

Identifying the Factors of Satisfaction with Workplace Relationships

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Received on August 06, 2018; revised on September 17, 2018; published on November 18, 2018

Abstract

Interpersonal relationships in the workplace (relationships with coworkers, immediate managers, other leaders, other peers), as well as satisfaction with them, is a subject that is calling for more research than there has been. A better understanding is warranted by the current trends of increasing technology advancement, globalization and diversity, geographical mobility, and pace of change. When studied, workplace relationships are typically viewed indirectly, through individual skills, teamwork, or job satisfaction, which is actionable for individuals, however appears to be less specific or helpful than could be addressing the concept of workplace relationships directly, through its content and meaning. This research is an attempt to better understanding the content of workplace relationships, its dynamics and variations based on hierarchy of organizational structure and put into the context of national culture, with the example of Russian Federation and United States. Findings helped understand and describe perceptions and attitudes to the aspects of workplace relationship system. Factor analysis revealed one factor, assertiveness, which also demonstrated cross-cultural variations.

Keywords: cross-cultural, workplace relationships, relationships, satisfaction, factor

1. Introduction

Satisfaction with workplace relationships is rarely studied directly, and there are several reasons to that. First of all, when studying satisfaction in the workplace, researchers commonly focus on employee satisfaction with their immediate jobs or work environment, as well as employee engagement. Those have been long considered to be factors of productivity and performance, therefore companies care about these factors more.

Secondly, researchers usually leave out the concept of relationship quality and what needs they allow individuals to meet.

Thirdly, workplace relationships as such, are rarely studied at the dyadic level. Researchers typically study processes such as influence and leadership, communication, strategies of networking, team development and teamwork, among others, probably because they are deemed to be more actionable and within an individual's control, actions are evidently simpler to correlate with results. This approach lacks the depth and holistic view of the quality of relationships at work, which can evidently directly affect the speed and quality of organizational outcomes.

Relationships developed in the workplace, are different from other kinds of relationships an individual may have, in several ways. First,

workplace relationships are both personal and professional, that is: developed with another human being, while at the same time, has a purpose defined within the framework of organizational goals and organizational culture. Personal level of workplace relationship in this approach refers to the human element; it is different from incivility, harassment, romance, or unethical behavior.

Second, this is the kind of relationship that one cannot end unless he or she leaves the company. If one wants to succeed in their current environment, he or she needs to make relationships with others effective.

Third, workplace relationships are not equal, there is current or potential hierarchy to them: some individuals are one's immediate manager, manager's manager, other leaders in the organization, others have the potential to become one's leader one day, or conversely, can report to one. That leads to different kinds of power exercised or in potential.

Fourth, the structure of workplace relationships is increasingly more complex with the demographic and background diversity, mobility, cultural agility, increasing pace of change and technological innovation.

Therefore, the search for factors of satisfaction with workplace relationships appears to be another concept that would be even more difficult to unpack. From both the perspective of research and that of business practice, a better understanding of the content and context of workplace relationships, and its cultural variations and invariances, is warranted.

Following a theoretical study of earlier research, an empirical study of satisfaction with workplace relationships was launched. This paper, describing and discussing a part of a larger study, is aiming to articulate the search of factors of satisfaction with workplace relationships universally as well as in context of specific cultures in the USA and in Russia.

Theoretical research of workplace relationships in the national cultures of countries such as USA, Russia, China, and Sweden, allowed to discover the differences in value, key characteristics, time orientation, and purpose of workplace relationships in those cultures. We also considered empirical research performed by such researchers as Hofstede (2010), Triandis (1994), Weber (2002), Lebedeva (2001), and compared them to our theoretical findings.

