

Organization Development Intervention (ODI) on Work Practices in Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Gitwe, Ruhango District, Rwanda, East Africa Community

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Abstract

Work practices are a fact of Institution life and it is the attitude to perform that can make the difference between success and failure. To maintain a competitive edge today, an Institution will need to actively embrace performance and even competition. This study aimed to emphasize on the implementation of interventions in ISPG employees to find out their role and the impact on quality education.

***Methodology:** A total number of 50 participants of ISPG who were able to read and to understand English were selected using purposive sampling technique, research questionnaire was administered to them for quantitative information and informal interview for qualitative. The data analysis was done using descriptive statistics in the pre-intervention and inferential statistics paired t-test comparative for the post intervention with IBM SPSS version 20. The value of a paired t-test and corresponding p-value were obtained at alpha level of significance 0.05.*

***Results:** The results of the pre intervention assessment formed the basis of interventions conducted from June 20th, 2013 to December 20th, 2013 which include customer satisfaction ($P = 0.03$), staff motivation ($P = 0.005$), communication within ISPG ($P = 0.002$), teamwork and quality service ($P = 0.001$), commitment of all employees ($P = 0.049$), interpersonal relationship and mutual respect ($P = 0.020$), and conflict management ($P = 0.005$).*

***Conclusion:** The findings of this study showed that there is a significant difference on work practices within ISPG before and after interventions; for a sustainable improvement a strict follow up using the given program is highly recommended.*

Key Words: Intervention, Work practices, Performance, Sustainable, improvement

Introduction

Historical Background of ISPG

Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Gitwe (ISPG) is a higher learning institution operating since 1993. ISPG was created by the “Association Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Gitwe” (A.I.S.P.G) motivated by a parent’s association named Gitwe Adventist Parents’ Association (GAPA) located in Ruhango District, Southern Province. As there wasn’t any Higher Learning Institution around, the students finishing secondary schools had to go elsewhere to pursue their higher studies, and considering the needs and wants of the population living in that district, the idea to create ISPG was found necessary by the mentioned above Association in 1993. Since that year ISPG ran its education activities, but temporary closed in 1994 because of the genocide and reopened in 1997 with two Faculties (Nursing Science and Human Biology).

Firstly, GAPA put in place Gitwe Adventist Parents' Association Secondary School in 1981, ISPG in 1993, and Gitwe Hospital in 1997. ISPG got the provisional license from the Government of Rwanda during its Cabinet Session of 2nd October, 2002 and received its full accreditation or definitive operation license and degrees awarding power in the Cabinet Session of May 11th, 2011.

Furthermore, ISPG is the only one private Institution in all the country where the Faculty of Medicine is running since September, 2013. The idea of opening the Faculty of Medicine was drawn from the already existing Faculty of Human Biology (H.B), because of the shortage of Medical Doctors from the available Health Higher Learning Institutions in the country and with increasing population growth which is currently at 3% per year (Ministry of Health, 2014). The ratio of one Rwandan physician to the number of patients is nowadays 1:10,000 to 30,000 people which is very high; so the creation of the Faculty of Medicine in Private Higher Learning Institution like ISPG was a potential necessity in order to help the Government of Rwanda to solve this crucial and real problem and to enhance the community health in particular. ISPG trains students according to the philosophy based on Seventh - day Adventist beliefs and teachings that God is the only Authority and final source of true knowledge; that God is the only Omniscient, Omnipotent, Creator and Almighty (Spring, 2006). In this regard, the ISPG students must have obedience, honesty, prayer, physical, spiritual and intellectual rest so that they may play role models towards their colleagues. Starting with two faculties, nowadays ISPG has five faculties (Nursing Science, Medical Laboratory and Technology, Computer Sciences, Education, Medicine and Surgery)

Statement of the Problem within ISPG

It was from 2008 that ISPG experienced the stagnation in number of students due to the fact that it has been recruited and put in place the weak personnel occupying the sensitive places, without sense of obedience and without sense of respect either the students or our stakeholders and our partners, especially no mutual respect to the academic and administrative staff. Some members of staff complained of being mistreated by their coworkers but in vain.

In addition, SPG faced to a strong competition of new established High Learning Institutions (HLIs) and it had been known a slow speed in growing of its revenues as reflected in its financial statements resulting sometimes in annual reports.

