IDENTIFICATION OF TARGET GROUP TO STUDY THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGICAL GROOMING ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract
Research on the employees working in temples controlled by Travancore Devaswom board is hitherto not ventured much. Studies on Devaswom board's history, structure and finance have been published. But a research to understand the employees employed within the precincts of the temples controlled by the board is an area totally untouched.

The employees working inside the temples have their own beliefs, traditions and hierarchy which has been handed down from ancient times. Their work is a mixture of traditions, myths, allure and pompousness but is totally unspectacular and low key in terms of its materialistic remuneration. People are engaged in the job despite negligible materialistic expectations. The main study tries to prove the impact of ideological grooming on employee engagement.

As part of the bigger picture a pilot study based on qualitative methodology was carried out in order to identify the target group who among the temple employees were groomed both by the family and by professionals, with an aim to study the role of ideological grooming in employee engagement. The pilot study identified the suitable target group for further research .This study was carried out as the first step of a doctoral thesis.

Key words: Target group, Grooming, Ideology.

Introduction
Travancore Devaswom Board is a government organ constituted to run the functions of a chain of Hindu temples in the State of Kerala (India). A Hindu mandir (temple) is a house of god(s) (George Michell (1977). Devaswom means properties of god (Deva means God and Swom mean ownership in Sanskrit). Devaswom Boards are a social system, by which all properties of each temple are declared as personal property of presiding deity of each temple and managed through a body of trustees who bear allegiance to the presiding deity.

The Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act-1950, gives the responsibility for managing all temples of south Kerala, except owned by those private families and private boards, listed in official Covenant signed between the ruler of the kingdom of Travancore and Indian Government in 1949 to the State Government of Kerala. But the government of Kerala cannot directly get involved in the administration of temples. They can do so only through board officials appointed for the purpose and who are so authorised.

The temples follow Vedic principles which has been handed over right from the times of the great seer Adishankara. The various traditions and rituals followed by these temples date back to over 1000 years and these traditions are still being religiously followed. These are being done by people who are conventionally handed over the job, either through their family legacy or by their birth right, now a days the board also recruit people through interviews for the various posts.

The board therefore has "establishment employees" holding posts borne on the permanent administrative establishments (the administrative staff) and "contingency employees" working under its pay role (also called temple employees) who work within the precincts of a temple.

The contingency workers include the Shanthikars, Khazhagams and Adiyanthiram employees .The Shanthikars are the priests who conduct the ceremonial worship in the inner sanctum sanctorum, the khazhagam look after the activities within the outer sanctum like arranging flowers, the garlands for idols, cleaning of the sanctorum, the adiyanthiram include the employees (Vadyams, Sambandhi, Marar) who play the various musical and wind instruments (nadaswaram, thakil, panchavadyam).
Workforce with high employee engagement is a dream of any employer. But in the modern world, people seems to be extremely rare who happily do their job, even when the remuneration is not very promising. The study tries to answer the questions like whether any kind of grooming received traditionally or scientifically keeps them bonded to the job, which category of employees have their own work peculiarities and grooming. Which category among the employees go through a thought process grooming and what does this grooming reflect?.

The contingency employees of Travancore Devaswom Board were broadly selected as the study material. This is due to their common characteristics like low remuneration, odd timings, difficulties to avail leave and other basic amenities. Their

remuneration and benefits are trivial in comparison with other industries. They have working hours starting from 4.30 am to 12 pm noon and from 4pm to 8pm in the evening. A common grievance stated by a majority among them is their difficulty in finding spouse for marriage. These contingency employees come from varying socio economic backgrounds. The grooming received by each of these employees differ. It was therefore decided to study the extend of grooming received by each category of employees and to reach the most obvious target group. A pilot study was carried out among the employees of Travancore Devaswom board to find out the target group as part of a doctoral thesis. The original study design intends to find out the relationship of ideological grooming and employee engagement.