According to studies such as research performed by Soldatova (1998), cultural and ethnical identity is the foundation of socialization of each individual. Following this premise, the main goal of this empirical study is to clarify the nature and dynamics of interpersonal relationships in the workplace (workplace relationships), identify cross-cultural differences in employee attitudes to workplace relationships, and factors of satisfaction with those relationships. The subject of this study is cross-cultural social and psychological nuances of attitudes to workplace relationships as well as self-perception in workplace relationships. The object of this study is workplace relationships in the organizations in the United States and in Russian Federation. It is expected that satisfaction with workplace relationships is influenced by both relationship partners making effort to work together, and by their belonging to a national culture (*the main hypothesis*). It is also expected to determine generational, education-based, and gender-related differences.

2. Methods

Participants’ demographics are demonstrated in Table 1 below. All participants worked in a corporate environment in United States and in Russian Federation at the time of data collection.

Table 1. Demographics of the participants

Demographic data	Russian Sample	United States Sample
Number of participants	229 (45%)	279 (55%)
Gender	83 men (36%) 146 women (64%)	105 men (38%) 174 women (62%)
Age	24 to 75 years old M = 39.7	22 to 62 years old M = 36.7
Education	High School - 7.4%; College/Undergraduate - 84.2%; Ph.D. - 7.4%	

Total N = 508

Empirical research of cross-cultural differences of satisfaction with workplace relationships took place in the companies in the United States and Russia in 2012-2016, we studied employees of Russian and American organizations who work in roles of individual contributor, front line lead, and middle manager, employing the following methods: T. Leary’s Inter-

personal circumflex (both “Real Me” and “Ideal Me” categories); projective methods of “Incomplete sentences” by J. Sacks and S. Levy (author’s version); content analysis, which was used for qualitative analysis of the results obtained with the projective methods.

All materials presented to respondents were presented in the language of the country where they work (in the United States and in the Russian Federation), previously validated for English and Russian languages: Leary’s checklist had been translated and adopted in Russia prior to the study (Chervinskaya, 2008). The content and spirit of incomplete sentences was validated by bilingual HR specialists who ensured the same meaning in the cultures.

Data analysis employed several analyses: content analysis, analysis of the significance of differences (Chi-square, Mann-Whitney U), correlation analysis (Spearman’s rho), analysis of variance, one-factor ANOVA analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0.

Descriptors of the *Leary’s Interpersonal checklist* were asked of the respondents for both perception of how each person sees herself today, and what would be their ideal for themselves. Those descriptors make eight scales of the Leary’s circumflex demonstrating individual’s perceptions of their attitudes and behavior in interpersonal relationships, as well as how they believe they show up in relationships with others at work.

Incomplete Sentence method allows to determine emotional attitude of respondents to their work, to themselves, to tensions in interpersonal workplace relationships, to others, to coworkers, etc. As a result, we can identify what attitudes prevail: positive attitudes (positive experience, positive perception, positive expectations) or negative attitudes (negative experience, negative perception, negative expectations). Projective method of incomplete sentences provides minimal limitations for respondents in terms of way of answering the questions, while gives them a possibility to “project” their individual specificity in responses. The questionnaire represents a blank with phrases that respondents are asked to complete with the first thoughts that come to their mind. To form these tasks, the method by Sacks J. and Levy S. (1950) was employed, and a method described by Gurieva (2010), and Grieve and Tararukhina (2012). Data obtained by this method is subject to both quantitative and qualitative analysis, using methods of content analysis. Thirty incomplete sentences presented to the respondents represented ten scales of attitudes in the workplace, namely:

- Attitude to self at work
- Attitude to work
- Attitude to tension in relationships
- Attitude to senior leaders
- Attitude to attachment in the workplace
- Attitude to others at work
- Expectations
- Principles
- Attitude to coworkers
- Openness/vulnerability

The recorded completed sentences subsequently underwent content analysis procedures to attribute emotionally positive, negative, or neutral charge of each expression on a five-point scale. Those scores were subsequently utilized for the correlation and factor analyses. Content analysis for each language was performed by three natively speaking analysts in each country to ensure language sensitivity and the most unbiased perception of the responses, that all had to collectively align on.

The analysis of the data and discussion of results in our study was performed with a comparative approach: one relative to another, which is close to the way employees from the United States would be perceiving workplace relationships in Russia, and vice versa. Employing this approach was aiming to ensure that the comparison would be done without value judgment, and that neither culture would be presented as better than the other, while variances would be described.