ISPG as an educational organization is serving a large number of people so requires a committed staff with a culture of obedience, mutual respect between ISPG employees and students. This kind of discipline in work practices can be reflective through positive criticism which is not only intentionally encouraged, but also espoused in this time of competition. The spirit of teamwork, commitment of all employees, staff motivation and effective communication of employees should play a role of increasing intake, automatically institution's revenues increased.

Reducing the spirit of conflicts by innovative ways of handling them, and good employees' perceptions on how the work practices affect their ability to do their jobs; this not only makes people more motivated, but also stopping the departure of strong and right people, and consequently improve students' satisfaction where new intake enrollment will be increased for the next year and this for helping institution to facing the mentioned above problem of revenues.

The research pursued to implement Organization Development Intervention on work practices in ISPG before and after implementation of the planned interventions in terms of customer satisfaction, staff motivation, communication within ISPG, teamwork and quality service, commitment of all employees, interpersonal relationship, and mutual respect, conflict management. It sought mainly to the following hypothesis: there is no significant difference on work practices within ISPG before and after organizational development interventions. The purpose of this study was to emphasize on the implementation of work practices in ISPG on its employees in order to find out the role of employee work performance and its impact in quality education.

Materials and Methods

The study used the descriptive comparative survey method. The said method used the means in pre assessment and post evaluation data targeting to see the effects of ODIs on work practices in ISPG. The researcher also conducted an informal interview in order to gather the data that supported qualitative side of the study. This research was conducted in ISPG a Higher Learning Institution located in Gitwe, Ruhango District, Southern Province in Rwanda, East Africa. A total number of fifty respondents were chosen by purposive sampling techniques. This included a Rector, 19 administrative, and 30 academic staff. These fifty respondents were able to speak English

Data processing and Analysis

The results of the pre-assessment and post evaluation were compared. After this comparison the researcher would enumerate the transformation indicators. To facilitate interpretation of data gathered the means were used in the pre and post intervention evaluations data in order to assess the performance of work practices in ISPG.

Paired t - Test was used to compare the means of the pre and post intervention evaluation scores for a significant difference. This test compares the means of two samples. Paired t - Test uses means and standard deviations of two samples to make a comparison

Results

The table 1 shows the results and levels of comparison of the means before and after the ODIs. The p-values obtained in the seven areas were all below 0.05, therefore showing significant differences at alpha level of 0.05. On the basis of this evidence the null hypothesis was rejected like there was confirmed that the OD Interventions had a significant impact in the transformation of the work practices of ISPG.

Table 1: Comparison of data before and after Organization Development Interventions

Items	Mean before ODI	Mean after ODI	Paired t-value	P-value
1.Customer Satisfaction	3.72	4.14	6.407	0.003
2.Staff Motivation	2.94	3.15	5.541	0.005
3.Communication within ISPG	3.73	4.14	6.815	0.002
4.Teamwork and Quality Service	3.28	3.73	9.142	0.001
5.Commitment of all Employees	3.48	3.78	2.800	0.049
6.Interrelationship, and mutual respect	3.40	3.66	3.746	0.020
7.Conflict Management	2.85	3.34	5.520	0.005

Customer Satisfaction

The profile on the ratings on customer satisfaction showed an improvement from 3.72 to 4.14 ($t = 6.407$, $p = 0.003$). This means that there was statistically significant difference between the ratings obtained before and after the ODI assessments and the null hypothesis was rejected. The change was the result of participation of respondents in the seminar on customer satisfaction focusing on how and why to understand well the specific needs of students, considering the feedback of clients/customers in the spirit of delivering a quality service at the end this approves that the OD Interventions were operative.

Staff Motivation

The profile on the ratings on staff motivation showed also an improvement from 2.94 to 3.15 ($t = 5.541$, $P = 0.005$). These results show a statistically significant difference between the ratings obtained before and after ODI assessment on staff motivation. The change was due to the increasing of salaries given at different levels to all employees, to good physical working conditions offered to academic staff and to flexibility of top management to employees for getting a leave as programmed by the responsible of the concerned service all those things confirm that the ODI were operative.

Communication within ISPG

The profile on the ratings on communication within ISPG showed an improvement from 3.73 to 4.14 ($t = 6.815$, $P = 0.002$). The P-value was below 0.05 confirming that there was a statistically significant difference between the ratings obtained before and after ODI the null hypothesis was rejected. The change was due to the daily morning staff with many meetings composed by academic and administrative staff. The face to face meetings involving everyone in the system were productive and confirm that the ODI were effective.

