

A Comparative Study of Disciplinary Practices in Buddhism and Modern Human Resource Management

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Introduction

Discipline is the foundation of behaviour formation, order maintenance, and the proper functioning of any structured system, be it religious, social, or corporate. In the current context of modern Human Resource Management (HRM), organisations use formal HRM protocols to control employee misconduct and productivity (Dessler, 2020). Usually, organisations use disciplinary measures such as disciplinary notices, warnings, suspensions, demotions, and transfers in accordance with accepted rules and regulations. Contemporary HRM is more developed than traditional HRM in terms of counselling, coaching, and restorative practices, as well as in identifying employee talents and appreciation (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

Buddhism is based on discipline, grounded in the concepts of compassion, mindfulness, and moral responsibility. The main foundation of Buddhism is identifying the root cause of behaviour and encouraging individuals to recognise it and pursue transformation (Rahula, 1974) rather than resorting to severe punishments. The misconduct of Buddhism is based on concepts of kamma and vipāka, karuṇā (compassion), mettā (loving-kindness), and upekkhā (equanimity). The approach to discipline in Buddhism is continuous and developmental, rather than corrective, focusing on ethical awareness and the cessation of suffering. This study is therefore critically evaluating the disciplinary practices in domains of Buddhism and modern Human Resource management (HRM)

Research Question

- How do Buddhism and modern Human Resource Management use the disciplinary practices?

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to identify disciplinary practices in Buddhism and modern Human Resource Management, with particular focus on the roles of punishment and forgiveness in handling misconduct.

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The other specific objectives are as follows,

- To examine the conceptual foundations of discipline in Buddhism, including key ethical principles and teachings related to behaviour and accountability.
- To analyse the structure and application of disciplinary practices in modern HRM, including formal procedures and policies.
- To compare the approaches of Buddhism and HRM in addressing employee misconduct, particularly in terms of disciplinary vs corrective measures.
- To identify potential gaps in modern HRM practices that could be addressed through the integration of Buddhist ethical principles.
- To propose a balanced disciplinary model that combines organisational control with compassion and ethical development.

Methodology

The study uses a qualitative, comparative research design to examine disciplinary procedures in Buddhism and contemporary HRM using primary and secondary sources. Instead of gathering empirical data, the research is mostly intellectual and interpretive, concentrating on the examination of texts, theories, and practices..

2.1 Data Sources

The study is based on two main categories of sources;

Buddhist Texts and Teachings: To comprehend the Buddhist perspective in discipline, a few ethical discourses and doctrinal concepts, such as Dhammapada and Vāseṭṭha Sutta, as well as scholarly interpretations of Buddhist ethics, behaviour, and correction, are analysed. These include teachings on moral conduct, intention and consequences of actions.

HRM Literature: To analyse formal disciplinary procedures, including progressive discipline systems and contemporary trends like restorative practices and employee-centred approaches, current HRM theories, textbooks, and organisational policies are examined (Dessler, 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023).

Key ideas about discipline, punishment, and forgiveness in both systems were identified through a comparative investigation. To identify parallels, discrepancies, and points of convergence, the sub-themes are examined across the

two frameworks. The following dimensions form the basis of the comparison's structure:

- Purpose and objectives of the discipline
- Role of punishment and forgiveness
- Conceptual understanding of misconduct
- Expected outcomes for individuals and organisations

The above-structured approach ensures a systematic and balanced comparison between the two domains.

Results and Discussion

The analysis shows that disciplinary methods in Buddhism and contemporary HRM have both important distinctions and noteworthy parallels.

3.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Discipline

Contemporary HRM's main objectives are to maintain organisational order, ensure adherence to rules and regulations and protect production (Dessler, 2020). It is often reactive. It responds to wrongdoing after it occurs. In contrast, Buddhism views discipline as a proactive, growth-oriented practice that cultivates moral consciousness and helps avoid negative behaviour. It stresses internal change rather than external enforcement (Rahula, 1974).

