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PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS AND EMPLOYEES ON THEROLE OF NEW EMPLOYEES ORIENTATION: LESSONS FROM A SELECTED NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION IN GABORONE, BOTSWANA

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ABSTRACT

New employee orientation is considered an important strategy in employee retention. Effective new employee orientation programme has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety in new hires, reduce staff turnover, improve performance, reduce boredom and absenteeism in the workplace. It is reported that about 60% of new hires look for new jobs within six months. This has negative effects on organizational performance and delays achievement of organizational goals and vision. The research questions together with theoretical framework guided the study to understand the perceptions of organizational leaders and employees, the challenges and benefits, interventions that can be adopted to enhance new employee orientation, and compare and contrasting perceptions of leaders and employees. The study embarked on an enquiry into the effectiveness of orientation programme at a selected non- governmental organization in Gaborone, Botswana. The study used case study design as it helps with gaining in-depth understanding of challenges and mitigations of new employees' orientation in Gaborone, Botswana. The population of the study are the managing director and employees. Purposive sampling through heterogeneous sampling technique was used to select participants who can provide rich data in the study. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, and document analysis through the lens of uncertainty reduction theory and Path-Goal theory. Trustworthiness criteria that were used are credibility and confirmability in addition to researcher's reflexivity and piloting. Taguette software was used to analyze the data to generate meaning using codes and themes. Ethical considerations were adhered to when gaining access for field work. The results of the study might benefit the non- government organization in Gaborone with recommendations to implement effective orientation programme for low staff turnover, high retention, and high organizational performance. The results of the study show that

leaders and employees perceive that new employee orientation has an important role in welcoming new employees into the organization. Furthermore, the study made recommendations to improve the pre, during and post orientation sessions.

KEYWORDS: *Uncertainty Reduction Theory, Path-Goal Theory, Leaders, Leadership, New Employees, New Hires, Newcomer, Orientation, Induction, Perceptions, Challenges, Benefits, Improvements, Strategic Choice, Employee Retention, Staff Turnover, Organization, Non-Government, Gaborone, Botswana.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Caldwell and Peters (2018), the task of assimilating new employees into the organization is important. During the process of orientation, the new employees are going through stress and on the other hand organizations also struggle as they focus on organizational outcomes more than the new employees (Caldwell & Peters, 2018). Wachira (2010) says "organizations, large or small, should have a well-considered induction programme to ensure the effective integration of staff into or across the organization for the benefit of both parties" (p. 85). Smith (2018) says newcomers are people who are new to the organization or are moving to new roles in the same organization (p. 64). Furthermore, Smith (2018) says understanding the organizational culture is very important especially for attracting and retaining employees. Organizational culture is described as the "rules of the game for getting along in the organization and the ropes that a newcomer must learn in order to become an accepted member" (Sriramesh et al., as cited in Smith, 2018, p. 41).

Raub et al. (2021) conducted a study with participants in Europe, East Asia and Americas. The study had identified challenges with high turnover rate in the hospitality industry (Raub et al., 2021). Some of the solutions that this industry adopted were to utilize short contract employees and casual labor (Raub et al., 2021). However, this solution led to another problem that needed attention, which is "how can the new employees in hospitality firms be made operational as quickly as possible so as not to disrupt service processes and make the best use of their often limited time of employment" (Raub et al., 2021, p. 1). The solution to this question was found in new employee orientation which is conducted very early in the employment of staff (Wanous, as cited in Raub et al., 2021). Raub et al. (2021) suggest that if the new employee orientation has any deficiencies, it might result in lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities for the new employees thus introducing role ambiguity. Furthermore, the results of the study showed that an effective new employee orientation is a mitigation against stressors like role ambiguity and role conflict (Raub et al., 2021). Raub et al. (2021) further conclude in their study that new employee orientation is beneficial, and organizations can embrace it to ease the new hires into their new roles (Raub et al., 2021).

Erasmus et al. (2005) provides a "state-of-the-art theory and practice for human resource management from a South African public administration perspective" (p.1).

According to Erasmus et al. (2005), the objective of employee orientation is to introduce the new hire to their new organization. The introduction is done as soon as possible (Erasmus et al., 2005). The introduction goes beyond introducing the new employee to the public institution, it also introduces them to the team, the work, and environment. The new employees are provided with information that helps them to settle into their organization with ease (Erasmus et al., 2005).