3. Results and Discussion

Initially, we did theoretical comparative analysis of workplace cultures in Russia and the United States, then compared empirical findings with the theoretical findings as well as the findings from and other research, primarily Hofstede's research of global cultures.

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) there are three foundational assumptions that form a belief that economic interest is a priority over societal: *analysis, universalism* (the same rules for everyone), *linear time perspective* (present is to achieve for the sake of the future, and the past matters the least). Analyzing, codifying, creating repeatable formulas, quantifying, all supersede holistic approaches as well as qualitative categories such as harmony, aesthetics, integration. Universalism may have developed by the large proportion of adult immigrants that continue to come to live and work in the United States who need to learn the American way of how to live and work. Universalism can probably explain how friendship and social relations come second after following the rules, therefore the value of relationships decreases.

According to Hofstede (2010), United States is a culture with medium power distance, highly individualistic, highly masculine, with very low tolerance for ambiguity and a time orientation that is relatively short. This means that employees are not afraid to disagree with their managers and prefer or even expect to be involved in decision making; appreciate autonomy and challenge at work, value achievement, recognition, advancement, need clarity to be effective, think analytically, value rationality of decisions, universality, and standards.

In summary, the American model of workplace relationships is characterized by general trust within the boundaries of tasks, and relatively low significance of relationships compared to the significance of achievement and success, or the acceleration thereof.

According to Lebedeva (2001), Tatarukhina (2010), the main characteristics of organizational behavior in Russia are hierarchy and paternalism, belonging to an in-group is one of the career achievements, as well as a general mistrust of those outside of that group, coupled with general kindness towards others. This inconsistency of values and beliefs, coupled with context dependence, leads to a general uncertainty as a cultural norm. Therefore, Russian culture high ambiguity tolerance. We have also found evidence to Hofstede's findings of a simultaneous individualism (low importance of status and higher importance personality) and collectivism (interactions depend on social roles) in Russian culture.

It is not surprising that in Hofstede's research (2010) of national cultures, Russia appears high in power distance, in the middle between individualism and collectivism, leaning towards collectivism; it is also rather feminine, highly tolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty, and with a long-term time perspective, which means that both past and future matter more than present. This means that employees in Russian companies tend to not disagree with their leaders and prefer those leaders to make decisions; they value education and learning, as well as autonomy and personal sense of accomplishment. Employees in Russia value relationships and modesty

over recognition and advancement no matter what; they do well in ambiguity, and think in synthesis, holistically, rather than analyzing broken down parts.

According to Triandis (1994), individualistic cultures (such as United States) tend to describe behavior through dispositional characteristics, while contextual parameters are more often employed in collectivist cultures (such as Russia).

Following this theoretical research, empirical study was performed, including methods of Leary's Interpersonal checklist and Incomplete sentences. The empirical results obtained with the two methods described below were initially analyzed separately, and then underwent factor analysis together. The following description and discussion will follow the same structure.

1. Interpersonal checklist results

For statistical significance analysis of the differences in eight scales of Leary's test, the authors used Mann-Whitney U criterion for independent selections. As discussed in more detail in another article (Gurieva, Tatarukhina, Chiker, Yanicheva, 2018), our analysis of data obtained with this method suggested that the main differences between Russian and American samples were discovered in the "Real Me" category. These results allow us to argue that such concepts as self-respect, self-confidence, aspiration to compete with others, independence in acts and judgments, as well as aspiration to gain recognition and credibility in front of others, are more pronounced in employees of American organizations than in employees of Russian organizations. There is also a noticeable tendency in employees of American organizations to be more inclined to insist, to be skeptical, non-submissive and empathic than employees of Russian organizations. Comparison of perceptions of the desired interpersonal relationships (the "Ideal Me" category) demonstrates that employees of Russian organizations would like to see themselves as more submissive, dependent and uncertain than American employees. At the same time, the orientation to being practical in interpersonal relationships, can be considered a distinctive feature of the American employees, especially in conjunction with the theoretical and other research findings we discussed above.

