

MENTALABILITY, MENTORING AND LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Successful organizations are those that have always taken employees development as a challenge by looking out for leaders with desired qualities and enhancing those qualities to suit the vision and mission statements of such companies. This study evaluated the effects of mental ability, leadership competence, and formal mentoring (independent variables) on organizational performance (dependent variable). The study methodology was the adoption of secondary sources of data through the review of texts, journals, internets as well as informed observations. Results confirmed a strong effect on the independent variables and the dependent variable. The study recommended that, organizations should encourage career development to boost performance. Competent leaders with high mental ability are expected to mentor others and educate them on the key to their critical success factor for organizational growth and sustainability. Career development should be seen as a continuous process in any Organization. There is need for employee motivation and periodic organizational performance review.

Keywords: *Mental ability, Leadership competence, mentoring, Performance, organization.*

Background to the Study

It is important to note that the need to enhance the effectiveness of any organization rests in the heart of the management of the organization. Therefore, resources to achieve this which include people, finance, technology and material must be effectively and efficiently planned for. The most important of these resources is the people who coordinate the other resources. Those coordinators are expected to pose leadership qualities such as mental ability, competent, mentoring ability, integrity, ability to carry subordinate along. Over the years men working in the organization have been accorded various values, they were once referred to as the labour in the factor of production, at another time they were called personnel which later changed to human resources and thereafter to human capital development (Kehinde 2012).

According to Mbaegbu and Arugo (2015) at the main entrance of the Staff Training and Development Center of the defunct African Continental Bank Plc, was posted a statement "if you don't train them; don't blame them". The statement says it all; no matter the level of one's education and experience, on or out the job training is needed to update the person with current trends. Some organizations disregard the above statement and would rather prefer to be blamed by not taking their employees career development as a priority. The consequence upon such negligence is poor performance and living the fate of the organization to competitors' hand whose managers are filled with mental ability, mentoring ability and excellent leadership competence.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of mental ability, leadership competence, and mentoring on organizational performance.

Specifically, was to examine the relationship between mental ability and leadership competence and organizational performance.

Lastly was to assess how mentoring can affect performance in an organization.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between mental ability, leadership competence and organizational performance?
2. How does mentoring affect organizational performance?

Methodology

This study adopted secondary source of data collection. The data were elicited from journals, internets, texts and other informed observations relating to the study variables; dependent variable is Performance while the independent variables are mental ability, leadership competence, and mentoring.

Literature Review

The study literature was reviewed based on conceptual, empirical and theoretical frameworks on the variables both the dependent and independent and gaps in the study was summarized w following each argument.

Concept of Performance

Organizational performance has no precise definition; it could be assessed in terms of achievements in relation to its set goal. Performance can be in form of marketing strategy achievements, financial profitability achievement or return on investment resulting from strategic planning. Curristine (2005) defines performance as “the yield or results of activities carried out in relation to the purposes being pursued. However, defining, conceptualizing, and measuring performance have not been an easy task (Abu-Jarad, Yusof and Nikbin 2010).

Bernarden and Beaty (2013) defined performance as the record of outcomes produced on a specified job function, actually or behavior during a specified time period. They also distinguish this out comes oriented definition from a person- oriented one and criticize the currently tendency of performance evaluation to focus on the person's characteristics. Performance is usually indicated as desired result, behaviors, attitudes or trait. In another dimension, performance refers to the final result of an accomplished desire, while others argue that performance has to do with the behavior people exhibit in the course of producing result with their basic competence or ability to perform various aspects of job functions.

