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Management Planning and Employee Engagement: A Review of Literature

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Abstract:

Management planning is one of the fundamental constructs in management research and several empirical enquiries have been conducted to assess the relationship between it and employee engagement. This study sought to investigate the effect of management planning on employee engagement. A review of extant literature on management planning and employee engagement was conducted and the major finding was that management planning has a direct effect on employee engagement. The research anchored on the Critical planning theory with a focus on small and medium scale organizations. The study recommends that managers should ensure that management planning is done effectively and comprehensively so as to drive employee engagement and ultimately, organizational performance. While it is impractical to involve all employees at all levels of planning, it is recommended that all employees are involved at varying levels of management planning as may be required so they have an opportunity to contribute to plans that will shape the future of their organizations and their respective working conditions. This involvement fosters employee engagement and will in turn enhance employee productivity and organizational performance.

Keywords: Management planning, employee engagement, employee performance, organizational performance

1. Introduction

Due to the continuous and widespread growth of globalisation, it is increasingly obvious that the human capital of an organisation is a major determinant of its success or otherwise (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2013). The planning function of management has also been identified as a major foundation upon which most of the results of an organisation is drawn and this has made it a very significant area to be studied in driving organisational performance and success (Daft, 2014). Every organisation is increasingly realising the essence of planning, engaging and motivating employees to perform excellently at their jobs. However, a lot of organisations still do not often recognise that many employees also want to feel that they are involved positively in something that is so much larger than themselves (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2013). Ensuring that employees are engaged effectively in their respective deliverables has become a major challenge for most business leaders as it has been identified that highly engaged employees will consistently achieve more than their counterparts who are less engaged in their jobs (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002).

Employee engagement has been identified by several scholars as being very pivotal to the success or otherwise of an organisation (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2013). It has also been further identified that organisational performance is largely dependent on management planning and how the planning function of the organisation is managed (Robins & Coutler, 2014). The researcher has observed that small and medium scale enterprises, especially in Ogun state, Nigeria are often owned and managed as a sole proprietorship and from the initial observations, management planning is often regarded as the sole responsibility of these owner-managers and this limits employee participation and engagement.

The nature of most small and medium scale enterprises is as such that management decisions are made usually by the owner-manager without much consultation or involvement of employees. Small scale organisations in Nigeria are considered as the mainstay of the economy and a major source of economic growth, dynamism and flexibility. Nwokoye (1988) defines Small and Medium-Scale business as "any enterprise employing between five and one hundred workers with an annual turnover of about four hundred thousand Naira (N400,000). The Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry defines SMEs as firms with a total investment (excluding cost of land but including capital) of up to N750,000, and paid employment of up to fifty (50) persons. In Nigeria, the Small and Medium Industries Enterprises Investment Scheme (SMIEIS) defines SME as any enterprise with a maximum asset base of N200 million excluding land and working capital and with a number of staff employed not less than 10 or more than 300.

SMEs exist in the form of sole proprietorship and partnership, though some could be registered as limited liability companies and characterized by: simple management structure, informal employer/employee relationship, labour intensive operation, simple technology, fusion of ownership and management and limited access to capital. A research

executed by the Federal Office of Statistics shows that 97% of all businesses in Nigeria employs less than 100 employees, implying that 97% of all businesses in Nigeria are "small businesses". The SME sector provides, on average, 50% of Nigeria's employment and 50% of its industrial output. Indeed, there appears to be an agreement that the development of SMEs in Nigeria is a step towards building a vibrant and diversified economy (Agwu, 2014).

Management planning and employee engagement hence must be well managed for these small scale organisations to thrive as it has been identified that majority of them fail within the first ten years of existence (Agwu, 2014).

