

RECOGNITION AND EMPLOYEE MORALE IN ORGANISATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Motivational tools and employee morale are major problems in agencies today and have affected employees in some specific areas than others for instance bank employees are at great risk of suffering from specific areas as a result of low motivation and employee morale given the competition in the field where all agencies fight to provide better services to win over employees' hearts. This comes with its own risk and health hazards like high morale. The symptoms of low motivational tools and low employee morale reveal themselves in behaviors like high employee turnover, absenteeism, decreased performance and careless mistakes which cost the agencies.

Keywords: Recognition, Employee Morale, Organisations

INTRODUCTION

The expectation of management of every public agency is for employee to put in their best to achieve the goals of that said agency. This is the reason why management practitioners and most people tend to pay attention to motivation to boost employee morale at work. Morale is an elusive quality which involves feelings, emotions, attitude and perception towards the organization and its members. Positive morale is usually characterized by discipline, confidence and willingness to perform. Low morale can be attributed to many factors such as job insecurity, lack of fair compensation policy and recognition. Low morale affects agency income, productivity, labour turnover and high absenteeism (Sauermann & Cohen, 2008). Low morale is an outcome of managerial behavior where managers address their employees from a top-down command and refuse to communicate directly on workplace issues (Sauermann & Cohen, 2008). This kind of communication results in a gap between employees and managers, which in turn leads to employee distrust, disrespect, and reduction of morale and workforce motivation (Chungsup, 2012). Low morale also causes employees to lose interest, especially when managers don't appreciate their efforts and the tasks performed (Zeynep & Huckman, 2008). A costly indicator of low morale is high employee turnover. This happens when employees leave their jobs because they feel unhappy and have no incentives to stay. The negative effect of employee turnover is disconcerting because of its great implication both on labour turnover and on productivity levels. Labour turnover means the company has to hire new employees either with payment of higher salaries or by additional training expenses. At the production level, the employees who leave will take with them the knowledge, skills and ability that helped contribute to the goals, profit and performance of the organization (Lee & Liu, 2009). Absenteeism is another costly indicator of low morale. Unjustified absenteeism increases cost and decreases productivity (Abbot, 2003). According to an article in the Leading edge, dissatisfied employees who are discontented with their bosses can have a high price tag. (Abbot, 2003). Agency should work on controlling the effects of low morale through the understanding of their employees' potentials and their core work processes, understanding their abilities, enriching employees' job and recognizing their achievements (Ngambi, 2011).

Agencies are more concerned with having high returns on investment which they have neglected workers to the background in their scale of priority. Many contemporary authors have argued that motivation is a concept that cannot be ignored when talking of workers morale. Yet lack of motivation has made a whole lot of agencies to collapse or at must run below their target. Motivated employees are needed in our rapidly changing workplace, motivated employee is more

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productive and help organizations to survive. Beer (2004) opined that many people are expecting such features to be facilitating the development of the public agencies but it has not been done under research. One of the key problems that usually confront the management is how to motivate workers to perform the assigned task and duties, so that the predetermined goals and objectives can be achieved.

Furthermore, most workers and management of agencies see motivation as just the addition to the take home of the employees, or promotion to another level in the hierarchy of the agency. They fail to realize that incentives, compensation and job security are what surrounds a job and it cannot lead to job satisfaction. That is the more reason why most agencies that believe in this concept are still finding it difficult to satisfy their employees in the long-run. Moreover, the fact cannot be eluded that most agencies see motivational tools of employees as unnecessary or a waste of resources that will yield a lot of profit when applied in other factors of production of the agency. Finally, hardly any previous scholars studied on this research. It is from this view that this research examines the extent to which motivational tools and employee morale of public agencies in Bayelsa State.

