

Impact of religion in work place

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Abstract: Studies on the impact of religion in management of organizations are rarely done. In addition, most organizations do not allow such studies to be conducted on their premises. Most respondents also fear participating in the research because they fear being victimized. However, most organizations still suffer from challenges of religious beliefs that their employees subscribe to. On the other hand, some employees also resist some of the policies that organizations put in place because they may contradict the teachings of their religion. To find out the impact of religion, a research was conducted on the Salvation Army. The research involved conducting interviews on a number of stakeholders working within the organization. Salvation Army is a Christian based charitable organization with its base in Minnesota. The organization was chosen because; it is founded on the teachings of the Salvation Army church. The beneficiaries of the charitable activities are both Christians and non-Christians. It also employs employees of diverse religious faiths. The research was carried out in December 2013 at a time that the organization was at the peak of their annual charitable activities. Of the 1000 thousand volunteers working with the organization, 100 took part in the interview. We also interviewed 1500 beneficiaries out of the 15000 beneficiaries of the program. The research also involved interviewing the management of the organization. From the analysis, it is evident that the research interviewed ten percent of the total population of employees and beneficiaries respectively. Based on the findings of the research, the paper proposes the incorporation of religious teachings in management of organizations dealing in provision of human services. The paper also proposes peaceful ways of solving conflicts that occur as a result of religious misunderstanding. The paper also seeks to see the application of religious teachings in the promotion of organization ethics and moral standards.

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Statement of the problem

The existence of stakeholders of diverse religious backgrounds is a major issue in Salvation Army. Though it is a church run organization, records show that in the year 2013, 200 volunteers who participated in the distribution of relief food were not members of the Salvation Army church. According to Army (2014), Of the 15000 beneficiaries of relief food on the same year, 2000 were not members of the church. The existence of pagans, members of other religions and atheists in the institution has complicated the issue with most members of the church ganging up against them. In terms of beneficiaries of relief services, some members have argued out that, only the members of the church should benefit.

Several questions have been raised about the impact of religion on the management of the Salvation Army. In December 2012, a taskforce was formed to look into how to integrate the operations of the organization to benefit other religions. From the taskforce, many Christians had observed that, such integration. Some however argued that it can contribute to unity and teamwork within the organization. Consequently, integration can promote spiritual growth among stakeholders (Ashforth and Pratt 2010, 16).

According to research article by Clark (2007, 30) on Religion and work, an argument is brought on how religion can promote realization of goals and objectives of the organization by laying strong foundation for service delivery. Some however oppose this reasoning and argue that, religion can be an impediment to service delivery.

The purpose of this research is to find the impact of religion on the management of the Salvation Army which is a religious based organization based in Minnesota. The paper will look into how the organization applies religious doctrines to promote the realization of goals and services within the organization. It also examines how religion has been used by the Salvation Army to promote ethics and moral standards. Finally, the paper seeks to find how an organization can address the conflicts that can arise because of religious misunderstandings.

Literature review

Religion based organizations such as Salvation Army value religion as a key factor in its management (Grossman 2008, 33). The fact that the organization has about 200 employees who do not subscribe to salvation army church has complicate the relationship between them and the members of the church who feel that they should be allowed to run the affairs of the

organization. In Salvation Army; a Christian based charitable organization based in Minnesota, there are a number of impact of religion on the management. The research focuses on how religion impacts on the management of salvation. The paper also focuses on how Salvation Army has managed various religious issues that affects its operations. This paper thus addresses a number of issues that include;

First is how the management of Salvation Army with a workforce of more than 100 volunteers manages religious conflicts that arise between its employees and beneficiaries (Army 2014, 1). In addition 2000 beneficiaries according to the official records of the organization are also not affiliated to the religion. The organization at times works in regions that are dominated by other religions. For instance, in 2013, it visited a catholic based village in Minnesota. Because of this diversity, there is possibility that various conflicts may arise. This research article looks at the remedies to such conflicts.

Secondly, the paper looks into how the religious believes can contribute to ethical standards of Salvation Army (Miller 2007, 20). Salvation Army, just like any other organization has its principles and moral standards. According to Army (2014, 4) Salvation Army has its principles pegged on the doctrines of the church. The impact of this is the promotion of both ethical and moral standard. The paper discusses how the Salvation Army church's doctrines have been used to form strong ethical foundation.

Another issue that the paper has analyzed is how religion can improve service delivery in Salvation Army (Gunther 2001, 60). The role of Salvation Army is to alleviate suffering and improve the living condition of humanity (Army 2014, 1). In this paper, the role of religion in the realization of the goals and the objectives of the organization has been discussed. In Salvation Army, it is the teachings of the bible that led to its establishment. The organization according to Army (2014, 1) recognizes the role that, it is the duty of the church to assist the poor. The driving principle and the foundation of the organization rely on this teaching.

In the research, a total of twelve references have been used. They contain journals, case studies and books that that analyze a number of issues that relate to the topic.