The study conducted an enquiry into the perceptions of organizational leaders on the role of new employee orientation. This enquiry provides an understanding of how the organizational cultures are introduced to the new employees to make the employees welcome in their new roles and organizations within non-government organizations in Gaborone Botswana. New employee orientation studies have been conducted before, however a search on the internet and on google scholar did not bring up results for studies in Botswana. This has prompted the study to focus on non-government organizations in Gaborone, Botswana to gain in-depth understanding of the new hires orientation and leadership. In addition to understanding the organizational culture, it is also important to understand the condition of the new employees as they join the new organization. The study used uncertainty reduction theory and Path-Goal theory to gain even further appreciation of how leaders can identify and mitigate the challenges that new employees go through as they enter new roles. Uncertainty

reduction theory says uncertainty drives an individual to seek information in order to reduce that uncertainty (Dainton & Zelley, 2010). Path-Goal theory talks about how leaders motivate their followers towards achieving set goals (Northouse, 2016). As the new hires arrive and information is disseminated to them, the uncertainty that they previously had clears up and they start to feel welcome and feel part of the workplace. The study explored how this dissemination of information is planned and executed with regards to new employee orientation. In other studies, research has shown that new employees look for a new job within their first six months on the job (Kaemingk, as cited in Hills, 2022). Smith (2018) provides an illustration of a manufacturing company that implemented a revised orientation programme which resulted in more than 70% reduction in staff turnover. The manufacturing company adopted a formal orientation strategy and took all new hires irrespective of their department, took them through relationship building activities (Smith, 2018). The sooner the orientation is conducted the sooner expectations can be aligned between the organization and the new employees (Smith, 2018). The study also enquired on the realities of how soon non- government organizations in Gaborone socialize the new hires and the impact of their adopted schedules on organizational goals and strategies.

New employee orientation is an important stage in the recruitment process (Durai, 2010). During this stage the new employee is introduced to the organization, their new role and to their co-workers (Durai, 2010). They get to appreciate the organizational culture, mission, goals, and values (Arthur, 2006; Aswathappa, 2013).

The challenge faced by the non-government organizations is ineffective new employee orientation programmes which lead to staff turnover, unresolved anxiety, regret about deciding to accept the new role, feeling unwelcome in the organization and taking a long time to reach effective level demanded by the job. Employees take a long time to reach effective level demanded by the role as they struggle with policy and process issues that ideally are covered during orientation. The organization also suffers setbacks on meeting targets and realizing their vision while employees learn the ropes. Efforts to obtain new employee orientation statistical data from Statistics Botswana and Human Resource Development Council were unsuccessful as they were not available. This has given rise to the need for research and this study intends to fill this gap. The purpose of the study was to enquire on the perceptions of organizational leaders on the role of new employee orientation in Gaborone, Botswana. Furthermore, the study provided recommendations for effective newemployee orientation.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of organizational leaders on the role of new employee orientation at selected non-government organization in Gaborone, Botswana?

2. What challenges are experienced with new employee orientation at selected non- government organization in Gaborone, Botswana?

3. What benefits have been realized from new employee orientation at selected non- government organization in Gaborone, Botswana?

4. What interventions can be adopted to enhance and develop effective new employee orientation at selected non-government organization in Gaborone, Botswana?

5. What is the difference in the perception of organizational leaders and employees on the role of new employee orientation at selected non-government organization in Gaborone, Botswana?

Theoretical Framework

This section provides a discussion of the theoretical framework that aided the study in addressing the research questions. The two theories discussed in this section are Path-Goal Theory of leadership and Uncertainty Reduction Theory, URT.

Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

According to Northouse (2016), Path-Goal Theory is about how leader motivate their followers towards achieving set goals (p. 115). The purpose of this "leadership theory is to enhance follower performance and follower satisfaction by focusing on follower motivation" (Northouse, 2016, p. 115). A leader may adopt one of the four leadership styles, directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented, to match the environment, the employee, and the goal (Hemmings, 2018). Path-Goal Theory makes a suggestion that leaders should choose a behavior that will suit their followers needs and the work situations (Rana et al., 2019a). Essentially "a leader can help subordinates by selecting a style of leadership that provides what is what is missing in a particular setting" (Northouse, as cited in Rana et al., 2019b, p. 138). Path-Goal Theory is best suited for this study as it helps leaders with being effective in delivering a successful and effective new employee orientation.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory

This study is based on the uncertainty reduction theory, URT. URT implies that "social life is filled with ambiguities" (Berger & Calabrese, as cited in Dainton & Zelley, 2010, p. 43). Furthermore, URT through its axiom number seven suggests that individuals tend to look for information to reduce ambiguity or uncertainty (Dainton & Zelley, 2010). The more information the individual gets about a particular situation or person, the lesser the uncertainty becomes (Dainton & Zelley, 2010). Dainton and Zelley (2010) say that URT has been tested systematically over time which has increased credibility of the uncertainty reduction theory. URT says "newcomers desire increased predictability of interactions between themselves and others when they are moving into a new organization" (Berger and Calabrese, as cited in Smith, 2018, p. 65). This theory is best suited for this study as it helps

with understanding the new employees state of mind before starting their first day, and during their first day and orientation. Most importantly it helps the organizations to deliver effective orientation by disseminating information in the most effective way.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a discussion on the review of related literature and follows a thematic structure beginning with New Employee Orientation, New Employee Orientation Challenges, New Employee Orientation Benefits and finally Effective New Employee Orientation.

