

The Role of Leadership in Knowledge Management and Information Sharing for Small and Medium Retail Business

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the role of a leader in information sharing and knowledge management within the team of retail stores. It is also trying to identify the mediating role of information sharing and governing role of knowledge management between the leadership and team effectiveness. It is a quantitative research method will be used as data collection instrument

Keywords: Leadership • Knowledge management • Information sharing • Employee motivation • Small and medium business • Teamwork • Team performance • Transformational leadership • Organizational performance and outcome

Background

Leadership is the most important aspect for the organizational progress as it defines goals and objectives to be achieved by following certain leadership strategy. Information sharing and knowledge transfer plays a significant part within the organization for the employee to work with full potential. Leaders who share information within the team is always get benefits from the employee performance. Information sharing can contribute to high quality team performance [1]. In addition to that, knowledge management is the key for organizational success [2]. Thus, it is quite extensive to have information sharing and knowledge management atmosphere within the team for high quality performance.

There are several leadership styles that had been used in literature to resolve issues regarding employee motivation and empowerment. However, for this study transformational leadership has been used because empowering employees, conflict management and organizational success are the three key strengths. Thus, transformational leadership is selected for this study.

Research Problem

Leaders often take the whole responsibility of decision-making process for the organization and deny sharing information with the sub-ordinates. However, in this modern era it is quite impossible to hide information and it is better to provide an open source of information to the employee so that they feel trusted and motivated. Knowledge management is another aspect of leadership strategy which plays crucial role for the employee and organization progress. But there is lack of knowledge transfer within the organizations of small and medium enterprises. Same scenario is visible in the retail industries where the information is not easily shared within the departments as well as there is limited scope of knowledge transfer in the retail stores. There is also very limited communication between the administrative department, operations department and sales department. Thus, there is a need of a communication channel between these departments that will allow the employee to share information as well as transfer the knowledge to other department or team

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Received 18 April 2021; Accepted 17 May 2021; Published 24 May 2021

member for organizational excellence.

Information sharing has not been given much thought where the people work in batches and shifts as the focus of the retail industry is the sales and thus business owners are not worried about resolving team issue and communication gap. In addition to that business owners are not concentrating on knowledge transfer within organization because it requires lot of time and effort. Due to these issues' employee feel demotivated and untrusted and thus they do not perform their work effectively which eventually disturb team perform. This research will try to investigate these problems is trying to identify how can a change in leadership strategy can resolve these problems.

Rationale for the study

This study will provide in-depth analysis on the influence of a leader in the team where information sharing is paramount. It will also try to resolve conflicts which occur due to miscommunication within the team as it will be governed by leader. This study is highly substantial because the retail industry across the world follows a teamwork-based structure and whenever there is teamwork there is need of management. In addition to that it will present the impact of knowledge management practice in the small and medium industry. There are several researches that presented the implication on Knowledge Management practices for large organization but the implication of it in small and medium organization is not quite clear. Furthermore, this research will not only for us on its implication in small and medium in organization, but it will also present as knowledge management practice applied within the team dynamics.

Research Purpose and Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to identify the role of a leader in information sharing and knowledge management within the team of retail stores. It basically tries to understand that how a leader could be able to transform the way of information sharing and how the knowledge could be transferred within the team members. In addition to that it also tries to identify the importance of information sharing and knowledge management within the team effectiveness.

For this research we are going to use transformational leadership as structure and the main objective of the study is to identify the role of transformational leadership in developing an information sharing atmosphere to manage the

team. In addition to that the second objective of the study is how transfer and management of knowledge within the team could be influenced by transformational leadership. Finally, the third objective of the study is to identify that how team performance could be influenced by having information sharing team and knowledge is transfer in the team explicitly.

Research Questions

This research is trying to identify the relationship of transformational leadership with information sharing process and knowledge management with respect to teamwork. Here information sharing and knowledge management plays a mediating role between transformational leadership and team effectiveness. Based on this research aspect the following questions are formulated.

To what extent does the transformational leadership influence knowledge management within the team”?

To what extent does the information sharing make team work effective”?

To what extent does the knowledge management make team work effective”?

Preliminary Review of Literature

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is used in this research because it has high degree of employee involvement. It is linked with employee satisfaction, performance, and commitment towards organization [3]. Transformational leadership is a process that governs and empowers the employee for achieving higher organizational objectives. Transformational leader has high moral value that empowers the employee to work harder for the organization by putting organization first and their goals in the back seat [4]. In addition to that this type of leader are more committed towards employee's satisfaction because they value their employee. Transformational leadership has four dimensions or behavioural components that allow a structure to the leadership approach. The first component is idealized influence where the leader act as a role model for his team and exert a charismatic behavior by setting an example for them [4]. The second attribute is inspirational motivation which is basically leader's ability to provide a shared and clear vision to his employees that they feel challenged, and they have a sense of purpose [3].

Intellectual simulation is another component that deals with challenging employee's problem solving ability and creativity for innovating solutions. The last one is individualized consideration where the leader built a strong relationship with his employee and feels sensitive towards their needs. Because of these abilities transformational leadership is used as structure for our research that will govern the information sharing and knowledge management practices [4].

