

The bahamian work ethic management essay



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I propose to study the work ethic of Bahamian employees as it relates to job performance in the Bahamas Electricity Corporation. My particular interest in this study is because I am an employee of BEC and it is a general belief of the public that work performance is poor and degrading in the company. If this is in fact true, could the performance of these employees be related to how Bahamians believe work performance should be. because this is what they are used to? There could be a way to change the culture of job performance with education and willingness to change.

Work ethic is all about being diligent and hard working at any task assigned. There are not only are those values associated with it, but also knowing that there is a moral gain from it and a sense of improving one's character on the whole. Persons that exhibit a character of hard work and dedication are more likely to get better tasks and promotions wherever they work. And those who do not show a good work ethic are often labeled " lazy" and are said to be making more money which is not equal to the amount of work they are performing.

Some individuals believe that idea of having good work ethic and working hard is a delusion set up to have employees working for harder than they should for their employers. Criticisms about work ethic, like the one mentioned, have always been a part of the work industry. Andre Gorz, a French philosopher, wrote " In actual fact the work ethic has become obsolete. It is no longer true that producing more means working more or that producing more will lead to a better way of life" (1989). However, when an individual is working below minimum or not working at all and if he or she

is fully capable of performing, it causes others to work harder to fill in the productivity gap.

Bahamians have always been associated with “when the spirit moves them” attitude towards work especially in the civil servant sector as opposed to the private sector. In 2007, there was a survey conducted by the Ministry of Tourism entitled “Bahamian Resident Survey” which provided some information stating, “Bahamian workers are perceived to project a lack of work ethics” (Gibbs, 2012). High school students are being prepared now from the 12th grade to be ready for the work force and to perform at their best even when others are not doing so. The focus of this study is to evaluate the relationship that exists between the Bahamian work ethic and work performance. The study will assess documentation in the context of work ethics and employee work performance. By studying this relationship, it will hope to bring some light to this area of study in work performance left untouched in the Bahamas.

Statement of Problem

In order to understand the rationale behind the degrading Bahamian work ethic, its relationship with employee work performance is tested.

Additionally, attitudes and behavior are involved in the process. With the degradation happening as such, customer satisfaction levels are falling and productivity could come an all time low. While addressing the problem in this study, ways to improve job performance and work ethic in Corporations will be looked at.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether an employee's work ethic is related to the way that individual performs on the job. Also, this study hopes to find a difference in the work ethic of age generations in the Corporation. The unit of analysis is the employees by department. The topic and study is particularly important because future generations of Bahamians can benefit from understanding that certain beliefs and attitudes towards general working and employment are unwarranted.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following question will be addressed:

Question 1: Can the work ethic (attitudes and beliefs) of Bahamians be associated with employee performance?

Question 2: What is the Bahamian work ethic?

Question 3: How can work ethic in the Corporation be improved?

Significance of the Problem

This research study needs to be conducted because it can help Bahamian employers to understand how to motivate their employees to perform better on the job in terms of attitude, beliefs and behavior towards work. By getting to the root of the problem with the research results, solutions recommended could help to improve the customer satisfaction levels and the day to day work habits of employees.

Delimitations

With more time, the research study could have encompassed all staff (technical and clerical) of the Bahamas Electricity Corporation, Water and Sewerage Corporation and Bahamas Telecommunication Corporation for a full study of corporations in the Bahamas. Also, there was not enough money in the budget to perform an outer island study for the Family Island branches. The female population, where the sample is being taken, is very low to the males. So this sample will be pre-dominantly males which will only show their prospective on the matter.

Review of Related Literature

On the job performance is evaluated in a number of ways. An assessment of an employee's tasks and how well it is realized is known as a performance appraisal (Rotundo, 2009). This review is planned for the discussion and understanding of the Bahamian attitude towards working and how it relates to work performance.