New Employees Orientation

Definition of Orientation

According to Nzuve (2010), orientation is the "process of disseminating information and providing directions to new employees" (p. 59). Basic information needed to be able to survive and adopt in the workplace is provided to the new employee (Nzuve, 2010). Dwivedi

(2007) says, orientation or induction is the process by which new employees are given guidance and counselling to familiarize them with job situations. According to Chapman (2009), orientation is a multi-stage process that utilizes formal and informal activities to assist new employees to assimilate into the culture of the organization. Durai (2010), orientation and socialization are sometimes used interchangeably. Here are some definitions of socialization: "the process of learning the ropes, being indoctrinated and trained, the process of being taught what is important in an organization or some subunit thereof" (Schein, as cited in Smith, 2018) and "the process by which a person learns the values, norms and required behaviors which permit him to participate as a member of an organization" (Van Maanen, as cited in Smith, 2018, p.64). Bhakta and Medina (2021) say that it is important to evaluate existing onboarding and orientation processes to identify areas of improvement (p.

169). According to Hills (2022), many organizations do not have well designed new employee orientation program.

According to Aswathappa (2013), orientation helps the new employees with information that they need to be able to perform their functions well. Furthermore, it helps them to be efficient in the organization. Aswathappa (2013) says that induction and on- boarding are other terms used to refer to orientation. Induction is a planned introduction of the new hires, the organization and the colleagues to each other, (Aswatappa, 2013). Arthur (2006) acknowledges that employers use the terms orientation, onboarding and induction interchangeably. However, Arthur (2006) draws a distinction that "onboarding continues far beyond the point at which orientation programs typically end, lasting as long as a year" (p. 317). Arthur (2006) further says that new orientation programs should focus on making the new employee feel that they have made the right decision by joining the new organization. According to Durai (2010), orientation and socialization are sometimes used interchangeably though there are definite differences between the two. Durai (2010) further says some of these differences are: (1) orientation is usually formal and structured introduction of the new employee to the organization while socialization is informal and spontaneous process of introducing the new employee to the organizational culture, (2) orientation is short term and time-bound while socialization is a gradual and long-term process, (3) Human Resource department takes the primary responsibility of orientation process generally while line management take primary responsibility for the socialization process (p. 182). Arthur (2006) says new employees should be taken through orientation at the earliest, day one being ideal as they have not been caught up by their work yet and this avoids them receiving inaccurate information elsewhere.

The Place of New Employee Orientation

Aswathappa (2013) says talent management lifecycle is beneficial to organizations and that the stages in the lifecycle need to be managed in an integrated manner (p. 517).

However, many organizations manage these stages independent of each other (Aswathappa, 2013). According to Aswathappa (2013), organizations need to identify interventions to align the business strategy and the talent lifecycle. Talent lifecycle model consists of the following stages, acquiring, onboarding, training, succession, retaining and recovering (Berger and Berger as cited in Aswathappa, 2013).

Orientation Strategic Consideration

According to Aswathappa (2013), an organization needs to make four strategic choices that will help in designing an orientation programme. These are: (1) formal or informal, (2) individual or collective, (3) serial or disjunctive and (4) investiture or

divestiture. Durai (2010) further adds three more which are: fixed or variable, sequential or non sequential, and tournament and contest-oriented. Durai (2010) says that organizations can adopt any combination of strategies to accomplish its objectives.

Formal or Informal

According to Aswathappa (2013), the choice between formal and informal is dependent of the management's goals as new employees who go through formal orientation are likely to think and act like executives or management. Furthermore Aswathappa (2013) says that new employees are more likely to acquire a known set of standards when going through a formal orientation program. Organizations can choose informal orientation where individual differences are desired (Aswathappa, 2013). Aswathappa (2013) goes on to say individuals who go through informal orientation are more likely to challenge the status quo with health questioning, come up with solutions to organizational problems or challenges. Durai (2010) says when the new employees are left to learn on their own, that is an informal strategy and other can help the new hire to learn the organizational culture.

Individual or Collective

Individual approach is expensive and time consuming although it preserves individual differences (Rao, 2004; Aswathappa, 2013). Individual orientation produces much less views of the same kind in contrast with the collective approach. New employees miss out on the opportunity to share anxieties with their fellow new hires when individual approach is used (Rao, 2004). Aswathappa (2013) says that collective orientation approach provides solutions to the challenges in individual approach. The collective strategy is mostly used by large organizations with exception of executives as they are usually few while smaller organizations seldom use collective approach (Aswathappa, 2013).