In both countries, the scales of the "Ideal me" category were less pronounced than in their "Real me" category, with only two exceptions in the Russian sample. It appears that the respondents in both countries would prefer to "mute" their expression, aspiring to become softer, less rigid in their workplace relationships. That suggests that connection, inclusiveness, fairness are valued in both countries, and employees see the benefit of being more open and welcoming to others, rather than not. In addition, Russian respondents appear to prefer to be more dominant than they see themselves in reality, and to remain at the same level on the competitiveness scale (which is lower than the "Real Me" for the American sample). American respondents would prefer their self-expression to be significantly lower than the way they see themselves in reality.

2. Incomplete Sentences Results

We determined a significant difference between Russian and American samples in 7 out of 10 scales of the Incomplete Sentences: "attitude to work", "attitude to self at work", "attitude to others at work", "attitude to leaders", "attitude to attachment", "attitude to others at work", "expectations", and "being open/closed to vulnerability". There was no statistically significant difference identified for 3 other scales: "attitude to tension", "moral principles", and "attitude to coworkers". Some of the findings demonstrate that emotionally, Russians feel more positively than Americans about their

work, leaders, attachment, other people at work, and expectations from others. Employees in both countries feel rather negatively about vulnerability at work, but Russians even more negatively than Americans, who at the same time tend to be more confident at work than Russians (Tararukhina, Gurieva, in review).

These results correspond to the differences in dimensions of national cultures according to Hofstede's research (2010):

- Strongly positive "Attitude to Work" in Russia, corresponds to rather feminine collectivist aspects of Russian culture, and a slightly negative attitude of employees in the United States corresponds to highly masculine and highly individualistic culture in United States. According to Hofstede (2010), in feminine culture rewards are based on equality and people work in order to live, and conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation; while in an individualist culture they are based on equity and people live in order to work, and conflicts are resolved by the strongest winning.

- "Attitude to Self at Work" is exactly the opposite: a bit negative self-confidence in Russia corresponds to the aspect of its culture that is feminine and values relationships with others over oneself, as well as thrives in ambiguity; definitively positive attitude to self at work in the United States, which can be interpreted as positive self-confidence, corresponds to its masculine culture with avoidance of uncertainty. According to Hofstede (2010), in individualistic countries, individuals are economic persons pursuing employer's interest if it coincides with their interest, task prevail over relationship, and every customer or employee should be treated equally. According to the same study, management in masculine culture is supposed to be decisive and aggressive, while in a feminine culture - based on intuition and consensus.

- Results for the scale "Attitude to Senior Leaders" correspond to the power distance scores for both countries: high power distance in Russia, and low power distance in the United States. According to Hofstede (2010) large power distance reflects hierarchy as an existential inequality rather than convenience of roles organization, where employees are guided by more knowledgeable and experienced leaders.

- "Attitude to Attachment", "Attitude to Others at Work", "Expectation of Others", explain collectivist and feminine aspects of Russian culture, as well as highly individualistic and masculine culture of the United States. According to Hofstede (2010), a humanized job in masculine culture is enriching individual's life through achievement, advancement, recognition, and challenge; in feminine cultures a humanized job allows for more social contacts, cooperation, and mutual help.

- Both in the USA and in Russia, employees have similar emotional attitudes to principles, and principled coworkers, as well as to coworkers in general: principles are admired and respected. Principled people are respected but sometimes can create resistance. Coworkers in general are typically the source of feeling liked, ability to contribute to something bigger than oneself.

We can conclude that both in the USA and in Russia, employees value the experience of belonging with their immediate coworkers.

3. Factor Analysis

Theoretical and empirical analysis described above as well as correlation analysis of the larger study, allowed to conclude that satisfaction with workplace relationships is independence, separateness of the person, coupled with positive attitude to coworkers and friends, which warranted factor analysis. Factor analysis was employed with the method of key components which allows consolidating several variables into one factor, to examine whether there are grounds to discuss factors of satisfaction with workplace relationships, and whether it was possible to identify its cross-

cultural variability. This method allows reducing the number of variables, identify latent variables that influence variability of the rest of variables, and therefore can simplify description of the phenomenon, as well as explain the influence over this phenomenon.

