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Human Resource Development, Emotional Intelligence and Social Capital for Senior Managers in the Hospitality Industry in Zimbabwe

By

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Abstract

As competitive advantage for organizations is determined by people, managers need to be well equipped to develop their staff for overall organizational capacity. The major question was on whether managers' human resource development orientation, emotional intelligence and social capital help organizations develop and redevelop themselves for competitive advantage. The research was a case study of a hotel in Zimbabwe. Stratified random sampling was employed to come up with a sample size of 30 respondents with 8 being the immediate bosses (management) and the rest were from line officers. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), organizational profile score sheet to measure social capital and questionnaires were used to elicit data from subordinates and management. Findings revealed that indeed there was a link between managers who were well developed, management's emotional intelligence and organizational social capital, and organizational productivity. However, most frontline officers in the hotel explained that they could not only depend on management decisions and guidance as they needed a personal touch with their clients and stakeholders. The research concluded that there was interconnectivity between human resource development, emotional intelligence, social capital and organizational productivity. The research recommended that both management and subordinates in hotel industry should be involved in organizational development programs that seek to equip them in emotional intelligence and social capital skills.

Human Resources management has articulated the literature that suggest that any manager should be able to plan, organize, control, and implement as he comes up with a winning strategy for his department but little has been said about the need for every manager to have capabilities that take cognizance of not only relevant skills but over and above emotional intelligence and social capital. Human Resources Development (HRD) has been defined as a process for developing and imparting skills and knowledge through organizational development, personal training and development for the purpose of improving performance for individuals, teams and the organization at large. The article focuses on the organization HRD agenda that takes cognizance of managers emotional intelligence behavior and the need for managers to have social relationships that matters to all stake holders including employees so as to assist them accomplish their work goals in service to customers and business at large. The major question to be addressed is if HRD initiatives can help harness psychological theories (EI) and (SC) and the economic theories (productivity).

Literature Review

Background

Hotels in Zimbabwe as compared to their African counter parts are less productive, less profitable and less labour intensive. The challenge is to develop human resource skills which help enhance productivity and profitability without necessarily increasing staff levels. Hospitality industry in Zimbabwe has been affected by the declining economy which forces them to employ on short term contracts, where they take employees aboard when the organization is busy. This has been further stifled by the stiff competition, coupled with little money circulating in the economy as companies cut down on costs and give their managers accommodation allowances which hinder them from staying in a hotel.

Thus hospitality industry has been left to rely on part time employees posing challenges of developing some HR skills to full capacity. Significant contributions to industry viability will be achieved when hospitality industry invest in full time employees who will give back commitment and the chain value that eventually give satisfaction to customers and shareholders. This brings the issue of the importance of HRD initiatives that takes cognizance of emotional intelligence skills, organisation social capital and productivity.

Human Resource Development

Human Resource Development is the framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and abilities, thus it becomes managers mandate to ensure employees are well equipped with relevant skills and attributes. One of the major companies cited by Osuin (2008) outlined its line

managers' responsibilities as follows, placing the right person at the right job, induction, training and development, improving job performance, gaining creative cooperation and developing smooth working relationships, interpreting the organization's procedures, controlling labor costs and developing abilities of each person in creating and maintaining departmental moral. Managers are employees charged with responsibilities and they play interpersonal roles, information roles and decision making roles which involve problem solving, resolving conflict, reviewing decisions and actions and making any necessary changes. It is therefore important that HRD programs should aim at providing organizational consulting services to all senior management areas to spur improved organizational and individual performance. It is the human capability and commitment which distinguish successful organizations from the rest. In practice HRD initiatives should concentrate on the following:

1. organizational development and managing change
2. development of behaviours, attitudes, skills, knowledge, expertise and technology proficiency required through managers
3. product, service and operational advancement and improvement
4. Integrating managerial expertise like organizational and environmental pressures, opportunities and constraints and managing across-cultures and transforming professions, industries and sectors.