Serial or Disjunctive

When serial strategy is used, an experienced employee with familiarity to the new hire's job is provided to direct or guide the new employee (Rao, 2004). In this approach, traditions and customs are usually preserved and the status quo will be maintained within the organization over time (Aswathappa, 2013). Durai (2010) says the new employee can be placed into their new

position without going through orientation and this is the disjunctive approach. When there is no predecessor to induct the new hire, the approach is disjunctive (Rao, 2004). Disjunctive approach facilitates for inventive and creative employees as there is no burden of traditions placed upon the new hires (Aswathappa, 2013).

Investiture or Divestiture

This strategy addresses the need to maintain or dismantle the identity of the new employee (Aswathappa, 2013). Durai (2010) says when the orientation "aims at reinforcing the values and beliefs brought in by the new employees, it is called an investiture strategy. This strategy is usually adopted when there is compatibility between the individual culture and the organizational culture" (p. 185). An organization may have a desire to strip some characteristics from the new hire (Rao, 2004). Although the new employee was identified as an individual with potential to be a high performer, the organization may tweak some of their characteristics to achieve a closer candidate and organization fit (Rao, 2004). Aswathappa (2013) says that divestiture strategy seeks to make minor modifications to the individuals characteristics despite having been selected based on those characteristics. The purpose of the modification is to achieve an alignment between the new member and the organization, and the approach is commonly used in military, professional football, police academies, fraternal groups, religious cults, and self-realization groups (Aswathappa, 2013). According to Durai (2010), divestiture strategy can be used when there is incompatibility between the organizational culture and the individual values and beliefs.

Organizational Orientation

According to Arthur (2006), organizational orientation is a process that takes time and needs careful consideration as to what information is covered and how is it presented and how much time allocated to each item. Organizations have different approaches when it comes to planning for the participants. Some group all the new employees together, some separate by benefits, some separate by new to workforce or not (Arthur, 2006). Those who are new to the workforce usually need support with transition from academic to business world (Arthur, 2006). Arthur (2006) says, when choosing the location for the orientation, consideration needs to be made to suite most participants who will attend. Furthermore, the room setting should enable participants to take down notes as presentations are made and round tables and chairs are recommended against auditorium settings (Arthur, 2006). There are two main categories of information that needs to be shared with the new employees

being, "what the employees can expect from the organization and what the organization can expect from the employees" (Arthur, 2006, p. 299). There still remains a lot of topics that the respective organizations can choose to include in their orientation depending on their work environments and the participant groups (Arthur, 2006). Consider first that the new employees want to feel welcome in their new organization (Arthur, 2006). While keeping in mind that information retention is low on the first day, new employees are interested in knowing about company policies and procedures, they want to know and how they affect them, what are consequences of violating those policies (Arthur, 2006). According to Arthur (2006), a good starting point for the presentations is to present the employee-friendly programs as this will grab attention of the participant and establish the organization's commitment to its employees.

Arthur (2006) says that the purpose of organizational orientation are the following (1) give overview of organizations history, products and services, (2) describe how the organization differentiates itself from competition, (3) explain the organizational structure,

(4) describe the organization's philosophy, mission and goals, (5) explain how vital each employee is in helping to achieve company goals, (6) discuss the organizations culture including work life balance, (7) explain career development opportunities, including available training, mentoring programs, tuition assistance, and promotional opportunities, (8) describe the benefits and employee services offered, (9) identify the organization's commitment to equal employment opportunity, diversity, no harassment, health, and safety,

(10) review the interrelationship between various departments, (11) outline the company's standards of performance and policies and procedures and (12) outline safety and security practices (p. 298).

Departmental Orientation

Departmental orientation does not need to be formal or structured as in most cases a department will have one new employee at a given time (Arthur, 2006). Introducing the new employees to their colleagues should be the first thing to do in departmental orientation (Arthur, 2006). The introductions should include even officers that might not directly work with the new hires on a regular basis. While doing introductions, new employees should be allowed to form their own opinions of about their coworkers (Arthur, 2006). Furthermore Arthur (2006) says, introductions are to be objective and descriptive of the overall function of the individuals being introduced. Providing the new employees with a list of the names, contacts, role and function can ease the pressure of memorizing as introductions are made.

During the walk abouts doing introductions, new hires are to be shown the rest rooms, kitchen, lounge, printing areas, and other common areas on the floor (Arthur, 2006).

