

VALUE AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP IN ORGANISATION**Wugo Ngozi****Ph.D Student, Department of Office and Information Management
Faculty of Management Sciences, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

The focus of this paper is to gain insight on the concept of values and employee relationship. It has been found that it is difficult for organizations to achieve basic objectives with such valuable assets like the employees. Therefore, it is important to create a conducive working environment that satisfy core values and employee relationship needs. Many companies' and individuals exhibit insincerity when attempting to attain common and shared corporate values. Nevertheless, corporate values have become a great matter of interest for many companies in different industries. Values as it were is conceptualized in terms of personal/individual values and corporate/organizational values. Values when incorporated into culture helps to maintain positive relationship. Maintaining values and employee relationships entails focusing on the right and responsibility, management and obeying caused by the interest between the organization and the employees as a total of cooperating, conflict, strengthens and power relations and is influenced by economic, technology, legal system and socio cultural background in a certain community. It is concluded that the importance of having values that are both static and changeable, something that is confirmed by both empirical data and the literature. It is the perception of values that are articulated, which also will affect the message of values, that will be communicated throughout the organisation. This on the other hand helps to build and enhance relationships, reinforce commitment to the organization and improve the employees' commitment. It was hence, recommended that Organizations should pay special attention to all components of employee relations involving communication, trust, leadership styles, shared goals and values as important variables because of its great effect on employees' commitment on long term.

Keywords: Value, Employee, Communication, Relationship, Trust

INTRODUCTION

Employees are the major valuable assets of an organization in which without them, it will be hard to realize its basic objectives. To harvest more from employees it requires creating conducive working environment which satisfies the needs of individual employee as well as the manager of an organization. Employee relations have become the driving force of competitive organizations in the global business environment. Maintaining good interrelationships among various stakeholders is the critical aspect that determines employee commitment in the organization (Armstrong, 2006). Effective employee relationship management is essential in ensuring employees perform together as a collective unit and contribute equally towards the realization of a common goal. No task can be accomplished if the individuals are engaged in constant conflicts and misunderstandings; employee relations management ensures workplace issues are handled effectively and expediently in order to remove barriers to successful job performance and foster a positive work environment. It has been observed that targets are achieved at a much faster rate if the employees work together and share a warm relationship with each other. The need to achieve excellent performance demands that organizations should monitor attitudes and behaviors of their workers towards organizational practices and come up with ways of influencing their employee commitment.

The concepts of employee relationship can be explored by identifying the prevalent values one has towards different aspects of their work. Dose (1997) defined that "Work values are the evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is "right" or

assess the importance of preferences" (pp. 227-228). Further on, values can be viewed as having impact on a person's preference for what kind of work one has and in what type of organizational environment one works in. Cherrington (1980) defined three different work values. The first value named The Rewards of Work described rewards as feeling worthwhile, getting respect and feedback from your supervisor and coworkers and for some, getting rewarded with a higher wage. The second named Pride in Craftsmanship can be explained as how one should be proud of one's accomplishments, always aim to do a good work and enjoy it regardless of the task. The value Moral Importance of Work can be explained as the idea that this is your moral duty and regardless needing money or not, you should work.

Some profound critic the least to say presented by Lencioni (2002) towards many companies' insincerity when attempting to attain common shared corporate values throughout an organisation. Nevertheless, corporate values have become a great matter of interest for many companies in different industries (Thomsen, 2004). Collins and Porras' (1994) research suggests that organisations with shared, deeply held core values outperforms the competition on the general stock market as well as demonstrated the ability to cope with change and overcome setbacks. Their research implied that visionary companies which succeed for decades are all guided by core ideologies, including a sense of purpose beyond making money (Williams, 2013). This suggests that companies need to be aware of their vision and mission in order to define a core ideology to be followed. Although being very critical of many companies approach towards corporate values, Lencioni (2002) still argues for great opportunities from attaining strong, shared values within an organisation. This gives way to clarify the corporate identity and set the company apart from competitors, as well as providing a rallying point for employees. It is therefore interesting to investigate how this process of formulating and implementing corporate values throughout an organisation generally acts out. Do statements from theories like Lencioni (2002) holds any truth or not? That most companies' values are nothing else than just empty words, not integrated into the day-to-day work as well as an organisation's vision and mission. In this perspective, it is interesting to further examine the reasons why actually organisations still pursue into implementing common corporate values. Furthermore, when closer examining this process, trying to define the potential obstacles and challenges that might hinder some companies to obtain a unified corporate platform of shared, believed and held values.