Factor analysis was performed for the overall data set of the entire study sample, which allowed for the factor of satisfaction with interpersonal workplace relationships to emerge. Then the same procedure was performed independently for the US sample, as well as for the Russian sample, which allowed to identify cross-cultural differences and commonalities for the factor.

3.1 Factor Analysis for the Overall Sample

For the overall sample (containing data for both United States and Russian samples) the identified factor is presented in Table 2. This factor explains 29.5% of variables dispersion. This factor was called "Assertiveness".

Table 2. Components of the Assertiveness Factor of Satisfaction with Interpersonal Relationships in the Workplace

Variable	Factor Scores
Managerial-Autocratic "Ideal Me" (<i>dominance</i>)	0,71
Competitive-Narcissistic "Real Me" (<i>independence</i>)	0,70
Cooperative-OverConventional "Real Me" (<i>friendliness</i>)	0,71

N=397; dispersion 29.5%

Given that the complex of parameters composing the factor, were obtained with Leary's test, their content and meaning can be unpacked, understood, and explained employing interpretational schemas of the method, according to Chervinskaya (2008).

Dominance in its first interval of the test range reflects managerial skills, responsibility, persistency, coupled with the ability to command respect and be liked, and may be less prone to submit to others, which is considered a weakness (Chervinskaya, 2008). Since this scale is a part of the factor in the "Ideal Me" category, this parameter in the factor may be characteristic of respondents seeing themselves as too submissive and would like to have more authority.

Independence in its first interval of the test range reflects confidence, feeling worthy, as well as orientation for competition, independence in opinions and actions (Chervinskaya, 2008).

Friendliness in its first interval of the test range reflects kindness, orientation to cooperate and have good relations with others (Chervinskaya, 2008).

Results on both samples were identified in the zero interval of intensity for ask three variables, therefore representing a tendency rather than an intense expression of the respondents. This content of the variables informed the appropriate title for the factor.

This content lead to identifying the factor as *Assertiveness*: one's ability to be firm, honest, and open and kind towards others and oneself at the same time. These results demonstrate that assertiveness is key to satisfying interpersonal workplace relationships in both countries. This set of characteristics in relationship allows one to facilitate maximization of satisfaction for both workplace relationship partners. This also corresponds

to the definition of assertiveness (ed. Mescheryakov, Zinchenko, 2003), defining assertiveness as one’s ability to be firm, honest, and open and kind towards others and oneself at the same time. One could define it also as the ability to tend to the needs of both relationship partners), and to be proactive during the times of tension or even conflict, caring about well for both parties, even in the situations of hierarchical inequality.

At the next stage of analysis, it was determined that the content of assertiveness differs for Russia and the United States. In other words, assertiveness can vary cross-culturally.

3.2 Factor Analysis for United States Sample Data

For the United States sample, the identified factor is presented in Table 3. This factor explains 35.7% of variables dispersion, and is called *Assertiveness_A*.

Table 3. Components of the Assertiveness Factor of Satisfaction with Interpersonal Relationships in the Workplace in the United States (*Assertiveness_A*)

Variable	Factor Scores
Managerial-Autocratic “Real Me” (<i>dominance</i>)	0,76
Managerial-Autocratic “Ideal Me” (<i>dominance</i>)	0,74
Competitive-Narcissistic “Real Me” (<i>independence</i>)	0,78
Docile-Dependent “Ideal Me” (<i>dependence</i>)	0,70
Cooperative-OverConventional “Real Me” (<i>friendliness</i>)	0,71

N = 221, Dispersion 35.7%

The factor consists of the scales of the Leary’s test. Given that *Dominance* (in the “Ideal Me” category), *Independence* (“Real Me” category), and *Friendliness* (“Real Me” category) were discussed in the paragraph above for the total sample comprised of both US and Russian samples, it is only necessary to discuss the new parameter, *Dependence*.

