

The Impact of Cross-cultural Human Resource Management on Brand Consistency of Multinational Enterprises and Optimization of Management Strategies

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the impact of cross-cultural human resource management on brand consistency in multinational enterprises and the directions for optimization. The research methods adopted include literature analysis and case study. It describes the historical background of three development stages in this field, analyzes the current situation and influence related to the topic, and takes McDonald's as an example to propose the content and implementation process of optimization strategies. The research findings show that the current cross-cultural human resource management has both positive and negative impacts on brand consistency in multinational enterprises: efficient management can promote cultural integration, strengthen employees' brand consensus, reduce cognitive biases, and contribute to brand consistency; inefficient management, on the other hand, can lead to cultural conflicts, internal divisions, and damage brand consistency. Taking McDonald's as an example, it effectively maintains brand consistency through strategies such as establishing a standardized system, advocating a diverse and inclusive culture, and promoting local talent. The conclusion indicates that multinational enterprises need to attach importance to cross-cultural human resource management, adopt targeted strategies to address cultural differences, and maintain brand image consistency and enhance global influence.

Keywords: Cross-culture Human Resource Management; Brand Consistency; Multinational Enterprise.

1. Introduction

This thesis mainly explores the impact of cross-cultural human resource management on brand consistency in multinational enterprises and the optimization directions through literature analysis and case studies. The historical background of the topic can be roughly divided into three periods. The first period is from the 1960s to the 1970s, when all multinational enterprises were just established and were not interested in cross-cultural human resource management. Brand consistency was only superficial. The second period is from the 1980s to the 1990s, which is the middle stage of brand establishment for multinational enterprises. At this time, enterprises lacked cross-cultural human resource management, resulting in poor coordination among enterprises and confusion in brand consistency. The third period is from the 21st century to the present. By now, enterprises have recognized the importance of understanding cultural differences and adopted various methods for cross-cultural human resource management, thus supporting brand consistency. The significance of this topic lies in presenting the core values of cross-enterprise brands globally through cross-cultural human resource management. In the face of communication barriers and cultural differences, some enterprises have taken actions to address the challenges. In the future, enterprises can promote a positive trend in brand consistency by increasing the intensity of cross-cultural training and leveraging AI and other means. The importance of this topic is reflected in enterprises' responses to cultural differences, maintenance of brand image, and enhancement of brand global influence. The innovation and highlights of this research lie in proposing strategies for enterprises to deal with

cultural differences and providing solutions to the negative impact of cross-cultural human resource management on brand consistency in multinational enterprises[1-8].

2. Literature Review

In 2024, Zhao Gongao employed methods such as literature analysis and exemplification to analyze the significance, challenges, and strategies of cross-cultural human resource management in a global cultural context. He concluded that in the context of globalization, enterprises should formulate and implement cross-cultural human resource management strategies from multiple dimensions such as awareness cultivation, attach importance to cultural differences, integrate local environments, consider cultural adaptability, and optimize management with digital tools to address challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve sustainable development[1].

In 2025, Li Junying and Zhou Xiaodie, through the application of theoretical research methods, first analyzed the environment, key elements, challenges and countermeasures of cross-cultural human resource management in e-commerce enterprises. Subsequently, by listing and analyzing e-commerce enterprises, they explored the problems, core factors and challenges that enterprises would encounter in operating multinational enterprises, and provided solutions and suggestions for the country's e-commerce enterprises, which will serve as a reference for the international operation of China's e-commerce enterprises in the future[2].

In 2014, Cao Yu introduced the theory of cross-cultural human resource management by applying literature analysis, theoretical analysis and induction, and case analysis methods. Through analyzing the cross-cultural human resource

management strategies of South Korean enterprises in China, he concluded that the effective management of cross-cultural human resources in multinational enterprises includes localizing talents, establishing a good personnel allocation and promotion mechanism, and implementing cross-cultural training[3].

In 2021, Mao Yiming, through the application of literature analysis, induction and comparative analysis methods, analyzed the necessary conditions for cross-cultural human resource management in Sino-foreign joint ventures, the current management status, the problems encountered in the management model, and how to apply the management model. He concluded that to solve the problems of cross-cultural human resource management in Sino-foreign joint ventures, it is necessary to consider cultural differences, optimize the organizational and management system, integrate cultures, establish an incentive mechanism to prevent talent loss, and enhance competitiveness through teams to promote long-term development[4].