Mental Ability, Leadership Competence, and performance

General mental ability (GMA), general cognitive ability or general intelligence refers to a general factor of cognitive abilities including quantitative, verbal spatial reasoning aptitude and the like (Gottfredson, 1997; Hunter& Schmidt, 1998; Ree& Earls, 1992). Literature has confirmed high performance by organizational leaders with general mental ability, such leaders have been consistent with high job performance (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004), the area of leadership research has long acknowledge the importance of general mental ability as it contribute to leadership. The mental ability of a leader therefore enhances his competent level. There are a number of reasons why GMA plays an essential role in affecting leadership. First, leadership positions typically involve high cognitive job demands, such as gathering, integrating and interpreting information (Locke, 1991), and planning and organizing, problem solving, decision making, and monitoring (YUKL, Wall, &Lepsinger, 1090). Such cognitive demands require people who occupy leadership positions to have adequate levels of cognitive capacity in order to perform their jobs well. This position is buttressed by several leadership models (Mintberg, 1973; Mumford, Campion,&Morgeson, 2007) which review cognitive capacity as a foundation of leadership competency requirements. Secondly, GMA is associated with adaptive performance (Pulakos, Schmitt, Dorsey, Arad, Borman& hedge, 2002). It encompasses creative problem solving, learning, handling emergencies and uncertainties and so forth (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan,&Plamondon, 2000). Schmidt &Hunter (2004) suggest that people with high level of GMA likely to acquire job knowledge more rapidly and be creative in their own behaviors and to stimulate others. Lastly, implicit leadership theory suggests that people with high levels of GMA are more likely to be perceived as leaders than those with low GMA (Atwater &Yammarinol, 1993).

The dimensions of an organizational leader behaviors considered to be associated with successful goal outcomes have included both appropriate collaborative behaviors and transformational leadership. Emotional intelligence has been suggested as a unique area of individual differences that is likely to underpin sets of behaviors in this area (Clarke, 2010).

Leadership competence and mental ability are unique qualities needed by a focus leader to achieve an organizational goal, driven by concerned and goal oriented team members who are properly communicated with the mission and vision statement of the company. Mental ability of any leader must be that, that puts the leader at alert all the time and this enhances his level of competence. A competent leader must be knowledgeable, firm, honest, leave by example; energetic. Leadership has been defined in a number of ways such as the ability to guide followers toward shared goals (Bryman, 1992). A competence leader must guide his followers towards achieving a set goal. He must ensure customer satisfaction; he is expected to motivate his workers. The end result of the above is organizational enhanced performance.

Formal Mentoring

Mentoring is a relationship. It is a relationship between the mentor and the protégé. Mentoring is defined as one-t-one relationship in which an expert or a senior person voluntarily gives time to teach, support, and encourage another (Santamaria,2003). The concept of mentoring relates to emotional support and guidance usually given by a mature individual to a younger person called a protégé (Successful managers.com, 2004).

According to Zachary (2002), mentoring passes on knowledge of subjects, facilitates personal development, encourages wise choices, and helps protégé to make transitions. In most literature, mentoring is being examined in relation to individual career development, with the mentor as a friend, career guide, information source, and intellectual guide. Here mentoring is promoted with peers, where those associated with the mentoring relationship is colleagues. The mentor and the mentee (protégé) are in an exchange relationship, each has something of value to offer and to receive. Harnish& Wild (994) posit that participants in peer mentoring have been known to achieve a level of mutual expertise, equality, and empathy frequently absent from traditional mentoring relationships. Mentoring has been identified as an important influence in professional development in both the public and private sector.

Mentoring and leadership competence on performance

The competent leader is that, that can be a mentor to his subordinates. Another definition of a mentor is someone who helps a protégé to learn something that he or she would have learned less well, more slowly, or not at all if left alone (Bell,2000). An incompetent leader cannot play such roles as asserted by Bell, he will rather mislead the protégé and this might affect performance negatively in an organizational setting. Not all mentors are supervisors or managers. But all effective supervisors and managers should be mentors. Mentoring must become that part of every leader's role that has growth as its primary component (Bell, 2000). Quest for growth has challenged most companies, who are now implementing career development in form of training, enhanced mental ability and formal mentoring for the following reasons:

- ® Enhance the competent level of their leaders and managers alike
- ® Help new recruits, trainees to settle into the organization
- ® Enables others to tap knowledge from the experience and expertise and highly competent staff
- ® Increase organizational performance

® Helps bridge the organizational gap between theory and practice.

® Mentoring helps employees plan, develop and manage their careers, become more resilient in times of Change Leadership and management development; leadership competencies, knowledge management, recruitment processes, customer services and others.

Empirical study on performance

The study of Rehman, Rehman, and Zaliad (2011) confirmed that human capital efficiency has significant relationship with financial performance, return on capital employed (ROE) and earnings per share (EPS). In the study, there was indication that one of the important components of strength is the intellectual capital efficiency. This implies that more investment on employees will boost the employees' productivity and as such increase the human capital efficiency of employees. In essence, one can conclude that performance of all organization depends on its human capital development.

