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Organizational Culture and its Impact on Educator Performance. A case of Educators in Masvingo Urban in Zimbabwe.

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Abstract:

For many years, the issue of organizational culture and the resultant performance has captured the interest of researchers since time immemorial. The Denison Model was used as it explores the relationship between organizational culture and educator performance in a developing country context. The study mainly adopted a positivist approach which has its roots in physical science. The study was a case study in the Ministry of Education. A sample was drawn from fourteen (14) primary and Secondary schools, the District and Provincial staff in Masvingo Province. Data was obtained through questionnaires and interviews. The SPSS package was used in the analysis of the gathered data. The major findings were that most educators had knowledge of their organizational culture but did not have an integrated performance culture. Not much has been done on monitoring and evaluation of the performance appraisal system and there are no practical benefits. Educators are demoralized due to low salaries, poor working conditions, lack of resources and large classes. The findings have established that there is a positive relationship between organizational culture and educator performance. Further studies should focus on re-inventing new strategies for ensuring that organizational culture becomes an integral source of educator morale and performance. Further studies should also focus on how schools can be resourced other than through increasing fees for students.

Keywords: Organizational culture, performance, results based management (RBM), Zimbabwe.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

In this global business world, intelligent managers have realized that an organization has its own corporate culture. Sharp awareness has brought in its increasingly broad and contradictory concepts of culture. Researchers and practitioners alike often view culture as a new management approach that will not only cure a variety of organizational ills such as political interference, abuse of office and corruption in any organization. According to Director's Circular Minute Number 9 of 2012 which specifies staff establishment, the Ministry of Education has had 15993 teachers by the period 2012. A total of 993 teachers have been dismissed from service so far and that has affected the service performance by 6.2 %. A study by Civil Service Commission (CSC) reflects that, there is significant evidence that the majority of new teachers and non teaching staff are not being inducted. It is clear that, had orientation and induction taken place at the initial stages these officers could have benefited from the enculturation of the organization's expectations. According to Stewart (2007), culture refers to the set of rules and instructions that are observed by the members of the organization. It is a set of rules and regulations that every educator needs to be made aware inclusive of such material things like the values, norms and belief systems that are observable in every organization. There is a direct causal relationship between organizational culture and educator performance. The major goal of many organizations is profit maximization (Stewart, 2007). Organizational culture requires an in depth research to establish its contribution to organizational success. The Herald of 4th of September, 2013, shows that there is a high level of corruption in the civil service

caused by senior personnel in Government and people of authority in the society. The Herald of September 5, 2013 states that stringent measures must be taken by corporate organizations to tackle corruption.

According to Gallagher (2007), organizational culture is not just an important factor of an organization but it is the central driver of superior business performance. In Zimbabwe, institutional culture is also guided by statutory instruments, circulars and general letters which are generated by the Civil Service Commission. These are often violated by civil service members. Some school heads over the years have been misappropriating funds which are the major cause of discharge from the civil service. Improper association with minors and abuse of sick leave are other common misconduct acts which have seen members discharged from service. The systems gap, therefore, is lack of induction for the newly appointed and serving members.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to establish the existing organizational cultural practices in the Ministry of Education and to determine the manner in which the organization's culture and policies in operation is being implemented as well as identifying strategies for improving performance of educators. This study seeks to reduce the high staff turnover through the various approaches. The culture expectations and existing culture are going to be suggested in the study.

1.3. Problem Statement

The high staff turnover in the Ministry of Education appears to be a cultural behavior because of inconsistencies such as lack of induction, training, none strategy supportive behaviors, rampant levels of corruption, bribery, fraud leading to dismissal and affecting performance. Negative performance is manifested through a continuous recruitment of new teachers who need time to recruit, train and orient on the expected standards of behavior which eventually leads to poor examination results.

1.4. Research Objectives

The study intends to evaluate the existing organizational cultural practices in the Ministry of Education, establish the influence of organizational culture on educator performance and to suggest new cultural strategies for improving educator performance.