If managers are well developed in the above aspects it means that employees can also be developed through their managers giving HRD on economic characteristic that sustain organizational productivity. HRD has been defined by Yang 2004 quoted in Venkatesh & Balaji (2012) as a field of study supported by three theoretical foundations of economic, psychological and systems theories. The economic characteristic in this study is the management capabilities that help the organization to have competitive advantage and sustain productivity. The psychological theories articulates the need to manage their and others emotions and create relationships that have influence on loyalty, economic transactions, production and willingness to assume risks. It becomes imperative that organizations invest in relevant human needs by attending to theirs and others' emotional intelligence, social capital issues and human resource development that impact on organizational performance.

Emotional Intelligence

Researchers like (Mayer & Salovey, 2000, Higgs 2004) have explained EI as being able to understand one's emotion and the impact they have on one's behavior and on those around them. According to Mayer & Salovey 1997 (ability model) there are four abilities identified namely perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions. The first ability is to detect and decipher emotions in faces, pictures, voices and cultural artifacts including identification of own emotions.

The second ability is the use of emotions where one should be able to harness emotions to facilitate various cognitive activities such as problem solving. It is argued here that one should capitalize on his or her changing moods to best fit the task at hand. The third ability is the understanding of emotions through understanding emotion language and appreciates complicated relationships among people thus showing sensitivity to others. The fourth and last ability according to this model is the ability to regulate emotions in both ourselves and others. An emotional intelligent person can harness even negative emotions in others and manage them to achieve intended goals. This model has a wide array of competencies including the core relationship between emotions and IQ, cognitive and personality factors. The model explains that an individual can be able to be aware of their emotions and manage them while at the same time he can be aware of other people's emotions and manage them as well. The ability to understand your own and other people's emotions helps one in acquiring skills in treating people according to their emotional reactions, the proficiency in managing relationships, building networks and the ability to find common ground and build rapport (Goleman 2002).

Thus to be emotionally intelligent one needs to understand how others feel and knowing how to manage relationships makes one's socially savvy and allows one to forge long term relationships. As managers become emotionally aware of theirs and others' emotions it means they can influence their actions so that they can be understood by those that follow them. As managers control employees they will be able to manage conflict and resolve disagreements through negotiating, compromising and seeking the best alternatives that yield positive results (Xavier 2005). Kotter (2002) of Harvard Business School correctly notes that 'because of the pace at which business is going it is not the strategy that fails us but the question of emotions. The winning strategy needs leaders of people instead of managers of processes. If management development programs are designed to take care of employees' strengths, it empowers employees to contribute value to the organization. Good leadership breeds collaboration and affiliation that drive profit and reduce cost Cox (1995). When employees are satisfied, this will in turn create a value chain when they provide excellent services to the customers who in turn become satisfied and give loyalty to the organization. Cox further argue that Richard Branson of Virgin Atlantic was able to provide employee growth, support and autonomy that drove client satisfaction which in turn drove shareholder returns. There is need therefore to develop managers who are able to manage the value chain that start with employee investment that drives customer loyalty and ultimately shareholder value.

Social Capital

Social capital in this article is defined as social networks that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation that increase productivity by reducing costs of doing

business. Lin (2001) supported the above definition when he defined social capital as investment by people in interpersonal relationships valuable in the markets. Foreman (2006) postulates that social relationships are important as they provide access to and control of valuable resources, which enable people to successfully operate in their environment. If networks can help managers with access to and control of organizational resources, managers with strong ties become strategically placed and effective than leaders with few networks. Benefits of strong ties are that of building loyalty, trust, mutual respect and emotional attachment between leaders and subordinates and organization and stakeholders. Goleman (1990) has explained social capital as relationships that create value which means managers can get connected to people they think matters in the business world, both internally and externally. Jack Welch quoted by Foreman (2006) argues that the most important thing for leaders in business is cash flow, doing the right thing for customers and doing things right by employees. There is then the need to build a kind of work environment that attracts, focuses and keeps talented employees who are able to unleash the value that drive customer loyalty and ultimately shareholder value.

