Full Length Research Paper

Hello! Ethiopian managers, be positive

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The purpose of this research paper was to find out the Ethiopian managers behavioural patterns and managerial competencies. The study explored this point from two dimensions (employees' view point and the managers' view point). Relevant literature reviews on behavioural patterns and managerial abilities with specific emphasis on the behaviours of managers and their competencies were made. Structured questionnaires and sporty personal interviews were administered to 500 managers and 2000 employees of Ethiopian corporate organizations located in the Capital City, Addis Ababa. Two types of questionnaires were prepared, one for measuring behavioural patterns and the other for measuring managerial competencies of the managers under observation. The questionnaires were administered to both the employees and managers. The survey data were analyzed by using statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and microsoft excel software packages. The finding of this research showed that the responses from the managers and the employees with regard to the managerial behaviours and competencies were strongly contrastive for both the variables measured (managerial behaviour and managerial competence). The managers were found to view themselves as behaviourally positive (assertive) and managerially competent while the employees were found to view their managers as behaviourally either submissive or aggressive and managerially incompetent. The contrasting view of the managers and employees on the behavioural patterns and managerial competencies of the management community would establish a foundation based on which strategic corrective action plans can be put in place for the future. These corrective plans include skill development plans and behaviour oriented trainings. This paper puts forward thoughtful views of the behavioral patterns and managerial competencies of Ethiopian managers. It is analyzed both from employees' view point and managers' view point with the purpose of providing objective data to help design action plans that will motivate the prevalence of appropriate managerial behaviour and competencies.

Key words: Submissive behaviour, aggressive behaviour, positive behaviour, managerial competence.

INTRODUCTION

In the present day's highly volatile environment, where survival and success are challenging, organizations in general and managers in particular need to adopt a right blend of strategic planning and implementation to achieve organizational goals. Employees are the better sources of information for evaluating their managers' behavioural patterns and managerial competence levels; although, it is still arguable that there is no comprehensive chance to get fair opinion from any grade of employees. Organizations exist for achieving certain objectives. These objectives could be profit making or giving service to the public. Organizations are groups of people who are pulled together to carry out the desired objectives. These groups of people need to be coached and directed in certain ways to be effective. Managers play the role of

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coaching and leading the entire team.

The role of managers in leading or coaching their subordinates (managerial functions) have significant effect on the achievement of desired objectives. In the case of Ethiopia, the market economy is in its infant stage as it came to existence only after the downfall of the military regime. While majority of the business and service organizations are still under the ownership of the government, gradually, transformation policies are being introduced, that allow participation of the private and multi-national organizations into specific sectors of the economy.

While the participation of these private and multinational organizations are expected to introduce improved behavioural and managerial practices, the long established negative cultural values and the predominance of government ownership in major economic areas are still barriers that need to be fought for long time to come. The existing cultural values do not promote such things like: time consciousness, team spirit in the work environment and defined feedback mechanism among the employees and managers. On the contrary, it encourages autocratic and feudalistic behavioural tendencies. The prevalence of these cultural values limits the effort for continuous improvement by managers.

Typically, human beings are identified to portray three forms of behaviours: Submissiveness, aggressiveness, and assertiveness (positive). As the name suggests, submissive behaviour limits one's actions to convinced thin limits. Such people often perform tasks that they do not wish to do but are silently offended of the same. Aggressive people correspond with others in an 'uncivil-tone' and encroach on others' rights. It is barely the positive people who converse or set up for themselves or others without diminishing someone else's rights. Thus, it is believed that, positive behaviour advances effective associations, though it may not always assure success. The study aim is to assess these facts within the Ethiopian context based on data collected from both the managers and the employees. This is believed to uncover certain insights that would be of use to the managers of Ethiopian organizations in their endeavour for improvement.