1.5. Hypothesis to be Tested

H1: There is a positive relationship between knowledge of organizational culture and educator performance. The dependent variable is performance while culture is the independent variable.

The relationship between culture and educator performance will be tested using regression analysis.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study shall benefit the broader stakeholders involved in the education of children and these include Ministry of Education, teachers, students and parents.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Terms

2.1.1. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture has been conceptualized as a shared mental position that assists by guiding the required behaviour for the required situation (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006).

2.1.2. Performance

Performance is defined as the ability to execute a specific task in a specific manner that can be on a scale. Performance is used to describe different societal, organizational and educator output (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/performance.html>). Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmit (1997) emphasize judgmental and evaluative processes that take a great deal along with action itself while defining performance. In view of the above definitions, the researcher perceives that performance is all about accomplishment of a specific task for a given purpose to achieve set goals in an organization.

2.2. Models of Organizational Culture

2.2.1. Organizational cultural framework by Denison

According to the model, beliefs and assumptions that represent the levels of organizational culture are emphasized (Yilmaz, 2008). These fundamental assumptions provide the foundation from which surface-level cultural components such as values and observable artifacts come from (Denison, 2000, p. 292). He further states that values and beliefs of an organization lead to management practices, which are activities steeped in the values of the organization. These activities stem from and reinforce the dominant values and beliefs of the organization. The model posits that there are four key cultural traits: involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission.

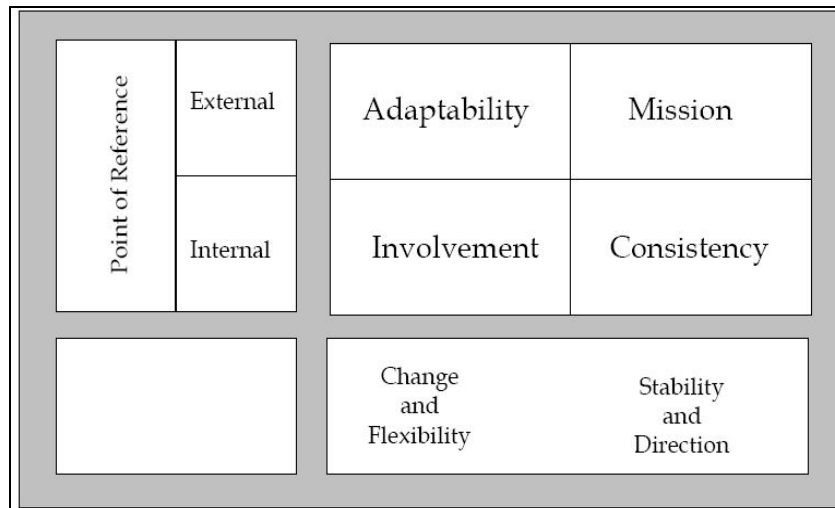


Figure 1: Model of Culture and Effectiveness by Denison
Source: Adapted from Denison (2003, p49)

The model shows that comparisons of organizations are based on values and their practices are made and such values are more accessible than the assumptions and more reliable than the artifacts. Four cultural traits make up the model, namely consistency, involvement, adaptability and mission; and these have been shown by literature to have an impact of performance (Denison and Mishra, 1995). The traits are explicated below:

2.2.1.1. Involvement:

Effective organizations empower their people, build their organizations around teams, and develop human capability at all levels. This makes managers, executives, including educators to be committed to their work and have a feeling of ownership of the organization. This makes people feel that their input is important and have and this directly impacts organizational performance.

2.2.1.2. Consistency:

Organizations with strong cultures become consistent, well coordinated, and integrated. Behavior is a component of core values, and leaders and followers are skilled at reaching agreement even when there are diverse points of view. Therefore consistency is a major determinant of stability and internal integration that culminates from conformity.

2.2.1.3. Adaptability:

Unexpectedly, it is those organizations that have strong bonds that are not easy to change. Organizations that adapt learn from their mistakes as they are pushed by their customers and thus create change. They continuously change so that they adapt.

