Comparison between the modern and Islamic concept of team building

Hafiz Muhammad Sufyan Khalid   (Corresponding Author)

Department of management sciences, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

Mob: +92-300-8089899 Email: Sufyan.chaudary@gmail.com, Sufyan_chaudary@yahoo.com

Hafiz Muhammad Abdullah Shaiq

Department of Management Sciences, Szabist Islamabad, Pakistan

Mob: +92-334-7071759 Email: Shaiq_cresentsmile@hotmail.com

Abstract

This paper tries to describe the different concepts of team building. It shows the Comparison between the modern and Islamic concepts of team building, function, norms and values and relationships among the team members and some differences. This paper also discusses the main issues and conflicts among the members of the group and organization. In the last section this paper describes the dissimilarities between the modern and Islamic function of the groups.

Design/Methodology

In this study I have analyzed and interpret the literature to discuss the Islamic and modern point of view about human team building.

Findings

This paper tries to conclude some comparisons between the Islamic and modern concept of team building

Key words

Team building, teams, work groups, organizations.

Introduction

In this era when there are many changes happened in the market and also the competition among the organizations has increased. The changes are necessary in this regard. Teams are playing important role to face the different challenges of the current environment. It is well known saying that one is one and individual is considered to be eleven. When two or more people working at any task, they can get better results than an individual. Now the organizations are moving towards the concept of team building. Team is basically when people come from different backgrounds and work at a single task. All have different norms and values and culture, so working together heaving different background is a difficult task. The leaders play an important role in this regard. To understand the working in the team first we have to know what team or team building is.

1. What is Team building?

Team building is basically the phenomenon that people came from different places and work together for a single purpose or to achieve some goals. It is the process in which an organization joined some workers to fulfill any task. An organization is also a team and there can be teams in the organization. This phenomenon is called the team building between the team. It is also formed for improving the process of team (Heap, 1996).

Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995) cited in Castka, (2001) that individual is the basic element for knowledge interaction, while both are agree that with interaction of individuals in team's knowledge is spread through the organizations. Teamwork is the core element for this spread of knowledge.

2. Why and how to form teams?

There are some reasons for building the team in organizations. These are listed below

1. Getting work done in a good manner

2. Improving the communication

3. Building the good relations among the team members

4. Increasing the profit

5. Motivating the members

6. Improve the skills of the workers

Basically the purpose of the team building is to increase the abilities of the workers to work together in a group more effectively. Why we appoint assistant managers in the organization? The answer is simple that to manage the work more efficiently and more effectively (Rainey, 2009).

Some teams are built officially by the leaders for completing any task or improving the work and some teams are built informally. Even in informal groups, members decide how to do work and how to resolve the conflicts.

3. Different types of team building

There are different types of team building that are building for performing different tasks. Some of them build for improving the communication, some for completing the task effectively and some for achieving the goals. Some groups build for the benefits of the employees, and to resolve the different conflicts regarding worker's issues. These types of team building are called the informal team. Examples of informal team building are the worker unions.

4. Who made and control the teams?

Now the question is that who made and control the teams? This is based on the team that what type of team is. In official teams the upper level managers made the teams and the lower level managers control the teams. The duty of the manager is to control the team and motivate them and get work effectively. Manager will be the responsible person for everything done within the group. In some places there can be a facilitator that evaluates the team's performance. For controlling the team, manager should be more active then members. He knows that how to get work done from others. He must have the leadership abilities. Manager should know that how to motivate the employees and how to resolve any issue among the workers. Manager must have the ethical value and norms, because he or she has to deal with human beings.

5. Norms and values of the team

Once the groups are form than the values and norms of the group also develop. Some researchers found the norms and values of the group that workers shared. Some psychologist found the problem in the group.

Manager must have the leadership ability, because every person has its own thinking and the manager must know that what type of work is suitable for whom Rainey, (2009). When a person works in a group, his moral values grow up automatically. He teaches to collaborate with others and make relationships with others. His living standards will be high automatically.