Teamwork and Quality Service

The profile on the ratings on teamwork and quality service showed an improvement from 3.28 to 3.73 ($t = 9.142$, $P = 0.001$). This confirms that there was a statistically significant difference between the ratings obtained before and after ODI and the null hypothesis was rejected. The change was due to the conducted lecture meetings on the role and importance on supportive teamwork and gaining throughout them also the good understanding of ISPG vision-mission-goals.

Commitment of all employees

The profile on the ratings on commitment of all employees showed an improvement from 3.48 to 3.78 ($t = 2.800$, $p = 0.049$). The results confirm that there was a significance difference between the ratings obtained before and after ODI and the null hypothesis was rejected. The change was due to the change of ISPG management behavior towards the employees by considering each of them and considering the feedback from them and from customers this implies the involvement of employees in the process of developing the Institution where increased level of commitment of all employees.

Interpersonal relationship and mutual respect

The profile on the ratings on interpersonal relationship, and mutual respect showed an improvement from 3.40 to 3.66 ($t = 3.746$, $P = 0.020$). The p-value was below 0.05 confirming that there was a statistically significance difference between the ratings obtained before and after ODI and the null hypothesis was rejected. The change was due to the departure of some weak employees occupying the right positions, reduction of the ambitious influence observed on some workers which automatically brought a real increasing of interpersonal relationship, and mutual respect within ISPG. The morning staff prayer, the studies based on the word of God played also a great and positive role, so confirmation that the ODI were operative.

Conflict Management

The profile on the ratings on conflict management show an improvement from 2.85 to 3.34 ($t = 5.520$, $P = 0.005$). The p-value was below 0.05 confirming that there was a statistically significance difference between the ratings obtained before and after ODI and the null hypothesis was rejected

Discussion

Considering the analysis, it can be seen that there were significant improvements in all areas identified in the organization analysis. Consequently, the problems were resolved by the interventions which put in place the following transformation indicators.

Customer satisfaction skills improved significantly as now we understand the specific needs of our customers like students; we deliver our teachings/services on-time to our students; focusing on delivering high quality teaching/services; our teachings meet our customers' expectations as fitting with phase action research cyclical process of Susman and Evered (1978): diagnosing, taking, planning, and evaluating activities. Emery (2001) remarked that customer satisfaction directly correlates to larger enrollments: Happy students stay in school, so retention rates remain high; happy students inform their high-school friends, so new recruitment of students is higher; more students mean more tuition fees, and thus more revenues for the institution. According to Robbins, Stephen, and Mary (2001) employees feel happy when they are more motivated towards their work. A certain improvement of benefits and opportunities provided by ISPG, salaries increased a little bit, physical conditions of teachers improved, and annual leaves accorded to the employees following the given schedule of each service. Introducing a small change and the ratings somehow increased; so the ISPG management has to take a great attention on the staff motivation in order to improve the work practices for their employees within institution.

Our face-to-face meetings were so productive and by involving everybody in the activities of ISPG and considering the feedback from the stakeholders/Customers the results were necessary improved and enhanced the communication within it, consequently increasing the work practices.

Nowadays the teamwork and quality service in ISPG is encouraged and supported by the institution management and from correcting previous mistakes made by placing the right persons on their right positions, the mutual understanding has been redressed and automatically the teamwork among the employees enhanced. The supportive teamwork is now observable between employees and administrative staff. Robbins, Stephen, and Mary (2001) confirmed that teamwork is one of the important reasons for job satisfaction.

ISPG is committed to helping employees develop and grow morale and ratings of the respondents' perception show that there is an improvement on commitment of all employees but it must be stimulated and enhanced by considering their contribution in the development of the Institution. The establishment of good communication, teamwork and conflicts resolved implies the increasing of commitment of employees, because of feeling unstressed and esteemed within organization

The flexibility to meet the needs of ISPG employees, the fact that the hostile attitude of some employees towards their coworkers has been reduced, and spirit of supporting each other's ideas and professional goals increased in; you can observe now within ISPG the good relationship, mutual respect and sociability increased. The fact that there is no influence of the mentioned weak people who disturb the good functioning and often provoke the misunderstanding between individuals, and with the lecture meetings on this subject the spirit of good relationship plus mutual respect improve obviously.