2.2.1.4. Mission:

Successful organizations have a definite direction that epitomizes the goals, strategic objectives and a vision that shows how the organization will be like in future. To change the mission of an organization means changing its culture

2.2.2 Theory Z

Ouchi (1993) analyzed better performing companies to discover what was common in these companies. His theory is an extension of McGregor's X and Y theories that differentiates between leadership styles of supervisors, yet Theory Z explicates the culture of the entire organization. The theory further shows that it focuses on long term aspects of the organization.

2.2.2.1 The notion of Decision Making and Shared control

As a recommendation, school administrators need more time with students, teachers, parents and to interact on issues of the school and how schools are run. Both internal and external stakeholders assist with their input into decisions that will affect the way they perform their responsibilities. Students can discuss with management during the Headmaster's hour all issues of their concern. Teachers will be involved through staff meetings, parents will be represented by the (SDC) School Development Committee and these parents may also be called for Parents meetings and Annual General Meetings.

2.2.2.2 Skills Training

The theory emphasizes learning teams. Small groups of educators meet periodically and map the way forward that should improve the culture of the place. This group system helps in buy in when it comes to group think and task execution (Bonstingl, 2001) In the Zimbabwean schools this can be done at subject panel or cluster level where both teaching and non-teaching staff and students benefit .

2.2.2.3 Self interest as a form of motivation

Self-interest is the kind of interest believed by Ouchi. There is need for creation of a conducive environment where individuals explore to satisfy their self interest in order to achieve organizational goals. This implies that there is need for open door

communication where individuals must bring in their ideas and these will be incorporated into the school's objectives so as to accomplish the goals of the school.

2.2.2.4. Equitable Rewards System

There is need to reward high achievers or performers and a record should be kept so that those lagging behind will emulate them and will want to work hard as well so that their efforts will also be recognized. Teachers can be rewarded through Merit Awards such as the Best Teacher or Best Educator of Year or Best Student. Performance related salaries should be used to motivate high performers.

2.3 Performance

2.3.1 Results Based Management (RBM)

Results-based Management involves some of the following dimensions:

1. Defining realistic results based on appropriate analysis;
2. Clearly identifying programme beneficiaries and designing programmes that meet their needs and priorities;
3. Using results information to make effective management decisions;
4. Monitoring the progress of expected results and resources spent with the use of appropriate indicators;
5. Increasing knowledge and improving practice through lessons learned;
6. Identifying and managing risks;
7. Reporting on results and resources used ((Try and Radnor, 2007; Hulme, 2010).

2.5. The Hypothesis

The research sets out to find the existence or non-existence of a relationship between organization culture and the performance of educators. The model proposed by Denison proposes that culture traits result in higher performance. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

H1: The culture of an organization is positively correlated with educator performance.

Many researchers have researched on the impact culture has on performance. (Harris, 2000; Heck, 1993 and Ogbonna and Harris, 2000) and not much research has been done on organizational culture as a contextual factor of performance management (Magee, 2002). This research therefore seeks to fill the gap where traits of organizational culture are correlated with organizational performance.

3. Materials And Methods

The study adopted a positivist approach which has its roots in physical science. The study was a case study in the Ministry of Education. A sample was drawn from educators of fourteen (14) primary and Secondary schools, the District and Provincial staff in Masvingo Province constituting a population of 500 people. Data was obtained through questionnaires and interviews. The SPSS package was used in the analysis of the gathered data using regression and descriptive statistics.

4. Research Findings And Discussion

4.1. Questionnaire return rate

One hundred questionnaires were sent to 14 schools comprising; 10 primaries and 4 secondary, in Masvingo District office and Masvingo Provincial Office (Masvingo urban). Eighty were filled in and returned representing a response rate of 80%. Ten interviews were carried out to complement the data collected through questionnaires. The following distribution was reported;

4.2. Respondents age distribution

Age distribution was as follows: 17.5% were in the age group 26 -36; 40% were in the age group 37-47; 38.75 % were in the age group 48 - 58 ; 3.75 % were in the age group 59 and above . This shows that more respondents were in the age group 37 – 47, this could be attributed to the fact that most of the new appointees are usually deployed in the rural areas while the experienced teachers are considered as transferees. The age group 59 and above was represented by the least number of respondents , this could be attributed to some teachers preferring to proceed on early retirement and this is consistent with the Pensions and Provident Act while others may be opting to be nearer their rural homes in preparation for their retirement .

