
ATTAINMENT OF GOAL THROUGH OUR DIVERSITY IN AN ORGANIZATION**ISHAQ F. MUSA (Ph. D)**

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ABSTRACT

The paper is a discussion and analysis on various diversities that are found in human beings in various organizations. These diversities manifest themselves in terms of ambitions, tribes, religion etc. and their effect on organizational goals attainment. It recommended that our diversities should rather be a strength instead of obstacles to goal attainment.

Key words: goals, diversity, self-efficiency

INTRODUCTION

Every organization be it formal or informal consist of people with different qualities, characteristic, ambitions etc. and organizations or entities have their goals. These differences are referred to as diversity. There is no doubt that they are lots of these differences in every setting.

Goals can be defined as internal representations of desired end state (e.g., outcomes, processes and events. Goals are significant sources of motivation and incentive for action (Lochrane & Tesser, 1999).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this paper is the use of secondary data in other words content analysis of existing literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW**DIVERSITY**

Studies have indicated that matters of goal attainment for any institution be it formal

or informal, diversity is a necessity.

Two school or thought have provided explanations for group diversity. The first is based on social categorization and social identity (Tuner, 1987) and the similarity attraction paradigm (Bryne, 1971). They both argued that diversity will instigate in group-outgroup distinctions and negative social processes, thereby compromising group performance.

The second is based on information and decision-making theories, and their own position is that diversity will provide a broad range of perspectives, skills and insights which can increase the group's creativity and problem solving capabilities, thereby enhancing performance (Cox and Blake, 1991). These two perspectives suggest that there are challenges for managing diverse groups for goal attainment. However, Ely (2001) avers that what is important is to strike a balance by adapting interventions that diminish the detrimental effects of social categorization process without extinguishing the benefits of diversity. These interventions can be in form of policies, rules guidelines and regulations within an organization or institutions.

According to social categorization and social identity theories, membership in any social group provides naturally occurring lines along which conflicts can be drawn. Such conflicts stem from members tendency to establish positive social identity and to confirm good affiliation by showing favouritism towards in group members and behaving in hostile or discriminatory ways towards out-group members (Kramer, 1991). These effects create animosity and disrupt interactions in group composed of people from different social categories.

The similarity attraction theory suggest likewise that people have preference for interacting with similar others and find interactions with similar others easier, positively reenforcing and more desirable compared to interactions with others who are different (Williams and O'Reilly, 1988). The view of this differs from social categorization/social identity paradigm by not positing a hostile stance toward out-group members. Both theories predict that increased diversity on any salient dimension result in group process losses, which in turn leads to group performance loses.

However, diversity have been found to provide a competitive advantage by increasing pool of resources, networks, perspectives, style, knowledge, and insight that people can bring to bear on complex problems as explained by (Cox, 1991 1993; Cox and blake, 1991). Levine and Resnick (1993) also said that it helps in generating conceptual restructuring of ideas and members holding unconventional views can lead groups to consideration of non-obvious alternatives (Nemeth, 1986). Information and

decision-making theories support this. It is inline with this Wanous and Youtz (1986) observed that heterogenous groups are therefore likely to be more creative, make higher quality decisions and perform better than homogenous groups.

GOALS

There has been research related to the complexity of goal types (Fred and Slonik, 2004; Lee and Shular, 1980; Steers, 1976). Goals have been conceptualized in many different ways, for example as objectives (Blan and Mckinley, 1979), evaluation criteria (Tahsik, 1973), effectiveness criteria (Connolly et al, 1980).

Other theories of organization in corporate more explicitly the pursuit of multiple goal types and resulting friction. Stakeholder theory asserts that organizations must find a balance among different stakeholders with differing interest (Connolly et al, 1980).

What are then goals; goals according to Conchrane and Tesser (1996) are significant source of motivation and incentive for action. They are internal representation of desired end state (e.g. outcome, processes, and event).

