

## 論文

# Case Studies of Japanese NGOs in Bangladesh: Understanding Bangladeshi Employees' Time Management

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**Abstract:** Two case studies of Japanese NGOs in Bangladesh reveal that Bangladeshi employees working in these organizations tend to be more punctual than those working in local organizations, adapting to a punctuality norm within the organizations. Our study finds that parent organization's time culture prevails and supervisors model timely behaviour, cultivating a punctual organizational time culture norm. In both cases, parent organization's influence (Japanese time culture) is stronger than local isomorphism (Bangladeshi time culture). Employees rate Japanese time culture and supervisor's attitude most highly as variables that influence time management; conversely, they rate Bangladeshi time culture and organizational policy as least relevant. Academic and practical implications are provided, along with limitations of the study.

**Keywords:** Japan, Bangladesh, punctuality, lateness, cross-culture

**アブストラクト:** 本論文は、バングラデシュにおける日本のNGOに関する二つの事例研究である。本研究を通じて、これらの組織で働くバングラデシュ人職員は、現地の他組織で働く職員よりも時間を守る傾向が強く、組織内での時間厳守の規範に適応していることが明らかになった。親組織の時間文化が優勢であり、上司が時間厳守の行動を率先して示すことで、時間厳守を組織文化の規範として根付かせていたのである。いずれのケースでも、日本の親組織が持つ時間文化の影響は、現地における類似組織に見られるバングラデシュの時間文化よりも強く表れていた。従業員は、日本の時間文化と上司の態度を、時間管理に影響を与える変数として最も高く評価した一方で、バングラデシュの時間文化と組織の政策については最も関連性が低いと評価された。本研究は、学術的および実務的な示唆を提供するとともに、研究上の限界についても言及している。

**キーワード:** 日本, バングラデシュ, 時間厳守, 遅刻, 異文化理解

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## 1. Importance of Time Management

The importance of employee punctuality is globally evident from company rules and regulations; entry times are often closely monitored; tardiness reprimanded, and sometimes even fined in the form of wage cuts or dismissal. Punctuality is important for leaders as being on time often indicates how seriously employees take their work, facilitating a quality relationship between leaders and subordinates (Bluedorn, 2002). Although employee tardiness directly results in loss of productivity and loss of supervisor's time spent on disciplining employees (Blau, 1995), it remains a relatively sparsely explored area, in comparison to employee absenteeism and turnover (Bardsley & Rhodes, 1996; Dishon-Berkovits & Koslowsky, 2002). When we reverse the lenses and study employee punctuality, we see that even fewer studies examine this as the main variable, showing academic neglect of this area. Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) studies employee punctuality together with other 'citizenship behaviours' (Morrison, 1994; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983; Organ & Lingl, 1995), thereby failing to study this variable alone. Our research intends to fill this gap by providing a cross-cultural qualitative analysis of employee time management, taking into consideration punctuality, OCB, tardiness and related withdrawal literature.

In addition to the dearth of literature in this field, Japan and Bangladesh have uniquely different perspectives when it comes to the matter of time, which makes the choice of these two countries particularly challenging. In Japan, punctuality is of paramount importance, signifying respect and dedication for one's work (Nishiyama, 2000; Hashimoto, 2002), and marked by the annual celebration of Time Day (*toki no kinenbi*) since 10th June 1920. It is said that Japanese workers arrive at their office 10-15 minutes before start time and read the newspaper at their desks. When the clock strikes 8 am, they start work. This way, not a minute of their work time is wasted. In stark contrast, Bangladesh has a lax approach to time management, which locals often refer to as 'the Bangali time.' According to the Embassy of Bangladesh in Japan, in June 2023, some 350 Japanese companies were operating in Bangladesh, making it important to understand how these two distinct cultures are managing the matter of time while working together.

The main purpose of our study is to take a qualitative approach in understanding *how* Japanese organizations in Bangladesh influence the arrival time of Bangladeshi employees, while looking at the perspective of employees on various related variables. No previous study has been found addressing this issue in the field. Two highly respected Japanese NGOs in Bangladesh are chosen for the study that have long-standing operations in Bangladesh, making them somewhat of experts in understanding Bangladeshi employee management. The results of this descriptive, exploratory study will be used to provide academic and practical implications for future scholars and managers in the field.