The link between performance and work ethic

It is believed that there could be links between certain behaviors on the job and how this might prevent good performance from employees just like it would make the performance better (Carter, Murray and Gray, 2011). There are attributes that an employee should have as a part of their individualism such as trust, interpersonal sensitivity, altruism and perspective taking. " Psychological well-being in turn predicts improved job performance and reduced turnover" stated Peterson, Park, Hall and Seligman (2009).

The research offers that few studies have explicitly examined the linkage between HRM practices and service quality. Schneider et al. (1998) proposed that service quality rests on a set of organizational “ foundation issues” that support and facilitate front-line employee service delivery, which include internal service provided by support staff, efforts to remove obstacles to work, and employee participation and training.

Ishak, Mustapha, Mahmud and Afriffin commented on decreased productivity in the workplace stating that, “ The inability to manage and communicate emotions effectively can lead to unresolved and repetitive conflicts among employees and in the long run that can cause severe burnout and diminished productivity” (2008). Many employees do not know how communicate properly and this could be tie to a lost in real work ethics training.

Quality of work and high performance

The majority of studies investigating the outcomes of ethics on employee performance look at the matter from the side of management. In their paper “ Do They See Eye to Eye? Management and Employee Perspectives of High-Performance Work Systems and Influence Processes on Service Quality”, Liao, Toya, Lepak and Hong explore the notion of how different perspectives on service can be between management, employees and even customers of the banking sector.

In their paper ‘ High Performance Work Systems in the Paper Industry’, Parsons and Necochea offer that ‘ Though there is not a single definition, HPWS can be described as work systems that maximize the fit between the

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social (employees and structure) and technology systems. Fit or alignment between employees, technologies, and organizational strategy is seen as a key factor in the competitive advantage of an organization. While this definition and most models seem more easily aligned towards the production sector of industry, the service is no less accounted for as this study demonstrates. The researchers engaged 292 managers, 830 employees, and 1, 772 customers of 91 bank branches.

As mentioned before, perspectives differed between management and line staff and while an issue like having standard operation procedures was important from a management perspective, customers noted a positive experience when line staff appeared to have the latitude to make decisions that was specific to accommodating their needs as opposed to having to follow management guides. Employees felt a degree of empowerment from the same process. This empowerment allowed employees to perform greater and feel better about what tasks they were assigned.

Work ethics history

Wang (2008) summarizes that in earlier decades in the age of Christianity, doing work was looked at as being punishment for doing something wrong. Because of the Reformation Age, people were taught that working was something good and honest to do. Further on, it was told that if you were not doing work, it was a bad idea as opposed to working which was good. It is also understood in China after the change of government to communism, the people were given a cultural boost to ensure that their indoctrinate work ethics would remain and no external forces combat their natural hard

working attitudes to improve China. This same cultural boost can be used in other areas to improve the output of hard workers in the Bahamas.

Bahamian Work Ethic

During the later part of the year, Junkanoo band practices and costume making are taking place. Junkanoo parades take place around Christmas while schools are closed. Bahamians put a lot of effort into competing in these parades for just those two days of the year. Storr (2006) asked the question, “ What does Junkanoo teach Bahamians about themselves and their abilities?.. Certainly, the most important lesson that Bahamians learn from Junkanoo is that success and hard work are inextricably linked” (p. 301). What is being said is that there is no lack of work ethic in the Bahamas, it is just focused in certain areas. The same way the participants in Junkanoo can spend long hours pasting costumes and practicing dancing they can spend performing well on the job.

Research Hypothesis:

H0: Bahamian work ethic is related to employee performance

Ha: Bahamian work ethic is not related to employee performance

Methodology

Participants

During the later half fall season of 2012, 65 employees of the Blue Hills Power Station (BEC) of ages 19 and above will be asked to participate in the study by completing the surveys. The employees at the station are predominantly men and are separated by day and shift works. There are three

departments: Electrical and Mechanical (Day workers) and Operations (Shift workers). Posters will be put up around the station in the respective departments to remind the employees to the study.