4.3. Educational Level of the Respondents

Secondary school : 3,8 %; Diploma 17.5 % ; Bachelors 61.2 % ; Masters 17.5 % Most of the teachers in Zimbabwe are embarking on further studies to enhance their chances of being promoted it now a requirement for administrators to be holders of a first degree this is consistent with Heller (1999) who support that such a status quo requires managers to have relevant qualifications for better decision making and organizational insight .Zimbabwe is also rated as one of the African countries with a high literacy rate. The least number of qualification was secondary education this could be an indication that some office orderlies were included in respondents.

4.4. Organizational Culture And Performance

| Question | Response | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. Do you think that organizational culture has an impact on educator performance? | Agree | 33 | 41.25 |
| | strongly agree | 26 | 32.5 |
| | Disagree | 17 | 21.25 |
| | strongly disagree | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Does your organization have written organizational culture values? | Agree | 40 | 50 |
| | strongly agree | 26 | 32.5 |
| | No | 5 | 6.25 |
| | no idea | 9 | 11.25 |
| 3. How would you rate the effectiveness of your cultural practices? | highly effective | 17 | 21.25 |
| | Effective | 54 | 67.5 |
| | Ineffective | 8 | 10 |
| | totally ineffective | 1 | 1.25 |
| 4. Do your leaders communicate the cultural practices & policies with you? | Often | 29 | 36.25 |
| | Usually | 17 | 21.25 |
| | Sometimes | 31 | 38.75 |
| | Never | 3 | 3.75 |
| 5. What is your involvement in formulating cultural practices? | highly involved | 15 | 18.75 |
| | Involved | 29 | 36.25 |
| | not involved | 33 | 41.25 |
| | not involved at all | 3 | 3.75 |
| 6. Are there any changes in the ministry's standard of operations since you joined the organization? | strongly agree | 44 | 55 |
| | Agree | 24 | 30 |
| | Disagree | 9 | 11.25 |
| | strongly disagree | 3 | 3.75 |
| 7. Do you think the current cultural practices are integrated with your organization's business strategy? | strongly agree | 9 | 11.25 |
| | Agree | 56 | 70 |
| | Disagree | 12 | 15 |
| | strongly disagree | 3 | 3.75 |

Table 1: Code of Conduct,
Source: Raw Data

The study found out that 74% of the respondents said that there is relationship between organizational culture and educator performance. These findings are consistent with the findings of Lunenburg (2011), Martin and Terblanche (2003), and Schein (2011). These researchers assume that a strong culture has a positive influence on performance with particular emphasis on creativity and innovation. Martin and Terblanche 2003 assert that Organizational culture seem to be a critical factor in the success of any organization. Sixty – six percent (66) respondents out of 88 were in agreement that their organization has written organizational cultural values which they derive from the mission statement. This consistent with the Denison (1990) which posits that successful organizations have a clear sense of purpose and direction that defines organizational goals and strategic objectives and expresses a vision of how the organization will look in future . Of the 80 respondents 71 pointed out that their organizational culture was effective. This seems to suggest that the respondents have knowledge of their organization’s culture. Forty – six (46) out of 80 respondents revealed that they were consulted by their leaders on cultural policies. This number is slightly above half the total number of respondents which tend to point that consultation could be involving those members in administrative positions leaving out the rest of the staff .Eighty- five percent (85%) of the respondents revealed that there have been some cultural changes since they joined their organization. This is consistent with Denison et al (2003) who pointed out that when an organizational underlying mission changes, change also occur in the other aspects of the organizational culture. 65 out of 80 respondents were of the opinion that organizational culture should be linked to the business strategy. This is supported by the current appraisal system which links the organizations with their vision and mission statements.