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Management Planning

Kools and George (2020) described management planning as 'a deliberative, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why' (Bryson, 2010, p. s256). Although strategic planning in the public sector has been around since the 1970s, it was the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm that fast tracked its adoption by public organizations since the 1990s onwards (George & Desmidt, 2014). The study looked into the necessity of developing public organizations as learning organizations and how strategic planning would impact the overall success of these public organizations. The article focused on a study of Wales which is currently in the idle of an educational reform focused on the implementation of a new school curriculum by September 2022 (Welsh Government, 2017).

Richard Daft (2014) defined management planning as the act of determining goals and defining the means of achieving them. The scholar identified varying levels of plans and goals in an organisation was presented in a pyramid indicating that the identified levels vary in terms of how broad and involving they are. Robins and Coutler (2014) identified a number of reasons why management planning is considered critical to the success of any management. Firstly, they opined that management planning provides direction to managers and non-managers as well. The scholars reported that if all members of an organisation (irrespective of their cadre) have a clear-cut understanding of the goals an organisation is seeking to achieve and what it would take to achieve it, they would cooperate with one another to ensure that the vision is attained. They further identified that members of an organisation will work at cross-purposes if they are not all aligned with respect to what has to be achieved and how to go about it. Secondly, management planning was described as an activity that significantly reduces uncertainty in an organisation. It compels managers to look ahead, make projections, anticipate changes and plan to respond appropriately to these changes as they occur. Planning indeed would not eliminate uncertainty, but it would essentially prepare the organisation for these changes if well drawn and executed. Thirdly, the scholars observed and reported that planning minimises waste and redundancy. This becomes very plausible when work arrangements are drawn around well-laid plans so inefficiencies can be addressed appropriately. In other words, management planning helps to attain and maintain efficiencies in work arrangements. Management planning is hence deployed to identify, correct and or eliminate inefficiencies. Finally, planning is required to set up the standards for another critical management activity called 'controlling'. In other words, without planning there would be nothing to control and measure. This hence means that planning is the most fundamental management function amongst the four identified primary functions of a manager and these are: Planning, organising, leading and controlling.

In essence, none of these listed activities can be successfully executed and measured without adequate and effective planning. The authors identified that numerous studies have researched the concept of management planning and reported the existence of a positive relationship between planning and performance. It was further reported that positive financial reports are largely associated with well-drawn management plans. A positive relationship was also reported between management planning, improved profits, higher return on investments and several other positive organisational success or growth indicators. The major strengths and weaknesses that can be drawn from the definition of Management Planning provided by Daft (2014) are summarily discussed in this section.

Primarily, Daft's (2014) definition of management planning is essentially simple and straightforward. It is easy to recall and also easy to understand. In other words, the definition summarized the essence of management planning in very few words while essentially portraying the primary focus of management planning which is to achieve corporate goals. Another major strength of the definition is that it is essentially focused on how management goals are identified and how they are to be achieved. This hence propounds that management planning is primarily about management goals. The weaknesses observed in the definition include the fact that it comes across as overly simplistic. Its brevity provides grounds for it to have left out other salient constructs that would have further enriched the definition. Also, the definition failed to take into account the varying levels of management planning although he later on discussed these levels while discussing the concept. Summarily, Richard Daft's definition and discussion of management planning can be described as having further enriched the scholarly discussions and body of work in that particular area of study.

Robins and Coulter (2014) defined management planning as an activity that involves defining the organisations goals, establishing strategies for achieving those goals, and developing plans to integrate and coordinate work activities. Management planning is considered to be concerned primarily about the 'what' and 'how' of management.

Both scholars jointly identified that formal planning focuses primarily on specific goals with specific timeframes. The goals have to be written and shared with members of the organisation so as to reduce if not remove completely ambiguity and then create a common sense of purpose regarding what has to be done individually and collectively. Summarily, they are of the opinion that specific plans are drawn with the aim of achieving set goals. Planning is described as the fundamental management function primarily because it is the basis for all other activities' managers engage in. Planning provides the required guide for steps to be taken to achieve stated goals. The authors described management goals as the desired outcomes or targets. They guide management decision and provide the criteria to measure

performance. These often include resource allocation, schedules and all other necessary actions to attain set goals. In essence, as managers plan, they develop goals as well. The scholars hence are of the opinion that management planning cannot be discussed without understanding goals and the various types of goals that can be identified.