Instrument Design

For the purpose of this study, a survey design was chosen as the best instrument for this quantitative study because it can provide trends in behavior and opinions from a sample of the population. The first part of the survey used questions that were taken from the study entitled, " A Chinese Work Ethic in a Global Community" by Victor Wang of California State University. The second part of the survey was created by the researcher to appropriately fit the work lifestyle of the employees at the power station. There are 21 questions in all; with Part 1 headed " Work Ethic" and Part 2 headed " Job Performance". The survey uses a Likert Scale with range from 6 to 1 in Part 1; Six (6) being strongly agree and (1) being strongly disagree. However, in Part 2, Six (6) was changed to strongly disagree and one (1) to strongly agree to prevent participant overlook. Because the items in the survey will assess the content that was used to measure before (survey has been used by different researchers in management and education studies), there will be no need to demonstrate validity except for Part 2 which was created by the researcher. The instrument's reliability of Part 2 will be tested by an alpha of 0. 95, N of participants = 65, N of questions = 21.

Procedures / Data Collection

The letter of consent (in an email) will be sent two weeks ahead of the schedule date for the survey. All of the employees that are willing to participate will reply to the email address given to them. The mechanical and

electrical staff that have agreed to participate will be taken in groups of 5 or 6 to the Mess Hall (Blue Hills Power Station) to be administered the survey. One group a day during the lunch break so that none of the employees are kept from their lunch. For the consenting participants of the Operation department, each of the shifts have a rotation into the 8am to 4pm shift every three days. At this time, the shift team that is on will be asked to accompany the survey administer to the Mess Hall where they will sit and be given pencils to begin filling out the questionnaire. After that shift teams' three days are over, the next shift team taking over the 8am to 4pm shift will be administered the survey and so on until all the shift teams have completed it. All of the participants will be asked by the administers not to hold conversations while filling out the survey.

Data Analysis

Minitab 16 Statistical Software for the Windows operating system will be used to evaluate the data collected for this study. The responses to Part 1 and Part 2 Likert questions of the instrument will be summed up. The mode of each question will be used to find the most frequent response. The best approach to analyze the responses will be to use the Mann Whitney. The Kruskal Wallis test can be used also to analyze the difference in responses from the three departments (Operations, Electrical and Mechanical). Further analysis can be done by converting the responses into two groups of agree and disagree. This way a chi square test can be used to test if the null hypothesis is true. The hypotheses will be tested at a minimum of the .05 level of significance.

Projected Findings

Part 1 (Work Ethic) — Mode

Statements

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

Strongly Disagree

5

12

20

25

8

26

18

15

6

28

1

17

Disagree

5

10

15

15

6

15

12

18

7

18

3

8

Somewhat Disagree

10

5

10

12

10

7

10

12

9

12

5

2

Somewhat Agree

20

15

10

7

10

8

15

10

10

5

11

6

Agree

18

10

8

6

17

8

5

7

20

2

25

18

Strongly Agree

7

15

2

0

14

1

5

3

13

0

20

14

n = 65

Part 2 (Job Performance) — Mode

Statements

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Strongly Disagree

3

1

4

10

7

9

3

0

1

Disagree

5

4

3

4

12

7

2

9

1

Somewhat Disagree

8

16

10

12

14

9

7

4

2

Somewhat Agree

17

11

8

15

16

15

20

14

10

Agree

14

20

22

11

14

20

22

26

18

Strongly Agree

18

12

18

13

2

5

11

12

33

n = 65

Timeline

**Please see attached in Appendices.

Proposed Budget

Cory K. Bain Proposal

Cash Budget

For the month ended December 30 2012

December

Cash Receipts

Allowance

\$500. 00

Total Cash Receipts

\$500. 00

Cash Payments

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Posters

\$15. 00

Papers

\$10. 00

Pencils

\$5. 00

Folders

\$5. 00

Refreshments

\$20. 00

Pens

\$8. 00

Researchers' Salaries

\$300. 00

Total Cash Payments

\$363. 00

Ending Cash Balance

\$137. 00