## 2. Understanding Time Management

A review of previous lateness literature provides us with a brief overview of this complex phenomenon. One popular outlook is to view lateness as being dependent on two factors: voluntary factors (i.e. employee's motivation to be on time) and involuntary factors (i.e. employee's ability to be on time), both of which are important determinants of lateness (Bardsley & Rhodes, 1996; Steers & Rhodes, 1978). This notion takes into account the important fact that lateness is often involuntary; failure to take involuntary lateness into account is a weakness in much lateness literature. Some research suggests that lateness may predict more serious offences such as absenteeism and turnover (Berry, Lechhook & Clark, 2012; Koslowsky, Sagie, Krausz & Singer 1997; Benson & Pond, 1987). While Hanisch and Hulin (1990) find that dissatisfied employees are more likely to engage in withdrawal behaviours (such as lateness), Gupta & Jenkins (1983) do not find significant relations with attitudinal variables (such as job satisfaction) and tardiness.

When we examine punctuality instead of lateness, we find they are most often studied together with other organizational citizenship behaviours. Organ initially defined OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ 1988: 4, as cited in Organ 1997)." Punctuality has been commonly included as one such organizational citizenship behavior (e.g. Smith, Organ, Near, 1983; Morrison, 1994). According to Organ and Ryan's 1995 meta-analytic review of 55 studies, OCB antecedents include employees' conscientiousness, leader supportiveness, perceived fairness, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. When we compare them to the antecedents of lateness, we find that these factors are very similar, although being studied by a different group of scholars with divergent agendas, hence reaffirming the antecedents' relevance. Similar to lateness literature, OCB antecedents include personality factors (Organ, 1994; Organ & Lingl, 1995), and organizational factors (leader supportiveness (Smith et al., 1983), job satisfaction (Smith et al., 1983; Organ & Lingl, 1995), organizational commitment (Williams & Anderson, 1991), perceived fairness (Moorman, 1991)).

As we can see, time management is a complex theme influenced by various personal, organizational and external factors. A detailed study of previous literature suggests the inclusion of the following factors to understand the effect on time management: traffic (e.g., Blau, 1995), work attitude (e.g., Harrison, Newman & Roth, 2006; Sharma, Singh & Kishor, 2013), personality (e.g., Dishon-Berkovits & Koslowsky, 2002; Back, Schmukle & Egloff, 2006), supervisor's attitude (e.g., Sagie, Koslowsky & Hamburger, 2002; Steers & Rhodes, 1978), team work (e.g., Drago & Wooden, 1992), arrival time of other employees (e.g., Lau, Au & Ho, 2003), organizational policy (e.g., Dishon-Berkovits & Koslowsky, 2002), wage earner status (e.g., Bardsley & Rhodes, 1996), and weather (e.g., Motley, 1926).

Literature on OCB, punctuality, lateness and related withdrawal behaviours fail to study the national

cultural effect on time management, even though it is an 'extraorganizational level' antecedent of employee lateness (Sagie et al., 2002). Of the thirty articles on OCB, punctuality and lateness examined, only one was found to have used cross-cultural data, showing a gap in literature. Drago & Wooden (1992) analysed data from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US and found that cohesive workgroups were associated with low levels of absence, if job satisfaction was high, but high levels of absence if job satisfaction was low. While they used cross-national data, they analysed them together and did not particularly focus on the national cultural effect.

Using Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's (1997) definitions, we can distinguish Japan as being sequential (events occurring in chronological order) and Bangladesh as being synchronic (multiple tasks occurring in the same time period), which shows difference in the outlook on time management; this suggests that Japanese employees are generally more punctual than Bangladeshi employees. Manrai & Manrai (1995) show that national culture has an effect on individual's time management. Uematsu-Bhuiyan's 2023 paper on organizational variables influencing tardiness through Hofstede's national cultural dimensions, classified Bangladesh as one of the top five countries with the most difference with Japan, cautioning managers to watch out for differences in time management in these countries. Bluedorn & Jaussi (2008) suggest taking national cultures into consideration for future research on leadership, followers and time management. Taking into consideration the lacking of previous literature and suggestions thereof, our study includes national time cultures of Japan and Bangladesh as two variables to be explored.

