

Commitment to the company



In the organisation that is being discussed a survey showed that the commitment of the organisation is declining, and perceived pressure to work long hours is increasing. In addition, many employees report a lack of organisational support and difficulties in balancing work and home responsibilities.

All these factors can lead to high absenteeism, turnover and the lack of interest to enhance skills and knowledge within the organisation.

A discussion will be put forward to assess the potential causes of these problems, what impact it has upon the organisation and recommendations will be suggested to address these problems.

The organisation is finding that its employees are lacking commitment; this can be caused by lack of job satisfaction and motivation. Employees can feel disconnected with the organisation as they are doing the same thing everyday and they have no real input in how things are done. However, an employee who has responsibility within the organisation and can make decisions without consulting anyone else can feel important and involved within the organisation. This can be resolved by empowerment, this can be defined as “ providing the means by which subordinates can exercise power over their working lives. Whereas delegation might provide the power for a subordinate to carry out specific tasks, empowerment is more all embracing. It implies a degree of self-regulation; the freedom to decide what to do and how to do it” (Lines, 2000: 87). Employees may feel that they have no real commitment to the organisation because they do not have any responsibilities. Empowerment can change that by giving the employee the

perception of having power and input. This can benefit the employee and the organisation because they will feel more motivated and this encourages commitment, risk taking and innovation (Thomas, 1990). Research has shown that empowerment has a radical effect on the way people work, with improved job satisfaction, performance, decreased turnover and enhanced loyalty and commitment. With this, increased motivation and feeling of well being the employee will want to be more involved in the organisation by developing their skills within and producing efficient work.

Thomas (1990) states that if there is an absence of supervision, employees demonstrate flexibility on controlling their own task accomplishment, initiation of new tasks and resilience to obstacles and sustaining motivation in the face of problems. These are signs of motivated behaviour, as they are being trusted to get on with their work on their own and make decisions.

However, there can be some problems with empowerment such as if there are no real guidelines in what the employee can and cannot do. The employee also needs to make it work too by having the desire for increased control, having positive beliefs and trust, the co-operation of others and a willingness to take risks. Without these factors, empowerment can be a complete waste of time and resources. It has also been found that having a strict atmosphere, negative communication with or from management can negatively effect empowerment (Siegal, 2000). These problems can be overcome by having a realistic job preview, job design, training and good communication skills. An additional resource that can be used is focus/discussion groups and employee surveys to find out if empowerment is effective. It is important that employees understand the goals of senior

management and they believe that they can all work together to achieve the same targets in order for them to be willing and able to take empowered actions (Siegal, 2000).

Thomas and Velthouse's model depicted empowerment as based on four cognitions: impact, competence, meaningfulness and choice.

“ Impact was the degree to which behaviour is seen as ‘ making a difference’ in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the task. Competence was the degree to which a person can perform task activities skilfully.

Meaningfulness involves the individual's intrinsic caring about a given task.

Choice involves causal responsibility for a persons actions” (Siegal, 2000: 668). The model shows that the employee must have each of these traits to succeed at being empowered and benefit from it. Effective empowerment requires people to make good decisions about their work, and then take the appropriate actions to carry out those decisions; poor communications and network systems could inhibit empowerment.

From looking at providing employees with empowerment, this will resolve the lack of commitment issue towards the organisation if it is properly planned and executed with the right training and communication. Those who thrive on being in control of their work will benefit from this technique as it gives them a meaning to going to work each day.