Types of human behaviour

Submissive behaviour

People low in self-possession, consider that they are amateurish, their needs are not valuable and they deserve no consideration or concern. They have a propensity to put down decision to fortune or to others. They hope to get all that they want but expect others to guess and even arrange their needs for them. Generally, they show the way to miserable life since-'all peripheral dependence is sorrow'. This type of people show an idiosyncratic body language of: shy posture; head bent to one side; avoid eye contact; coughing tensely; looking down, etc. Being of 'self-depreciating' nature, they work in order to avoid unpleasant situations, conflicts, and short-term confrontation; take no accountability for their actions; remain exposed to exploitation by others; remain lonely and suffer in silence and, in the process, they often do not get what they would like (Das, 1998).

Managers with submissive behaviour are very frequently creating some kind of inconvenience to their peers, subordinates and customers. This creates relentless state of fatigue, annoyance, culpability, irritation, drawing limited respect from them as they are of no use to them either in directing them or in improving their performance. Such kind of managers can be pressed over by everyone including the customers, peers and subordinates and therefore, provide little administrative and moral support to their subordinates, who stick to organizational requirements. In a positive side, this class of managers most of the times has an excellent capability particularly in conceptual thinking, planning, organizational and coordinating skills and mostly these are hardworking people. Only they lack the confidence towards their abilities. If they are provided with support, they can still have confidence in them by covering their deficiency with the shore up of their hard work. These categories of managers are mostly sensitive people who do not want to give any pains to others.

Aggressive behaviour

In daily language, the word "aggressive" is use to describe a person who may be successful in business, in sales, in sports and a variety of activities. Spoken this way, the word "aggressive" generally signifies a positive personality trait. However, in the field of psychology, the word "aggression" is largely confined to hostile behaviour that has harmful consequences. The adjective form "aggressive" generally signifies a positive activity, while the noun form of the word, "aggression," is generally used to indicate something that has a negative outcome, like destructiveness, violence and crime (Franken, 2008). "Aggression is a form of social behaviour within everyone's repertoire. Accordingly, attention needs to be focused on the features that serve to keep its manifestations within acceptable bounds" (Rutter, 1985).

Managers with this behaviour utter views/feelings in a way that penalizes, intimidates or puts the other person down. They feel sanctimonious, controlling and superior. These kinds of managers are often close to people who are working and pointing their work whether that may be right or wrong and using a loud tone to highlight/point the work. They do not respect others' rights. They have only one statement that is: "Do what I say or leave the organization!" (Baron, 1996).

Aggressive managers are acknowledged to gain a

sense of dominance out of aggression. It allows them to get the anger off their chest. By being aggressive, they feel that they are implementing control over the branch and believe that they get what they want, at others' expenses. They fail to realize that in the process of being aggressive, their future transactions with others become more difficult and they will meet hostile responses.

Relaxing and unwinding become a distant dream for such aggressive managers even after they overcome their anxiety in a particular situation. Aggressive managers make their colleagues feel embarrassed/ devalued/hurt; make them unfriendly/angry; offended, troubled/panic the aggressor; and mutely work for revenge. The net result is poor organizational producti-vity. These kinds of managers centralize power in them and take all decisions without consulting the peers or subordinates. These dominate and drive the group through coercion and command. This class of managers loves power and never delegates authority, gives orders and expects the subordinates to follow them willingly and unquestioningly and uses carrot and stick approach to direct the employees. Some times just to cover their inefficiency, these managers use their voice to control the activity to cover up their egoistic nature (Baron, 1996).

Assertive or positive behaviour

Albert and Emmons (1971) define assertive behaviour as an open and flexible behaviour, genuinely concerned with the rights of others, and at the same time able to establish very well one's own rights. Most important positive traits are: courage, goodness, honesty, truthfulness, etc. These traits are virtues because they further have altruistic ends (Roback, 2000). According to Andrews et al. (1994), being assertive includes the following:

(I) Valuing yourself and believing that you have the right. to express your opinions and get your needs met.
(ii) Being willing to share your-self with others, rather than holding everything inside.
(iii) Respecting the rights and needs of others.
(iv) Being able to choose how to respond to people or situations.
(v) Feeling okay about yourself, your needs, and actions.