Dependence in its first interval of the test range reflects the need for help, for recognition and for encouragement coming from the others (Chervinskaya, 2008). This parameter is part of the Assertion-A factor in “Ideal Me” category, which suggests that this can be a trait of people who are independent but believe that they will achieve more if they share with others the responsibility for consequences of their own actions.

This composition of the factor suggests that *Assertiveness_A* is characterized by looking to share responsibility with others, needing their recognition and encouragement.

3.3 Factor Analysis for Russian Sample Data

For the Russian sample, the identified factor is presented in Table 4. This factor explains 38.8% of variables dispersion, and is called *Assertiveness_R*.

Table 4. Components of the Assertiveness Factor of Satisfaction with Interpersonal Relationships in the Workplace in Russia (*Assertiveness_R*)

Variable	Factor Scores
Managerial-Autocratic “Ideal Me” (<i>dominance</i>)	0,70
Self-Effacing-Masochistic “Real Me” (<i>pliability</i>)	0,72
Cooperative-OverConventional “Real Me” (<i>friendliness</i>)	0,71
Responsible-Hypernormal “Real Me” (<i>helpfulness</i>)	0,73
Principles	0,71
Attitude to coworkers	0,75

N = 176, Dispersion 38.8%

The parameters composing the factor were obtained with both Leary’s test and the Incomplete Sentences method, their content and meaning can be unpacked, understood, and explained employing interpretational schemas of the test, according to Chervinksaya (2008), as well as based on interpretation of the results discussed earlier for the method of Incomplete Sentences. The parameters obtained with the method of Incomplete Sentences, were obtained through evaluation of the emotional charge of respondents according to a five-point scale: from an intensely negative (the answers were attributed a -2 score) to an intensely positive attitude to the subject of the sentence (a +2 score).

Pliability in its first range of the test reflects a lack of self-confidence, modesty, humility, and an inclination to submit (Chervinskaya, 2008). This parameter is a part of the factor in “Real Me” category, which suggests that respondents may be valuing sharing more than self-expression, advancement, and fulfillment. This may be another confirmation of the collectivist aspect of Russian culture.

Helpfulness reflects kindness, empathy, caring and concern for others (Chervinskaya, 2008). This parameter is a part of the factor in the “Real Me” category, which suggests that empathy can be part of assertion in a Russian organization.

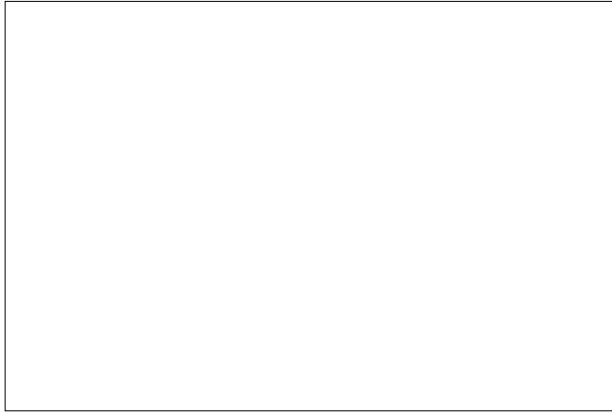
Principles (in Incomplete Sentences) reflect the degree (from -2 to +2) and direction (positive or negative) of the emotional charge about others’ decency, principles, honesty, in the organizational context. This parameter being a part of the assertiveness factor for Russian sample, suggests that assertiveness in Russia is a positive appraisal of decency, principles, and honesty.

Attitude to coworkers (in Incomplete Sentences) reflects the degree (from -2 to +2) and direction (positive or negative) of the emotional charge about general sentences about their coworkers. This parameter makes a part of the assertiveness factor for Russian sample suggests that positive attitude to immediate coworkers, a sense of belonging with them, is a part of assertiveness in Russia.

This composition of the factor suggests that *Assertiveness_R* is accentuated by modesty, empathy, decency, and positive attitude to coworkers.