Hamel quoted in Foreman (2006) argues that every employee brings six qualities to work which are obedience, diligence, intellect, initiative, creativity and passion. Organizations need managers who are able to invoke all these qualities in order to be competitive in this global economy. According to John Kotter (2006) to energise and service an asset that is characterized by emotions, memories and its own volition, leaders must first master their own human and social capital to which to build an authentic foundation of trust, respect and inspiration to get others committed to work.

Methodology

The research approach was basically qualitative and was a case study of a hotel in Zimbabwe which will not be mentioned for reasons of confidentiality. A case study design was used because the researcher wanted to understand the dynamics present within a single setting. Stratified random sampling was used to select both subordinate and managers. The Mayer-Salovey Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), organizational profile score sheet that was developed by the World Bank to measure organizational social capital and questionnaires were used to elicit data from subordinates and managers. Both secondary and primary source of data were used in this study. The primary source was gathered from the subjects who completed the research tools and answered the questionnaires. The secondary sources of data were the company records such as disciplinary hearing records and grievance procedure reports and customer feedback.

Discussion

Interconnectivity of Human Resources Development, Emotional Intelligence, Social Capital and Productivity

When managers were asked on whether they have management development programmes in the organization that equip them with leadership skills, to this 50% of the respondents agreed to HRD practices like job rotation, high frequency of meetings, participation in decision making, coaching and both on the job and off the job training. 20% of management respondents highlighted that they have been able to impart such skills to their own subordinates through departmental meetings, mentoring and coaching. 15% of employee respondents concurred with the management explanation but explained that most meetings were held to give instructions meaning that employee involvement was limited. This had an implication on how employees received management's intentions thus blocking a working environment that encourage trust, customer service that boost loyalty and ultimately a negative impact on shareholder value.

According to Lamb (2004) effective leadership has the following characteristics which are trust, confidence and effective communication which help employees to understand how they contribute in achieving organizational goals. There was therefore need for senior managers to develop HRD initiatives that encompassed employee needs in order to give them trust, confidence and effective communication.

On being aware of their and others emotions 15% of managements said while they were involved in resolving conflicts, and making decisions that affect employees and customers, there was need for high collaboration from subordinates as they were the ones who had a personal touch with the customers. 10% of management respondents indicated that hospitality industry was dominated by high labour mobility and turnover where junior employees in particular just leave work unceremoniously making it difficult for managers to impart skills to a labour force which is not stable and committed. This however was refuted by 40% of employees who blamed management for creating unfriendly environment and also not involving them in most organizational activities, leaving them to find their way in the organization. Employees attributed lack of emotional intelligence by their managers as contributing to high labour turnover as they explained that most managers' interests were interested in getting things done without evaluating their own and others emotions. Other employees responded by saying in as much as they get guidance from management, they use their own emotional intelligence to handle customers and provide satisfactory service. This was supported by high disciplinary cases that involved employees in carrying out their duties, implying that manager employee relations were hostile. Goleman (2002:1) states that 'great leaders move us; they ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When they try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision and powerful

ideas but the reality is much more primal that great leadership works through the emotions. This shows that in as much as managers may have good HRD initiatives, these could only become effective if they are able to handle their emotions hence the connectivity of HRD initiatives and emotional intelligence skills.

Data Presentation

Data on Selected Factors on Hospitality Management

| Factors of HRD | Hospitality High | Management Low | Total |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Emotional Intelligence | 14 | 12 | 26 |
| Human Development | 23 | 10 | 33 |
| Social Capital | 12 | 8 | 20 |
| Productivity | 05 | 16 | 21 |
| Total | 54 | 46 | 100 |

Source: Field survey, 2011

Data Analysis

The data above shows that 14 out of 54 responses belief that high hospitality management is arising from emotional intelligence of managers, 23 are of the opinion of human development, 12 agree to social capital and 5 say productivity serves as high hospitality management in Zimbabwe. On the whole, out of 100 responses 54 say very high hospitality management result from factors of emotional intelligence, human development, social capital and productivity while about 46 say low hospitality management is accounted for by the factors of HRD in Zimbabwe.