A positive manager can tell people what he wants, and deal with them confidently without threatening them. A positive manager exhibits the ability to cope with other's manipulation and criticism without responding to counter-criticism with hurt feelings, guilt or shame. He will make requests and state points of view in a confident, straight forward manner without getting loud, annoyed or angry even with the union leaders. He cooperates with others in solving problems at an adult level so that both the parties can share the thinking process and get most of what they want (Alberti and Emmons, 1971).

Being assertive does not mean that a manager cannot freely and effectively refute, support or enhance others' views. It simply enables him to say 'yes' or 'no' or 'may be'. Thus, assertiveness means voicing one's opinion, observation or concern without diminishing others' rights. That is how a positive manager always remains in control of himself while drawing the full attention of all those with whom he interacts. This ability of a positive manager to communicate with others so as to draw them in and enlist their support helps the manager achieve his objectives effectively.

Managers who want to deliver best to their organization always opt for assertiveness training. In assertiveness training the person learns the importance of believing in fairness and good relations. The success of assertive-ness training lies in several additional factors, but the most important is to believe in maintaining a relationship. That means suppressing volatile hostility, and replacing it with behaviour and words which claim what you want (Alberti and Emmons, 1994).

Managerial competencies

Modern day professionally managed companies no longer recruit only the stereotypical male managers; they look for intelligent, highly motivated people with the ability to create and sustain a vision of how an organization can succeed. The 21st century manager must apply critical thinking skills and creativity to business challenges, steer change, and manage an increasingly diverse workforce (Boone and Kurtz, 2003).

You cannot be an effective manager by systematically ignoring some aspect of the problems which surround you (Griseri, 2002). Though, the similarities that pervade most organizational settings are the phases in the management process, important differences include the emphasis, sequencing, and implications of each phase (Ghospal and Bartlett, 1995).

Managerial functions are general administrative duties that need to be carried out in virtually all productive organizations (Kreitner, 2001). Thus, modern day professional managers' job is complex and multidimensional requiring great synchronization of both functional abilities with the conceptual, human and technical skills (Daft, 2003).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data were used in this research. The primary data were collected through the use of structured questionnaires and interview while the secondary data were obtained from literatures and documents. This research work considered only the corporate organizations located within Addis Ababa as they are assumed to form a clustered sample that can represent all other organizations outside of Addis Ababa.

Table 1. Managers view of their own behavioral patterns.

Parameters	Submissive		Aggressive		Positive		Total
	Figures	**%**	**Figure**	**%**	**Figures**	**%**	
Speech	75	15.00	125	25.00	300	60.00	500
Look	50	10.00	50	10.00	400	80.00	500
Manner	75	15.00	150	30.00	275	55.00	500
Behavior	45	9.00	100	20.00	355	71.00	500
Treatment of rights	60	12.00	110	22.00	330	66.00	500
Image	25	5.00	150	30.00	325	65.00	500
Average percentage		11.00		22.83		66.17	100%

Sample size

A sample size of 500 managers and 2000 employees were selected for this research from an estimated population of about 5,000 managers of corporate sector organizations and estimated population of 50,000 employees working for corporate organizations.

Sample frame and limitations

The sample frame for this study was only those employees and managers of the corporate organizations located in Addis Ababa. This research survey was administered only with middle and top level managers. Lower level managers were not considered.

Data collection

Two types of structured questionnaires were prepared and distributed to both managers and employees selected on convenience basis. The first type contained questions under six headings: speech, look, manner, behaviour, treatment of rights and image to measure the behavioural tendencies and the second part contained questions related to six managerial functional parameters: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, and controlling to measure the managerial competencies of Ethiopian managers. The entire questionnaire was made available for respondents in both English and local language (Amharic) to give a greater clarity and clear understanding.

Data analysis

Collected data were analyzed based on the consistency with research questions and objectives and the understanding and judgments of the researchers. The collected data were summarized, coded and manipulated by using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research paper was to find out Ethiopian managers' behavioural patterns and managerial competencies. The study explored this point both from the employees' and the managers' point view. The analysis and presentation of the findings were organized under the two areas of interest: behavioural patterns and managerial competence.

Behavioral patterns

Summary of the data collected through the survey questionnaire from the managers and the employees are presented below. The responses from the managers and employees are shown separately. The questions included in the questionnaire to measure this variable (behavioural pattern) were: speech, look, manner, behaviour, treatment of rights, and image portrayed by the managers.