Theoretical Background
Ideology has been conferred a title of elusiveness by various researchers from the time of its inception by Count Antoine Destutt de Tracy, in 1817.Various definitions and explanations have been invented for this concept. Ideologists were considered as people who had their own hardened beliefs as ideologies are shared beliefs that reflect the social experiences in a particular context at a particular time (Dunbar, Dutton, and Torbert, 1982), and that too for an action oriented way of life as ideologies are sets of ideas that evolve out of specific social contexts (Beyer, Dunbar, and Meyer, 1988).

Grooming is an integral part of ideology, as ideologies are reasonably integrated sets of ideas addressed to facilitate an understanding and navigation of human social life (Machan, 1992). Specific social contexts determine the ideological grooming practices.

Very ancient traditions are being practiced in the temples of Kerala. People are groomed in a traditional way to follow the temple rituals religiously. These grooming practices are endorsed through agents. The practices has a compelling character (Durkheim), it has to be enacted in a particular way as defined by its logic. The agents in early years of an individual comprises of the family as well as the teachers, who enact the role of groomers. The grooming practices and beliefs generate a meaning within an individual knowingly and unknowingly as ideology defines peoples' apprehensions of reality, structures their desires, and shapes their aspirations (Prasad and Prasad, 1994).

Ideological grooming is the process of grooming for inculcating a culture and belief system into young active mind. Such grooming is done at home by the parents, the family and the teacher's .They knowingly and unknowingly influence the thought process of the child. In certain communities there is a system which runs in the family to influence the child in a subtle, suggestive way to carry on with his family legacy. Deep marks are generated in the subconscious mind of the child which eventually help him to define his own vistas. Such ideological formations generated through grooming practices and processes get logically integrated as sets of beliefs that integrated and bind individuals to the organization and that provide a shared meaning for organizational participants (Chung and Gibbons, 1997).

Study Design
The Travancore Devaswom Board has employees coming from various backgrounds. A study carried out among the temple employees would help to identify the employees who had received such grooming which was assimilated right from their childhood and to comprehend the type and the extent of grooming received by different categories of contingency employees working in temples. 26 contingency employees from various Mahakshetras (big temples) were chosen randomly for this purpose. A qualitative input collection program was carried out as qualitative approach enables theory-building (Eisenhardt, 1989) and the generation of 'thick' knowledge. A brief interview schedule was developed and self-administered to the respondents to collect their demographic and other background information. The respondents were asked to elaborate on their family traditions, childhood memories and the childhood familial grooming practices which have enthused them in their current work .The interviews were recorded. The data generated through semi-structured, face-to-face in depth (Yin, 1994) interviews were analysed using Atlas.ti software.

Findings
The analysis of the data showed that the employees had a different kind of familial grooming .The grooming was dissimilar for different employees. Employees doing priestly work had a different style of upbringing, which instilled a sense of identity and mental framework. But a similar grooming pattern was seen among a particular sect of priests. These employees spoke elaborately on their set pattern of grooming processes which was mandatory and built in with their upbringing. The category of employees with this grooming were zeroed down to the Brahmin priests. They had elaborate grooming practices which began at a very young age and were socialised into it from a young age starting typically from 7 years of age. Even before this age they were synchronised into a way of life by having mental models of persons with in their family, in particular the male members such as their grandfather, father or uncles. These influences were ingrained into their memories in a subtle manner. They were groomed both by the male members within the family circle and also by teachers in their later childhood.

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Table I: Showing the type of grooming received