A summary of variables included in our exploratory study is displayed below, along with brief definitions:

- (i) Personality – personal characteristics of an individual. Modern organizational psychology divides personality into Type A, B, C, D and T<sup>(1)</sup> (Samaras & Galanakis, 2022). Type A, for example, are considered to be high-achieving individuals who are goal oriented. Type T are considered to be risk-taking individuals.
- (ii) Work Attitude – how an individual perceives his/her job. This includes job satisfaction (how happy they are with their jobs), organizational commitment (how dedicated they are to their jobs) and job involvement (how personally involved they are in their jobs).
- (iii) Wage earner status – whether the individual is the primary earner of the family, supported by other family members' incomes or the only earner in the family. This also includes part-time employees who are working on the side and using their income to fund their leisure activities.
- (iv) Team work – whether their work is task interdependent or independent; how closely individuals work with their teams.

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(1) Type B are stress-free individuals who are patient and easy-going. Type C are submissive individuals who have difficulty showing emotions. Type D are pessimistic individuals.

- (v) Arrival time of other employees – whether other workers arrive to work on time. This is part of group influence of others on the individual.
- (vi) Organizational policy – written rules and regulations that focus on tardiness and related behaviour.
- (vii) Supervisor's attitude – how the supervisor reacts to lateness of employees; whether the supervisor models punctuality himself / herself.
- (viii) Weather – atmospheric condition of the day (whether there is heavy rainfall, etc.).
- (ix) Traffic - movement of transport on the roads. Heavy traffic, for instance, may hamper the arrival time of employees.
- (x) Japanese time culture – arrival time norm in Japan. As the general public in Japan are mostly punctual, we conclude that Japanese time culture is punctual. As Japanese NGOs are chosen, we examine whether the parent organization's time culture affects arrival time of Bangladeshi employees.
- (xi) Bangladeshi time culture – national cultural norm of arrival times in Bangladesh. This includes general behaviour of time management of individuals in the country. In Bangladesh delays are often considered to be normal.
- (xii) Punctuality – arriving to work on time or earlier than start time. Arrival time to meetings is also included within this variable.

### 3. Internal consistency versus isomorphism

As we examine time management, we ask whether these organizations follow their home country's practices (arriving punctually) or adapt to local practices (arriving late). In their study of HRM practices, Rosenzweig & Nohria (1994) suggest pressure for internal consistency may be higher, arguing that multinational organizations keep consistent policies and practices across their affiliates to facilitate employee relocation within the organization. While pressure for internal consistency may lead to more punctual employees, the contrary may also prove to be true if local isomorphic pressure is higher. As suggested by DiMaggio & Powell (1983), some organizations may have to comply with local rules and regulations, leading to 'coercive isomorphism'. Instances of uncertainty and professionalism may also result in these institutions copying local practices, leading to 'mimetic' and 'normative isomorphism.' These competing pressures for internal consistency and isomorphism will be deciding factors for punctuality or non-punctuality within the organizations.

### 4. Research Method

Two highly respected Japanese NGOs are chosen for their particularly long-standing service in Bangladesh; as long-established successful NGOs, we believe they have ample knowledge in understanding Bangladeshi

employee management. As manufacturing companies often use stringent measures to punish latecomers (e.g. fining employees in the form of wage cuts for late arrival), we choose the service sector to understand how they manage this situation without using such strict methods. NGOs are particularly chosen to understand how organizations that are not solely profit driven encourage the punctual arrival time of their employees using perhaps a gentler approach. Two case studies are selected to allow for depth as well as comparability in the study.