It is also pertinent that we review the kind of plans that exist as reported by the scholars. They largely adopted the classification of plans into the two broad categories of strategic and operational. They went further to state that strategic plans are usually with much longer terms and time frames than operational plans. Strategic plans are also described to be those that apply to the entire organization and actually affects all parts of the organisation's activities. They are also described as directional and single use. Operational management plans are however referred to as short-term, specific and standing. The compositions of the two classes of management plans can be further described in terms of the kind of activities they span. Strategic plans generally apply to the overall goals of an organisation. This has to be aligned with the vision and mission statements of the organisation. Operational plans that however focus on a particular area of operation or activities in an organisation are referred to as operational plans. They observed that long term plans used to be anything over seven years but with recent fast pace of environmental changes, this has been reduced. Long term has now been shortened to three years and above. Short term plans however span the period of one year or less.

The scholars also drew a distinction between specific and directional plans. Specific plans are those that leave no space for ambiguities or misunderstandings. It was however noted that when there is a high possibility of unexpected changes, directional plans become preferable. These are more flexible and can be adapted to varying changes both in the external and internal environment of an organisation. In other words, the major advantage of specific plans is that they are precise and leave no room for ambiguities. The major weakness however is that they are not flexible enough to adapt to spontaneous changes. For directional plans, it was identified that the major advantage is that it can be applied generally to a broader scope of organisational operations and also that it can be adapted easily in the face of changes in the external and internal environments of the organisation.

The scholars also drew a distinction between single-use plans and standing plans. Single use plans are one-time plans specifically designed to meet the needs of a particular situation. Standing plans however are usually on-going plans that provide guidance for activities that have become a routine and are hence often repeated.

Robins and Coulter (2014) also reported that in cases where it appears as if formal planning did not provide desired results, it is also usually identified that environmental factors that are beyond the control of the organisation are usually at play. Such environmental or external forces include governmental policies, market forces and technological change. The scholars however also described the fact that planning and time frames have to be properly considered before the impact of planning is considered in an organisation. The scholars also opined that it usually takes an average period of four years of formal planning before significant positive results are identified in the overall performance of an organisation. Robins and Coutler (2014) further described the process of developing management plans in their discussions on the concept of management planning. They also identified that the processes are influenced by three contingency factors and by the planning approach followed.

The three contingency factors that impact management planning process are: organisational level, degree of environmental uncertainty, and length of future commitments. Low level managers were observed to design and execute operational plans while upper-level managers orchestrate strategic planning.

The second contingency variable is environmental uncertainty. It was reported that when uncertainty is high, plans should be more specific however also flexible.

The time frame assigned to plans forms the final or third contingency factor or variable. The commitment concept states that plans should extend far enough to cater for commitments made at the point when the plans are made.

Robins and Coutler (2014) provided a relatively robust and encompassing definition of the concept of management planning. The definition identified a number of constructs that indeed make it relatively robust and comprehensive. The identified constructs in the definition are organisational goals, goal achievement strategies, integration and coordination of work activities. The definition shows that management planning is about establishing and achieving slated goals. The scholars also went further to enrich this description by identifying various stages and approaches to planning, different levels of goals and approaches to goal setting. This provides another major strength in that it has significantly added to the body of management knowledge and practice. Another major advantage is that the perspective can be applied to all types of management planning and is not limited to any particular kind or approach of planning. The scholars also considered the impact of environmental contingencies on management planning.

Williams (2015) defined management planning as "choosing a goal and developing a method or strategy to achieve that goal. He is also credited for describing management planning as a 'two-edged sword' that brings immense increases in individual and organisational performance if properly designed and executed.

The scholar considered planning as an activity that is at the centre of the primary functions of management. He is also credited for describing management planning as a 'two-edged sword'.