Employees needing a balance between their home and work life need to seek flexibility from an organisation so they can deal with their other responsibilities like children and family. This is the case in the organisation as it does not provide its employees with an adequate work-life balance. This

can be defined as “ meeting demands in one domain (e. g. work) makes it difficult to meet demands in the other (e. g. home)” (Beauregard, 2006). This balance is so relevant today because more women participate in the work force which means those employees with children need their employers to be flexible to enable them to deal with their home responsibilities. A CIPD survey showed that more and more people have to juggle responsibilities at home and in the workplace and when employees are asked about work, the two concerns that emerge most frequently are long hours and intensity. (cipd. co. uk)

As the number of dual career families has increased, there is more pressure put upon employers to implement benefits to help employees balance work and family issues. Research has shown that work-life programs enhance morale, attendance, productivity and recruitment (Casper, 2004). Those organisations that offer work-life benefits benefit from their employees feeling as though their employers are concerned about their welfare and are supportive of their needs. “ Perceived organisational support is defined as a global impression employees hold that an organisation values them and cares about their well-being, and is postulated to create social exchange such that perceived support from the organisation enhances organisational attachment” (Casper, 2004: 2). From this, we can see that if an organisation offers support and benefits to its employees, they are more than likely to be able to reduce absenteeism and they feel more appreciated in the workplace. Examples of what employers can offer include career breaks, extended maternity and paternity leave, compressed weeks, reduced hours and job share schemes. The implementation of work-life policies are

regarded as an exercise of culture change (cipd. co. uk). Managers are convinced of the business benefits of adopting a work-life balance as it provides a better culture and produces better results, as the employees are happier and under less pressure from their responsibilities.

There can be some downsides to flexible working from the point of view that those who choose not to take up the option feel as though they are completing the work that others have left so they can balance their home and work life. A feeling of disgruntlement may be felt by those left in the office at six o'clock on a Friday night. However, this can be avoided if proper planning and preparation is carried out before such benefits are offered.

A case study on Lloyds TSB shows how a work-life balance can be achieved in practice. Lloyds TSB introduced a flexible working scheme which enabled its employees to discuss with their manager working schedules that would suit both the company and the employee. They introduced a compressed fortnight where employees could work nine days out of every ten, a question and answer booklet was handed to all employees to make sure that everything was clearly understood and then staff were happy to support the idea. The scheme was designed so that there were no gaps in delivering a good service to its customers and every employee has an important role to play (peoplemanagement. co. uk). With this kind of planning, as demonstrated by Lloyds TSB, offering flexible working can provide employees with job satisfaction and they will feel under less pressure when juggling their home and work responsibilities. With various flexible options it attracts managers and men to take up the offer, not just married women with children. This shows that there are equal feelings between men and

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women that there is a need for more flexible working hours to be available so a better culture can be created with a healthy balance between work and home life.

Another problem within the organisation that is becoming apparent is the culture of working long hours. Working long hours is becoming more common with British employees working some of the longest hours in Europe. A high proportion of UK workers work more than ten hours over and above their contracted hours. This is not an occasional effort to cope with emergencies or peak periods, but rather a regular event (employment-studies.co.uk). National data shows that over a quarter of UK full time employees work in excess of 48 hours per week, which is longer than the Working Time Directive (WTD) weekly working hours limit.

The main reasons for working such long hours are because of work pressure arising from heavier workloads, increasingly demanding customers (in particular increased expectation of 24 hours a day service), greater competition, fewer staff and tighter budgets. Also, managers put pressure on their employees to work long hours to achieve their goals. Employers can implement a long hours culture where it is interpreted that as demonstrating commitment. Job insecurity and individuals feeling the need to prove their indispensability is also an issue for some employees.

Working long hours can have effects on both the organisation and on the individual. In the short term working long hours, it gets the work done in time for any deadlines and deals with any emergencies that need to be seen to. However, in the long term, it can have an effect on employees' health and

well being as well as effecting their satisfaction at work which reflects upon their job performance.

Other impacts on the individual of working long hours include adverse impacts on relationships, families, social lives and community activities and reduced employment opportunities for individuals, particularly those with caring responsibilities who may be unable or unwilling to work long hours.

Employers will face consequences as well as the individual for working long hours such as increased sickness, low morale and high turnover, lower productivity and greater health risks (employment-studies. co. uk).