Today, business leaders are challenged like never before due to a globalised activity, as well as constant political, technological and economical changes (Thornbury, 2003). Due to an intensified globalisation of the world economy, the need for a further global adoption of international business ethics and international business codes have arisen. The increased need for working across natural cultural boundaries can many times be a common matter why companies start to engage in corporate values (Thornbury, 2003). Values can provide companies with cohesion and common understanding in an increasingly networked world (Humble et al., 1994). Thornbury (2003) argues that if colleagues across the world, in other departments or divisions, are convinced that everyone within the organisation operates after the same basic principles, it will lead to a harmonisation within the organisation and streamline the working relationships.

Concept of Values

Values as a general concept is a well-known term but have numerous explanations when attempting to define the concept. "A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973, p.5).

Hofstede's (1980, p.19) definition of a value is "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over other". Hofstede (1998), in a later published article, further tries to distinguish a difference between values and attitudes. Attitudes include components of job satisfaction and are relatively easy to translate into practical conclusion. Whereas values are more basic interests and do not have to lead to an immediate practical conclusion.

Definition of values as such has been a question of debate and discussion since the days of Socrates. Value is associated with ethics, virtues, and morale, in simple terms; it defines what is wrong and what is right. When values are rooted deep enough, it is difficult for an individual to explain why he/she thinks so. The answer often is "it just is so." (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014.) In a situation like that, the value has become a strong belief in which people have an emotional attachment to. These values or beliefs are not easy to change. (Juuti, 1995).

In a corporate perspective, values within organisations are defined in several ways such as corporate values, core values and organisational values. Corporate values is a common term which has been investigated by numerous researchers listed by Agle and Caldwell (1999). Corporate values are a way of expressing how a company will operate. However, there are different ways of expressing and categorise values. Williams (2011) denominates the concept as work values, which are applied to explain the effect values have on individuals and organisations.

Thornbury (2003) uses Schein's (1993) levels of culture to illustrate a model (figure 1), which distinguishing values from culture. Core values are the values of deep roots in the organisation which have been present for a long time, representing the heart of an organisation. Thornbury (2003) further argues that espoused values, on the contrary of core values, are such values that are applied to fit the company's business model. Schein (2004) describes, in his third edition of organisational culture and leadership, espoused values as important but leaves important information about behaviour aside. To really understand an organisation, the basic underlying assumptions, defined as core values in the second edition, must be understood. Basic underlying assumptions is the product of the human need of cognitive stability and is immensely taken for granted, which means it has been given no room for variation. With that said, basic underlying assumptions, or core values, are by Schein (2004) considered static. A difficult situation since the corporate culture must change when implementing new or different values, and therefore must be considered very challenging to achieve.

Schein (2004, p. 36) states that since "the essence of a culture lies in the pattern of basic underlying assumptions, and once one understands those, one can easily understand the other more surface levels and deal appropriately with them." The outer layers of Thornbury's model consist of behaviours and artifacts. Behaviours are presented by Thornbury (2003) as the "way we do things around here" and are less visible from an external perspective than artifacts. Thornbury (2003) further states that values are easier to understand if behaviours are identified. Concerning the layer farthest from core values are artifacts the easiest characteristics of an organisation to spot. Nevertheless, by only studying artifacts this will produce a quite shallow investigation identifying things we can see and feel at a workplace.

On the contrary to the framework of Thornbury (2003), Hofstede (1998) offers a theory involving practices as the central role of organisational culture. Hofstede (1998) argues that information regarding corporate values used in management literature are usually drawn from management, from which corporate values derives from. Employees should follow a company's practices, designed according to the corporate values, but they do not have to confess to the established values. Which means that leader's values become the employee's practices. Corporate culture is further argued to be in all members of an organisation, and therefore, practices are instead seen as the core of organisational culture (Hofstede, 1998).

Malbašić and Brčić (2012, p.105) defines organisational values as "a stable and constant construct", referring to the work of Collins and Porras (1996). Malbašić and Brčić (2012, p.105) further suggests that while business practices, corporate goals and strategies may be adapted to the circumstances of an organisation, "core organisational values should not depend on situational factors". Organisational values are observable in every act of communication, whether this involves external communication with business associates or internal communication within the organisation (Atkinson, 2003; Esrock and Leichty, 1998; Shockley-Zalabak, 2009, referred in Malbašić and Brčić, 2012, p.105). Values are furthermore embedded in the perception of the

organisational brand, the vision and mission statements, annual reports, as well as in all organisational decisions.

