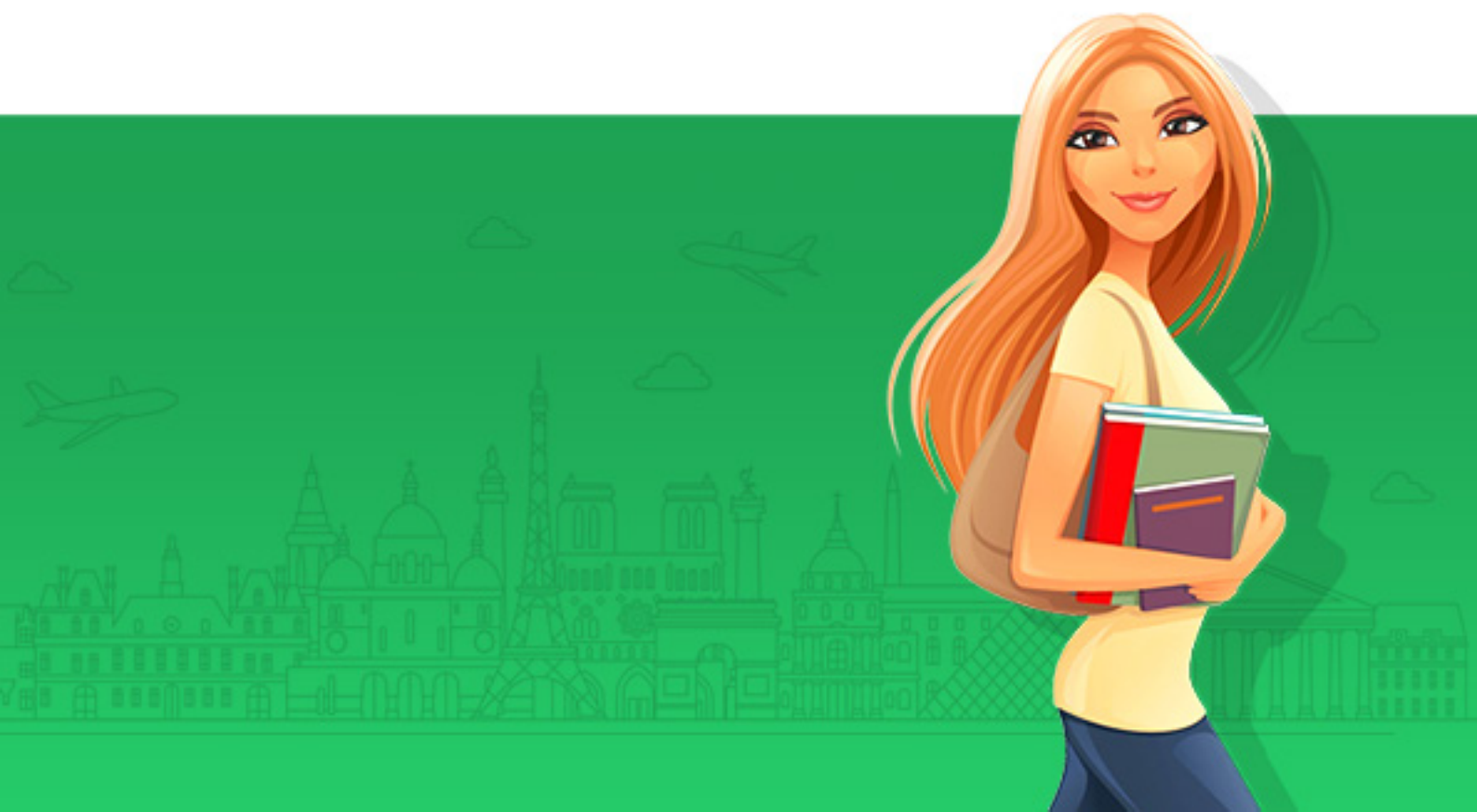




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CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW



The problem that I identified in our investment team is related to the knowledge hoarding. Some of the members of the team do not feel comfortable sharing their investment ideas that they might be having. It has caused our team to generate poorer investment ideas compared to other investment firms in the industry. This significantly reduced the profits that our investment team earned in the previous financial periods. In some cases, members of our investment team fail to share knowledge that they have since they believe that it will guarantee them job security. New members in our investment team do not receive support from old members since the old members fear that the new members may become better than they are. They argue that it will threaten their job security.