6. Advantages and Disadvantages of team work

Group work has advantage on individual. Work in a group is easier then as an individual, because when you work in a group then the chances of mistake is lesser than as an individual. Group has the ability of more talent, view points and ideas. As an individual you are one who has the all responsibility, but in a group the responsibility divided with others. Large group has the advantage on small group, because work is divided in more peoples Heap, (1996). Where there are advantages of group some disadvantages can also be found in the groups. The structure of the group also influence the group activities, like people come from different backgrounds and different place. They feel difficulty to interact with each other. Communication is a big issue in this regard. It is the era of globalization and in organizations people come from different place, the cultures are different from one another. In this regard the manager must consider that where, when and how groups can perform and in which conditions Gordon, (2002). All the pros and cones of the group are due to the skills of the manager. Manager can resolve many conflicts with his good communication skills. Team work will not only promote the sense of friendship, norms and values but also transfers to all the customers and clients who do business with the organization. This shows the results that team building is truly amazing. Team building gives the less stress and greater enjoyment while completing the task at hand (Kleiner, H. Brian and Twomey, Karen, 1996).

7. Groupthink

Groupthink is a process in which decision is made by all the members of the group, but the result is a poor and unchallenged decision. When all members of the group made the decisions than nobody can challenge it, either it is good or bad (Janis, 1971).

Janis gave some suggestion to managers to avoid the groupthink. In these steps the manager can take the help from the members to avoid group thinking.

1. You must accept the criticism of your own actions

2. Invite outsiders in the discussion

3. Assign one work problem to many groups

4. Break down the group into two sub-groups

5. Take some time to review the threats to the decisions and to overcome the weaknesses

6. In major decisions you must hold last chance, which members can made their reservations

8. Communication in the organization

Graber, (2003); Pandey and Garnett, (2006) cited in Rainey, (2009) that Communication between the group plays an important role. If there is a good communication in the group than there will be less chances of conflict arising. Communication is a big source to avoid the conflicts and many problems in the group. There are two types of communication in the group. One is the horizontal and other is the vertical communication. Horizontal communication is among the members of the group and vertical/hierarchal communication is between the members and the leader or manager. The assessment of communication is

very important in the group. In this regard you can assess the communication with the help of questionnaire. Managers have to rotate the questionnaire in the group to ask about the satisfaction, procedure, performance and environment in the group. After the response of the questions you can asses and audit the group performance and the level of communication. Other way to assess the communication is to track the message in the group and check that who communicate with whom and why.

8.1 Communication problems

There are many problems in communication within the group and the organization. The main issue is to understand or to take it positively. The problem is that how you perceive the information. The communication is more difficult in bureaucratic or public organizations then in democratic organizations. In bureaucratic organizations there is a complex structure, and to communicate with your boss is a big issue for any employee.

8.2 Barriers in effective communication

There are also some barriers in effective communication. First is that when receiver of the communication don't reply. When there is a lick of feed back in the communication. Second barrier is, the noise in the communication, when there is a interference in the communication. Third problem is the misuse of language and the last is the deficiencies in listening. There are some other barriers between the groups. When there is a problem of win-or-lose between the groups. When they use the threats, and when they exploit other group's benefits.

9. Conflicts and their types

There are many types of conflicts in the group. Some conflicts are between the people, some are between groups and some others. Different types of conflicts occur differently. Conflicts can range horizontally between the managers or members and vertically between the managers and members. These are the main conflicts which occur between the higher level and lower level managers, for example the conflicts between the managers and labors (Rainey, 2009).

9.1 Basis of conflicts

Basically the most of the conflicts occur due to the difference in culture, values, goal structures and tasks. It is because everyone has its different background. So to work together it is very difficult to understand others. In equality is another base of conflicts. When there is inequality in the group than there must be some conflicts. Power status is also a big source of conflicts. When you give the power to lower level employee to the higher, it will create conflicts. Not involving in decision making process is also creating conflicts. When you take decisions without involving all the members or without taking in confidence, it will create many problems in fulfilling that task.

9.2 Outcomes of conflicts

There are many aggressive outcomes of conflicts which created the bad impact on the organizations. If you ignore the conflicts it will create many others. These types of conflicts create dissatisfaction, absenteeism, frustration, high turnover and poor performance among employees. If poorly managed the conflicts it will damage the organization. Managers have to face many difficulties in communication, to deal with peoples, improving working process and to resolve conflicts while working in the organizations.