Dimensions of Values

1. Personal/Individual Values

Values can be divided into personal (or individual) and organizational values. Our personal values reflect to our organizational behaviour and perhaps in a lesser extent vice versa. Personal in the sense that the values that each one of us possesses are brought to the workplace in the way we think and behave, but in a modest form. If personal values differ greatly or enough, depending on one's emotional attachment thereunto, from the values of the organization, it is likely that the individual has difficulties in adapting to organizational culture. Oftentimes, these individuals tend to terminate or get their employment terminated quite fast. On the other hand, when personal values are somewhat aligned, or at least not contradictory, to the values of the organization and to other employees, individuals have longer employments and a bigger chance of getting satisfaction from work. (Leiviskä, 2011; Finegan, 2000).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often used in describing the connection between hidden needs and behaviour. First a person needs to get the basics like food and other physiological needs satisfied, the upper steps towards self-actualization are safety, then love/belonging, and esteem. (Pichère, 2015.) As individuals we value the most getting our physiological needs satisfied, but to pursue happiness, our values are inclined to be in cohesion with self-esteem and self-actualisation (Hofstede et al., 2010: 9). Values answer to the question: "what is important to you?" or perhaps even to "what makes you tick?" (Putnam, 2006).

2. Organizational/Corporate Values

Values are often divided into terminal and instrumental values, wherein the first one refers to having a moral significance or value by itself for its own sake, while an instrumental value is achieved through something else (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2014). In the case of an organization, mission and vision could be translated to be inclusive of terminal values, while instrumental values refer to ways how the terminal values are achieved (Hultman, 2005). In this sense, organizational values that include desirable state of existence are terminal, and lived-by-values, which define desired behaviour to attain the terminal values, are considered instrumental. Organizational values are shared values by those associated, often working, in a particular organization. They are common to and shared by individuals and should support the desired behaviour and guide to understanding what is right or wrong as part of the organizational culture. Organizational values can become beliefs that are unique to the organization, but not necessarily to individuals. These beliefs are shared, as often the case is, by employees. What may be personally important to someone may be secondary in organizational values, and not contradictory. (Finegan 2000; Gorenak & Gosir, 2012; Hofstede, 2010).

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Organizational values are meant to inspire (Serrat, 2010); they ought to be defined as actions (Hultman, 2005); they should be integrated to behaviour (Hoffman and Woehr, 2006) to name a few. Values are connected to ethical behaviour, morale, commitment to and of employees, and commitment to customers (Schein, 2009). Other connections are likely but not necessarily proved directly (Kelly et al., 2005). The values must be defined in such a way that they have an impact

on the way how people perform their tasks. The values have little input, if they are not communicated well. (Gorenak & Gosir, 2012).

Usual problems with values are that they lack specificity, they are not action directed, they are badly introduced to employees, too common sense and not distinguished enough, and controversial (too ambiguous to understand). (Thornbury, 2003; van Rekom et al., 2006). There are many good descriptions on organizational values, but here is a quotation from the presentation of C. Krueger in the study of Vogds' (2010), who has compared many descriptions: "values are a set of beliefs that influence the way people and groups behave; they are the "soul" of the organization; effective values are deep rooted. - - The values, or perceptions thereof, are the driving force of an organization" (Vogs, 2010). Another organizational value description is from Cingula (Gorenak & Gosir, 2012): "Organizational values are what people within organization think is good for organization in the future. Due to this, values reflect the mission and strategic goals of the organization.

"Work values refer to the goals or rewards people seek through their work" (Schwartz, 1999 :43). They are personal values in the context of work setting. Work values are grouped into intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic are born from within the employee, and these are e.g. personal growth, autonomy, interest, and creativity. The extrinsic work values are expectations of work, e.g. status, pay and security. It could be summarized that work values connect personal and organizational values, and to be able to do this, the values need to be lived-by, i.e. the connection must be made visible and empowering.

