LEADERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK TEAM COHESIVENESS IN RIVERS STATE POLYTECHNICS

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Abstract

The study examined leaders' emotional intelligence and work team cohesiveness of polytechnics in Rivers State. It investigated the relationship that exists between leaders' emotional intelligence and work team cohesiveness. Population of the study consisted of three hundred and fifty two (352) work team in Rivers State polytechnics, which was gotten through proportionate sampling. It was further reduced to a sample size of one hundred and eighty seven (187), using Taro Yamane's' formula. Percentages were used in analyzing responses to questionnaire items, while Kendall tau_b was implored in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that a significant relationship exists between self-awareness and work team cohesiveness. It was concluded that, leaders' emotional intelligent in any organization, improves work team cohesiveness among employees. Also, self-awareness and self-regulation are vital keys that a good leader can use in work team cohesiveness in an organization. The researcher therefore recommended amongst others that leaders in organizations should always ensure that they relates with their employees or workers well, so as to build confidence and team work among them, management in any organizations should always ensure they carry out their obligations consciously and in a controlled manner. By this, employees will develop a team spirit and result oriented and organizations should always endeavour to reward and motivate their workers, by this, good environment and atmosphere will be created for hard work, and good teamwork.

Keywords: Self-awareness, team cohesiveness, emotional intelligence, employees & team spirit

Introduction

Work team cohesiveness is the degree to which members are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay in the team. The increase in team-based work structures is currently one of the most important characteristics of the contemporary workplaces, and the shift from individual work based to team work has expanded throughout the organization (NRC, 1999; West, 2004). The shift in work base from individual to work team has so many implications for leadership as contemporary management is primarily concerned about managing groups, and leadership behaviour should be evaluated in connection to team effectiveness (Burke et al., 2006; Day, Gronn & Salas, 2006). An integral part of work team is cohesiveness of the team.

The proposition of team work holds that the development of cohesiveness among team members is an important part of team management (Druskat & Wheel, 2003). Stern exploration of a leader's effect on team cohesiveness is necessary to understand on how the team cohesiveness can be managed and maintained. House (1966) concluded this concept over forty years ago by indicating that the productive capacity of the group depends on its degree of cohesiveness, and cohesiveness demands effective leadership. Most theoretical work and empirical studies in this area of study draw deeply on western ideas, data and it is believed that these ideas are relevant for western and non western culture and organization.
Team cohesiveness is the degree to which members are attracted to a group and motivated to remain indivisible part of it (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2002). It also refers to both "forces that attract members to the group," as well as to "the incentives to remain within the group" (Man & Lam, 2003). Employees in cohesive teams value their membership and strive to maintain positive relationships with other team members (Schermerhorn et al., 2000).

Based on the foregoing exposition into work team cohesiveness, the researcher has investigated three categories of work team of Rivers State Polytechnics, Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic, and Port Harcourt Polytechnic and experience has shown that there are three categories of work team with regard to cohesiveness with their job. It has been observed that some workers, no matter how well or poorly motivated, do their work diligently with team spirit, effectiveness and cohesiveness. Personal contact with such workers usually reveals their high value and regard for their profession and teamwork. They are at all times committed, dedicated and willing to offer skill, knowledge and services to their leaders and work environment (institution).

Cohesiveness is the feeling of together lines that holds a group together voluntarily. Employees operate better as individuals if they consider themselves to be part of a well-functioning supportive team to which all are happy to belong. As committed and dedicated participants in the group, they are more productive, communicative, trusting, motivated and loyal (New Zealand Management, 2001).