The summarized statistics in Tables 1 and 2 shows a contrasting response of managers and employees. While 66.17% of the managers rated themselves to portray positive (assertive) behaviour, the employees' response on the other hand showed the opposite. According to the employees, only 20.33% of their managers portray positive behaviour. The same contrastive scenarios were observed with respect to the other two behavioural patterns. Summary of the managers' responses showed 11 - 22.83% for submissive and aggressive behaviours, respectively.

Observation of the employees' responses on the other hand showed 33.50 - 46.17% for submissive and aggressive behaviours of managers, respectively.

Submissive behavioral pattern

The data collected from the employees showed that, the managers classified as possessing submissive behaviours from the employee's point of view were found to be fond of doing the following: speaking unclearly, looking somewhere when talking with people, apologizing most of the times, escaping mood from the responsibilities, surrendering their own rights when requested by their peers, possessing a doormat image (every body touches it just to remove their dust).

In the researchers' casual interviews, some employees felt that submissive behaviour emanates from lack of confidence in the managers' technical, managerial, conceptual capacities, lack of communication skills, inferiority complex, shyness, which make the core group people to defame them. The core group people treated manager's consultation as a sign of incompetence to deal

Table 2. Employees view of manager's behavioral pattern.

Parameters	Submissive		Aggressive		Positive		Total
	Figures	**%**	**Figure**	**%**	**Figures**	**%**	
Speech	500	25.00	900	45.00	600	30.00	2000
Look	660	33.00	800	40.00	540	27.00	2000
Manner	660	33.00	900	45.00	440	22.00	2000
Behavior	700	35.00	1060	53.00	240	12.00	2000
Treatment of rights	800	40.00	1080	54.00	120	6.00	2000
Image	700	35.00	800	40.00	500	25.00	2000
Average percentage		33.50		46.17		20.33	100%

with problems and led to slandering them in front of others. Employees also indicated that because of the basic nature of the Ethiopians, that is, friendliness and helpfulness, they express sympathy towards this kind of managers and ready to extend their cooperation at any extent.

Aggressive behavioral pattern

Analysis of the data collected from both the employees and managers showed that, the possible reasons for this kind of behaviours by managers could be associated with the following attributes: cover-up of their inabilities, shouting on others without proper reason, demonstrating their power and authority, believing they are superior, speaking loudly while communicating to subordinates, scolding without any specific reason, staring at others, fault finding, always in a mood to fight with others.

This kind of managers adores power and never delegates authority but blames others for the failure in completion of job. Aggressive managers are always in a mood to dictate terms and conditions for every employee in the organization but most of the times this leads to conflict with employees. These managers were suffering with ego problems and some times this led to conflict among subordinates. Apart from this, some of the employees believed that, aggression is required to quickly complete the work and when managing less competent subordinates.

Positive behavioral pattern

The attributes that were analyzed to express this managerial behaviour in the Ethiopian context include: positive thinking like acting normal, cool and straight to the point while giving oral or written instructions to their employees, straight and polite towards workers, concerned about employees' rights, ready to safeguard the employees and take decisions in consultation with peers, superiors, and subordinates.

These managers were portrayed by the employees like a pillar, which offer extraordinary support to all classes of employees to stand in their situation. They encourage freedom of thinking, and expression among all levels of employees. Ethiopian employees strongly believe in these managers' working style as well as their capabilities in building team work, focus for result, personal effectiveness, business understanding and customer orientation. While the analysis of the managers responses show the majority of them to fall under this behavioural pattern, the employee's response rather showed a discouraging 20.33% of managers fall within this behavioural pattern. This is therefore, an area of insight that requires the manager's community to give prompt attention.

Managerial competence

Summary of the data collected through the survey questionnaire to measure this variable is presented. The responses from the managers and employees are shown separately. The questions included in the questionnaire to measure managerial competence were the manager's competence in: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, and controlling.