A descriptive, exploratory case study approach is used to understand how Japanese NGOs influence the arrival time of Bangladeshi employees. Open ended interview questions are used and individuals are asked about the twelve variables and their perspective on the degree to which they influence the arrival time of employees. To ensure multiple perspectives are taken into account, interviewees are chosen from diverse demographics with varied experience levels and differing job roles (see appendix). We undertake an inductive, thematic approach, using semi-structured interview style to give us fluidity to identify new themes as they arise. Each interview is coded separately and an iterative process is used, whereby we identify new themes as they emerge and adjust following interview questions accordingly for a more robust development of emerging themes. Each interview is conducted in English and/or Bengali, according to the comfort level of the employee. Subtlety of the language is analysed through line-by-line coding (descriptive coding and code categorization) and the same data is analysed several times in conjunction with other documentation and observation to provide strong support of themes. Robert Yin (2018) and Johnny Saldaña's (2009) guidelines are used for designing the case, collecting data, analysing data and reporting the cases. Our sources of evidence include interviews, documentation, direct observation, participant observation and archival records when available.

## 5. Time Management in Bangladeshi office of Japanese NGOs

We started our data collection after literature review of OCB, punctuality, lateness, and related withdrawal behaviours, drawing out eleven independent variables and one dependent variable to include in the study. The literature suggests Japanese employees are more punctual than Bangladeshi employees. Hence, we started our discussion by trying to gauge if Bangladeshi employees working in Japanese NGOs in Bangladesh are more punctual than those working in other Bangladeshi-owned organizations. The next question we asked is *how* Japanese NGOs influenced punctuality of their employees in Bangladesh. Finally, we received inputs from the employees on all the related variables to see what their perceptions were on the influence of these variables on time management.

## 5.1 Parent Organization's Time Culture Prevails in Bangladeshi Office / Parent Organization's Nationality Matters in Time Management

### Case Study 1: Meena Organization

Meena Organization was established in Bangladesh in the 1970s; it is one of the oldest NGOs in Bangladesh with a total number of 13 employees. Meena works with the underprivileged population, helping support the community through education, and various awareness and training programs. Their Bangladeshi office is in frequent contact with their main headquarters in Japan. Meena's Country Director in Bangladesh is Ms. Nara, who is a Japanese person with fluent Bengali skills, something unique to Meena as an organization. She serves as the main liaison, relaying key information between the Bangladeshi office and Japanese headquarters. We conducted in-depth interviews of four employees in Dhaka's facilities and gathered data through direct observation and documentation of their facilities. We also participated in day-to-day work to get detailed understanding of the program.

Ms. Noureen has been working in Meena's main office for several years. She has also worked for other Bangladeshi companies prior to her time at Meena, and finds staff at Meena to be more punctual by comparison. She states that almost 100% of the employees arrive to work on time or 10 minutes earlier than start time. This is unusual in Bangladesh, where arriving to work slightly late is often considered to be the norm. Ms. Noureen states that Meena's staff also arrive to meetings in advance; "we arrive at meetings 5 mins before start time and wait for the meeting to commence. Meetings with Bangladeshi companies also tend to start on time; as they know we are a Japanese organization, they tend to make an effort to come on time to match our punctuality." There seems to be a spillover effect of punctuality to other organizations as well, where the nationality of the parent organization is a decisive determinant of punctuality itself. This is more so the case for companies which have had previous meetings with them, as newcomers may not be well aware of this trait. She mentions that if anyone is late, it is customary for them to call in advance and inform the office about the reason for their delay; traffic congestions are usually the most common cause of delays. She rates Japanese time culture highly as being a variable that influences arrival times, identifying punctuality as one of the biggest differences between Japanese and Bangladeshi organizations. Other differences she highlights are ethics and management styles; she finds Japanese management style to be kinder and calmer in comparison to the more assertive Bangladeshi style.

One of the interesting differences observed between Meena and other Bangladeshi organizations is their use of indoor shoes within the office. At the entrance, employees and guests are requested to take off their outdoor shoes and put on indoor slippers. Although this is common practice in Japanese homes and some offices, it is very unique in Bangladesh, where keeping outdoor shoes on is the norm in offices. This small but unique practice within Meena immediately reminds people about the nationality of the organization as they enter the office.

### Case Study 2: Sakura Organization

Sakura Organization started their operation in Bangladesh in the 1980s, helping the impoverished community by providing home and schooling for children in need, and running various training and educational programs. Sakura is a long-established, well-respected organization in Bangladesh with 88 employees. Mr. Alam, the Country Director of Sakura in Bangladesh, has had close ties with Japan all his life. He studied Japanese language in Bangladesh and later went to Japan for his higher studies. He is of Bangladeshi origin and speaks fluent Japanese and Bengali. Data was collected by visiting their main office and three facilities, going through documentation and archival records, participating in programs organized by the institution, and interviewing five employees from their main facilities in Bangladesh.