A survey conducted by the CIPD showed that the main reason for working long hours was workload. The survey also showed that more than one in four respondents reported some sort of negative impact on health, more than two out of five respondents reported a negative impact on their relationships and most respondents reported negative effects on their job performance. A review from the Health and Safety Executive concluded that “ there is some evidence that working long hours can lead to stress or mental ill-health” (cipd. co. uk). From these sources, it shows that there are mainly negative effects that result from working long hours.

Companies need to break the long hours culture by recognising that it is not effective in the long term and look at how it can impact the company. From this they can produce a strategy to break the long working hours culture.

Examples include, ‘ go home on time’ days to raise awareness of the issue, introduce training and development programmes to improve time management and delegation (employment-studies. co. uk). These initiatives

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show that management does not expect employees to get in early and stay at work until late. This reduces the pressure put upon employees and therefore will reduce their stress levels.

The report also shows absenteeism and turnover is increasing, this shows that so much pressure is being put upon the employees that they feel they cannot work and end up leaving the organisation. One of the adverse influences of this is stress. Stress is a source of tension and frustration and can arise through a number of influences, including individual, organisational and environmental factors (Mullins, 1996). A certain amount of stress can be a good thing as it promotes a high level of performance; however, it is also potentially harmful. “ Stress can lead to difficulties in communication and interpersonal relationships and have an adverse effect on morale, performance and effectiveness at work, and health” (Mullins, 1996: 527).

Absenteeism and turnover can be very problematic for any organisation because of the time and cost of replacing staff and covering for them when they are off sick. Companies need to monitor these levels; otherwise, it could become very costly for them. Sickness absence is an issue of growing concern among employers in the UK owing to changing legislation, increased competitive pressures and greater awareness of the costs incurred as a result of absence (cipd. co. uk). A study suggests that between 2 and 16% of annual salary bills may be spent by employers absence. High absenteeism is seen mostly in jobs where there is little skill involved and lack of involvement, this suggests that employees are unmotivated and dissatisfied with their job.

Employees are also unwilling to take up opportunities on training courses because they are not committed to the organisation. This lack of commitment shows that they do not plan on staying with the organisation for very long.

To reduce these problems strategies need to be in place to make employees feel valued and not under pressure to work over their contracted hours. There may be issues to employ more staff to help with heavy workloads, even if it is just on a temporary basis. There will be fewer employees leaving the organisation, less being off sick and also more willingness to go on training courses to enhance their skills.

The organisation needs to address these issues of commitment, long hours, support and the work-life balance otherwise their problems of turnover, training and absenteeism will persist to be a problem. As already stated there are many ways in which the company can resolve these problems.

Employees feel more motivated and have job satisfaction when they have responsibility and are in control of how they go about their work; this is when empowerment becomes effective in an organisation. It provides the employee to make decisions for themselves and feel as though they are a significant member of the team. As research has shown this will also help with the organisations high absenteeism and commitment problems as employees want to come to work as they enjoy what they do.

The work-life balance is becoming more important to employees as they have other commitments outside of work like looking after children and elderly relatives. Organisations need to offer support and offer some kind of

flexible working to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities outside of work. This enables them to feel as though they are being supported by their employer in dealing with both their home and work responsibilities.

The long hours culture has become a major problem in the UK as employers are putting pressure on their employees that results will only be achieved if extra work is put in. This culture also puts the message across that promotion will only be achieved if extra hours are put in at the office. This puts a lot of stress onto employees as they feel as though they need to work an excess of hours to be recognised for doing good work. Those who are unable to stay late or come in early because of other responsibilities feel at a disadvantage as they are unable to work the long hours that is expected. This culture needs to be changed by employers and implemented by the managers and acting by example. Having days where employees have to go on time is just one way to encourage all employees to go home. This change in culture will have an effect on absenteeism and turnover as employees will feel under less pressure.

The absenteeism, high turnover and unwillingness to partake in training courses are all to do with the lack of support from the organisation for the employees' welfare. Once all the above have been attended to then these factors will improve the overall culture within the organisation.