| | Response | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Do you participate in performance appraisal? | Agree | 33 | 41.25 |
| | Strongly agree | 26 | 32.5 |
| | Disagree | 17 | 21.25 |
| | Strongly disagree | 4 | 5 |
| If you participate in performance appraisal, do you think it is useful? | Strongly agree | 14 | 17.5 |
| | Agree | 27 | 33.75 |
| | Disagree | 21 | 26.25 |
| Is performance appraisal conducted periodically? | Strongly disagree | 18 | 22.5 |
| | Strongly agree | 24 | 30 |
| | Agree | 44 | 55 |
| | Disagree | 10 | 12.5 |
| | Strongly disagree | 2 | 2.5 |
| | Strongly agree | 11 | 13.75 |
| Are performance appraisal purposes, schedules & dimensions clearly communicated with educators | Agree | 25 | 31.25 |
| | Disagree | 27 | 33.75 |
| | Strongly disagree | 17 | 21.25 |
| | Strongly agree | 25 | 31.25 |
| Are appraisal interviews/discussions conducted? | Agree | 42 | 52.5 |
| | Disagree | 11 | 13.75 |
| | Strongly agree | 2 | 2.5 |
| | Strongly disagree | 13 | 16.25 |
| Any follow up conducted after performance appraisal to confirm improvement? | Agree | 28 | 35 |
| | Disagree | 27 | 33.75 |
| | Strongly disagree | 12 | 15 |
| Do you have difficulties or constraints in doing Performance appraisal? | Strongly agree | 29 | 36.25 |
| | Agree | 37 | 46.25 |
| | Disagree | 11 | 13.75 |
| | Strongly disagree | 3 | 3.75 |

Table 2: Performance Appraisal (RBM),

Source: Raw Data from SPSS

Of the 80 respondents 59 said that they participated in performance appraisal and 41 out of 80 revealed that it was useful as asserted by Smart (2003) when they state that measuring performance in Education is very important. Eighty – five percent of the respondents revealed that performance appraisals are held periodically this is in line with the new performance appraisal system (RBM) which advocated for quarterly progress reviews .The findings revealed that forty five percent of the respondents are in agreement that performance appraisal purposes schedules and dimensions are clearly communicated with educators while sixty five percent are in disagreement. This is a clear indication that performance management may not be properly managed in the Ministry of Education because a large percentage is in disagreement. Sixty –seven respondents out of 80 revealed that appraisal interviews or discussions were held this is line with performance management requirements due to the fact that it is a process which is done over a period of time and a schedule of event is usually provided. Of the 80 respondents 51.25 % revealed that follow ups were held after appraisal to confirm improvement while 38.75 were in disagreement this is an indication that monitoring and measuring is lacking in the Ministry of Education. When the statistics are so close to each other it means that the

responses show a mixed result. It has been established that 82.50 % of the respondents had difficulties or constraints in doing performance appraisal while 17.5 % said that they were knowledgeable of the appraisal system this could have been attributed to haphazard training and that the training targeted senior management some of whom had not grasped the concept of Results Based Management (RBM).

4.5. Regression Analysis

| Model | R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | Standard error of estimate |
|-------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 0.229 ^a | 0.053 | 0.41 | 0.88988 |

Table: 3 Model Summary

- a. Predictors: (Constant), does your organization have written cultural values that stipulate the behaviour standards that are expected

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.524 | .206 | | 7.382 | .000 |
| | Does your organization have written organizational culture values that stipulate the expected behavior standards? | .211 | .101 | .229 | 2.082 | .041 |

Table 4: Coefficients

- a. Dependent Variable: do you think your organization has an effective culture that supports employee performance
Regression Equation:
- b. Worker performanc_e = β₀ + β₁ X₁ + ε_t
- c. Worker performanc_e = 1.524 + 0.211 Organizational Culture + ε_t

Interpretation: The results indicate a positive relationship between organizational culture and work performance. This suggests that organizational culture has a great bearing on employee performance. Given a t-ratio of 2.082 we reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between organizational culture and work performance at 5% significance level and conclude that a relationship between organizational culture and work performance does exist.