4. Cross-Cultural Variations of the Factor

The analysis of a factor of satisfaction with workplace relationships, for the sample of the study overall, as well as for the American and Russian



samples analyzed independently, it was possible to empirically identify cross-cultural variances in assertiveness in workplace relationships.

Assertiveness in Russia is accentuated by modesty, empathy, decency, and positive attitude to coworkers. Assertiveness in the USA is characterized by looking to share responsibility with others and looking to them for recognition and encouragement.

4. Discussion

The main hypothesis of the study was supported: satisfaction with workplace relationships is influenced by both relationship partners making effort to work together, being firm, open, honest, and kind to each others. This influencing factor in conditioned by their belonging to a national culture.

This study allowed us to identify not only variations in workplace relationships between the employees in the United States and in Russia, but also similarities. To summarize:

- (1) Interpersonal Checklist statistically significant differences were demonstrated in a) "Real Me": Americans are both more independent and dependent: ("Competitive-Narcissistic" ($p < 0.001$) and "Docile-Dependent" ($p = 0.008$)); b) "Ideal Me": Tendency for Russians to want to be more pliable ("Self-Effacing-Masochistic" ($p = 0.056$) and for the results in 6 out of 8 scales to be more pronounced (although results for both countries are in the zero interval).
- (2) Incomplete Sentences: 7 out of 10 scales demonstrated statistically significant difference.
- (3) The commonalities between the workplace relationships in the United States and in Russia are: a) Aspiration to become even softer, kinder, more caring and empathetic in relationship with others. That may be an evidence that connection, inclusiveness, fairness are valued in both countries, and that in both countries corporate employees recognize the benefit of being more open and welcoming to others, as opposed to not; b) Principles are admired and respected while can sometimes can create resistance; c) Value the experience of belonging with immediate coworkers (coworkers in general are providing the feeling liked, ability to contribute to something bigger than oneself, and other ways of making a difference to another person.
- (4) Our factor analysis (key components method that allows consolidating several variables in one factor) of the structure of satisfaction with interpersonal workplace relationships in USA and in

Russia revealed that assertiveness (one's ability to be firm, honest, and friendly at the same time) is key to a satisfying workplace relationship in both countries. This set of characteristics in relationship allows one to facilitate maximization of satisfaction for both workplace relationship partners. However, it also revealed that the content and meaning of assertiveness varies between two countries. In other words, assertiveness has cross-cultural differences. Assertiveness in Russia is accentuated by modesty, empathy, decency, and positive attitude to coworkers. Assertiveness in the USA is characterized by looking to share responsibility with others.

Hypothesis 2 was not supported: our research did not reveal any differences based on generation or age, educational level, or gender. This result may suggest that culture-determined behaviors and norms are a stronger factor in workplace relationships than demographics, but this hypothesis warrants further exploration and explication.

5. Conclusion

Despite a limited body of research about the content and development of relationships, that would not be focused on individual skills or teamwork, more research in the field of interpersonal workplace relationships is warranted and needed.

The ability to establish, develop, and nurture workplace relationships to the degree that they are effective and satisfying, is becoming an increasingly more important asset class of employees and organizations. In the context of technology development such as automation, digitization, robotization, on one hand, and of the "epidemic of loneliness" that impacts human health and organizational productivity, on the other, the ability to build, develop, and sustain a system of positive interpersonal relationships is becoming more and more valuable for both individuals and business. This ability becomes especially important in the global context, therefore skills of establishing, developing, sustaining, improving workplace relationships in cross-cultural context is what the outcomes of work depend on.

Future research of generational, educational, and gender differences in workplace relationships would be suited to explicate and help understand both universal and cross-culturally variable parameters in other cultures, beyond Russian Federation and the United States.

Acknowledgements

We express gratitude to the specialists who helped us validate Incomplete sentences for both languages and the analysts who helped us perform an effective content analysis in both languages.

Funding

This work has not received any funding.

Conflict of Interest: none to declare.

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