Colonel Norman Schwarzkopf was arriving in Vietnam to command of his battalion from the outgoing commander. Before the outgoing commander left, he handed Schwarzkopf a bottle of scotch and told him he will need it as the battalion he is about to command is a lousy battalion, with a lousy morale and a lousy mission (Maxwell, 2007; Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011). The new commander got to realize that the old commander had never actually ventured out of the camp to inspect his battalion (Maxwell, 2007). Although during introduction, the old commander imposed his opinion of the battalion on the new commander, the new commander demonstrated qualities of a leader and formed his own opinion. He transformed the team into a high performing battalion by attending to details that were previously neglected (Maxwell, 2007). This illustration shows the importance of allowing new employees to form their own opinions about their new coworkers and supervisors.

According to Arthur (2006), the contents of departmental orientation include the following, departmental responsibilities, interrelationship between departments, departmental structure, departmental culture, job duties and responsibilities, confidentiality, performance expectations, hours of work, meal and break time, payroll, personal telephone calls and personal use of the computer, reporting relationship and vacation scheduling (p. 304). Arthur (2006) further says that during the job duties and responsibilities, the discussions should cover the job description, specifics of the responsibilities and the interrelation within the department and with other departments.

New Employee Orientation Agenda

According to Wachira (2010), a good induction program should cover (1) the physical location of the organizations facilities, (2) give the new employee an idea of where they fit into the organizational team, (3) health and safety information as required by the law, (4) take the employee through the terms and conditions of employment, (5) history of the organization, its products and services, culture and values, (6) a clear outline of the job requirement (p. 87). Dwivedi (2007) says employee orientation should include organizational chart, map of the facilities, terms that are unique to the industry, the company and the job, provide employee with a copy of the company policy handbook, a copy of union's contract where applicable, a list of benefits, copies of performance appraisal forms, dates and procedures, a list of on the job training opportunities, key contacts and locations of people and operations, sample copies of company's publications. Chapman (2009) says for an orientation program to be successful it needs to be aligned with the organizations mission, goals and have management support.

According to Aswathappa (2013), topics often covered during orientation include (1) organizational issues: history of employer, organization of employer, names and titles of key executives, employee's title and department, layout of physical facilities, probationary period, product line or services provided, overview of production processes, company policies and rules, disciplinary regulations, employee handbook, safety procedure and enforcement, (2) employee benefits: pay scale and pay days, vacations and holidays, rest breaks, training and education benefit, counselling, insurance benefits, retirement programme, employer-provided services to employees, rehabilitation programmes, (3)

introduction: to supervisor, to trainers, to co-workers, to employee counsellor and (4) job duties: job location, job tasks, job safety requirements, overview of job, job objectives and relationship to other jobs.

Organizational Leaders Experiences

According to Sims (2011), a lot of companies do a good job in covering policies, values, and workplace safety during orientations. Sims (2011) goes on to ask a question, "how well does your organization communicate the unwritten rules of the organization" (p. 5). An illustration is provided where one leader transitioned from a start-up organization to a large manufacturing organization (Sims, 2011). This leader was taken by surprise at the cautiousness in decision making at the new organization due to chain of command, adherence to positional power. Decisions made by senior level leaders were to be followed without much discussion or information (Sims, 2011). Sims (2011) provides an account of the leader after some time "there are so many subtle patterns that I misread early in my transition. Had I understood this sooner, I could have generated significantly more positive contributions within my team. I'm just thankful that my peers were patient and forgiving while I learned

the system" (p. 5). The illustration shows that critical information that is not shared in the early days of the new employee, can make the employee journey an unpleasant one, including leaders joining new organizations. Sims (2011) outlines some common unwritten rules that need to be communicated: chain of command, normal work hours, level of risk taking that is encouraged or discouraged, the value of relationship building and friendships that exist in the organization, and level of fun and energy encouraged or discouraged.

According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), leaders must be prepared to discuss values and expectations with new employees during recruitment, selection, and orientations (p. 67). Kouzes and Posner (2012), in the book *The Leadership Challenge*, provide the experience of president and managing director of Fuji Xerox Singapore, Bert Wong. Bert attended a leadership course and "was asked to reflect on the behaviors a great leader would

demonstrate" (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 93). Bert was not able to provide an answer. He also recalled the business flourished when he is around, when he moves, then business suffers (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Kouzes and Posner (2012) further say that this drove Bert to begin a process of creating an organization in which everyone has and is driven by shared values which were reinforced through company-wide social events (p. 94). Orientation and training are some of the means available to teach people how to enact values and algin behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Elmore (2021) says people generally need leaders to convince them of what they are capable of doing. Leaders convince by embodying a value driven lifestyle and others can emulate (Elmore, 2021). Values are "strong guardrails that simplify choices and keep us on the right path" (Elmore, 2021, p. 153). When new employees see these values modeled by leaders in the organization, they will emulate them in their daily decision making. Elmore (2021) discusses the experience of a pharmaceutical company whose purpose is to help people on the path to better health.

