

Chapter 10

Conceptualizing of Workplace Harmony in Organization

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Introduction

Workplace harmony refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationships between employers and employees for their mutual benefit (Laden, 2012). It is chiefly concerned with the peace and tranquility that exist in the workplace with respect to the terms and conditions of employment and the workplace at large. In effect, it is a situation where employees and management cooperate willingly in pursuit of the organization's aims and objectives with peace, love and unity. Maintaining workplace harmony should be a key focus of every organization. Conflict in the workplace can lead to behaviours such as bullying, harassment and discrimination. Staff can lack motivation, fail to work as a team and be generally unhappy (Vince, 2018).

In the light of the above, workplace harmony refers to the enhancement of cooperation and interpersonal relations devoid of conflict in an organizational setting. This fosters peace and tranquility within and outside the workplace.

Workplace harmony refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationships between management and workers for their mutual benefit (Osad and Osas, 2013). Workplace harmony in its ideal form, presupposes an industry in a condition of relative equilibrium where relationship between individuals and or groups are cordial and productive. Apparently, workplace harmony represents absence of strike by industrial unions in organization which is bound to result in effective and efficient organization. In addendum, workplace harmony entails cooperation and interpersonal relationship within groups of individuals and the organization at large. According to Odia and Omofonmwan (2007), workplace harmony thus covers four broad areas of cooperation: responsibilities, employment policy, collective bargaining, communication and consultation.

Workplace Harmony can only come out of what is known as "Industrial Democracy" a situation in organization where to a larger extent, the participation of workers is adequately sought in the process of making decisions that will determine the conditions of their working lives. It involves joint participation in decision making process between the two major actors to labour relations (Onyeizugbe, Aghara, Olohi and Chidiogo, 2018). It encompasses such concepts as joint consultation, co-ownership or co-partnership and co-determination. Workplace harmony enhances labour productivity and in turn improves performance in organizations, achieving economic growth, and enhancing living standards and quality of life. It creates a peaceful working environment conducive to tolerance, dialogue and other alternative (to strike) means of resolving industrial or labour disputes in Nigeria (such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, conciliation and litigation or court adjudication). This creates a high level of employee satisfaction, peace and tranquility in the workplace (Onyeizugbe, et al, 2018).

Concept of Workplace Harmony

According to Whitmore (2016), offices are a microcosm of humanity. They are a mix of all types of people, with all types of personalities, quirks, goals and challenges, so for everyone to get along beautifully, it takes effort. Thus, building a harmonious workplace for organization to perform effectually is germane in today's business world where technology and globalization is changing the conducts of firm's activities and operations.

Industrial, Organizational and Work Psychology

Initiating and stabilizing a harmonious workplace among others require the entertainment of management and individual efforts. Happiness and harmony to an extent are tied together. Taking time to acknowledge even the smallest achievement can make an employee feel valued. When a co-worker or employee is happy at his or her job, he or she will go out of his or her way to add a little extra to their commitment. He or she might take on an extra assignment or stay late to help out with an uncompleted project. The more you notice and offer thanks for these little "extras," the more management builds happiness and harmony in the workplace, and the more motivated her co-workers will become thus improving business activities and attainments. The formulation, implementation and extension of no-gossip policy for events outside the office ensue happy hours, company outings or holiday parties among management and employees promotes harmony and tranquility.

Kelvin (2017) asserted that establishing an open environment for discussion by creating a "come to me anytime" system can help promote workplace effectiveness and efficiency. Be open to suggestions, complaints or discussions without judgment. Because individual in the workplace come from different backgrounds and experiences as everyone has his or her own way of looking at things. Grooming one's employees to managing stuck, overworked or faced with a major deadline are appreciable if harmony must be attainment among Deposit Money Banks may take a little extra effort but its significance promotes effectual cooperation and communication (Whitmore, 2016). Building friendships and harmonies outside of work with casual outings are important for the growth, development and survival of Deposit Money Banks. Also, holding regular meetings with the entire workforce in part or whole business would promote values as it enables employees to create and build the business as a whole.