As mentioned above, by increasing the mutual relationship between employees and managing well the conflicts in resolving and handling them constructively within ISPG using the new ways of approaching people, we can say that moody of conflict in groups or in services was reduced; so employees can seat and resolve their problems in mutual respect and the face to face meetings together with the morning staff prayers will continue to contribute in solving of conflict in this organization.

Employee work performance is one of the most important factors within institution for maintaining and increasing quality education (Douglas, 2012). Some of the most common responsibilities of supervisors are to delegate the work, and to give information or advice to subordinates. In acknowledging that it is the duty of supervisors to ensure that employee work performance is at maximum potential, it would be advantageous for managers in ISPG to understand what types of employee supervisor interactions are associated with employee work performance. Knowledge regarding the possible association between supervisor-employee relationship and work performance would enable the implementation of more effective systems for good management, and subsequently, better quality teaching and service for the institution through increased work performance (Justin, 2011). According to Suhartini (1995) employee performance is a mutual result of effort, ability, and perception of tasks. Good work performance is step towards the achievement of organizational aims.

Robbins, Stephen, and Mary (2001) said that when employees feel happy about their compensation, they are more motivated towards their work and the performance of the institution also boosts.

Many measures purport that employee satisfaction is a factor in employee motivation, employee goal achievement, and positive employee morale in the workplace. Employee satisfaction is looked at in areas such as: management, understanding of mission, vision, empowerment, teamwork, communication, and coworker interaction. Furthermore, the administration of the ISPG must monitor the work practices of its employees regularly as a part of their daily duties. Effective managers monitor work practices on an ongoing basis to identify and correct performance issues as they occur, rather than waiting for the annual performance review to provide negative feedback without taking steps to improve performance.

Factors contributing to employee satisfaction include treating employees with respect, providing regular employee recognition, empowering employees, offering above institution-average benefits and compensation, providing employee concerned and Institution's activities, and positive management within a success framework of goals, measurements, and expectations. Satisfied employees tend to be more productive, creative and committed to their employers, and recent studies have shown a direct correlation between staff satisfaction and work practices.

Competition is now the order of the day, and institutions that do not keep up to date will simply disappear. Only the Institutions which are innovative, creative, and manifest the spirit of performing their teachers will survive. Employees can use it as a clear indication of what is expected to them, and then as a feedback of how well they did.

Employee satisfaction is considered as one of institutional primary motivators in creating quality, customer satisfaction, and productivity. Satisfied employees will also be committed to improve continuously and improve the quality. According to Matzler (2004), employee satisfaction is shaped by several factors, including one's job, colleagues, remuneration, responsibility, and recognition.

The factors which signal that an employee possesses an employee engagement value can be seen from the factors of readiness, willingness, and pride to utilize all of one's energy into a physical, cognitive, and emotional expressive form to finish tasks.

In explaining the retention motivational factors are actually work factors like workload, basic job characteristics, complexity of a task and agency factors like work development, supervisor behavior, and policy clarity. Leadership behavior argued as one of the retention motivational factors based on the agency category as supported by Bubernick (2004), who states that supervisor behavior is included in one of three retention supporting critical factors.

When employees are unable to express their ideas, feelings and needs in a constructive fashion, they will instead act out emotionally with passive aggressive behavior, resistance, power struggles and absenteeism. Rather than thriving at work - connecting emotionally, investing their energy and drawing on their intrinsic motivation – employees begin surviving – just showing up, adapting withdrawing their energy, and doing the bare minimum. Engagement must be cultivated and developed by effective managers who understand that employee management is about getting people on board to achieve the things, which they are naturally good at. By taking the time to understand and learn what energizes employees to perform at their best, employees and managers can more easily provide the right working environment for all type of staff, whilst allocating the right kind of tasks that promote employee engagement and help high-performance flourish (Gibbons, 2006).

People understand what is expected of them and which decisions are theirs to make. When accountability is shared, employees understand when and with whom they need to collaborate. Clear roles and structure remove the ambiguity that slows decision making and improve the performance potential and employee engagement of modern organizations (Boston Consulting Group, 2011).