During the research, Creswell's book entitled *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* was used in providing general direction on how to apply both qualitative and quantitative research methods in data collection and analysis.

Harris' book entitled '*Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiaris*'

was helpful in analysing various case studies that were used in the research. together with Yin's work entitled *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, the books provided guidance on how to collect, analyse and interpret data.

A number of case studies were also analysed. After analysing the, hypothesis were formulated. Such cases studies include; a case study on The surprising quest for spiritual renewal in the American workplace by Grossman. Published in 2008, the case study gives an analysis of how sampled organizations in New York are trying to incorporate religious practices into their management.

Another case study that was analyzed was on God and Business. The case study published by Gunther in 2001, was on research that was carried out on how Google Company manages its operations without interfering with the set religious principles. The paper also analyzed the protestant perception of economic development. Titled Protestant ethic as a general precondition for economic development, Hansin looks at some of the ways by which the protest church look at religious aspect of economic growth. In the research, Salvation Army official website was used to search through some of the data and facts about the organization.

During the research, mixed method was used to collect, analyze and interpret data. Quantitative data analysis was used to collect data from the respondents who were employees of the Salvation Army, analyze the data and present it. Qualitative data on the other hand was used to study various case studies, formulate hypothesis from the case studies and arrive at conclusions.

Mixed method was used because the nature of research required both physical collection of data, through interviews and response to questionnaires. This nature of research requires quantitative method. In qualitative research, various papers, articles, and case studies on the impact of religion have been analyzed. Hypothesizes have too been formulated.

Target population

The study targeted 500 employees of Salvation Army. The employees were categorized in terms of 200 Christians, 50 Muslims, 50 Buddhists, 50 Hindus, 20 pagans, 30 atheists, and finally 100 members representing other religions. It also targeted 1500 beneficiaries of the organization. Out of the 1500 beneficiaries, 800 were members of the Salvation Army church while 700 hundred were drawn other religions.

Research design

The research was timed during the religious ceremony. It is during this period that religious doctrines are highly observed. The first research was done in the month of December. During this time,

1000 volunteers of the Salvation Army were involved in distribution of relief food and clothes to 15000 residents of Minnesota. The timing was in December, during this period, Christians prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ whom they believe is their savior (Harrison and Huntington 2000, 41). It began on first December and ended on thirteenth December after the celebration of the birth of Jesus. The data was then analyzed and results record.

In April, another research was carried out. During this period, according to John and Jonathan (2011, 30) Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus. Again, 500 employees were interviewed. The same criterion was followed. In the month of September, another research was carried out. During this period, the Muslims visit Mecca where they commemorate the birth of Mohammed. Mohammed is the senior most prophets among the Muslims. He is also believed to be the founder of the church.

Repeat research was necessary because it provided room for analysis of various data. It also made it possible to compare research findings so as to come up with the most authentic and reliable result. The respondents were categorized into various categories. For instance, there were Christians, Buddhists, and Muslims, pagans, atheists and polytheists.

Data collection consists of a sample of respondents representing various populations (Turabian 2014, 18). In my research, the target population consisted of **atheists, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and pagans**. Participation in the research was voluntary. After sensitizing people about my research, they are expected to volunteer and participate in the research. Analysis of case studies on the impact of religion on the management of an organization has also been done. Through the analysis, theories and hypothesis are formulated on the topic.

Because the research took relatively longer time, Time and resources was granted by the employees of different departments to allow willing respondents to participate in the research. A total of two hours was accorded to each respondent. After the research, the report was compiled by the third party. It involves analysis of the findings of the research. The research was published after the end of the research.

Research method

The research on the impact of religion on the management of an organization employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative method was used to find data from a sampled number of workers working with the Salvation Army (Creswell 2014, 101).

Collection of information was by use of face to face interview on the 5000 employees and the 1500 beneficiaries. Questionnaires with open ended

questions were also given to 100 respondents who preferred taking written interview. The nature of the questions also determined on whether the interview was to be oral or written. For instance, confidential questions required written response.

Among the questions that were asked during the interview include those that touched on how religion has enhanced working culture within the organization. I also asked how various religious conflicts within the organization are addressed. Being a religious organization, the organizations activities do not conflict with the teachings of the church. I also enquired from the respondents how the organization applies the doctrines of the religion to uphold the level of ethics and morality within it.

The research also involved the use of qualitative research. It was used in analyzing and interpreting patterns of religious themes in the management of Salvation Army. Through qualitative method, I identified, examined and interpreted the patterns and themes that are found in various case studies (John and Jonathan 2011, 30). The analysis helped me to found out the concept of religion and its application in other organizations. For instance, I related the information that I collected verbally to various case studies that I researched through in the books.

Data analysis

The proposal integrates the use of both deductive and inductive data analysis (Yin 2014, 18). From the responses that are given by respondents, a comparison table and charts are drawn to determine the relationship between various variables.