To sum up the organisation needs to be more aware of its employees' needs and provide help and support where necessary. With proper research into what the employees want the organisation will be able to keep its employees

loyal and committed to the organisation as well as avoid creating a culture where long hours is the norm.

These changes would result in the creation of a more loyal, committed and effective team.

Question 2

theories are a means by which we generate expectations about the world; often they are

derived from what we have perceived to have happened before and thus they influence

how we set about future interactions with our world. Moreover, theory is clearly enmeshed in practice since explanation enables prediction which in turn enables control (Gill and Johnson, 2002, pp. 32-33).

The relationship of organization theory, and its subject matter is always problematic. This is because its subject matter consists of knowledgeable beings who are self-aware, aware of others' behaviour and who have the power of sensory perception and are capable of feeling. Because social science theory attempts to understand and explain all aspects of human behaviour, including organizational phenomena, a key issue is that those theories can impact upon and change the very behaviour that constitutes the social scientist's focus precisely because those theories are irrevocably part and parcel of that human domain, they are created by it, they are investigated in it, they are disseminated in it and they can change it!

In contrast, for natural scientists who investigate the behaviour of physical, nonsentient

phenomena, their relationship with those phenomena is not problematic in these

respects. people evidently do have subjective capacities, and they have the ability to attempt

to purposively and self-consciously change their behaviours in the light of knowledge

that has been disseminated to them by social scientists or other people. To put it bluntly,

social science's theoretical analyses and interpretation of human behaviour are constantly

fed back into that which they are about, the social world.

the social world is a domain in which the

same process of theoretical analysis and interpretation also take place, albeit usually

in a less rigorous manner, through the action of what we often refer to as common

sense. Hence, the social world can and does answer back in unpredictable ways

as people make use of theory to conceptualise and explain their experiences.

Of

course, such processes might undermine, enhance or indeed remain indifferent to the

explanatory power of the social science theory.

People can and do read social science theory and in the light of that knowledge,

change what they do. Hence, the double hermeneutic is a notion that has at its

heart the relationship between social science theory and the everyday practices of

human agents. Therefore, Giddens claims, social science

must have an inherently evaluative and normative relationship to social change and development

through its criticism of the taken-for-granted beliefs of actors that are encoded into

and expressed in their everyday social practices.

As we have argued, social scientists' analysis of actors' social practices is constantly

disseminated, into what it is about. Their analyses can therefore

change their subject matter if actors subsequently decide to incorporate those criticisms

within their own understanding and practices. For instance, people might begin

to use social scientists' analyses to understand their own behaviour and that of other

people. In doing so, they might change their own behaviours and attempt to influence

the behaviour of others in particular directions. This

issue has important consequences for a subject such as organization theory.

Not only

does organization theory try to describe and explain the institutional forms that

organizations take, it might also have the effect of being an active agent that participates

in changing and creating those organizational forms through its own dissemination

in, and impact upon, the social world. This paradox is illustrated by Figure 1

Hence, the double hermeneutic raises two sets of issues.

1. The ways in which social science-derived organization theories, through their social dissemination, can influence: the creation, maintenance and development of organizations and the routine practices of their participants; the nature of that membership; the relations between those members (e. g., the various types of managers and their hierarchical relations with different types of subordinates).

2. The ways in which organizational members deploy theory from various sources in understanding and practically developing, maintaining and changing their organizations; the ways in which these everyday social processes and practices exert influence upon the development of social scientists' theories about organizations.

Undoubtedly, it is difficult to separate these two sets of issues because of the reciprocal relationship between social science theory and the social practice processes

those theories are about, as illustrated in Figure 1. Nevertheless, for our purpose

here, the two issues raise significant questions about how organization theory

is developed and how it is communicated to, disseminated to and used by various

organizational audiences. Moreover, it also raises questions about how what is going

on in organizations is made available to organization theorists and for wider public

consumption.

Figure 1: The Double hermeneutic

McAuley. J-Duberley. J & Johnson. P , Organizational Theory, (2007), Pearson Education Limited, P, 19.