Networking

Maxwell (2007) says the power of making connections and relationships should never be underestimated. Leaders should make connections and build relationships before asking the people to follow them (Maxwell, 2007). According to Wachira (2010), "networking is an ongoing process of reaching out and getting in touch with others to get tasks done" (p. 110). It is through this process that we gain access to knowledge and resources and as a result our effectiveness increases (Wachira, 2010). New employee orientation provides new hires with access to organizational leaders to tap into knowledge, expertise, and models.

The Taj Group of Hotels has an orientation program that facilitates for networking between new employees and the senior management team. According to Aswathappa (2013), when the entire senior management team from the Regional Vice President downwards join the orientation program, they introduce themselves and welcome the new hires. Aswathappa (2013) says that among the senior management team "over 70 percent of them were typically those who had also joined in similar capacities in their youth, they would come through as

ideal role models to emulate" (p. 446). Following the introductions and welcome is the question and answer session which leads to a tea break during which the senior management team and the new employees have opportunity to network (Aswathappa, 2013).

New Employees Orientation Challenges

According to Aswathappa (2013) new employee orientation can go wrong for a number of reasons. Some of the reasons are "(1) supervisor who is entrusted with the job is not trained, (2) employee is overwhelmed with too much information in a short time, (3) employee is overwhelmed with forms to complete, (4) employee is given only menial tasks that discourage job interest and company loyalty, (5) employee is asked to perform tasks where there are high

chances of failure that could needlessly discourage the employee, (6) employee is pushed into the job with a sketchy orientation under the mistaken belief that

'trial by fire' is the best orientation, (7) employee is forced to fill in the gaps between a broad orientation by the HR department and a narrow orientation at the departmental level, (8) employee is thrown into action too soon, (9) employee's mistakes can damage the company, and (10) employee may develop wrong perceptions because of short periods spent on each job" (Aswathappa, 2013, p. 445). Durai (2010) outlines the following as problems in orientation, data overload, problem of boredom and rigidity, lack of adequate time and training for facilitators, risk of failure and counter-effects, lack of diversity in the orientation programmes, absence of evaluation and follow-up (p. 180).

There are other challenges associated with new employee orientation. Based on impression made during initiat days of starting work in the new organization, 60% leave their new job in the first ten days and 33% look for new jobs within their first six months (Mahapatro, 2010). The following points have been discovered by researchers in relation to new employee anxiety "the first days on the job were anxious and disturbing ones, 'new

employee initiation' practices by peers intensified anxiety, anxiety interfered with the training process, turnover of newly hired employee was caused primarily by anxiety, and the new workers were reluctant to discuss problems with their supervisor" (Dessler, as cited in Aswathappa, 2013, p. 435). Entrusting development of orientation programme to human resource creates room for failure (Durai, 2010). Arthur (2006) says that lengthy sessions do harm to the concentration span of the new hires. Additionally, not catering for auditory and visual preferences can result in challenges during the orientation.

New Employees Orientation Benefits

New employee orientation can provide several benefits to an organization. According to Khugshal and Chaubey (2022), orientation strategy is among the leading strategies that organizations utilize to achieve their employee retention strategy. Ghani et al. (2022) say that conducting effective employee orientations help employers retain their employees. Chapman (2009) says that "employee orientation and socialization can be a useful aspect of a human resources strategy oriented toward increasing retention" (p. 126). Bhakta and Medina (2021)

say successful onboarding and orientation programs can lead to satisfaction and retention of employees (p. 169). According to Arthur (2010), when the orientation has provided some level of security to the new employees, their attention can be turned to global concerns, the organizational goals. They develop interest in knowing: "What is my role in helping to achieve these goals? Who are my competitors? How are we positioned in relation to our competitors? And what are the major external issues that affect us?" (Arthur, 2010, p. 294).

Other major benefits of new employee orientation are: new employee can have a favorable impression about the work and the organization, can help with anxiety and help new hire settle into their new job and be comfortable, dissemination of important information about the job and the organization thus helping the new employee to have more realistic expectation, save time and effort and lower start-up costs, improved new hire productivity, reduction in staff turnover and improve employment stability, manage conflicts caused by uncertainty and negative impressions, affirm organizational culture (Holt, as cited in Rao, 2008a).