Employee Relations

The definition of employee relations refers to an organization's efforts to create and maintain a positive relationship with its employees. By maintaining positive, constructive employee relations, organizations hope to keep employees loyal and more engaged in their work. Typically, an organization's human resources department manages employee relations efforts; however, some organizations may have a dedicated employee relations manager role. Typical responsibilities of an employee relations manager include acting as a liaison or intermediary between employees and managers, and either creating or advising on the creation of policies around employee issues like fair compensation, useful benefits, proper work-life balance, reasonable working hours, and others. When it comes to employee relations, an HR department has two primary functions. First, HR helps prevent and resolve problems or disputes between employees and management. Second, they assist in creating and enforcing policies that are fair and consistent for everyone in the workplace. Employee relation is a kind of interpersonal relationship concept which is drawn by western scholars in the 20th century to replace the industrial relation. It focuses on the right and responsibility, management and obeying caused by the interest between the organization and the employees as a total of cooperating, conflict, strengthens and power relations and is influenced by economic, technology, legal system and socio cultural background in a certain community (Yongesai, 2010). Employee relation is defined as the relationship between employees and managers to enhance moral, commitment and trust of employees and to create suitable working environment which enables them to put much effort for the achievement of organizational goals (Bajaj, 2013). An effective employee relation involves creating and cultivating a motivated and productive workforce. Creating healthy employee relation in an organization is a prerequisite for the achievement of organizational goals. For this to happen, organizations have to develop strong employee relationship which involves motivating employees, making them to participate in decision making activity and create an opportunity for free flow of information in the organization and resolve conflicts or disagreements when they arise in the work place. This scenario makes employees to develop a sense of ownership in the organization and this in return initiated them to work hard. Healthy employee relation leads to more efficient, effective and productive employees which further leads to the increment of production level in the organization.

Simply put, employee relations are strategically created a positive atmosphere for the employees with the hope to keep them loyal and more engaged at work. Most organizations employ a dedicated employee relations manager who plays the role of an advisor, mediator, and compensator to employee issues. Essentially, the role of employee relations manager is to elude better relationships between management by working on certain policies, developing mutual respect, trust, and marinating transparency.

Value and Employee relationship

Good employee relation creates pleasant atmosphere for employees which can increase their motivation. Increased employees moral can lead to increased workers performance as well. Organization in employee relation programs investigating may experience an increase in performance which leads to increase in profit for the business (Kelchner, 2017). Based on the study of Harvard Business School professor Teresa Amabile and psychologist Steven Kramer, the employees' engagement needs the same development as our personal desires do. The salary does not motivate as much as is often mistakenly thought so, but it is the basis for physiological survival. The more an organization wishes to motivate its employees the more it should concentrate on the higher ends of the pyramid, personal accomplishment (Shah, 2015)

"A belief system provides direction and meaning to employees by conveying values and a sense of purpose. Values can be considered beliefs, perceptions or ideals with desirable end-states that influence employee attitudes and behaviours. The amount of impact values has on employee's behavior, institutionalized by beliefs systems, can be estimated by looking at: recruiting, socialization and the studied phenomenon of values. Values are intended to guide employee's everyday decisions. - - In order to influence affective commitment, employees must first be aware of these" (Huhta & Landström 2016).

The values must be defined in such a way that they have an impact on the way how people perform their tasks. The values have little input, if they are not communicated well. (Gorenak & Košir 2012) In practice, the example of management and especially the CEO is extremely important (Kelly et al, 2005). "Affective commitment is an employee's emotional bond with the organization and is highly desirable as it holds many benefits such as increased job performance" (Huhta and Landström, 2016).

The next step of the implementation occurs when corporate values have been decided and these are to be communicated throughout the organisation. In relation to the work of Humble et al. (1994), Malbašić and Brčić (2012) studies the process of communication to different stakeholders. The theory discusses the managerial commitment to organisational values. Leaders that truly understands organisational values and the use of them bears a larger chance of implementing them in the organisation and align the employee's' actions to the overall aim of the organisation. Malbašić and Brčić (2012) lastly states that managers hold the ultimate responsibility of communicating values and that their actions indirectly affect employees to organisational commitment.

Grof (2001) studied the role of communication during the processes of establishing and implementing corporate values. She argues that the most important function of communication is to convey information, and additionally to interpret it. This is demonstrated in the proceedings of analysing the information and values recognised from the context and environment in which an organisation conducts business within, and further on to integrate new values created as a response to this into the corporate attitude. Grof (2001) argues four stages of development in a company's operation exist. She further determines the appropriate corporate communication for value-creating functions for each of these stages. These are:

- when a company joins the market. This involves obtaining and transferring information and values from the environment, absorbed into company strategy and culture communicated both internally and externally.
- when strengthening a company from utilising important information of feedback in order to stabilise the value system of the company.
- the stage of routine operation.