According to Pinto (2007), trust is a common denominator for other behaviours like appreciation and cohesion. Low cohesiveness is associated with lack of trust in newly formed

teams (Yukl, 2010). According to Costa (2003), trust was associated with both perceived task performance and team satisfaction. Moreover, Mumbi's (2007) research was focusing on virtual team trust in which team members were working from dispersed locations. Trust in team member significantly impacts on both team performance and collective efficacy (Chuang et al., 2004). Also according to Chuang et al. (2004), leadership style has significant indirect effects on both team performance and collective efficacy via trust in team member. Webber (2008) also postulated that client trust in managing did influence team trust, team cohesion and team performance. Nevertheless, there is still lack of research on how team trust within the work team can predict project performance, team satisfaction, team effectiveness and team cohesion

Statement of the Problem

It is our observations and discovery that in-cohesiveness of team members and high level of diversity as well as increase in the use of ICT, are problems of Polytechnics in Rivers State and the attempt of bringing out the best from the organization through the emotional competence of leaders.

Today, most leaders found in the polytechnics do not have the robust mind set when it comes to trust, emotional stability, agreeableness, integrity, openness, consistency and honesty as well as other leadership attributes which should cordially bring out the cohesiveness of teamwork. Leaders found in polytechnics are self-centred, bias and of animosity, greedy and opposed to constructive criticism. Leaders and employees in each department take upon themselves the opportunity to work in isolation because of in-cohesiveness found in the system. Leaders only put the blame on workers and do not realize that workers respond to what they receive from the institution. Over the last decades, polytechnics have gone on debates because of their inability to meet up the current trend in the qualification potency as opposed to universities. This trend demoralizes the spiritual tempo of leaders as their yearnings and aspirations are not considered by government. Most times, the inability of some leaders towards, beliefs, expectations, values, norms and ICT give them sense of threat towards workers who are good with those traits and this would reduce the level of cohesion that would be achieved by the school. Polytechnics need workers who have the required competence to perform both general and specific task. These workers also need competent leaders who would influence them towards achieving both organizational and industrial goals. When polytechnics have good leaders who are ready to drive the course of cohesion, it first begins with trust worthiness of such leaders before it transcend to the various units and workers. Such cohesion that would occur would be confirmed by students who are satisfied as well as the general public that would benefit either through their knowledge or such service which contribute meaningfully to the society. However, any institution with short leadership has little chance for survival (Yousef,1998). Polytechnics need professional leaders who can achieve maximum goals of both leaders and employees. This study seeks to fill the gap and effort to improve the role of leadership using emotional competence to actuate cohesion among teamwork.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between self awareness and team trust in Rivers State Polytechnics.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between self awareness and team size in Rivers State Polytechnics.

Theoretical framework

Meso Baseline Theory on Leader's Emotional Intelligence and Work Team Cohesiveness

A Meso-level theoretical model is used to develop and outline the relationship between self and share leadership, focusing on the processes of trust, potency and commitment that may lead to the development of shared leadership and optimally more transformative knowledge creation. Organizations inherently believe that the group is the best means by which to get managerial work done. It is argued that group decisions are in some way better that than individual decisions. How cohesive a group is can be judged by indicators such as whether members arrive on time, the degree of trust and support between them, and the amount of satisfaction they gain from their group membership.

Richard Hackman(1987) argued that instead of propelling people together and hoping that they form a team, managers/leaders can take four alarming steps in order to increase the tendency of effective team performance. The steps include: pre-work, creating performance conditions, forming and building a team and providing on-going help.

Conceptualizing leadership in this way leads to numerous unanswered questions regarding how team dynamics influence, and are influenced by, various forms of leadership (including lateral, upward, and downward influence attempts). Greater dialogue between the team dynamics literature and the leadership literature may lead to new insights into how shared leadership is influenced by a variety of team characteristics, including team ability, size, member maturity, familiarity, likeability, cohesion, etc., all of which are potential areas for future research.

A distinct research paradigm emerges when scientists deal with data in a systematic fashion (Kuhn, 1970). The theory or the model is then subject to severe discussion, debates and questioning which takes the concept to its ripping state. Except the theory holds itself good against the Karl Popper's Test – that "the theory has the potential to explain things that other theories cannot, or if it has the potential to explain things better than other competing theories."(Emmerling and Goleman, 2003), it cannot be taken. Does the theory of EI conform to these standards? The theory of EI has the produced responsibility of proving itself beyond doubt not only to academicians but also to the non academic people.