History of the Respondent	Type of Grooming Received	Indicative Quotes
Mr.A is a priest from the non-Brahmin community working with the board. He has entered into this job on his own interest. His family had no predisposition of doing priestly work. After his matriculation discontinued studies. In his spare time used to visit the temple close to his house. He was asked to assist in doing the menial jobs. He started observing the various tasks done by the priest. He also started learning mantras and scriptures. Watching this change in him the priest suggested that he undergo classes in conducting the rituals and ceremonial worship .On completion of the Vedic studies he joined a temple as a priest.	Went for professional grooming for better learning and understanding of the temple rituals. Had schooled learning	"I used to visit temples. Was very fond of ringing the big brass bells .Used to go to ring the temple bell .After passing my post matriculation examinations I used to hang around right from early morning till the closing time. Helped with the menial jobs within the temple sanctum sanctorum. Started observing and learning the simpler activities. The chief priest suggested that I go to a Vedic school which teaches temple rituals .I was comfortable with the suggestion so joined a Vedic school .I was recruited directly from the school by the Board. Family had no connections to this activity. Well like in all other household mother used to light lamps in front of the deity and sing holy hymns nothing more"
Mr.B is a priest from the Brahmin community. Right from childhood after the customary rituals like his upanayanam and samavarthanam (socialisation rituals) he started assisting his father and grandfather in their family temple. He used to watch his father and uncles follow his grandfather's instructions with respect to the temple rituals and other ceremonial worship. Grew up watching the daily rituals which were part of their way of life, performed by other family members within their family precincts. It was an automatic progression.	Got a grooming right from the childhood watching, learning and chanting hymns and scriptures and the various rituals which formed the daily activities in temple work. This was by watching his family members undergoing their mundane activities and the "thevarams" (mandatory religious rituals done each day).	"It is like teaching a fish to swim. We really do not need to teach a fish to swim. It is in built. I first observed and learned from my grandfather, then my father .At the time of my upanayanam (a ritual done in childhood) I was given permission by my Guru to chant mantras. From then on I used to go along with my father and also assisted my maternal uncle. I was sent to a Vedic school for 6 months to fine tune my learning and get better insights into the scriptures"
Mr.C is a Khazhagam .The main duties of these employees in a temple include cleaning the sanctum sanctorum, arranging flowers and garlands for the deity and overall upkeep of things within the outer sanctorum. He got into this job through a recommendation by his friend .It was his friend who mentioned about the vacancy in the board. He applied for it and got it.From there on he is with the board.	No grooming as such was received either from family or from the board.	"I got this job through the recommendation of my friend. I had completed ITI diploma and was scouting around for a job in that field. The temple employment was totally unexpected. Not very comfortable. I am writing other exams too."
Mr.D plays the musical instrument during the rituals and ceremonial worship. Has good musical ears. From a young age itself was artistically inclined. Loved music. After passing his post matriculation studies attended	Professional Grooming received by enrolling for a certified course for studying musical instruments.	"Had good artistic talent. Was not very good in my studies .But was good at learning wind instruments. Went to the music school to learn. Got recruited by the board on passing out. I teach music to the public too when I get free time.

a certificate course to learn music and musical instruments .Was recruited by the Board from there.		This is how I get some extra money."

Table II: Shows the different categories of employees, their job description and the analysis of the type of grooming received.

Job Position	Job description	Grooming received from Family	Professional Grooming	Any Specific Grooming
Shanthikars Brahmins	Ceremonial Worship	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non Brahmins		Nil	Yes	Nil
Khazhagams	Cleaning the sanctum sanctorum. Readying flowers and garlands for rituals	Nil	Nil	Nil
Adiyanthiram	Playing the temple musical instruments during rituals	No	Yes	No

Conclusions

The pilot study clearly indicated the type of grooming received by each category of contingency employees. The study did not cover the administrative employees of the Travancore Devaswom Board.Shanthikars of Brahmin community got both familial and professional grooming while Shanthikars of Non Brahmin Community received only professional grooming. Kazhagam employees were devoid of any kind of grooming while adiyanthiram employees were trained professionally. The study very positively showed that the priests who come from the Brahmin community are groomed right from their early years both by the family and by professionals. This groomed upbringing by various role models enacting the role of groomers is closely associated to a cultural mind set. This thought process grooming internalises as ideological formations. This helped the author to zero down to the target group which were the Brahmin priests. Now a more focussed study is envisaged to conclude the role of ideological grooming in employee engagement among the Brahmin priests of the Travancore Devaswom Board.

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