Sakura's facilities are located in the suburbs of Dhaka, in a quiet environment covered in lush greenery. At the entrance, there is a beautifully decorated grave of their Japanese founder, who had requested to be buried in Bangladesh. A touching poem is etched in the black granite in Japanese and Bengali, above the picture of their founder. One of the facilities is named in her honour and the walls of the main office are covered with framed photographs of many Japanese dignitaries and the founder herself, displaying respect and dedication for the founder and reminding everyone of their roots in Japan.

During the tour of the facilities, many aspects stood out as being unique and / or influenced by Japanese culture. Firstly, we noticed shoes are not allowed in the cafeteria which is carpeted throughout. Students and staff are requested to leave their shoes outside, similar to the Japanese custom of taking off outdoor shoes before entering indoor areas. Secondly, the school has an 'Honesty Shop,' an entirely unmanned stationeries shop; the camera-free room provides complete trust in the students and relies on their ethics for honest transactions. Students enter the unmanned shop, pick out their desired stationery and pay at the jar themselves, a remarkably new concept in Bangladesh. Thirdly, the school has a Japanese language class, taught by Mr. Alam himself. The classrooms and dormitory walls are filled with inspirational quotes, creating a motivational environment for the students. Mr. Alam says inspiration is key for the students, as most of them lack strong parental role models in their lives. Finally, we observed that students living in the dormitories are taught to clean and cook by themselves, rotating tasks among one another so they can all learn different practical skills. This is similar to Japanese schools where students learn to cook and clean by themselves, taking responsibility of their own classrooms and school grounds.

Ms. Anika is a full-time employee at one of Sakura's facilities. She beams with pride as she talks about the children she supports; it is evident that she loves her job. As Sakura frequently hosts guests from Japan, she has had the opportunity to interact with many Japanese individuals. She finds them to be nice, polite and highly punctual. She contributes timeliness to the nationality of the parent organization, believing this to be a unique Japanese trait. She highly rates Japanese time culture, considering it as one of the primary factors influencing employee punctuality within Sakura. She says almost 100% of the staff always come to work on time. Even



guests who attend meetings and events arrive on time. She finds Bangladeshi time culture norm to be irrelevant as all the staff are punctual, despite being Bangladeshi. The author took part in an event organized by Sakura and as per Ms. Anika's words, she also found the event to start exactly on time, despite the fact that all the attendees and participants were Bangladeshi. This event took place prior to the interviews, so the participants were not fully aware of the main focus of the study, avoiding possible behavioural bias.

## 5.2 Supervisor Models Timely Behaviour

### Case Study 1: Meena Organization

Ms. Zulekha is a full-time employee at Meena's main office in Bangladesh. She mentions that almost everyone comes to work on time, including Ms. Nara, her direct supervisor. "Most people live nearby so coming to work on time isn't an issue. For people who live far, traffic is usually the cause of their delay." If anyone is late, she says it is common practice to call the organization and let them know in advance. The country director oversees all the staff within the office, which she highlights as a key difference between Meena and other organizations she has worked in. As she is directly managed by Ms. Nara, she is well aware of the supervisor's punctuality and time management behaviour. Upon reflection she says "time management is life management, I think." This profound statement shows the importance of time given by the employee; she believes that one who is able to manage time can organize other aspects of his / her life as well.

Ms. Nara, the Country Director, provides us with some insight about Meena and the importance of time management within the organization. She lives nearby and commutes on foot, arriving punctually at the designated start time. On most days she maintains healthy working hours, as otherwise work can be endless. She confirms that most of the old staff are aware of the importance of punctuality within the organization, although she states this may not be the case for the newer employees. She says almost all the employees at Meena come to work on time. While performance review is done every six months, she states that feedback is generally given on an ongoing basis, as and when required, and employees are encouraged to work on *kaizen*. *Kaizen* is a Japanese business philosophy of continuous improvement. *Kaizen* consists of two Chinese characters: *kai* meaning change or modify and *zen* meaning good. While performance review does not explicitly include time management, she says the employee's *taido* (attitude towards work) is very important as it shows his / her dedication to the job.