Recognition

McCoy (1992), both incentives and recognition provide a reward; however, incentives drive performance while recognition is an after-the-fact display of appreciation for a contribution. Financial rewards are certainly important in compensation programs. Social recognition provides employees with a sense of self-worth by acknowledging the contributions they have made. This recognition could be given in the form of a ceremony that helps to validate and is an important compensation and one that probably costs a company very little in relationship to the benefit to employees. In my view, recognition seems to motivate employees to perform which the study will verify. (McCoy; 1992). Employee recognition, according to Harrison (2005) involves the timely, informal and/or formal acknowledgement of a person's behavior, effort or business result that supports the organization's goals and values, and which clearly has been beyond normal expectations. Recognition has been held to be a constructive response and a judgment made about a person's contribution, reflecting not just work performance but also personal dedication and engagement on a regular or ad hoc basis, and expressed formally or informally, individually or collectively, privately or publicly, and monetarily or non-monetarily (Brun & Dugas, 2008). As rightly stated by (Nyakundi, Karanja, Charles & Bisobori, 2012) the aim of employee recognition is to allow individuals to know and understand that their work is valued and appreciated, provides a sense of ownership and belongingness, improves morale, enhances loyalty and increases employee retention rate in the organization.

With organisation success tied to the motivational tools of employees, recognition is now globally more relevant and embraced in organizations determined to succeed in an economically competitive era (Nyakundi, Karanja, Charles & Bisobori, 2012) and its extensive scope presents varied options for use (Sonawane, 2008). Maritz Institute (2011) has pointed out that recognition encompasses a variety of practices and experiences that expand and enrich employee capabilities. Brun and Dugas (2008) in their scientific literature have identified four approaches to employee recognition expressed in the form of personal recognition, recognition of work practices, recognition of job dedication and recognition of results. They added that these four recognition practices recognize employees as full-fledged individuals as well as workers capable of being committed to their jobs by investing time and energy to perform duties competently and deliver concrete results. It has been held that recognition is inexpensive to distribute, available for all employees and can be offered in various forms ranging from a manager saying or writing formally to record thanks; a more senior manager in the organization writing to the individual; public appreciation of the individual employee of the month or year to provision of gift cards and certificates, shopping vouchers, domestic goods, dinner, trophies, reserved car parking space, theatre/cinema tickets, as well as use of certain facilities (Grote, 2006; Silverman, 2004; Nolan, 2012; Luthans, 2000).

Effective recognition occurs in organizations with strong, supportive culture that understand the psychology of praising employees for their good work, apply the principles of employee recognition and encourage other employees to initiate in their working relationship (Harrison, 2005; Saunderson, 2004). Manjunath and Rajesh (2012) and Ferguson and Reio (2010), in their study also pointed out that individuals already have the potential and required expertise to drive higher performance levels, but need to be driven by employee recognition. However, not every organization is committed to employee recognition. Neither does the scheme of service of most organizations spell out how employee recognition is to be executed. Brun and Dugas (2008) in their scientific literature have identified four approaches to employee recognition expressed in the form of personal recognition, recognition of work practices, recognition of job dedication and recognition of results. They added that these four recognition practices recognize employees as full-fledged individuals as well as workers capable of being committed to their jobs by investing time and energy to perform duties competently and deliver concrete results. It has been held that recognition is inexpensive to distribute, available for all employees and can be offered in various forms ranging from a manager saying or writing formally to record thanks; a more senior manager in the organization writing to the individual; public appreciation of the individual employee of the month or year to provision of gift cards and certificates, shopping vouchers, domestic goods, dinner, trophies, reserved car parking space, theatre/cinema tickets, as well as use of certain facilities (Grote, 2006; Silverman, 2004; Nolan, 2012; Luthans, 2000).

Concept of employee morale

Morale is a mental condition or attitude of individuals or groups which determines their willingness to co-operate. Morale is a collection of employee's feelings, attitudes and sentiments towards their jobs, superiors and organization. It reflects a state of mind of people. Mayo defined morale as – 'the maintenance of cooperative living. According to Robert M. Guion (2015) has said that, "Morale is a group phenomenon consisting of pattern of attitudes of members of the group. It refers to the spirit of the organization. It represents the attitude of individuals and groups in an organization towards their work environment and towards voluntary cooperation to the full extent of their capabilities for the fulfillment of organizational goals. Morale is an ambiguous concept that sometimes considered to be a component of satisfaction. Morale is defined as, a composite of feelings, attitudes, and sentiments that contribute to general feelings of satisfaction. In this connection morale is understood as one's attitude towards accomplishing his work rather than emotions he displays during work.