I am confident that if I solve the problem of knowledge hoarding, I will be able to improve the quality of investment decisions that the members of our investment team raise. In order to begin the process of examining the issue of knowledge hoarding, I want to review two streams of literature. The first stream of literature is related to the bad organizational culture while the second stream of literature is about knowledge creation. The main purpose of this review is to establish what other scholars have found out on the topic of knowledge hoarding. In addition, it aims at identifying different viewpoints of researchers regarding the issue of knowledge hoarding. Lastly, it also aims at establishing whether it is worth researching the problem of knowledge hoarding considering the findings of other researchers considering this issue.



— Re-Defining the Problem

Initially I considered the problem that affected our investment team to result purely from knowledge hoarding. However, after careful consideration and insights from members of my action set, I discovered that poor corporate culture could be the main reason that affected performance of our investment team. Members of my action set encouraged me to consider whether poor corporate culture could be the main reason that made employees in our investment team not to be free to raise their investment ideas. This is explained by the fact that if the corporate culture fails to establish good means of communication, employees will not be willing to share information that they have (Banduch, Pate & Thies 2008). In addition, if employees have to follow rigid lines of communication during the actual process of communication, it is likely that they will not be willing to raise any ideas that they may be having. The next section of this report examines literature covering poor corporate culture.

— Poor Corporate Culture

According to Banduch, Pate & Thies (2008), management of an organization significantly contributes whether an organization has poor corporate culture or not. If leaders in the organization fail to have clear articulated vision, there is a high possibility that the organization will have poor corporate culture. Galbreth (2009) supported the argument of Banduch, Pate and Thies (2008) by stating that if an organization wants to have good corporate culture, it needs to have leaders that have clear vision and values that are accurately defined. This is caused by the employees' willingness to emulate the vision of their leaders and this will



improve the quality of their decision-making. Galbreath (2009) states that poor relations of leader with his staff cause poor corporate culture inside of the team. Researchers have established that commanding leadership style may make leaders to relate poorly with their subordinates (Galbreath, 2009). The main aim of this leadership style is to ensure that all the subordinates comply with the rules set by their leaders. When people fail to follow a particular command given by their leaders, the leaders criticize or impose serious consequences to them. This leadership style contributes to poor corporate culture since employees will not be willing to participate in the decision making process of a particular organization. In addition, this leadership style may make employees lose their motivation leading to poor returns. Organizations that strictly follow this leadership style have also recorded high rates of employees' turnover.

Poor corporate culture is also developed in the organization where employees are not comfortable with their working environment. According to Ouchi and Wilkins (1985), such cases occur when they feel that the management constantly supervises them. This is explained by the fact that employees feel that the management only wants to identify their weaknesses to be able to fire them. Due to this, employees will not be free to raise innovative ideas. If the management of an organization does not consider creating a healthy working environment for their employees, the employees also will not be willing to improve their productivity.

Bad corporate culture in the organization develops when organizational goals are individually based. In some organizations, the management evaluates performance of employees by looking at their individual performances separately. Flamholtz and Randle (2011) state that this is dangerous since it may hinder teamwork in the organization. Employees



form individually based goals due to several reasons. One of the reasons is their desire to have individually recognized success (Galbreath, 2009). In addition, if there is unhealthy competition in the organization, employees will have individually based goals. This is caused by their willingness to succeed on their own without considering the overall success of the organization.

Flamholtz and Randle (2011) conducted a research on the negative effects of bad corporate culture in the organization. From their research, they discovered that bad corporate culture leads to higher rates of staff turnover. In most cases, organizations with bad corporate culture do not have good methods for dealing with conflicts. It is common for managers in the human resource management departments to fail investigating in the cause of a particular work based conflict if the corporate culture in the organization is poor. Work based conflicts that are unresolved may affect the morale of employees. It will occur since the employees will feel that the management does not value their well-being. Cameron & Green (2004) argue that if an organization has poor corporate culture, the process of communication in this organization will not be successful. This will cause the human resource management team to implement policies without informing other members of the organization. Poor communication is harmful in the organization due to several reasons. First, it increases the level of conflicts within organization. Moreover, employees will not be able to know objectives that a particular organization aims at achieving if it has poor communication.



— Critical Action Learning

Evidence in the literatures about the module of knowledge creation helps researchers to know different paradigms that they may adopt in order to generate knowledge on a particular issue. According to Huff (2000), there are two modes of knowledge production. These modes of knowledge production are mode 1 and mode 2. Managers who prefer to use mode 1, on average are more likely to use knowledge that is generated by other researchers during their study. Due to this, they prefer to use historical data while conducting analysis on the solution of a particular problem. Knowledge creation has been faced by an increase in the gap between relevance and rigor. This gap is caused by the fact that practitioners argue that the knowledge that is created by scientists on management is not practical. In addition, practitioners argue that scientists only concentrate on supporting or challenging certain hypothesis without considering how management research has changed over time.