Questionnaires are also analyzed to look into the response of various people on the topic. From the questionnaires, I used a frequency table to determine the average occurrences of variables on questions that had optional responses (Turabian 2014, 17). The responses were then rated in terms of occurrences.

After gathering all the information that I required for my research, I analyzed them using statistical analysis. My analysis involved examining the relationship between various pieces of information that are related (Yin 2014, 17). After the analysis, I made my conclusion and recommendations on the impact of religion on the management of an organization.

Results and Discussion

From my research on the impact of religion, I was able to deduce a number of results on how Salvation Army has benefitted from religion. First, the fact that the doctrines of the church has been used to set the foundation of the organization has reduced ideological differences that might occur due misunderstanding (Army 2014, 1). Every time there is

an ideological difference, the church's doctrines have been used to provide a solution and break the impasse.

Secondly, religion has been used to promote the ethical and moral standards of the organization (Clark 2007, 34). The doctrines of the church have always been used to inculcate the culture of ethics and morality into the performance of the organization. Every employee is always taken through the doctrines of the church. He is then taken through the doctrine of the organization which is a mere reflection of the doctrine of the church.

From the research, it is evident that, religion can influence the performance and delivery of services within an organization. According to Hansin 2008, 474), Virtues such as competency, diligence and hard-work are enshrined within the teachings of the church. In Salvation Army, these virtues have been incorporated. The employees use these doctrines to enhance their delivery.

Aspects of activities that Salvation Army carries out also have their foundation from the teachings of the church. For instance, according to Army (2014, 1), the mission and the vision of the organization centers on the improvement of lives of humanity through charitable activities; these originates from the teachings of the bible. The mission and the vision statement originate from the teachings of the bible that talk about providing for the poor.

Finally, from the research, it was deduced that, religion can be used to bring integration and promote diversity among employees and stakeholders (Grossman 2008, 33). Because the doctrines of the religion preach equality of all human beings, the management of the church appreciates the diversity in population. Salvation Army, therefore, employs members of other religions. It also directs it services to the members of other religions who may be in need of the organization's service.

Conclusion

From the research, I was able to make various conclusions on the research methods. First, I realized that face to face interview had a number of challenges in collection of information. To begin with, it was difficult to collect information from shy clients (Harris 2011, 15). Some of the clients could not divulge information out fear or lack of personality.

At times, I had problem gathering information from illiterate respondents. Some of the clients could only communicate in their native languages. I had to rely on the services of an interpreter to collect information from this category of respondents. Some of these respondents also feared divulging information because they feared being victimized by the members of their religion.

Face to face interview, however proved to be a very reliable method in terms verification of information. During the interviews, I could request the informant to furnish me with all the information that I needed. In case some piece of information was not clear, I would request for clarification. It was also easy to tell when a respondent was giving biased or exaggerated information.

In relation to questionnaires with open –ended questions, it proved to be the best tool for finding information from respondents who were either busy or shy. Though questionnaires provided very rigid answers, they were easy to analyze since they contained only the required pieces of information. Questions that had yes or no responses were also easy to analyze.

In terms of data analysis, quantitative method was helpful because; it provided quantifiable and results that were easy to understand. For instance, I could easily determine the number of employees who believe that religion can help improve ethical standards within an organization. I was also able to analyze data quantitatively by using a number of procedures that included data tabulation, Descriptive data, Data disaggregation, alongside Moderate and advanced analytical method (Creswell 2014, 71). Qualitative method also enabled me to analyze a number of case studies. The case studies provided room for analysis and comparison of data. Consequently, the data that I collected was not only authentic but was also reliable.

In data tabulation, I used frequency distribution and percent distribution to analyze the relationship between numbers of frequencies. For instance, I used frequency distribution table to calculate the number of employees who support the incorporation of religious principles into the management of the organization against those who oppose the incorporation (John and Jonathan 2011, 30).

I also used descriptive data table to interpret the results that I gathered from my clients. Through the descriptive data, I could relate the outcome of every respondent and the result that he gave. For instance, pagans were totally against the incorporation of religious principles into the organization. They argued that, such incorporation will force them to subscribe to a religion that they were against. I was also able to disintegrate data by use of quantitative method. Data disintegration was important because through it, I managed to evaluate different data that I had from my research.

From qualitative data analysis, I was able to determine the common themes that emerge about the impact of religion on the management of an organization (John and Jonathan 2011, 29). For instance, the issue of ethics and morality in relation to

religion was a common theme in all the case studies that I learnt. I was also able to identify deviations in the themes. For instance, different religions have different understandings of the concept of ethics. Deviations in the concepts was therefore a major factor that I investigated by qualitative analysis (Turabian 2014, 32).

In conclusion, it was easy to deduce that mixed method is an essential tool in research. Apart from giving a very comprehensive and holistic outcome, it provides research information that is easy to understand and interpret. Through the mixed method, I came to determine that religion is an essential component of organizational management (Yin 2014, 108). I can also conclude that, different religions have their principles. It is these principles that when incorporated into the organizational management, will improve the ethical and moral standards.

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