3.2 Role of Punishment and Forgiveness

HRM imposes punishments that range from warnings to termination or suspension. But these actions are well written and covered through acts, ordinances, rules and regulations; however, this can tend to make the employee fearful, resentful and disengaged (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). But Buddhism does not encourage punishment; rather, it encourages identifying wrongdoing and correcting it (purifying the mind). The concepts of Kamma and Vipāka are natural consequences: individuals are well-behaved because of the results of their actions.

In contemporary HRM, forgiveness is rarely discussed, yet it is crucial in some job roles (e.g., Finance). But new concepts of coaching and mediations somewhat motivate employees for positive outcomes by eliminating their negative thoughts and practices. But the traditional system focuses solely on accountability and consequences (Stone, 2018). Forgiveness is a core topic in Buddhism, and it can be provided with examples (Ven Aṅgulimāla etc.). But those links

with compassion, where individuals tend to commit wrongdoings due to ignorance, stress, or a desire for sensual pleasures. However, forgiveness is not merely a weakness; it's about destroying negativity and fostering growth in line with healing (Harvey, 2013).

3.4 Conceptual Understanding of Misconduct

HRM follow a rigid protocol and structure to address the wrongdoing. This has been well structure method in organizations. Those executed to maintain justice and identify the wrongdoer. It can vary according to the situation. Buddhism emphasises the root cause of behaviour. According to Rahula (1974), mental (untamed Consciousness) is the true cause of misconduct.

3.5 Expected Outcomes for Individuals and Organisations

The main objective of maintaining disciplinary procedures is to maintain efficiency and compliance. Further to deter misconduct and improve transparency. The main objective of Buddhism is to cease suffering and to foster ethical growth, with ultimate guidance toward Nibbāna provided by purifying the mind.

Discussion

The results indicate that although Buddhism and modern HRM have different conceptual underpinnings, there is ample room for integration. Fairness, consistency, and legal compliance, all crucial in organisational settings, are guaranteed by HRM's methodical, policy-driven approach. Those protocols can demotivate staff morale and, even though they can address the causes of wrongdoing (Stone, 2018), they can also neglect the causes of wrongdoing (Stone, 2018). But the Buddhist viewpoint is different, emphasising transformation, compassion and self-awareness. A deeper understanding of human behaviour can be gained by focusing on the motivations and mental states that underlie acts.

Another important highlight would be the balance between responsibility and empathy. Punishments are not always the principal response to misconduct. But it has to look at the long-term recovery and impact rather than focusing on the short term through counselling, mindfulness training, and discussions. Forgiveness is also another important consideration that should be highlighted. Forgiveness in the workplace might lead to learning and development rather than ignoring or protecting the wrongdoer. This is now consistent with contemporary HRM practices, which promote employee growth and welfare.

Further, the underdeveloped ethical and emotional dimensions of discipline are also discussed in contemporary HRM. Buddhism promotes personal growth (purification) and continuous behaviour correction. Further legal and cul-

tural aspects need to be further evaluated, which is a limitation in the study, as it can be tailored to the organisation's needs.

Conclusion

The study shows that, despite their different sources, disciplinary processes in Buddhism and contemporary HRM share the goal of changing human behaviour and maintaining harmony. Buddhism provides ethical and psychological insights that can enhance the efficacy and humanity of these practices, and HRM offers the structural and procedural framework of organisational discipline.

A comprehensive approach that integrates the advantages of both systems, structured responsibility and empathetic understanding can result in more effective and sustainable punishment procedures. This approach not only tackles wrongdoing but also promotes long-term growth, improves employee well-being and cultivates a positive organisational culture. This study contributes to the growth and management of human resources, which is not just about controlling them tightly but about understanding, guiding, coaching, and developing people in meaningful and ethical ways. This is a better win-win situation for organisations and individuals.

Keywords - Buddhism, Compassion, Disciplinary, Human Resource Management (HRM), Punishments

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