As an emerging field, several definitions are proposed to define the concept and it becomes important which EI handles as we are going to discuss. Whereas the phrase emotional intelligence has been in literature for a while even before Payne, (Leuner, 1966, as cited in Petrides, 2011) the concept in its present form have its roots in (Salovey and Mayer's construct of 1990). The concept was accepted as a new concept. But, the current popularity of the theory hinges on Goleman's book; "Emotional Intelligence". It is important more than

IQ. Following the popularity, innumerable constructs have been proposed (many not based on empirical data – Goleman's book itself was not strictly based on researched and tested data). The theory has metamorphosed into three different approaches – Mayer and Salovey's ability" model and Goleman and Bar-On"s „mixed" models.

Recently, Goleman"s model is referred to as a competency model and Bar-On"s as a trait model.

Data Analyses

HO$_1$: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and team trust in Rivers State Polytechnics.

Table 1 Kendall's tau_b Tests Output

Correlations

			Self-Awareness	Team Trust
Kendall's tau_b	Self-Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.786**
		Sig. (2-tailed	.	.000
		N	320	320
	Team Trust	Correlation Coefficient	.786**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	320	320

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.786) between self-awareness and team trust is strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.62$) indicates that 62% change in team trust can be explained by self-awareness. The significant value of 0.000 (p< 0.05) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and team trust in Rivers State Polytechnics.

HO$_2$: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and team size in Rivers State Polytechnics.

Table 2 Kendall's tau_b Tests Output

Correlations

			Self-Awareness	Team Size
Kendall's tau_b	Self-Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.822**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	320	320
	Team Size	Correlation Coefficient	.822**	1.000

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	320	320

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.822) between self-awareness and team size is strong and positive. The coefficient of determination (r^2 = 0.68) indicates that 68% of change in team size can be explained by self-awareness. The significant value of 0.000 (p< 0.05) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and team size in Rivers State Polytechnics.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the conclusion is reached. In this case, the study has filled the gap in literature by providing the knowledge base that leaders' emotional intelligence in any organization, improves work team cohesiveness among employees. Also, the research has shown that self-awareness and self-regulation are vital keys that a good leader can use in work team cohesiveness in an organization.

The research has also shown that, team trust and self awareness are vital tools that a leader can use in work team cohesiveness in an organization. It signifies that when the leader ensures that information on service delivery go through laid down policies and employees are the drivers, performance and productivity is enhanced through unity of purpose. Therefore, the increase in team trust among leaders in the organization improves growth. There is a significant relationship between team size and self regulation. This is validated by the fact that the leader ensures the organization encourages effective service delivery and loyalty.

Culture is a vital tool in the organization that set a pace for leaders with good and cogent administrative tenet. When the organization is having its norms, values and believes system such as we have addressed above, productivity, performance is enhanced. The leader uses employee output to relate with how much the employee believes in the norms and value of the institution, the leader uses service delivery and problem solving mechanism to implement adequate cohesiveness among team members and the leader does not like an employee with low cohesiveness. Based on the above findings, the performance of the organization is improved through work team cohesiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following are recommended;

1. Leaders in organizations should always ensure that they relate with their employees or workers well, so as to build confidence and team work among them. Management in any organization should always ensure they carry out their obligations consciously and in a controlled manner. By this, employees will develop team spirit and be result-oriented. Leaders in any organization should endeavor to work according to the ethics already established, as this will build trust team and confidence among employees.

1. Organizations should always endeavor to reward and motivate their workers; by this, good environment and atmosphere will be created for hard work, and good teamwork.

2. Leaders should be able to analyze and diagnose a situation and distinguish between cause and effect. By this, the organization will be optimal in their operation.

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