Effective New Employees Orientation

Pre Orientation Session

Durai (2010) says that organizations should do everything possible to provide new hires with a positive environment even prior to the first day of orientation session. The new employees should not be left to feel alienated when they arrive (Durai, 2010). Their first day should be a memorable one marking a highlight of their career (Durai, 2010). According to Arthur (2006), some "employers work proactively at converting a person's new hire status to that of employee well before orientation begins" (p. 290). Some organizations do a home delivery of a welcome pack comprising of a checklist of topics that will be presented during the orientation session (Arthur, 2006). Arthur (2006) says other organizations send the new hire's new business cards thus beginning the psychological conversion (p.290). One organization has a box that they call Logo Lottery which contains a T-shirts, hats, mugs and other merchandise with company branding (Arthur, 2006). Arthur (2006) says about a week before orientation human resource and the departmental should undertake engagement with the new hire and the staff.

During Orientation Session

According to Rao (2008b), more emphasis should be put towards communicating the organizations values to the new employees. When organizations implement effective onboarding process, it is easier "to get new employees who are connected to their new jobs, their new coworkers, the company objectives and vision" (Pratiwi et al., 2018, p. 604).

Effective new employee orientation programmes aim at reducing anxiety of the new hires by empowering them with information on the job environment and supervisors (Aswathappa, 2013).

Aswathappa (2013) provides the following requisites for an effective orientation. (1) Prepare for new employees – HR and supervisor should prepare to welcome the new employee, (2) Determine information new employees want to know, (3) Determine how to present information, and (4) Completion of paperwork –Tax, insurance, and timecards are among the essential forms to be completed (Aswathappa, 2013).

Durai (2010) provides the following measures to help achieve effective orientation.

(1) Framing clear-cut objectives, (2) Determining the roles of departments and personnel, (3)

Assessing the new employee' information requirements accurately, and (4) Selecting appropriate methodology, techniques and programme content (Durai, 2010). The content is to be guided by the objectives of the programme and drive toward attaining those objectives (Durai, 2010). After designing the content, decide on the suitable delivery techniques. Some of the techniques that can be matched with the orientation content include video, flip charts, PowerPoint, printouts, classroom teaching, group discussions, role play and game. The choice of delivery techniques will ensure that the concentration of the participants is sustained throughout the programme (Durai, 2010). Pande and Basak (2015) say new employees can be stressed and nervous. To further help them settle easily, a buddy can be provided for each employee (Pande & Basak, 2015). Pande and Basak (2015) further say a buddy is someone who has been with the organization for a longer time and is suited to help new hires to learn the ropes. Wallace (2009) says that providing a good match between the new employee and a buddy helps with getting the new hire to ask questions that are not easy or comfortable to ask a manager.

Post Orientation Session

According to Durai (2010), development of appropriate orientation programme evaluation tools is necessary. This is more so because orientation is a continuous process in organizations (Durai, 2010). The evaluation tools should measure the cognitive, affective and the behavioral learning aspects (Durai, 2010). Organizations should "carry out necessary improvements in the objectives, content, delivery techniques and evaluation process" (Durai, 2010, p. 180). Aswathappa (2013) recommends administering a questionnaire to the new employees after some length of time to allow them to gain familiarity with the organization. As an alternative to questionnaires, human resource or supervisors can conduct interviews to get the employees opinions (Aswathappa, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study employed case study design. According to Nassaji (2020), qualitative research can be defined as a kind of inquiry that does not deal with numbers. A case study is defined as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a real-life context" (Simons, 2009, p. 21). Case study design allows the researcher to gain in- depth analysis of the case being studied, in this case the perception of organizational leaders and employees on the role of new employee orientation at a selected non-government organization in Gaborone, Botswana. The researcher interviewed the participants in their natural setting. The selected non-government organization is based in Gaborone, Botswana.

The bounded system under study was a non-government organization which consists of new and old employees across business units. The theoretical framework and the research questions assisted the study to yield reliable data related to perceptions of organizational leaders on the role of new employee orientation.

This study utilized purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used in conducting this study to involve participants who can provide the most relevant data related to the study (Yin, 2016). This sampling technique is typically used for qualitative research (Leavy, 2017). The sample population of this study included managing director of the selected non-government organization and permanent employees. The study purposively selected key participants who could provide rich data to help answer the research questions of the study.

The type of purposive sampling that was used in this study is heterogeneous sampling. In heterogeneous sampling, participants consist of individuals or groups who differ from each other in a major aspect (Holloway, 2016). Heterogeneous sampling enabled the study to appreciate perceptions held by non-government organizational leaders as well as employees in relation to new employee orientation.

Data was collected through interviews, document analysis guide, and observation to achieve triangulation. The transcribed data was shared with the participants for member checking and the findings together with the rest of the research work was shared with peers to achieve peer review. An audit trail of decisions made during the study has been archived in fulfilment of confirmability. The collected data was analyzed using Taguette software for qualitative research. Ethical considerations were followed in engaging with participants as well as seeking consent to publish this article.