Finally, workplace harmony alludes to a situation of peace in relative sense in any industrial organization, which includes; nonappearance of strikes, and doubt among work gatherings or unions, tranquil relationship amongst unions and administration of the organization, and additionally representative positive view of his or her commitment as member not as subject inside the organization. Workplace harmony is an exceptionally basic element of organizational profitability and execution. Industrial agreement in its optimal structure, presupposes an industry in a state of relative balance where relationship amongst people as well as gatherings are heartfelt and profitable (Sholokwu and Olori, 2016).

The enhancement of workplace harmony

The enhancement of workplace harmony in an organizational setting requires that:

1. All management personnel understand their responsibilities and what is required of them, and have the training and authority necessary to discharge such duties and responsibilities efficiently;
2. Duties and responsibilities for each group of employees are stated with clarity and simplicity in the organizational structure;
3. Individual employees or work-groups know their objectives and are regularly kept informed of progress made towards achieving them;
4. There is an effective link in the interchange of information and views between senior management and members of the work group;
5. Supervisors are briefed about innovation and changes before they occur so they can explain management's policies and intentions to the work-group;
6. Employers cooperate with trade unions in establishing effective procedures for the negotiation of terms and conditions of employment and for the settlement of disputes;
7. Employers encourage the establishment of effective procedures among members in the organizations for the settlement of grievances and disputes at the level of the establishment or undertaking;
8. Employers take all reasonable steps to ensure the organization observes agreements and agreed upon procedures; and

Industrial, Organizational and Work Psychology

9. The organization maintains a communication system which secures the interchange of information and views between different levels in the organization and ensures that employees are systematically and regularly kept informed, factually and objectively, of changes and progress in the system (Akpooywaire, 2013).

Types of Workplace Harmony

A) Cooperation

According to Gilani (2019), cooperation is one of the most widely taught skills. At an early age, we are taught "united we stand, divided we fall. Cooperation means to work together to achieve a common goal. In the workplace this means a healthy environment in which employees work side by side to achieve both personal and organizational objectives. They must work with others, instead of against each other, to be productive.

Cooperation is defined by Argyle (1991) as "acting together, in a coordinated way at work, leisure, or in social relationships, in the pursuit of shared goals, the enjoyment of the joint activity, or simply furthering the relationship". In organizations Marcus and Le (2013) emphasized working with others for shared goals and pointed out situations such as sharing information and helping one another to complete certain tasks, where these cooperative behaviors are noticed. Thus, cooperation focuses on the interaction within individuals, groups and organizations, and the subsequent psychological relationships either for common gain or benefit. These authors state that cooperative relationships can be formal or informal, depending on whether they involve contractual obligations and formal structures of control, or adaptable arrangements that define parties' contributions. Deutsch's theory of cooperation and conflict resolution in dos Santos, Pais, Mónico, Rebelo and Moliner (2016) showed that cooperative groups will differentiate from competitive groups in some ways: more effective communication and acceptance among members; more friendly and helpful group discussions; more effort coordination, work division, orientation through task achievement, more order when discussing, and higher productivity; a greater feeling of agreement and confidence in each other's ideas and value for the group, and a better sense of similarity in values and beliefs. Also, cooperation leads to the perspective of conflict as a problem to be solved mutually and collaboratively.

B) Communication

Communication is a means of bringing about change (Nebo, Nwankwo and Okonkwo, 2015). It is the mainstream of any organization growth. There is need form interaction and understanding of management-employee relations this will bring about increased performance of all parties involved in the communication process or chain. It serves as a medium, a means to performance ends, or as constitutive, as the end in itself. Communication is a process of transmitting information from one person to another. Communication is a critical factor in directing and mobilizing the workforce towards the accomplishment of the organizational goals or objectives (Stephen, 2011). By creating understanding it promotes cooperation and effective performance among workers in the organization. Apparently, from the perspective of industrial democracy, workplace harmony among others can enhanced through management understanding as regards the effectiveness of communication in groups tasks and responsibilities. Communication is pertinent to enhance team or group performance as it is the blood that flows in an organization's import, process and export, thus it ensures coordination of factors of production and most importantly material and human elements of organization as an efficient network of change and advancement.