L. Jesseviciute-Ufartiene (2014) conducted a study on the importance of upper-level management planning in developing an organization and keeping it afloat in a dynamic environment. The study reported that the development and sustenance of an organization depends largely on the kind of future creation actions which is primarily what we describe as "management planning". The author executed an empirical quantitative research which studied Lithuanian top managers who confirmed the significance of planning and importance of decisions made during planning for the management and development of the organization. The scholar identified that every step of development is involved with future creation actions of organization. The study quoted Rac (1990) who defined management planning as "one of the twelve future creation actions in an organization". Drucker (1993) was also quoted to have opined that the core of a manager's business must be planning. The research methods involved the use of questionnaires and a scientific review of

literature in the field of planning and organizational development. The scholar used a research sample size calculator to arrive at the population sample size of 96 respondents although 113 filled questionnaires were eventually gathered. The concepts of organizational development were also studied and compared with the concept of self-development which was compared with mind activity of managers. The scholar traced the literature of management planning and organizational development as far back as Aristotle and Plato and all the way down to Drucker (1993) and Mintzberg (2001) while ascertaining that all the scholars agreed that management planning seeks to create the desired future for organizations.

The paper further identified and reported that managers employ pure-thinking, experience of management, mind activity, awareness of process in making plans.

The scholar reported that there was a significant correlation between planning and mind activity and development of an organization. There however was no correlation between research's propositions of development and propositions of planning. An assumption was however made that the reason for the result might be that managers do not relate planning with development directly while they also do not deny the significance of planning to development of organizations. Other concepts like self-confidence of the manager, ability to self-actualize, usage of facts and theoretical knowledge were considered in relation to management planning.

In conclusion, the study reported that management planning is based on managers ability to use his/her mind effectively. In other words, a manager who is focused on developing his/her mind activity could find it easier to influence improvement and development of his/her employees' individuality and this would bring about an improvement and development of an organization. The study of Raine Mantysalo (2002) who carried out an empirical research work on the applicability of the Critical Planning theory is also reviewed primary because it focused on an empirical study of a theory in planning. In his study, it was reported that Critical Planning theory is inadequate as a planning theory. Mantysalo further opined that the critical planning theory should be enriched to incorporate the principles of legitimate planning argumentation derived from Habermas's Social theory if it would be applicable to address planning practices and challenges.

2.2. Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement is of major importance and concern to managers in organizations all over the world primarily because it impacts organizational effectiveness, innovation and competitiveness (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2013). The concept can be traced to have evolved from academic research though it was largely a management consulting issue as far back as 1990. The concept has however begun to attract great attention over the years.

The concept is however difficult to define and outline in scope and usually, various studies on employee engagement consider the concepts from varying perspectives. This hence has prevented the concept from having a universally acceptable definition and measurement.

This paper examined several definitions of employee engagement and an attempt was made to arrange the various definitions in a chronological order, beginning with the earliest definitions. This will also provide a platform for the understanding of the concept.

Bedarkar & Pandita, 2013 further described employee engagement as a concept that emanated from role theory. They described it as the "spontaneous involvement in the role and the visible investment of attention and muscular effort". Katz and Kahn (1966) focused on employees need of employees to engage in their work and other organisations. They also associated this concept with organisational effectiveness. The scholars further identified three major conditions in explaining the concept of engagement and these are psychological safety, psychological meaningfulness, and psychological availability. Csikszentmihalyi (1982) expressed employee engagement as a flow concept, wherein flow is a holistic sensation which employees experience when they are totally involved in their work. W.A. Kahn, is considered as an academic parent of the employee engagement movement, developed the concept of 'personal engagement'. In his work, he defines personal work engagement as the "harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally, during role performances".