10. Islamic concept of team building

Muslim state had unique history in the formation and evolution of groups in society. Muslims in various part of world consider as a part of inclusive group known as "ummah". Ummah depicts as a community where equality of members and interaction among members is highly regarded. In the history of Islam, the basic reason of group formation was the necessity of building a team or group under adverse circumstance to cope up with situation. Muslims were divided into two social groups Al-mahajeerien and Ansar. Islamic teaching stresses on individuality and conformity at a same time. These two qualities contributed to the formation of groups and to interpret the role of individual and groups in Muslim societies Ali, (2005). The practices of pilgrimage and alms-giving emphasize on the importance of group. Personal responsibilities and ability to perform prayer individually affirms individualism. In the early period of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave more emphasis on team work. For example the construction of Masjid-e-Nabvi, battles of Tabooq, Ohad and Bader. We are heaving many best examples of team work from the early period of Islam. After the victory of Madina there were many examples of team work. Unlike the Europe, Muslim societies did not develop tightly closed rank and classes. There was flexibility and class mobility in the society.

10.1 Team building from Quran and Hadith

According to Quran Muslims have been forced to be united and don't be dispersed, as in groups they will remain powerful and save from the evil. (alimran: 102). This paper discusses many Ahadees and many remaining about team building. Many battles of the early Muslim history, like battle of Khandaq, construction of Kaabaa, and the process of puttind Hajr-e-Aswad. These all examples show the team work in Islam.

11. Types of groups

Goitien, (1967) cited in Ali, (2005) said that In Islam professional occupation was not the only base of group formation. Goitien identified four factors which define the status and membership in group. These factors are origin of family, religiosity, business practices and generosity. He classified five groups among Muslim which are: upper class, businessmen, masters' artisans, urban craftsmen and peasants.

Imam Ali, as an administrator, defined several group of society: the soldiers, public and private secretaries, administrator of justices, social workers, tax collectors, craftsmen and poor.

Both classification of society emphasize on the role of individual in society and profession. Political, social, religious and educational affiliations are the common basis of group formation.

12. Function of groups

Major focus of the Muslim society is on personal relations. Relationship seems to be complex but communication and interaction makes it easier and remarkably simple. People came from different background in that network but not seem to be different. Even business transactions are conducted in the context of personal relations. Whether a person emphasis on business or humanity, it will not affect the business transaction. The relations and consequences are both focused in Islam. "On who people are in relation to others, rather than where they are in set of life structure, and what consequences have befallen others by their acts" Rosen, 2002 cited in Ali, 2005.

There are two types of group; formal and informal which are shown below

According to Gibson formal group are design deliberately but informal groups are evolved without any deliberate effort. In Muslim societies, formal groups can also be evolved as a result of dialogue.

12.1 Functions of informal group

In Muslim societies, informal groups are common in organization. The existence of informal group shows the emphasis of Islamic society on personal relations. In organization, the existence of informal group both act as facilitator and obstacle. Some functions of informal groups are listed below:

- It helps to reduce the fear and uncertainty of newcomers in organization. When he joins the existing group, he became familiarize with the norms and values of the organization. One can attain the sense of power by joining group. He can face the challenges easily as a member of group.

- The informal group increases the socialization, self-respect and self-esteem of members. In Islamic setting socialization take much time but at the workplace it needs more concentration because it shows the sense of belongingness to the work group.

- The informal group enables the member to understand the politics which is exercising in the organization. The membership in the group is open to every member whether they are from different backgrounds and ranks. This thing will generate a better understanding about the nature of politics in the organization and also sharpen their skills in dealing with others.

- These types of group create awareness about job opportunities. In this case groups place an important role to communicate its members about existing work opportunities.

- It strengthens the spirituality and commitment to the noble causes. The members of group discuss religious and political issue in free time and offer prayers together.

These groups are beneficiary for members but sometime it creates conflict in the organizations. Especially in the case when group think that organizational policies are not good for them. These groups are helpful in situations that are highly dependent and complex.

12.2 Functions of formal group

Formal group are deliberately designed by management to accomplish complex task and to achieve organizational goals. Position or ranks in the organization is the basis of membership. Formal group can also be defined as hierarchal or task groups. Formal group give the impression that upper management is participative and it strengthen the formal and informal role of manager. Several functions of formal group are:

- When the operational activities and task are complex then formal group are designed to accomplish these task effectively. By the division of labor, organization facilitates the daily operations.