C) Collective Agreement

A collective agreement depicts a natural instinct of defense inherent in human, whereby people either demand satisfaction or promotion of the interest of one another. This important instinct has driven industrial relations between employers and employees' organization in trade disputes mediation, negotiations and awards in Nigeria, in particular, and other countries of the world (Macaulay, 2017). Procedurally, collective agreement suffices and precedes collective bargaining,

Industrial, Organizational and Work Psychology

which has been defined as “a voluntary negotiation between employers or employers’ organizations and workers’ organizations with a view to the regulation of the terms and conditions of employment – which ends in a collective agreement”. However, parties to a collective agreement are usually guided by their respective natural and inherent defensive interests, which are at all times conflicting (Ibietan, 2013). The employer primarily pushes for efficient, productive and increased profits-oriented workforce while the employees and their representatives usually demand from the employers’ better welfare packages, motivation and conducive working environment.

D) Responsibilities Fulfillment

The Business Dictionary defines responsibility as a duty or obligation to satisfactorily perform or complete a task (assigned by someone, or created by one's own promise or circumstances) that one must fulfill, and which has a consequent penalty for failure. It also defined fulfilment as the process of taking an order and executing it by making it ready for delivery to its intended customer. It may involve warehouse pickup, packaging, labeling, etc. To this end, responsibility fulfillment refers to the obligation to satisfactorily perform or complete a task, executing it by making it ready for delivery to its intended user. It is the ability to stand by the obligations placed before an employee, manager, group of employees and the organization at large.

Interpersonal relationship

Interpersonal relationship is an important aspect in every organization, and it is one of the vital components in human relationship. In today’s fast competitive business world, it is very difficult to hire people and retain them for a long period of time. Hence, organizations including the Nigerian banking firms are trying to maintain the workforce and to get the best out of them in that process (Nwinyokpugi and Omunakwe, 2019). Interpersonal relationship denotes the initiation and maintenance of a courteous, polite and honest social association, connection or affiliation between two or more people in the organization. Interpersonal relationship at work constitutes a friendly and acceptable the day today interaction between co-workers or managers and employees. Workplace relationships are unique interpersonal relationships with important implications for the individuals in those relationships and the organizations in which the relationships exist and develop, as it directly affect a worker’s ability to work and be productive amidst his or her colleagues (Manta and Harges, 2013).

Developing interpersonal relationship is a serious business that facilitates mutual relationship between workers in the organization, thus enhancing team and group attainments. Maxwell in Nwinyokpugi and Omunakwe (2019) observed that a thing brings two persons together to make them remain in the context of relationship. Such things may be common interest like desire, aspiration or a goal. More so, workplace interpersonal relationship is the type of relationship that exists between employee to employee, superior to subordinates, employer and employee in any organization. This kind of relationship can be formal or informal. However, a interpersonal relationship is born, fed, nurtured and grown. It is born at the level of acquaintance relationship; it is fed at associate relationship and is nurtured at friendship. It is very important to emphasize that relationship is the ladder to your gain or pain and therefore, it must be consciously handled. Interpersonal relationship does not come by chance as it requires a social network between two or more employees or workers in the organization.