Lack of induction has led some civil servants to unethical contact of business such as maladministration of funds by some school heads and some teachers being charged for improper association with school girls. This has led to discharge of members from the Civil Service and created vacant posts which were filled in by untrained teachers leading to poor results in most school and in particular rural schools.

4.6. Interview Responses

Respondents revealed that their organizations practice cultural practices such as Manpower Planning is consistent with Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000. They were not sure of the health and safety issues which can adversely affect the health of the educators and in turn affect their performance. Manpower planning is positive as this assist in improving the educators knowledge, effectiveness and efficient.

On whether they carry out performance management, such as Results Based Management, motivation, reward ceremonies, evaluation and auditing; respondents agreed that they carried out performance management, such as Results Based Management, however they pointed out that there was no feedback. One respondent argued that sometimes managers take educators for granted. They hardly give feedback when it concerns motivation aspects of the workforce while the other said that feedback is given when it targets negatives. They also argued that there was no motivation and this was contributing to the low morale of educators. Motivation is important to educators if productivity is to increase this is consistent with the Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs and McGregor’s Theory X and Y. Demotivated educators do not perform to the required standards.

On causes of poor performance, respondents cited poor remuneration, poor working conditions and inadequate resources. They also gave the other reasons as follows: lack of recognition, lack of non-monetary incentives such as duty free for imported vehicles, poor living conditions, unavailability of housing loans; high teacher – pupil ratio, no significant remuneration for those who will have acquired higher qualifications, inadequate infrastructure resulting in double sessioning, lack of information, low morale and total absence of supervision by heads of schools, education inspectors and the District Education Officers . One respondent argued that there was no recognition from stakeholders especially as the society now has been made to view teachers as gullible people of low economic value.

On limiting factors towards developing effective supervision strategies, respondents gave the following reasons: lack of proper knowledge on supervision especially for teachers in acting posts, lack of funds for supervision programmes, poor working conditions, lack of resources, lack of transport and poor motivation. Supervisors are not properly supported by the system, no travelling and subsistence allowance and shortage of transport and fuel.

Respondents gave strategies they felt could improve educator performance: monetary incentives, non monetary incentives such as vehicles, housing loans, duty free for imported personal vehicles, staff development workshops that are carried out frequently, rewards for high performers, performance based salaries, in-service programmes, educators should be involved or consulted in formulation of programme policies, remuneration should be based on qualification, performance and experience, improved infrastructure such as roads and water and sanitation.

5. Recommendations

- There is need for an integrated performance culture.
- Departments should avail adequate literature for the stakeholders. Progressive departments should be viewed as centres of information rather than being centres for information storage. Some managers keep away information and this result in information asymmetry.
- The Ministry of Education should create information hierarchies which flatten bureaucratic tendencies or (red tape) so as to promote the regime of transparency and accountability
- Integrative approaches such as (team building, involvement, collaborative, creating constituents, and creating magic leaders) to strategy formulation must be implemented by the Ministry of Education.
- Departments should be viewed as learning centres for performance management systems such as RBM; they must create databases, internet, extranet, for their internal and external stakeholders, for easy access to information.
- While there are no perceived practical benefits of RBM at the moment, the Ministry of Education is encouraged to appreciate the new system as is a current management tool used by most governments, and even international, for project monitoring and evaluation.
- The Ministry of Education should come up with new Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques for the effective implementation of organizational culture and educator performance.
- This study recommends for a re- run of training on RBM using new strategies which are participatory and not one-sided approaches (top-down) approach.
- On the issue of human resources development, corporate strategy must clearly indicate the importance of human resources to the organization and therefore measures must be taken to promote a culture of learning and development.
- The Ministry of Education should develop strategic plans with visions and mission statements and core values which are derived from the culture of the organization.
- On the issue of resources, departments should re-invent new strategies of resourcing their projects rather than waiting for the government to take the initiative. This research therefore insists on further investigation into this area.

6. Areas for future study

The issue of how to motivate educators should be further probed with a view to make the sector focused on task delivery, as it forms the backbone of any future human resources development. How can schools be able to raise more resources, other than through raising fees remains an area for future research?

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