Information Sharing and team performance

Information sharing is an important aspect of positive team process. It can be defined as deliberate attempt of a team member to exchange work related activity with one another as well as informing them about the key development within the team [1]. In addition to that it is also related with high quality team outcomes. Although information sharing is an important part of team and considered as an input factor, but little is known its importance towards team dynamics. For quality innovation, high level of decision making and creative problem solutions sharing of non-redundant information is a key ingredient [1].

Knowledge Management in SMEs

Knowledge management is one of the most important aspects of the large corporation however it is controversial topic because it takes lot of time, money, and effort to build a knowledge management practice. It is widely used in large corporate but disregarded in small and medium enterprises which is because of the inability to share and transfer of organizational knowledge [5]. It is basically creation, transformation and storage of information used for transferring knowledge to others. It plays a critical role in organization by

providing an ability to learn and utilize organizational resources [6].

Furthermore, it is considered as the most important activity for organizational performance and that is the reason of insisting in knowledge management practice. However, there is several implications of knowledge management practices that may pose threat to legitimacy of this aspect [7].

Hypothesis development

Transformational Leadership, Information Sharing and Knowledge Management

Transformational Leadership (TL) as mention earlier it is a priceless so for this research, we will use TL as the process where it will be used as a process for sharing information. This leadership style deals with empowering employee whereas transforms organizational goals. As mention in the literature there are four component of this leadership style and each component looks after different attribute of leadership. For this research we will examine Inspirational Motivation (IM) and Intellectual Simulation (ITS) for Information Sharing (IFS) and Knowledge Management (KM) respectively. Inspiration motivation deals with stimulating enthusiasm among the employee as well as articulating clear organizational vision to them. For presiding employee with clear vision, it is important to communicate them with proper information and so on this basis it can be concluded that Transformational leadership plays a significant role in information sharing within the team.

Intellectual simulation deals with creativity and innovation within the group and it challenge the employee's creativity and innovative skills. This is the ability of a leader that allows the employee to be more creative while solving problem in a group. Therefore, it can be used as process of knowledge transfer within the group to be more creative and innovative while solving problem in the team. Thus, based on this assumption it can be said that transformational leadership as a process could be used in knowledge management practices.

It is true that the connection of information sharing, and team or group is an age-old topic because where there are more than two people the information is shared and transferred. For this research we are focusing on the relevance, appropriateness and necessity of the information shared within the group. Furthermore, it will also be assessed weather the shared information can enhance the team work.

Here to keep an eye that weather the shared information by any member in the group is relevant, appropriate, and necessary for the team transformational leadership comes into picture. The first component of transformational leadership which is idealized Influence will be used to monitor this aspect because in this part it suggests following the path directed by leader.

Knowledge management is a platform where employee can share information and knowledge for competitiveness and productivity of the employee. For this research knowledge management will be used as process and the knowledge management strategy and operations will be used for governing the relevance, appropriateness and necessity of the information that is shared within the team. It is often mentioned in the literature that knowledge management contributes to team effectiveness, so we are taking this one step ahead by considering the information sharing aspect as discussed earlier.

As discussed, prior that knowledge management will work as a process and transformation leadership will guide this process. It will check the correctness of the information which is shared within the team and guide on utilization of such knowledge. Fader here will assess this appropriateness of this utilization and will take formative and informative decisions. Based on such arrangements role of the transformational will be decided which is unclear now.

Methodology

The research design will be quantitative because of two reasons. The

first reason is that we do not have to rely on participants with the in-depth knowledge of research because at this stage it will be hard to find. However, the participants will be provided with an overview of the research topic so that they could be able to provide relevant answer. The second reason is that with quantitative research approach the outcome of the research can be verified. In addition to that the positivist paradigm will be used for this research so that the outcome could be verified with generalized truth. Survey method will be used as our data collection instrument where employer and employee of the retail store will participate. Two sets of questionnaires will be prepared for employee and employer respectively so that the importance of information sharing, and knowledge management could be identified from two different perspectives. While selecting the target population (sample) it will be our aim to identify those people who will benefit from this research as well as clear about the research objectives. The sampling method used for this research will be probability sampling where every sample will get the equal chance of being included in the research. Finally, Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) will be used to analyze the data collected from the survey for more interactive and statistical analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The research conducted will be safeguarding the proper handling of the participant's information. For this purpose, a confidentiality agreement will be taken from the participants by ensuring that that information provided by them will be used for this research only. In addition to that consent will be taken from the participants in whom they will declare their willingness to participate in this research. Furthermore, participant will also be ensured that the information provided by them will be safe and will not be mishandled. Moreover, while designing the survey it will be considered that the questionnaire is devoid of any personal question that can harm the sentiments of the participants and they were given rights to withdraw at any given time. From the researchers end honesty and integrity is promised. The researcher will ensure that collected data will be true and not manipulated or falsified. The outcomes will not be depended on the presumptions but from the survey results only. Additionally, the researcher will maintain the positive approach during the tenure of the research because it can affect the outcomes of the research.

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How to cite this article: Hassan Shakil Bhatti. "The Role of Leadership in Knowledge Management and Information Sharing for Small and Medium Retail Business." *J Entrepren Organiz Manag* 10 (2021): 308.