Communication is the useful means of cooperation. To achieve a high work performance, frequent, transparent, and authentic communication amongst leadership, employees, stakeholders and customers is a necessity. If leaders are not clear – and in complete agreement- about the organization's mission and values, rules, policies, etc., attempts to cascade their message will only fail, as communication, employees understand the “why” behind their jobs collaboration is valued and teams freely communicate to get projects accomplished. Leaders listen to employee feedback and encourage it (Robbins, Stephen, & Mary, 2001).

Additionally, they effectively measure, analyze, and review performance data to drive improvement and organizational competitiveness. Continuous improvement and innovation is imperative to success, and can only occur through evaluation and a culture of continuous learning. Recognizing and rewarding employee contributions and accomplishments are an important part of creating a quality service. Some employees, the value of a reward is not as important as the fact that they know that their contributions are valued (Robbins, Stephen, & Mary, 2001).

People in organizations are highly interdependent. Most of what we accomplish is through working with others. Fostering teamwork is creating a work performance that values collaboration. In a teamwork environment, people understand and believe that thinking, planning, decisions and actions are better when done cooperatively. Through teamwork, a greater variety of complex issues can be tackled by pooling expertise and resources. It is an essential component for high performing organizations, characterized by building trust and improving communication (Robbins, Stephen, & Mary, 2001).

The best way for ISPG to achieve this objective is to place a renewed focus on meeting and workshops in improvement of new teaching methodologies, and exceeding the expectations needs of their students. Be sure that the senior management in the institution participates regularly in education workforce regulations and that both lecturers and employees are kept informed about current requirements for the best work practices and considering on time the role of people you have to manage step by step. Responding, reacting suitably to different character of people by their importance correctly and rapidly shows a real good-to –great leader (Gibbons, 2006).

This study focused on the effects of Organization Development Interventions on work practices in ISPG. The strong point of the study was that the individuals who involved in the research included the Rector, the academic and administrative staff.

However, the validity and reliability of the data may be affected by the honesty and sincerity of the respondents which may be compromised especially where the employees want to show a picture of being loyal and supportive to the top management.

Conclusion

The impact of organization development interventions applied was slightly notable, so the results for the seven facet indicators for work practices in ISPG show a numerical improvement. Nowadays, the employees understand the specific needs of the students at a certain level, communication and teamwork continue to be increased; improvement in staff motivation implies increasing of commitment which is observed through the reports, and evaluations of teachers by the students, teachers themselves, and administrative evaluation to teachers. Interpersonal relationship and mutual respect within ISPG start to resorb the existing conflict between services. The great role of ISPG top management in handling and resolving the conflicts increases sociability, develop and grow morale of the employees which resulting to build a strong teamwork, and finally increasing the quality service.

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations have to be considered. The work practice activities should be continued in this Institution by implementing activities that develop the seven work practice facets more effectively.

1. ISPG needs to focus on developing employees' satisfaction since in this research it shows that customer satisfaction has significant impact to both employee's performance and their retention.
2. The managers of ISPG as organization should change in general the culture of this institution by redressing the hostile behavior of some employees towards others in order to maintain them and stopping the departure of strong employees useful for the good functioning of ISPG, sustainability as result of the good governance of the Institution.
3. The service of finances should finalize the salaries of ISPG employees at different levels and show taxes taken to employees for different users in order to be clear and honest with them; kind of motivation.
4. The ISPG should have the following policies documented and implemented, especially policies on staff development and retention, on conflict management, and on staff motivation.
5. The authorities of ISPG must continue to implement these interventions ongoing in order to sustain a really change and development of this Higher Learning Institution with the time.
6. Promoting the employees and ranking the teachers must be encouraged by ISPG managers in the framework of motivating, and making them to be accountable to their performance and their responsibility.
7. ISPG managers have to put in place more social activities allowing the employees to be able to meet often discussing, sharing and talking on innovative ways appropriated to their institution in handling and solving the conflicts.
8. The administration of ISPG must reinforce the system of employees' evaluation using the forms recommended such as: 1) Form of evaluation of teachers by the students; 2) Form of self-assessment from teachers themselves; and 3) Form of employee performance.
9. Considering the work practices with a bit great improvement, a follow up through the real program is highly recommended. Thus, the researcher proposed a sustainable long-term Work Practices Interventions.
10. The same recommendations should work in University of Gitwe and continue to be implemented as well as it was in ISPG for its development and for its sustainability.

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