It is a state of mind and spirit, affecting willingness to work, which in turn affects Organizational and individual objectives. According to Robert (2003) opined that morale is the extent to which an individual needs satisfied and the extent to which the individual, person perceives that satisfaction is stemming from his total job satisfaction. According to Dale (2000) morale is the total satisfaction a person derives from his job, his work group, his boss, his Organization and his environment. Morale is frequently referred to as being satisfaction and happiness of people. Morale is involved in everything that makes a job satisfying. Morale is an important part of organizational climate. It is a vital ingredient of organizational success because it reflects the attitudes and sentiments of organizational members towards the organization, its objectives and policies. These attitudes and sentiments largely affect productivity and satisfaction of individuals. Morale is the total satisfaction a person derives from his job, his workgroup. His boss, his organization and his environment.

Furthermore, high morale assists the management to overcome several labour problems such as labour turnover, absenteeism, indiscipline, grievances, disharmony etc. It also helps to seek cooperation of the workers in getting higher production at minimum possible cost by reducing the wastage of time, man, machines, and materials. Production and productivity are directly affected by high morale in positive manner. High morale is indeed an index of good human relations in an organization.

See Garden (1994) opined that morale is like health and sanity that has to do with background conditions of living it is found that on the fringe rather than in a focus of consciousness. Also,

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according to Ceun (2000) opined that morale is the source of absence of conflict, personal adjustment, feeling of happy, group cohesiveness, job related attitudes and ego involvement in one's job.

Organizational Culture

Culture in an organization tends to help employees in identified their work environment and with each other (Amah, 2014). She further emphasized that cultures in an organization unite the employees in their belief, norms, shared assumptions, value and corrections on ways on doing things or handling issues in an organization. Besides, there are elements that can influence the human resource management practices on organizational survival. Among these are; the concept of organizational culture which was formally introduced by the human relationists in the late 1940s. Organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in Public agencies by defining appropriate behavior for various situations (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders. Also, organizational culture may influence how much employees identify with their organization (Schrodt, 2002). Now it has become a very useful metaphor for thinking about and describing the social system. Organizational climate is also referred to as the situational determinants or Environmental determinants which affect the human behaviour. Culture of a public agencies is somewhat like the personality of directors. Just as every director has a personality that makes him or her unique and different from other directors. Each agency has an organizational culture that clearly distinguishes it from other agencies. Basically, the organizational culture reflects a director's understanding of the agency to which he or she belongs. It is a set of unique characteristics and features that are perceived by the directors about their agencies which serves as a major force in influencing their behaviour.

Business managers are essential to the creation and communication of their workplace culture. However, the relationship between leadership and culture is not one-sided. While leaders are the principal architects of culture, an established culture influences what kind of leadership is possible (Schein, 2010). Culture of an organization acts as a uniting force among members of an organization and provides them with a sense of identity. Culture can be among the greatest assets that an organization possesses and if clearly defined, can give an organization a competitive advantage over their competition. Culture can become a liability for a company when the rules and boundaries established by the culture do not advance the effectiveness of the organization.

CONCLUSION

The symptoms of low motivational tools and low employee performance reveal themselves in behaviors like high employee turnover, absenteeism, decreased performance and careless mistakes which cost the agencies.

Agency employees are tasked with much work to be done in little time as they have to serve their employees. In order to minimize this especially in agencies, employees need to understand the priorities in their work and what satisfaction they get from doing it. By focusing on these priorities employee motivation and employee morale will be kept under control resulting into high employee performance of the agency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Basing on the above conclusions the following recommendations are given out:

1. Agencies should recognize their work force through gifts, packages thus making them gain consciousness on how to work hard for the development of agencies.
2. Workers should be paid well and given different allowances in order to motivate them.
3. Agencies should provide conducive environment to their employees so as to make them attracted. This can make the workers motivated to work hard thus leading to their success in terms of development.
4. Agencies should give workers rules and regulations followed on how worker can be develop.

5. agencies involvement should take part in recommending the provision of motivational needs through adjusting in the labour laws. This will ensure that all organizations provide basic requirements to their employees and eventually enable them to work hard for high morale.
6. It is also recommended that there should be a greater balance between employees' needs and organizational needs. It is the duty of all stake holders to ensure that this is achieved. This will reduce employees' selfishness.

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