Both Goffman and Khan observed that employees do not apply themselves to their roles in the same way, hence there is a variation in employee engagement ranging from one employee to another even when the jobs are intrinsically the same. Thus, Kahn's definition of employee engagement suggests that employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct. Kahn claims that the more of ourselves we give to a role, the more exciting and comfortable is our performance. Robinson, Perryman and Hayday ((2004) defined engagement as one step ahead of commitment. They described employee engagement as a positive attitude of employees towards their organisation and its values, wherein employees have awareness of business context and work to improve job and organizational effectiveness. Their study considered the concept from the two-way nature of employee engagement.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) coined the term 'job engagement' and further, defined it as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption". Thus, engagement is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. Hewitt (2004) developed an 18-item scale to measure employee engagement. It defines engagement as "the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organisation or group, as measured by three primary behaviours: Say (Employees speak positively about the organisation to others inside and out), Stay (Employees display an intense desire to be a member of the organisation) and Strive (Employees exert extra effort and engage in behaviours that contribute to business success)." Engaged employees exhibit these three behaviours, namely Say, Stay and Strive.

Saks (2006) extended the concept of employee engagement to include two important aspects, job engagement and organisation engagement. It is widely believed that his work restored employee engagement as a serious construct. Fleming and Asplund (2007) of Gallup, in their book, titled 'Human Sigma: Managing Employee-Customer Encounter'

define employee engagement as “the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of your employees to instill an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence.” They further point out that engaged employees want their organization to succeed because they feel connected emotionally, socially, and even spiritually to its mission, vision, and purpose.

Mani (2011) predicted four drivers of Employee Engagement and these are employee welfare, empowerment, employee growth and interpersonal relationships. Sejit (2006) identified 10 Cs of Employee Engagement and these are connected, clarity, convey, congratulate, contribute, control, collaborate, credibility and confidence.

The top five global engagement drivers identified by Bedarkar and Pandita (2013) were career opportunities, brand alignment, recognition, people/HR practices, and organization reputation. Through the economic downturn and into the recovery, employees are more concerned about what the company stands for and the consistency between the stated employer value proposition and the day-to-day reality of work. Brand alignment and recognition were also top global drivers in 2009, with pay and managing performance in 2009 being replaced with people/HR practices— and organizational reputation in 2010. Across the regions, the top two drivers—career opportunities and brand alignment— have remained consistent.

2.3. Management Planning and Employee Engagement

This research work is grounded on the agency theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). The theory anchors the basis of this research work on management planning and employee engagement. The agency theory describes the relationship between two or more parties, in which one party, designated as the principal, engages another party, designated as the agent, to perform some task on behalf of the principal. The theory assumes that once principals delegate authority to agents, they often have problems controlling them, because agents’ goals often differ from their own and because agents often have better information about their capacity and activities than do principals. The key question of the principal-agent framework is, ‘How does one empower an agent to fulfil the needs of the principal, while at the same time constraining the agent from shirking on their responsibilities?’

In strategic planning, agency theory seeks to explain the relationship between agents and principals in reaching a decision or formulating a corporate plan.

Organizations are hence considered from the perspective of all players falling into the categorization of either being an agent or a principal.

In other words, it is considered that parts of the organization make the decisions that are binding on other parts of an organization. This hence provides that not all parts or players in an organization are involved in planning and decision making.

Several scholars have reviewed the relationship between management planning and employee engagement and a positive correlation is often discovered and reported. Gulzar and Durrani (2014) reported a positive and significant correlation between succession planning (a type of management planning) and employee engagement. Their research was conducted in the telecommunication industry in Pakistan. The scholars reported that if the management effectively conducts succession planning, employees will show more engagement to their respective jobs and organization and this will in turn positively influence their performance.

Conkright (2015) carried out a research on the four functions of management for sustainable employee engagement. A positive correlation was also recorded between planning and employee engagement with the focus being on vision-casting, identifying goals, objectives, values and overall strategies.