According to Miskel 2006 in Bono 2007, leadership is a social process involving both national and emotional elements whereby a member or members of a group or organization influence the interpretation of internal and external events, the choice of goals or desired outcomes, organization of work activities, individual motivation and power relations.

Response on organization and social capital, 65% of the management respondents agreed that social networks within the organisation reduced the costs of doing business, citing examples where some employees were asked to work beyond their schedules to complete give tasks. There was evidence from the response that social network facilitated co-ordination and co-operation as managers could have their work done without paying extra cash or engaging extra personnel. Social network perspectives assume that the relationships are also important as they provide access to control valuable resources which help them operate in their environment. The researcher established that managers who had extensive networks within and outside

The Intuition

the organization were able to execute their duties effectively as compared to managers with few net-work ties. 20% of management respondent however dismissed the need for developing social network within the organization citing the problem where managers may be forced to spend valuable time negotiating with workers to get task done which they believed were part of their job description. On dealing with customers and other stakeholders there was evidence from management respondents that their clientele was made up of regular customers that included big organizations like companies, non-governmental organizations and the government itself when they host their function at the organization. This was supported by 50% of employee responses who alluded to serving regular customers more often. This is a clear link that there were strong ties between the organization and the customers who frequented the organization. However, it should be noted that the research could not elicit information from these regular customers to get the reasons why they frequented the organization. Burt quoted by Brass & Krackhart (1999) argues that an individual has a comparative advantage in competitive situations over those persons who are connected to him but have no ties to each other. In this article the organization enjoyed benefits of strong ties with customers and organizations that utilized its services through maintaining social ties with them. What could not be ascertained by this research was on whether it was HRD initiatives by management or employees' own initiatives that glued that organization, employees and customers together. Schmid & Robinson quoted by Brass & by Brass & Krackhart (1999) explained that relationships have influence on loyalty, economic transactions, production and willingness to assume risk.

The research concluded that social networks at work place are important as they help in reduction of transaction costs when those who are in a relationship cooperate and co-ordinate in their business activities, hence transactions that may require strict adherence to protocols can be reduced. This is supported by Humphrey & Schmitz quoted by Brass & Krackhart (1999) when he explained that economic agents in Germany, Japan and Italy were able to gain competitive advantage through networking. When there is negative social capital relationships in organizations, relations are characterised by industrial disputes, low trust, and poor workforce relations. As managers are developed to impart the correct behavior and attitudes in their subordinates, it takes leaders with emotional intelligence to empower subordinates to invest in social capital with colleagues, managers and customers as well to create a conducive environment that makes business prosper.

Conclusion

Human Resource Development initiatives, emotional intelligence and social capital issues are interconnected and help organizations develop committed employees who are able to provide service that help retain customers and ultimately share holder value. However, employees in hospitality industry while they receive coaching and

guidance from their managers, there is need for them to apply their own emotional intelligence and help develop social networks for the benefit of the organization.

Recommendation

1. Effective communication skills help leaders to build strong – relationships with subordinates which eventually lead to an effective organization. Communication skills are needed to deal with employees especially those with low socialization skills and diffuse aggressive personalities. Upward communication should be encouraged so that employees will feel involved and boost self-work, self-esteem and reduce incidence of work place deviance. This will help employees gain trust and loyalty to the organization and motivating them in providing quality service to the customers.
2. Leaders should design HRD that take cognizance of developing both management and employees' emotional intelligence and social networks.
3. A clear transparent grievance procedure should be in place to allow employees to give feedback where they feel mistreated. If employees can vent their anger through a transparent procedure this reduce conflict as no one will feel powerless hence effort will be directed towards providing quality service.
4. Hospitality industry should strive to develop HRD strategies that help retain employees so as to impart relevant skills to a stable labour force for the benefit of the organization.

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