The study conducted by Ahangar (2011) shows that performance of company's intellectual capital can explain profitability and productivity. More importantly that the study specifically reveals that human capital efficiency (HCE), physical capital efficiency (PCE) and assets turnover ratio (ATO) significantly influenced the company performance as measured by growth in sales. Furthermore, it also confirmed that human capital was more efficient than structural capital in terms of value creation efficiency.

Theoretical framework on Performance

Three theories abound in this study. They are; Human capital theory, Competence based theories, and Dynamic capabilities theory. But we adopted the human capital theory as the most suitable for this study as it emphasizes on the importance of education and investment of employees and its associated impact on performance.

Human Capital Theory

This theory was proposed by Schultz (1961) and the theory was formally developed by Becker (1964). The theory emanated from labor economics, an aspect of economics discipline. Human capital theory holds that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills. It is also veritable means of raising employees' future income as well as increasing their lifetime earnings. The theory establishes that expenditure on education or training and development is costly, and should be considered as investment. No doubt, investment yields returns such as profits, dividends and interests. Human capital approach is used to explain benefits attached to professional or skilled employees. Human capital theory distinguished between general skills and firm specific skill of human resources. General skills are skills possessed by individuals which provide value to a firm and are transferable across a variety of firms (Barney and Wright, 1997).

Competence Based Theories

The competence based theories of the organization emerged to explain organizational performance through the lens of capabilities competencies, or other organizational specific attributes acquired overtime through tangible or intangible assets at both the individual and collective levels. (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996). These theories seek an integration of economic

views with managerial and behavioural views, and as such competence-based theories include evolutionary theory knowledge based theories, and the resource-based view. This is desirable, because economic, managerial and behavioral theories of the firm fail to consider assets and learning processes at both the individual and organizational levels.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The theory is basically focused on firm's behavioral orientation to constantly integrates, reconfigure, renew and recreate its resources and capabilities, and most importantly upgrade and reconstruct its core capabilities to the changing environment to attain and sustain competitive advantage.

The concept of dynamic capabilities as the ultimate source of competitive advantage is at the forefront of strategy research. The dynamic capability perspective of resources indicates that capabilities need to be evolved and recreated progressively to allow a firm to stand clear of competition over time (Taghian 2010). The approach tends to steer managers toward creating distinctive and difficult-to-imitate advantages and avoiding games with customers and competitors (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). Beyond building organizational capability, stakeholder's perception also indicated that the organisation has to build its capacity to exploit current resources, capability exploitation and engage in capability building (Ahenkora and Adjei, 2012).

Conclusion

Mentoring, mental ability and leadership competence are strong variables that aid organizational performance. This is supported by the Clark (2010) statement "the dimensions of an organizational leader behaviors considered to be associated with successful goal outcomes have included both appropriate collaborative behaviors and transformational leadership. Emotional intelligence has been suggested as a unique area of individual differences that is likely to underpin sets of behaviors in this area".

The study also confirmed high performance by organizational leaders with general mental ability, such leaders have been consistent with high job performance (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004), the area of leadership research has long acknowledged the importance of general mental ability as it contribute to leadership. The mental ability of a leader therefore enhances his competent level.

Performance can be defined according to an organizational achievement in relation to her set goal and objective which could be measured in terms of market share, profitability, and return on investment among others.

Human capital theory holds that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills. It is also veritable means of raising employees' future income as well as increasing their lifetime earnings. The theory establishes that expenditure on education or training and development is costly, and should be considered as investment. The empirical study conducted by Ahangar (2011) shows that performance of company's intellectual capital can explain profitability and productivity.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are made based on the study outcomes:

Organizations irrespective of the cost or time involved on career development of employees should encourage such as it will yield long term positive effect on performance. Competent leaders with high mental ability are expected to mentor others and educate them on the key to their critical success factor for organizational growth and sustainability. Career development should be seen as a continuous process in any Organization. We advise occasional employee motivations as well as all round organizational performance appraisal to determine the performance indices and their contribution.

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