TABLE 1 THE FOUR FUNCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT AS A MODEL FOR SUSTAINING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT		
MANAGEMENT FUNCTION	FOCUS	ENGAGEMENT IMPACT
Planning	Vision-casting, identifying goals, objectives, values, overall strategy	Defining engagement and associated terminology, determining the organizational culture aspects of engagement
Organizing	Resource allocation, functional impacts, multilevel factors, tactical actions	Creating a cross-functional team to explore and determine engagement scheme, subcommittees and functional task forces, implementation plan, communication, and leadership development
Leading	Leadership competencies, strategic and tactical behaviors, motivational activities	Identifying leadership competencies that promote the engagement culture, training leaders, and building accountability process
Controlling	What and how to measure plans, interpreting qualitative and quantitative data, responding to feedback	Identifying key performance indicators for engagement, collecting qualitative and quantitative engagement feedback, creating process for continuous evaluation and adjustment of engagement strategy

Table 1: Four Functions of Management as a Model for Sustaining Employee Engagement

Conkright (2015) submitted that the keys to sustaining employee engagement come directly from the management functions identified by Fayol a century ago. It begins with planning a culturally relevant program and ensuring that there is system-wide implementation with functional representation. It requires well-trained and accountable leadership, continuous measurement, and adjusting to the internal and external conditions that put employee engagement at risk.

Bedarkar and Pandita (2013) studied the drivers of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. The researchers identified that employee engagement significantly impacts employee performance. The scholars looked at businesses of all sizes and reviewed how various Human Resources Management systems (which also includes management planning) impact employee engagement and productivity. In other words, it was observed that HR management functions which also includes human capital planning significantly impacts employee engagement and this in turn affects employee performance.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted by systematically reviewing literature; various studies that discussed management planning and employee engagement were reviewed. Relevant materials such as textbooks Journals and other official documents both in prints and electronic copies were widely consulted.

4. Findings and Discussions

Understanding how management planning and affects employee engagement is of strategic importance to the management of any institution or organization in that employee engagement has been found to play a major part in organizational performance, organizational effectiveness and overall growth for the organization. The findings from this study show that when management planning is effectively done and employees are involved at some stages of the planning, employee engagement is fostered within the organization.

The findings from this study show that management planning process must be effectively designed and executed to ensure that employees are carried along and are involved in making plans that have direct impact on their jobs or working conditions. An in-depth understanding of the concept management planning is a major step towards the enhancement of employee engagement within an organization.

Employee involvement in planning was identified as one of the drivers of employee engagement and this hence implies that business owners and managers should ensure that employees are given a degree of involvement in planning as this has been reported to further enhance their job and work engagement. Also, a well-defined and established planning process in an organization assures employees that their employers have plans that will sustain the organization and by extension, their respective jobs and this will enhance employee engagement and would also lead to improved performance.

To further improve employee engagement, attention should be paid to how plans are made and how much employees would participate in varying planning processes (Conkright, 2015; Bedarkar and Pandita, 2013; Gulzar and Durrani, 2014)

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Findings from this study posit that that management planning affects employee engagement. This supports the results of several researches conducted on management planning and employee engagement. This study however draws attention to the employee engagement of workers in small and medium scale enterprises in Ogun state, Nigeria. The study concludes involving employees in varying levels of planning (as may be required) can be used to boost employee engagement of workers in small scale enterprises in Ogun state, Nigeria. By involving the workers in the process of planning, employees will feel more valued and this will also enhance their understanding of management decisions since they were involved in the planning process at some varying levels as may be required. Employee participation in management planning also stimulates employee's work. Similarly, mutually drawn plans will cause employees to be more engaged in the execution of the plans as against when plans are only drawn by business owners and handed down to employees to run with.

Small and medium scale organizations as earlier identified are characterized by a relatively small workforce of between 5 – 50 employees (Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry) and it will be impractical to involve all employees at all levels of management planning. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs and business managers should create varying levels of planning across various strata of the organization so various categories of employees can be involved in various levels of planning within the organization. This will significantly affect employees' sense of belonging positively and would also enhance their engagement with their organization and by extension lead to improved organizational performance.

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