Main Findings

The selected non-government organization has unconsciously made a strategic choice combination of informal, disjunctive, individual, and divestiture orientation as employees are left to learn on their own, pick up the organizational culture from others, and their characteristics modified to align with organizational. When the interviewees joined the organization, they found no predecessors making the new employees go through disjunctive orientation approach. The employees are oriented as and when they arrive as individuals.

Minor modifications are introduced to their characteristics to achieve alignment with the organization as employees indicated the seriousness of their work and the consequences that can result from non-adherence to expected responsibilities. These four strategic choices were made unconsciously by the selected non-government organization. Since orientation was never considered, there were no objectives, preparations, and initiatives to help new employees to feel welcome on their first day.

Information about the organization is readily available in the company portfolio. The information can help new employees gain appreciation of the organization they are joining. The portfolio has captured the organization's vision and mission. The lack of policies and processes in the organization can lead to inconsistency in recruitment, hiring and orienting the new employees. When the leader is not there, the recruitment cannot advance as there is no human resource structure.

Lack of structured feedback and evaluation tools make it difficult to measure

individuals' improvement objectively. It is difficult to identify other areas of improvement for the individuals and for the respective initiatives geared towards helping the new employees to reach high levels of performance fast.

The ability of the leader in the organization to engage different leadership styles makes it easy for new employees to settle and feel welcome. Being able to reflect on assigned tasks and the need to clarify and remove ambiguity provides direction and guidance while new employees are new to their job. Showing understanding and giving guidance on work related and private matters has helped the new employees to feel welcome and be motivated.

CONCLUSION

Both employees and the leader perceive the role of new employee orientation to be very important in helping the newcomer settle in and feel part of the family. Though all participants said there is no orientation in the organization, from the interactions and the

documents reviewed, there is orientation happening with room for improvement. The organization has a combination of informal and disjunctive orientation strategies. The employees experienced challenges in the initial days of joining the organization. The challenges arose from being assigned tasks that were new to them and had not been shown how to do them. This may have resulted from the submission by the employees saying they have the skills required to do the work outlined in the list of responsibilities. From the

leader's analysis, this submission could have been a result of the employees wanting to secure a job. Other challenges were experienced by the organization in terms of poor quality of work when preparing tenders. Orientation has a major contribution in mitigating challenges at this

stage and helping the employees reach high levels of performance expected from them at the earliest opportunity.

There are some benefits that have been realized from the little introduction given to the employees on their first day. The read-out of list of responsibilities and the content of the employment contract have created an environment where employees respect each other and respect the organizations' property. This helped with alignment of expectations much early. The organization had grappled with abuse of company resources with the previous employees. The leader realized the benefits of going through the rules and regulations at thatearly stage.

Both employees and the leader have identified improvements that can help new hires who will join the organization in future. This comes after realizing the importance of orientation. Some of the initiatives they came up with include having lunch together as a team and conducting training for the new employees. These initiatives will go a long way in reducing anxiety among new employees. It will provide a chance to give instructions that help the employees navigate through the challenges and tasks associated with their work. The leader will also get some space to focus on other aspects related to business development and engage supportive leadership style. The employees and the leader appreciated the role of leaders in new employee orientation and how their presence during orientation can help remove fear and create a welcoming atmosphere in the workplace. Employees indicated that orientation is key as it facilitates introductions to the organization, departments, services offered, and colleagues.

Recommendations

The study made some recommendations for improving new employee orientation at the selected non-government organization. These recommendations focus in the three phases pre-orientation, during orientation, and post orientation session.

Pre-Orientation

Pre-orientation recommendations are: (1) develop organizational values, (2) introduce human resource in the organizational structure, (3) develop and implement recruitment, selection, and orientation policies and processes, (4) review existing undocumented orientation strategies and processes, retains what is working and benefiting the organization and document, (5) develop new employee orientation objectives and initiatives, (6) compile materials to be shared with the new employees before their first day excluding responsibilities, (7) inform existing employees when a new employee is coming to join the organization, (8) prepare for the orientation well in advance, (9) conducts needs assessment to ensure all relevant information is prepared for sharing during orientation, (10) plan

information presentation and room setup, and (11) prerecord standard messages in a video clip that can be played during orientation sessions and sent electronically to employees.

During Orientation

Recommendations to consider for during orientation session are: (1) communicate the organizational values, vision, and mission, (2) provide new employees access to company profile, (3) arrange a meeting room with round tables to provide a relaxed environment, (4) provide time for the new employees to complete paperwork that is necessary before commencing work, (5) formalize the buddy system to encourage more questions and comments from new employees,

and (6) exploit social media like WhatsApp to share information (text, audio, and video) to convert from new employee status.

Post Orientation

Post orientation recommendations are: (1) develop and implement feedback mechanisms, (2) collect feedback during and post orientation sessions and implement feedback suggestions for improvement.

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