The contrasting results that existed for the managers behaviours when viewed from employees and managers' view point were repeated in the analysis of the competence of the Ethiopian managers in Tables 3 and 4. While the manager's response analyzed showed that 84% of the managers viewed themselves as competent, the employee's response failed to support their view. The employee's response showed a discouraging 26.93% of managers as competent and the remaining 73.07% were classified as incompetent.

Competent managers

The qualities of the competent managers described by the employees showed: sound planning, careful analysis of all the influential elements, superb integration with other functional responsibility, confident designing and introduction of organizational structure, rational delegation of responsibility and authority, placing the right staff in the

Table 3. Managers' view on their competence.

Managerial functional parameter	Competent		Incompetent		Total
	Figure	%	Figures	%	
Planning	430	86.00	70	14.00	500
Organizing	450	90.00	50	10.00	500
Staffing	350	70.00	150	30.00	500
Directing	425	85.00	75	15.00	500
Coordinating	390	78.00	110	22.00	500
Controlling	475	95.00	25	5.00	500
Over all result in percentage		84.00		16.00	100%

Table 4. Employees view on managers' competence.

Managerial functional parameter	Competent		Incompetent		Total
	Figure	%	Figures	%	
Planning	360	18	1640	82	2000
Organizing	860	43	1140	57	2000
Staffing	280	14	1720	86	2000
Directing	332	16.6	1668	83.4	2000
Coordinating	720	36	1280	64	2000
Controlling	680	34	1320	66	2000
Over all result in percentage		26.93		73.07	

right job. These managers were observed in the view of the employees to show positive attitude in co-ordinating both intra-departmental and inter-departmental actions with careful planning and communication. These managers established well and rationally defined standards for every activity, introduction of most sophisticated and rationale methods for measuring performance of every class of employee and also viewed to possess conceptual, technical, administrative and functional capabilities.

Incompetent managers

Some of the attributes that were collected from the employees for these categories of managers were stated as follows: Lack of forward looking, failing in estimating the various premises which will severely affect the planning process, lack of integrating and analyzing skills related to planning, poor organizational structure, irrational process to delegate responsibility and authority, contemptible understanding of employees' skills, knowledge, abilities, dexterities, experience, educational, cultural and social background; wrong placement of employees, It is belief that this insight will provide valuable information for the management community as the issues presented by the employees are worth investigating and planning for corrective action.

Managerial implication

This research paper provided the view points of the Ethiopian employees and the managers on the managers' behavioural pattern and managerial competence levels. It is belief that this paper identified a number of important insights on the two managerial variables (behaviour and competence) to be of value to the Ethiopian managers in a way of a feedback.

It is of a paramount importance in a sense that, the feed back covers the broad opinions of the employees from the diverse and multiple corporate organizations which would not be available to each individual organization directly. While it would be impossible to totally close the contrasting results of this survey for behaviour and competence as viewed by managers and employees, the researchers feel that, the gap witnessed in this study is too wide to be ignore and is an indicative for the existence of some kind of problem both on the behavioural and competency areas of the managers. Based on the wide gap in the views of the managers and employees with regard to the behavioural patterns and competence levels of the Ethiopian managers, the study suggest that, participation in assertiveness training to build up and practice good skills would be of a help to managers.

The gap between the managers and employees on how they perceive managerial competence is again a

crucial area that can be provided as a strong feed back for the manager's community. This magnitude of disparity can not result simply as a result of the obvious and conflicting objectives of managers and employees. The finding, according to the study, provides a new insight that Ethiopian managers were never aware of and gives them the opportunity for mending the wounds.

Revisiting the capacities of the managers in alignment with the requirements of the position and the complexity and size of the organization would greatly help. The same way, organizing developmental trainings with educational institutes and consulting companies could be considered.

Conclusion

The researchers evidently identified the match between the views of Ethiopian employees on their managers' behavioural and managerial competencies. The finding showed a contrasting result for both the behaviour and competence measurements when viewed from the view-point of managers and employees. While the managers view that they are behaviourally assertive (Positive) and managerially competent, their perception is not supported by the employees. The employees perceive that most of their managers are behaviourally either submissive or aggressive and managerially incompetent.

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