
Jukka Jouhki

Finnish executives in India: Adaptations to a hierarchical work culture

Compared to Finnish organisations, Indian organisations are hierarchically quite rigid. The way managerial authority and employee initiative are perceived is also significantly different in India when compared to Finland. International companies in India often navigate between various work cultures in the workplace. Within them, many Finnish professional managers encounter practices and values that differ from the Finnish work environment in several ways. Based on 12 open interviews that focus on Indian work culture, this article examines the experiences of Finnish managers in India. The focal point of the data-driven analysis is hierarchy, which also includes discussions on authoritarian leadership and micromanagement. Based on the interviews, Finnish managers adapt fairly well to the local work culture, partly by flattening the hierarchy in the workplace but also by adopting some practices of the local work culture.

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