In 2011, Xu Pengfei used the methods of literature research and case analysis to summarize two parts of content. The first part is the basic content, characteristics, significance and status of cross-cultural human resource management. The second part is cultural differences and their influence on cross-cultural human resource management in South Korean-funded enterprises. By listing the example of cross-cultural human resource management in SX Semiconductor Co., Ltd., the main measures and characteristics of IHRM of the company and the main problems were analyzed. Finally, the author summarized the countermeasures for further improving cross-cultural human resource management in South Korean-funded enterprises and concluded that IHRM is an important prerequisite for the effective implementation of the globalization strategy of multinational enterprises; in terms of IHRM, there are significant characteristics and advantages in aspects such as talent recruitment and selection, talent training, performance evaluation, incentive systems and career planning[8].

3. The Impact of Cross-cultural Human Resource Management on Brand Consistency in Multinational Corporations

3.1. The Current Situation of Cross-Cultural Human Resource Management on Brand Consistency of Multinational Enterprises.

At present, the situation of cross-cultural human resource management for the consistency of multinational enterprise brands is a mixed bag. On the positive side, some enterprises have better maintained brand consistency by implementing good cross-cultural human resource management strategies, and have set an example for other enterprises to recognize the importance of properly managing cross-cultural human resources. On the negative side, due to the inability of some enterprises to correctly manage cross-cultural human resources, cultural differences and conflicts, lack of professional talents, and the formation of human resource bottlenecks have brought serious management problems.

3.2. The Positive Impact of Cross-Cultural Human Resource Management on the Consistency of Multinational Enterprise Brands

Highly efficient cross-cultural human resource management enables different cultures to blend together, allowing employees from various countries and with different religious beliefs to share a common understanding of the core values of the enterprise, thereby strengthening the consensus among employees on the brand's essence. Customers mostly learn about a brand through its employees. The attitudes and views of employees towards the enterprise and the brand will directly influence customers. If all employees have a strong sense of identification with the brand value of their enterprise and are committed to jointly building a brand, the frequency of the enterprise's market activities, customers' perception of the brand, and the brand's status worldwide will all see a significant improvement. At the same time, highly efficient cross-cultural human resource management can reduce the cognitive differences of employees from different countries towards the enterprise. By recruiting talents based on unified standards and setting up new employee training courses that include employee behavior guidelines and customer communication processes, and then implementing highly efficient cross-cultural human resource management processes after in-depth training, it can ensure that employees in every store across the country or around the world provide the same level of service[7]. This can prevent the confusion of brand perception among employees due to management differences in different regions, further promoting brand consistency.

3.3. The Negative Impact of Cross-Cultural Human Resource Management on Brand Consistency in Multinational Enterprises

The most obvious negative impact of inefficient cross-cultural human resource management is the internal division caused by cultural conflicts. Some enterprises only provide ordinary professional training for new employees while ignoring cultural differences. This will make employees resist the core values of the enterprise, and cognitive biases directly translate into behavioral differences. When the same brand is sold externally, employees trained in individualistic cultural regions will focus on "personal achievements", while those trained in collectivist cultural regions will focus on "team contributions"[5]. This leads to contradictory brand images, but it is not something that employees can control; it is caused by different and inefficient management methods. The management logic conflicts between the headquarters and branches due to cultural differences are ultimately reflected in the employees: employees from different cultural backgrounds may encounter collaboration obstacles due to differences in time perception, communication methods, etc., and may even avoid cross-cultural cooperation. Inefficient cross-cultural human resource management will disrupt the synergy mechanism, magnify cultural differences, undermine identity recognition, and lead to internal division.

4. Strategic Optimization of Brand Consistency in Multinational Enterprises through Cross-cultural Human Resource Management

McDonald's is the world's largest fast food chain enterprise, with over 42,000 stores in more than 100 countries. It has become a leader in the global fast-food industry through standardized services and localized strategies. McDonald's implements efficient cross-cultural human resource management, and its strategies roughly include the following points.

4.1. Establish a Standardized Management System.

McDonald's has developed a detailed "Operations Training Manual" for the company's marketing and restaurant operation procedures, dividing the restaurant service system into more than 20 workstations, each with detailed operation steps. Each manager, through learning the "Management Training Manual" and in combination with the training courses of the manager, ensures the uniformity of management effects. McDonald's also configures standardized machines and equipment in all global stores, and each employee needs to learn the unified customer reception process. At the same time, McDonald's also attaches great importance to the hygiene of the stores. The headquarters dispatches professional teams to visit the branches irregularly to ensure the quality of food and the environment in the stores.