When we visit their facility, about 20 minutes away from their main office in Dhaka, we find that time management is not prioritized here with good reasons. Many young, underprivileged students come to the facility as and when their work allows them to, and as they are often at the mercy of their supervisors regarding joining the classes, strict start times are not adhered to here. A relaxed and friendly atmosphere is created in the classes, allowing students to enjoy studying and socialize with their classmates. Towards the end of the observed class, students played *karam* and *ludu*, which are popular Bangladeshi board games, and chatted with one another. As the author participated in the class, one student put *henna* paint on her hands which the teacher proudly

complimented. During their class, many students were complimented by the staff, displaying an encouraging atmosphere cultivated by the institution. Ms. Nara says this classroom provides students with a safe space to be just themselves. It is implied that time management has to also make sense in the context of the work being carried out; it would not make sense to deprive the students of their classes for being late and as it is also not in their control, the teacher and staff are all extremely understanding and flexible with time within this facility. It is important to note that while the students are allowed to come in flexibly, the staff still arrive in a timely fashion.

### Case Study 2: Sakura Organization

Mr. Shabab is one of the senior workers at Sakura, having several years of work experience within the organization. He refers to Mr. Alam as *Boro Bhai*, which means big brother in Bengali. The author notices almost all the employees refer to him as *Boro Bhai*, a sign of high respect and admiration in Bangladesh. Mr. Shabab states that all his colleagues arrive to work before 9 am, their designated office start time. He credits this to Mr. Alam who is also very punctual, saying they all learned time management skills from Mr. Alam. When events or meetings are organized, Mr. Alam is always on time, arriving punctually with the guests of the event. This consistent behaviour makes punctuality a norm within the organization. The author, who was part of one of these guest attendees, also witnessed first-hand how Mr. Alam encourages everyone to get to the program punctually, keeping close monitor of time and reminding everyone to start. Mr. Shabab says that even people who were not so timely, become punctual as they work in this organization.

Mr. Salman, another full-time employee at Sakura, confirms this by conveying his story about time management. Mr. Salman laughs and says he was not always punctual before. He used to generally arrive slightly late, and since everyone in other organizations are also late, this was acceptable at his previous workplace. However, once he started working in Sakura, his behaviour towards time changed. He noticed that Mr. Alam was very timely and all the meetings and events started just on time. He recognized that coming on time was the new norm here so he quickly adjusted his behaviour and also started arriving on time. "Even though I'm generally a bit on the slow side, I have learned to come to work on time, thanks to Mr. Alam," he remarks with a light-hearted laugh.

### 5.3 Moderate and Least Influential Variables: Perception of Employees

At the end of the interviews, employees were asked to rate eleven variables on a scale of 1 to 5 according to their perceived influence on time management. The average ratings of these variables have been ranked and summarized in Table 1. Interestingly, both Meena and Sakura ranked organizational policy as one of the least influential variables. Bangladeshi time culture was ranked low for both as well. However, some employees in Meena thought it was relevant for participants from outside the organization (rather than for people within their own organization) who came late for meetings. This was not the case for Sakura, where everyone ranked

Bangladeshi time culture as least relevant. This could be because many of their participants from outside the organization tended to come directly from Japan.

Table 1: Summary of variables according to employees' perception of their influence on time management

Most influential	Moderately influential	Least influential
<i>Supervisor's attitude, Japanese time culture</i>	<i>Work attitude, Arrival time of other employees, Team work, Traffic, Personality, Wage earner status, Weather</i>	<i>Bangladeshi time culture, Organizational policy</i>

Source: Prepared by author

## 6. Comments on Cases

All interviewed employees in both the organizations reported that almost 100% of their staff were timely; this aligns with the author's observation of time management in these organizations. The only place this is not practised is for the students of Meena, given the nature of their situation; it is important to note that the staff in Meena's facility is still punctual. The observed timeliness, along with the perception of low influence of Bangladeshi time culture, show that individual attitudes about lateness (which presumably would be influenced by Bangladeshi time culture norm) did not delay or affect these employees. This finding concurs with that of Elicker, Foust, O'Malley and Levy (2008), who conclude that punctual climates within organizations constrain the influence of individual attitude on lateness, while in lenient or late climates, individual attitude on lateness has a strong influence on actual lateness.

