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the articles reviewed regarding the differences between the Bulgarian and Chinese approaches to human resource management:

1. In both countries, modern local businesses prefer to apply a democratic style of human resource management, although this may be slightly less prevalent in Chinese companies, where it is often mixed with some authoritarian traits.

2. In both national cultures, there is a strong influence of measurable company indicators as key parameters for determining an employee's performance and, accordingly, the company's attitude towards them. Especially for modern Bulgarian companies, the assessment of an employee's current performance is based mainly on how they meet the company's indicators and business targets.

3. Both Bulgarian and Chinese cultures increasingly rely on the personal responsibility of the employee. Overall, however, modern Bulgarian companies seem to make a greater effort to protect their employees from stress in the workplace, as Bulgarian managers are aware that overwork can have a detrimental effect even on the most responsible employees.

4. In Chinese companies, due to factors that are difficult to control, such as the much larger volume of work, it is often a challenge for local managers to reduce stress levels in the workplace, but they continue to make efforts in this direction.

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Zhang Ting
E-mail: zhangting140307@gmail.com



My name is Zhang Ting, and I am a third-year doctoral student at Sofia University. My research field: The impact of reward incentive systems on employee motivation.I hope this research will unlock employees' potential, enhance organizational effectiveness, and drive sustainable corporate development.