4.2. Advocate for a Culture of Diversity and Inclusiveness.

McDonald's has established diverse learning paths and a complete talent cultivation mechanism, such as the Talent Program, which creates personalized development plans for employees and helps them realize their own value. At the same time, McDonald's respects the cultural background and different personalities of each employee. In China, McDonald's has created a highly inclusive, empowering, and enjoyable working environment for its employees. For employees of different ages, the company also offers different working schedules, suitable for students, retired workers, and others. Additionally, McDonald's has formulated a diversified human resources policy, actively recruiting employees from various cultural backgrounds and providing equal opportunities in recruitment, training, and promotion. It has established a cross-cultural communication mechanism and enhanced employees' cross-cultural communication skills through training and exchanges, which not only promotes the integration of different cultures but also reduces communication barriers and improves employees' work efficiency.

4.3. Implement a Strategy of Localizing Talent.

McDonald's selects local talents based on local market experience, familiarity with consumers, and potential. In 2024, McDonald's China division will deepen cooperation with 556 universities across the country through the "Supply-Demand Matching Employment Education Project" of the Ministry of Education, signing 191 cooperation projects with 133 universities. It is expected to recruit over 150,000 new employees throughout the year. On the other hand, McDonald's attaches great importance to building a localized

management structure. The management team, teams, supplier services, and even the board of directors of McDonald's China have been highly localized. The advantage of a localized management team is that they have a better understanding of the Chinese market and can quickly implement decisions from planning to execution. At the same time, McDonald's respects the traditional culture and values of each region and holds some regional cultural activities to enhance employees' sense of belonging and team cohesion. This enables both local and non-local employees to better integrate into the company and enhance the brand's image and cohesion.

4.4. Build a Flexible Incentive Mechanism.

McDonald's implements a "more work, more pay" paid mechanism. The company not only offers multiple bonus salaries but also various salary calculation methods, such as hourly and monthly. At the same time, McDonald's adopts a transparent salary grade system, publicly disclosing employees' names and work performance when distributing salaries to enhance a sense of fairness. Salaries are adjusted based on employee performance. There are four performance evaluations each year, and the assessment results are directly linked to salary growth[6]. For instance, employees with outstanding performance can expect a salary increase of 10% to 13% in the following year. Regarding holidays, McDonald's policy is that, in addition to legal holidays, employees with excellent performance can enjoy welfare holidays. Employees who have worked for the company for 10 years can take 8 weeks of paid leave. For employees' personal safety, McDonald's also provides each employee with supplementary accident insurance, medical insurance, etc. In daily work, the company also offers employee-exclusive benefits. For example, it provides exclusive dining discounts for employees, anniversary service awards, and regularly organizes activities and team-building events for employees.

4.5. Strengthen Team Culture Construction.

McDonald's holds a general manager annual meeting for its restaurants every two years to honor outstanding employees by awarding them long-service awards, outstanding restaurant general manager awards, and so on. To carry forward the QSC culture, McDonald's also holds the All-Star Competition, which has a history of 29 years, providing a stage for restaurant employees to showcase their professional skills and outstanding qualities, allowing them to experience the QSC culture and enhance their sense of responsibility. To promote internal communication within the company, McDonald's has launched an exclusive smart APP for employees - BGM BOSS. As new McDonald's employees are called "new tomatoes", the "Tomato Square" community section in the APP is an interactive space for employees to share daily experiences, exchange ideas and post updates. During the All-Star Competition, employees can also use this section to communicate and share, enhancing team cohesion. At the same time, McDonald's adheres to the corporate culture of "integrity, respect and growth", creating a happy, passionate and inclusive working environment, making employees feel a sense of belonging and fostering a positive corporate culture atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the impact of cross-cultural human

resource management on brand consistency in multinational enterprises and points out the coexistence of advantages and disadvantages in the topic: from a positive perspective, efficient cross-cultural human resource management can promote the integration of different cultures, strengthen employees' consensus on the core values of the brand, reduce cognitive biases, ensure the uniformity of services provided by global employees, and enhance the status and consistency of the brand; from a negative perspective, inefficient cross-cultural human resource management will magnify cultural differences, trigger cultural conflicts, lead to internal division within the company, and damage the consistency of the brand image. I use the example of McDonald's to illustrate the correct strategies and implementation processes of cross-cultural human resource management. To improve brand consistency globally, managers or CEOs need to implement strategies such as establishing a standardized management system, advocating a diverse and inclusive culture, promoting local talent strategies, building flexible incentive mechanisms, and strengthening team culture construction to effectively maintain and enhance brand consistency, providing a reference for other multinational enterprises.

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