We find that parent organization's time culture and supervisor modelling timely behaviour create a punctuality norm in these two organizations, influencing time management of their employees. It is as if the presence of these two variables institutionalizes time culture, creating a new norm. This is especially interesting as delays are common in synchronic time culture countries like Bangladesh, making it a challenge for intercultural organizations (especially organizations from sequential time culture countries, such as Japan) to manage their employees. In both cases, we also find that the focus is more on the supervisors' modelling timely behaviour rather than monitoring or reacting to employees' lateness; in fact, none of the employees mentioned being monitored regarding time management. Supervisor modelling or leading by example is a construct that is often associated with effective leadership (Arnold, Arad, Rhoads & Drasgow, 2000; Rich, 1998). Interestingly, the nationality of supervisor does not matter, as long as he / she is displaying timely behaviour and setting an example. This parent organization influence could be especially true for Japanese affiliates as suggested by a study conducted by Rosenzweig & Nohria (1994). Their study of HRM practices in US affiliates of foreign corporations shows that Japan is the least affected by local isomorphism. Although these Japanese affiliates say they want to follow US practices, they adhere to US practices less than affiliates from other countries. These

findings are echoed by Miah, Sarah and Takahashi (2022), where the authors find that Japanese subsidiaries in Bangladesh are particularly influenced by their parent company, shaping the HRM practices of these subsidiaries. While these studies do not look at the time component, we find that when it comes to time culture, the Japanese NGOs show more parent characteristics (Japanese time culture) than local isomorphism (Bangladeshi time culture), as long as supervisors continue to display timeliness. Our findings are also supported by the employees' perceptions, where they rate the influence of Japanese time culture very high, conversely rating the influence of Bangladeshi time culture as very low.

We believe that punctuality is especially prevalent in Japanese affiliates as it shows employees' dedication to work. As Meena's country director mentioned, attitude towards one's work is especially important when it comes to performance reviews. Naoki Kuriyama (2017) refers to this attitude as *issyokenmei* (a working hard attitude) in his book on Japanese Human Resource Management, stating its high importance in employee evaluation. He says this is more so the case in Japan as job roles are often fluid and not clearly defined, especially for white-collar workers. In the west, we argue this concept is embodied in organization citizenship behaviours which consists of 'other behaviours,' often beyond the general role of work that helps the organization function well. Smith et al. uses punctuality as an example, stating these characteristics represent compliance behaviour within OCB that define what a "good employee ought to do" (1983: 657). We contend that although time management is not explicitly included in performance evaluations in these organizations, it is an important determinant of employees' hard-working attitude or OCB.

Interestingly, we find that organizational documentation is ranked among the lowest when it comes to influence on time management. All but one Bangladeshi employee rated it as least relevant, perhaps because of his / her personality or nature. The Japanese employee ranked it as one of the most important factors. When we compare Japan and Bangladesh with Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension using the culture factor tool,<sup>(2)</sup> we find that Japan scores one of the highest at 92, while Bangladesh has a mid-range score of 60. Japan is one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries in the world, requiring strict rules to satisfy the need for order and predictability (Hofstede, 1984). Bangladesh, on the other hand, has a moderate need for strict rules and regulations, which explains why almost all the employees thought organizational policy was least relevant for time management.

## 7. Summary, Implications and Limitations

This research was conducted as an exploratory study to understand time management of Bangladeshi employees in Japanese NGOs in Bangladesh. We found that even though Bangladeshi time culture is lax, when

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(2) <https://www.theculturefactor.com/>

working in Japanese NGOs, the employees became more punctual, adapting to the punctuality norm of these organizations. Parent organization time culture prevails in these organizations and supervisors, regardless of nationality, model timely behaviour, creating a punctual organizational time culture norm. The perceptions of employees were also recorded for twelve variables, and it was found that Japanese time culture and supervisor attitude were most highly rated, while organizational policy and Bangladeshi time culture were rated lowest for their influence on time management. While time management is not part of the performance review, we find that Japanese organizations place high importance on punctuality as it shows their hard-working attitude towards work.