The task for corporate communication is to recognise and interpret environmental changes in a way to control the organisations attitude and flexibility towards the values of the environment. - when organisations seek new ways, meaning the processes of incorporating new values into the value structure preparing for a shift in strategy.

According to Grof (2001), the quality of communicative interaction within these stages determines the effectiveness of a company's business proceedings. Which also, in the end, will affect the corporate culture, either by consolidation or result in changes.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Shalom Schwartz's personal value theory (1992). Human values are standards that guide people's attitudes and behaviors (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) and are a recurring theme in research in Social Psychology (Grunert & Juhl, 1995), however, it has become a subject of study as well in the Administration area with the popularization of Shalom Schwartz's personal value theory (Castro, 2006; Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz, 1992), a perspective adopted for the present essay. Theorists who preceded Schwartz proposed different concepts on the subject, sharing the idea of universality of values. Schwartz's theory also adopts assumptions of universality by proposing that "values are conceptions of the desirable that guide ways in which social actors select actions and evaluate people and events, explaining their actions and evaluations" (Schwartz, 1994, p.2).

Schwartz's Personal Value Theory (1994, 1992) specifies a set of higher order and lower order values. The 10 lower order values form the 4 higher order values, which are organized into a circular structure of two bipolar dimensions. In one dimension are the values "Opening to change" versus "Conservation", which, according to theory, have an oppositional relationship. In the other dimension are the values "Self-enhancement" versus "Self-transcendence. This theorized structure has been supported in studies carried out in several countries since 2002 by the European Social Survey (ESS); as well as in other studies which used multidimensional scaling (Bilsky et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006).

It is agreed by several theorists (Schwartz, 2006; Halman et al., 1994); the view of values as deeply rooted beliefs, which explain behaviors, choices, attitudes, opinions and actions, and also guide individuals in their judgment of situations (Schwartz, 1994). As determinants of human behavior, personal values are also important elements in an individual's relationship with their work (Tamayo, 2001). The link between "personal values" and their influence on job satisfaction is reinforced from Brief (1988) view that job satisfaction involves feelings and beliefs. In this sense, values are in this study seen as explanatory factors of human satisfaction at work, and, therefore, we sought to investigate this influence.

CONCLUSION

The literature review has shown large inconsistency from the concepts of values and what it means, and its separation from culture seemed widely unknown. The point is, if the concept is not thoroughly defined then it will be extremely difficult to decide what values an organisation should create and implement. Empowers values to become empty words without meaning and attachment in what the company actually stands for. The earlier mentioned importance of communication of values from management will obviously be very difficult if the management itself is not aware of what a value is, unaware of what considers as their corporate values are and what can be regarded as corporate culture. Even though there is a well-functioning culture within the company, it is concluded that in order to understand culture fully the underlying assumptions must be understood. It is concluded that the importance of having values that are both static and changeable, something that is confirmed by both empirical data and the literature. It is the perception of values that are articulated, which also will affect the message of values, that will be communicated throughout the organisation.

On the other hand, organizations are realizing that employee relationship helps them to build and enhance relationships, reinforce commitment to the organization and improve the employees' commitment. Many organizations built strategy by keeping an eye on their employees. It emphasizes on commitment, performance, growth and development of employees for creating competitive advantage. It helps in improving working conditions, establishing healthy relations among employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organizations should pay special attention to all components of employee relations involving communication, trust, leadership styles, shared goals and values as important variables because of its great effect on employees' commitment on long term.
2. Organizations should have clear model for employee relations. This model should contain every aspect for the employees' relationships where employee relationship management must be a new concept the organizations in every sector should focus on training as a very helpful strategy for the employees to develop their skills and abilities to enable them carry the tasks on the right way.
3. Organization should provide inspiring and effective leadership, open transparent communication within the employees through exchange of ideas, feelings and opinions with management to strengthen the relationship with employees.
4. Organizations should open lines of communication which can improve employees' relationships, and it should provide feedback, actively listening to employees.
5. Employees should be involved by organizations in decision making that will improve trust between them and improve their performance.
6. Managers in every sector should clarify goals and values, provide formal and informal feedback, and engage employees in open and honest dialogue, so they can improve the relationships they share with employees.

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