- Formal group can also be formed to legitimize the decision or action taken by senior management. Management already taken the decision but they formed a group or committee to approve the action and check the validity of decision or action. This shows the manager consult the committee before taking decision and depicts the consultative environment of organization.

- Formal group motivates the employees. Whenever new techniques introduce in the organization, group is formed to train employees. Group train them and share their responsibilities in the start. This gives the sense to the employee that he is valuable to the organization.

- When new strategic decision implemented in the organization, it require support and acceptance of employee across the organization. So management designs the formal group of representative of various departments. This group motivates and influences the employees and makes them agree to implement decisions.

- The activities of organization are closely monitored by political and social agencies. Senior manager form groups and committees to make decisions on the issue which are critical. In this way senior management shift its responsibilities and blame, in case of objections, to others.

- Managers have to mobilize the members of group throughout the organization behind a new goal or mission especially when there is crisis in the organization or at a critical turning point. When the organization is at critical turning point, in other societies, member taken it impersonal but in the Muslim societies' member takes it personally.

- Management should include the dissatisfied employees in the prestigious group and involve them in the decision making process. This practice will help to reduce the dissatisfaction level among the employee. In Muslim societies, it is common practice to include the opponents in the group and then try to solve the conflicts by personal negotiations.

13. Factors affecting group effectiveness

There are many factors which influence the group performance and organizational goals. These factors can easily affect the functioning of the group whether these are formal or informal group. The ideal no of group members are almost eight and you can improve that figure with the nature of task. Team performance is

highest when the group members are limited for maximum interchange (Harris, R. Philip & Harris, G.Kevin,. 1996).

13.1 Socio-cultural factor
In Islamic society, there are many assumptions regarding organization. The primary assumptions are (Ali, 2005).

- Employees are motivated by standardize and clear rules.

- Employees should be treated equally with justices, kindness and mercy.

- Organization has to fulfill the interest of society and work for the well being of community.

Formal group are controlled by the upper management and strict rules and regulation are followed to accomplish the assigned task. To maintain the effectiveness of group and to improve the performance of group, management should provide clear guidelines and directions to utilize the resources. Management align personal, organizational and societal goals and use organization as an instrument for society well being in long run.

13.2 Cultural factor
The crucial determinant in understanding the group function is cultural factor. While addressing any problem, first develop a framework to get the core understanding of problem then plan to solve it step by step. Divide the major problem into interrelated sub-problems. Solve the one sub problem then move toward the next interrelated problem until reach to the solution of the whole problem. But in Islamic society this approach is consider as time and resources wastage.

14. Self-censorship
In Muslim societies, there is tendency of strong personal relationship among members of group. So they do not criticize other on their mistakes and don't inform other their weakness. But in long term, this will adversely affect the performance of group.

15. Infatuation with ideal
This is another factor which can affect the performance of group. This is common in Islamic societies, any deviation from ideal is considered as injustices, lack of morality and corruption. This feeling can motivate the members to take corrective step and to improve society. But in the adverse situation, it will cause frustration and dissatisfaction among members. This factor or conflict is not common in western societies. They are only concerned with reality and don't take ideal as an obsession.

Discussion and Conclusion

Comparison between the modern and Islamic functions of team building

There are some dis-similarities between modern and Islamic functions of tem building:

- In western societies, group is considered as a mean of socialization among member of society but Islamic societies are built on the socialization.

- Western and Muslim societies can be differentiated on the basis of leader's approach towards members. In Muslim societies, whenever conflicts and critical issues arises then managers appeals the member by personal relationships. He handled the member by emotions and friendship and influences them to move on. In contrast, in western societies, managers deal personal and business issues separately.

- In Muslim societies, when crisis arises. Employees take it personally and put their all effort to resolve the issue. But in western societies, members take these issues impersonal.

- In Muslim societies, individuals show their disapprovals by doing protest.

This paper tries to discuss the nature and types of groups in modern and Islamic societies. The primary functions of both the sides are similar. There are some functions which differentiated the modern and Islamic concept of team building. This paper helps to understand the team building and different issues of the teams in the organizations. The groups in the Muslim societies are placed at the centre of the social activities. Islam tells us the relationships among the people and also differentiates what is personal and what is business. There are some verses and Ahadees about the team work.

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