### 7.1 Academic Implications

From our empirical findings, we can suggest some follow up research for further investigations by future scholars:

1. While our empirical observation suggests that organization's nationality and supervisor modelling behaviour create an organizational time culture norm, a quantitative review would provide additional support to this finding. We suggest using Elicker et al.'s (2008) 5-point measure of perceived lateness climate to survey a large organization to examine whether employees' perception of supervisor modelling behaviour and organization's nationality are good predictors of organizational time culture norm or perceived lateness climate (as referred to by Elicker et al.).
2. A quantitative study examining the direct and indirect antecedents of time management across cultures; finding out whether these direct and indirect antecedents change with national cultures.
3. Quantitative study to explore a large organization in synchronic time culture, examining whether supervisor modelling behaviour alone has an effect on time management, in the absence of organization's nationality effect; if this is found to be true, it would suggest that punctuality time culture norm can be 'taught' by supervisors if appropriate importance is given to it and supervisors are trained in it. It is suggested that other related variables are properly controlled for. A qualitative study in this area may also be interesting to see *how* punctual organizations manage to influence arrival times, without having the organization's nationality effect. This is especially important to understand as tardiness tends to be more prevalent in synchronic time cultures.
4. Similar qualitative studies for cross-cultural review of organizational antecedents of time management and *how* Japanese organizations influence time management in these cultures. Uematsu-Bhuiyan (2023) suggests cross-cultural review of Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore as these countries with Japanese affiliates also have distinctly different Hofstede's national cultural dimensions.

### 7.2 Practical Implications

Several practical implications are suggested by our case study observations. Our suggestions for

organizations trying to create a punctual organizational time culture norm include:

1. Choose supervisors with strong individual time management skills. This could be done using Foust, Elicker & Levy's (2006) 9-point measure of individual lateness attitude (low score would indicate punctuality) or through the time urgency subcomponent of Type A personality as suggested by Dishon-Berkovitz & Koslowsky (2002).
2. Ensure supervisors model timely behaviour through punctual arrival times to work and meetings. Provide appropriate trainings and increase awareness on the importance of time management, especially for supervisors in synchronic time cultures.
3. Particularly in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, clear organizational policies should be made that outline time management as a key component. In low uncertainty avoidance cultures, it is more important for supervisors to give practical everyday reminders of punctuality by modelling timely behaviour themselves.

### 7.3 Limitations

Our qualitative analysis comes with its own limitations. In both our cases, the supervisors had strong backgrounds in Japan, which may have affected their views on punctuality, thereby influencing their time management styles. However, as they are Japanese NGOs, it is also possible that supervisors are particularly chosen for their Japanese backgrounds. As with most qualitative research, our sample size is small and our study is not statistically representative, which is why we urge future researchers to also undertake a quantitative study in this field. Furthermore, most previous studies in this field have been on for-profit companies; choosing NGOs may have its own limitations. The author herself intends to pursue qualitative and quantitative follow up research with for-profit companies, using findings from this exploratory case study.

While we carefully tried to assess the nuances of the language and with it, arising themes, some information may have been lost in translation. As all interviewees were interviewed in their language of comfort, and the author is fluent in both the languages, we hope this issue was kept at its minimum.

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All the names have been changed to protect the privacy of the employees. The names of the organizations have also been changed in accordance to the requests by the organizations.

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Appendix

Demographic details

Serial	Pseudonym	NGO	Job Title	Gender	Years of experience
1	Nara	Meena	Country Director	Female	16 years
2	Zulekha	Meena	Assistant Program Officer	Female	2 years
3	Noureen	Meena	Coordinator	Female	14 years
4	Tumpa	Meena	Teacher	Female	1 year
5	Alam	Sakura	Country Director	Male	38 years
6	Nazia	Sakura	Girls' Tutor	Female	1 year
7	Rumi	Sakura	Senior Program Officer	Male	24 years
8	Rahim	Sakura	Coordinator	Male	8 years
9	Rana	Sakura	Boys' Tutor	Male	1.5 years