A) Relationship with Colleagues

Creating and maintaining interpersonal relationship with colleagues is important in the life of Deposit Money Banks, as brotherhood is key to progress and development. It is expected of employees or management to maintain the relationship with their colleagues in the organization at all times. Being courteous, polite and honest to one’s colleague in one’s workplace is important as it drives unity and assistance in the dealings of one’s or organization’s issues. Workplace relationships are unique interpersonal relationships with important implications for the individuals in those relationships and

Industrial, Organizational and Work Psychology

the organizations in which the relationships exist and develop, as it directly affect a worker's ability to work and be productive amidst his or her colleagues (Manta and Harges, 2013). Developing interpersonal relationship is a serious business that facilitates mutual relationship between colleagues in the organization, thus enhancing team and group attainments. Interpersonal relationship with colleagues exists between manager and manager of same status, though operating in different departments. It also cuts across employee to employee, superior to superior, subordinates to subordinates, in the organization. This kind of interpersonal relationship can be formal or informal but the major concern is that it is a relationship among colleagues. For interpersonal relationship to prevail among colleagues, honesty, courtesy and politeness must be upheld in the circle of friends and colleagues in the workplace.

Finally, how they relate with each other determines their level of longevity and togetherness of the relationship. It is undoubted that the greater the density of interpersonal relationships among colleagues, the greater is the impact on togetherness and co-helpfulness among them.

B) Interpersonal relationship in Work Groups

The Business Dictionary defines work group as a collection of individuals that come together to achieve a stated objective. In a business context, a working group might involve people from different divisions or even companies that are collaborating on a project that requires their particular expertise or time. Also, Work groups within companies interchanged with the name task forces are teams of employees brought together to accomplish a specific task. The task often involves analyzing a problem, formulating a solution and making a recommendation to the company's management, including the owner of the small business. Work groups' efforts can result in improving company operations and also benefit the employees who participate in the groups (Brian, 2013). The use of work group has been facilitated by many studies reporting the positive relationship between team-based working and the quality of products and services offered by an organization (Neelam and Shilpi 2015).

Furthermore, being courteous, polite and honest among work groups is important as it drives unity and assistance in the dealings of group's issues. Developing interpersonal relationship is a serious business that facilitates mutual relationship between colleagues in the organization, thus enhancing team and group attainments. Interpersonal relationship among members of work group is formal in nature due to the fact that it was the organization that constituted the work group. Interpersonal relationship in work group entails honesty, courtesy, politeness, team spirit and oneness from genesis to exodus of the group's assignments, tasks and responsibilities.

Managers must recognize that they play a central role in enhancing effective interpersonal relationship with constituted work groups in the organization. Work group involves a wide variety of activities presented to organizations and aimed at improving group performance. It is a philosophy of job design that sees members of a group rather than individual workers to enhance productivity and performance (Fapohunda, 2013). Work group is a form of collective work that might involve individual tasks, but usually include some kind of collective task where each member is contributing part of a collectively written document that is supposed to reflect the collective wisdom of the group. It is trite to say, organizations with work groups will attract and retain the best people while enhancing group goals and as well that of the organization. This in turn will create a high group performance that is flexible, efficient, and most importantly, profitable to the group and the organization at large.

C) Interpersonal relationship between Management and Employees

The interpersonal relationship between management and employees in a workplace is one of the crucial factors determining organization's vision, mission and success. Thus, having a platform where management and employees share special bonds to deliver their level best is essential. According to (Wael, 2015), the manager-employee relationship has a critical impact on performance of an organization. The interpersonal relationship between managers and employees is so important to

Industrial, Organizational and Work Psychology

build a good organization as well as good economy. A manager is just like captain of the ship who has the responsibility of taking all his crew members along. For management, employees are just like babies and she needs to take care of each and every employee, thus she ought not to be partial to anyone. This engenders the avoidance of favouritism towards employees.

The intimacy of management and employee relationship enables the employees to have a fuller knowledge of the organization. Thus, when employees are knowledgeable and have good resources, they are better-informed, solve problems more quickly and make more data-driven decisions. Employees who relate with management make good decisions and as well experience success on a regular basis. Interpersonal relationship between management and employees of an organization fosters employees' resilience to ensuring the organization's goals and objectives are effectively and efficiently attained.

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Industrial, Organizational and Work Psychology

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