When a researcher decides to generate knowledge regarding a particular issue, it is important for them to observe ethics. Bell & Bryman (2007) outlined the basic ethics that researchers should consider while conducting management research. Researchers should avoid misrepresenting any data that they collect in a particular research. It is unethical to misrepresent data collected since it will lead to wrong research findings. While researchers conduct research processes in order to generate knowledge, they need to treat participants with dignity. This will encourage participants to be cooperative during the whole process of research. It is also critical for all the researchers to consider maintaining transparency and honesty during the whole process of research. When researchers consider all the factors, conflicts between researchers and participants will not occur. In addition, results



from the research will be credible and reliable.

Researchers can generate knowledge using either qualitative research or quantitative research tools. According to Kinchelo & McLaren (2011), qualitative research mainly aims at studying and understanding human behavior. In addition, it seeks to find out reasons why human beings exhibit certain behaviors. Methodologies of qualitative research include ethnographic research, ethical inquiry, grounded theory, phenomenology, foundation research and historical research. The main aim of ethnographic research is to investigate a particular issue taking place within a small group of people sharing the same culture. Grounded theory research uses an inductive approach during the process of data collection from the field of research. This form of research uses different methods of data collection. Researchers prefer using interviews as a method of data collection in qualitative research (Kinchelero & McLaren, 2011). This is explained by the fact that interviews enable researchers collect first hand information from the participants, therefore, avoiding the risk of collecting inaccurate data. Moreover, an interviewer is able to gauge the accuracy of the response collected from the interviewees ensuring that he/she only collects accurate and reliable data. Researchers may also consider using questionnaires as a tool of data collection. They prefer using questionnaires since it is a cheap method of collecting data. Researchers are also able to collect data from participants who might be located in different geographical places.

Researchers carry out quantitative research in order to quantify particular data collected from research. The sample that is used in a quantitative research is usually large. Random sampling is mainly used to select participants to a particular research. According to Polit & Beck (2010), researchers use online surveys as one of the techniques for collecting data. This approach is common because online surveys are



cheaper to conduct. Researchers are also able to conduct survey of population that is geographically distributed. However, critics argue that this method of data collection is not that efficient since errors in computer connections may take place, leading to a researcher failing to collect enough data. Researchers may also consider using mail questionnaires as a tool for collecting data. However, the response rate from the questionnaires may be low making the data collected from the research to be unreliable (Polit & Beck 2010). Researchers prefer using qualitative research due to several reasons. First, it summarizes large amount of information. Statistical techniques, such as calculation of means and medians help them to summarize large statistical information (Carr 2008). Moreover, researchers use line graphs and pie charts to summarize large amount of statistical information. This type of research also does not have bias. Researchers are not directly involved with the participants during the process of data collection. This eliminates the risk of personal bias of a particular researcher influencing results of a particular study. Finally, results obtained from quantitative research are also more accurate and objective compared to qualitative research.

— Reflecting on the Issues

The concept of reflexivity is critical since it helps researchers to problematize what they know and how they came to know about it. It reveals the assumptions that a researcher makes while generating knowledge to be used in the process of research. Reflexivity aims at identifying the factors that influenced the researcher while he/she conducted the actual process of research. Due to this, the researcher is not passive during a particular research. According to Perriton (2001), if



a researcher does not practice reflexivity, there is a very high chance that the methodology will drive the researcher instead of the researcher driving the methodology of his/her research. I kept a journal every night regarding my progress in solving the problem of knowledge hoarding in our organization. My fellow set members encouraged me to note all the challenges that I faced while looking for a solution on the problem of knowledge hoarding. This would help me practice reflexivity during my research process.

— Conclusion and Actions for the Future

Overall, the action learning set encouraged me to reframe my problem from one of knowledge hoarding to that of poor corporate culture. It is necessary for me to solve the problem of poor corporate culture that is experienced by our organization so that I can improve the quality of investment ideas that are raised by our investment team members. Poor corporate culture makes members of our investment team not to be free to communicate the ideas that they may have about a particular investment issue. In addition, it reduces teamwork between employees in our organization, therefore, increasing chances of work based conflicts. By conducting qualitative research, I will generate knowledge that will help me come up with a solution on how to improve the corporate culture in our organization.