Goals setting typically refers to cognitive process of identifying or generating the goal. Goal setting is thought to direct attention, stimulate goal planning, and increase effort and persistence (Loke, 1996). Goal striving involves the behavioural steps required to progress towards or attain the goal, for instance, completing task, and monitoring tasks, reviewing goal attainment (Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006).

Goal setting has two aspects i.e goal quality and content. Goal setting, quality refers to a number of goal setting principles incorporate into the process of goal setting. Some of these principles are goal commitment, goal clarity, self-efficacy, goal planning monitoring and feedback (Locke, 1996). Greater goal setting quality is associated with greater goal attainment, and this informs the idea that setting is a vital, and important aspect of an organization.

Goal content is what the goal refers to or what the goal is about. In order to examine the contents of the goal, individual goals are classified across categories and frequency counts for each of the categories are conducted (Schmack and Sheldon, 2001). Questions can then be raised to look at the types of goals people are striving for and the relationship with outcome measures.

FACTORS THAT ENHANCE GOAL ATTAINMENT

Goal theories outline numerous goal setting principles found to enhance goal attainment. These factors include goal difficulty, goal commitment, goal clarity, self-efficiency, goal planning, monitoring and feedback.

Goal difficulty has been found according to Locke and Lathan (1990) to have a linear relationship with level of goal achievement, such that when goals are more difficult, people achieve better results. In order for goal difficulty to result in higher goal achievement, it requires the individual to be committed to the target goal. This conclusion is supported by various studies within organizational context (Yukl and Lathan, 1978). The motivational effects of goal difficulty only expected when goals are personally meaningful and important to the individual (Locke, 1996).

Goal commitment is responsible for moderation of the relationship between goal difficulty and goal attainment. Goal commitment refers to the degree to which a person is attached to and determined to reach the set goal (Locke, 1991). High commitment is attained when (a) the individual is convinced that the goal is important, and (b) the individual equally believes that the goal is attainable. Attainment of goals can also be made possible when goals are clearly specified-goal clarity (Granty and Greene, 2001). This enhances the awareness of the degree of variance between actual performance and required performance. This enables the individual to monitor his/her performance more closely and help gain accurate feedback and adjust his/her performance accordingly.

Enhancement of goal attainment can also be achieved by developing strategies and planning goal pathways.

Strategies development and planning allows pathways for goals to be identified and as such promotes self-efficiency (Bandura, 1986). Planning takes account of steps required to reach the target goal as well as evaluating the cost and benefits of varying goal pathways. Concrete steps are identified in order to meet the longer-term goal.

Self-efficacy has been found to, in the view of Locke (1996) to directly affect performance toward the goal. People with high self-efficacy are more inclined to select difficult goals, have more positive response to setbacks when goal striving. Self-efficacy can be bolstered through encouragement and support.

Monitoring of goal progress and providing feedback on performance has been shown to enhance goal progress (Frost and Mohoney, 1976). Feedback enhances an individual awareness of the discrepancy between actual performance and ideal performance. Feedback mechanism should therefore be phrased constructively a with focus on what was done well, as well as a focus on barriers to attainment specific to the goal rather than global problems with the individual.

Collaboration is important in promoting the attainment amongst diverse groups, by enabling individuals to participate in the goal setting process volition is increased. This

enhances the individual commitment towards the goal and enhances the likelihood for goal attainment (Hollenback and Williams, 1987).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The social context in which the diverse groups operate is important in determining whether diversity is a benefit or liability. The relationship between the diversity and goal attainment may also depend on the particular dimension of diversity under consideration.

The characteristics of work groups or teams also explained the mixed effects of diversity on goal attainment. Shared goals and values among diverse groups members can suppress divisive differences by encouraging members to use the works group as a whole, rather than separate group identities, as the basis for identification and perceived similarities.

The benefits of information and decision-making approach holds a lot of prospect for diverse groups through enhancement of factors that improve goal attainment such as goal difficulty, goal commitment, goal clarity, self-efficacy, goal planning, monitoring and feedback.

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