

# Emotional Association Theory (EA) as a Key to Proper Strategy Implementation

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**Abstract**—Emotional Association Theory (EA) deals with the psychological attachment of the employees to their employer as a focal way of awakening employees' productivity, innovativeness, and creativity towards achieving a common cause within an organization. The objectives of this paper include; to comprehend the forms of motivation at workstation as provided by the Emotion Association Theory, to improve access to the skills relevant for a good working environment, to raise new skills through knowing the power to influence employees, improving communication skills as well as researching current leaders and their leadership skills. The paper makes use of descriptive and intervention by examining the effect of motivation on employees. The method makes use of psychological EA theory that analyses the 3E leadership model to impact the ability to adopt the organization's policy and employee productivity. In this case, the method will assess the workplace culture by assessing personal values and qualities that make master manager in organizations. In addition, the method will apply the theory to supporting the positive work engagement and its successful implementation to effectively influence employee productivity. The findings of this research showcase the significance motivating employees to increase their productivity as provided by the theory. Nonetheless, it improves sense of belonging among workers in a firm since it is employee-oriented. In addition, it works upon unification of workers within a workplace through mutual respect and empathy which promotes competence and policy implementation. Therefore, emotionally related qualities ignite motivation in workers.

**Keywords**—Emotional Association Theory, motivation, implementation, employees, leadership model, traits, skills, emotion.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE quality of organizational management has a significant effect on strategy implementation and efficiency. Specifically, personnel management structures influence employee productivity and their adherence to laid out procedures. A manager's personality traits shape the direction of an organization and also determine its efficiency. Therefore, the role that managers play in the performance, productivity, and success of an organization cannot be underestimated [2]. Although organizations have many resources, such as capital and equipment, the most important resource in a firm is the human resource as the latter is the driver of all other resources. Therefore, effective management of human resources is the most significant determinant of organizational success. For managers to be successful in the management of human capital, they must have the necessary people skills that enable them to motivate employees [2]. Motivation arises when managers create a workplace where there is mutual respect, empathy,

collaboration, and concern. Both external motivation, which is derived from the work environment, and internal motivation, which primarily results from personal thought patterns, are supported by the emotional association (EA) theory of management. Creating a workplace condition where the workforce feels emotionally endorsed can boost intrinsic motivation and inspire employees to work towards the achievement of the strategic goals of their organization. For this reason, improving workplace efficiency and policy implementation requires not only organization management skills but also the creation of a supportive culture.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT DURING STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic implementation refers to an alteration in the organizational capabilities of a firm. The implementation is often accompanied by fundamental changes in the structures, systems, and philosophies of a firm. Strategic implementation leads to a significant redistribution of power and resources in a company. Also, it creates a paradigm shift that challenges the basic assumptions held by employees regarding the organization [3]. Employees invest emotionally in an organization. When change occurs during strategic implementation, they are likely to be affected emotionally, and these emotions can be destructive to an organization. The process of strategic implementation is usually stressful and challenging for organizations. So, to deal with these challenges and stressful events, general skillful management is required. Organizational executives may find it hard to create strategic renewal in their firms if they do not have an emotional touch. Fearful and anxious workers in an organization may find it hard to devote their attention to their day to day tasks. Furthermore, their capacity and enthusiasm for gaining fresh knowledge decline [4]. Employees who are resentful and angry can easily sabotage an organization. Depressed employees are also a burden to their peers. All these conditions that are related to emotions can thwart strategic implementation and renewal. Skillful management of emotions is important because it plays a role in the self-identity of workers. It determines how they perceive themselves, which is related to their self-esteem and confidence. Emotional factors, such as anxiety, can lead to hopelessness and depression among workers, and it can lead to reduced productivity. The effectiveness and innovativeness of workers can also be affected by anxiety [3]. Unfortunately, many managers do not understand how to thoughtfully manage

the emotions of employees during strategic implementation and stage. Many organizations do not practice it systematically. Some of these firms are designed to operate as emotional vacuums meaning that the emotions of employees are not prioritized. When organizations fail to exercise thoughtful, emotional management, they treat their employees as machines. Unfortunately, such an organizational context focuses on profits at the expense of the emotional welfare of employees. Attaining financial effectiveness and operational efficiency at the expense of the emotional wellbeing of employees is sustainable in the long run. Organizations with highly bureaucratic structures that treat employees as machines end up losing their best talents to others that prioritize their emotional needs. In the long run, bureaucratic organizations fail to attain operational and financial effectiveness as a result of high attrition rates. As a result, powerful emotional management is important as it creates organizational contexts that encourage innovation, creativity, and change. The modern organizational setting requires emotion-aware leaders and managers. It needs leaders and managers who can systematically allocate the resources of their organizations to create systems and procedures that are related to the management of emotions. When they skillfully enact these procedures, they enhance the emotional capability of their organizations.

The emotional capability of an organization plays a significant role in the process of strategic implementation. Undoubtedly, strategic change arouses strong emotions that can disrupt an organization and its operations [3]. As a result, managers must use the emotional balancing concept to help in the management of emotions during the strategic change process. Strategic change involves different sets of people. The first one is those who propose the amendment. The second one is those who conduct change, while the third one is the recipients of change. The recipients of change are the ones who are most affected by the process. Strategic implementation and change elicit a wide range of emotions in the recipients of change [3]. These include fear, anxiety, and anger because change, in most cases, produces uncertainty. As organizations implement their strategies, they need to put in place structures that can manage these emotions. Failure to manage them skillfully can disrupt the strategy implementation process and make it hard for an organization to achieve its objectives.

### III. EMOTIONAL ASSOCIATION THEORY

The emotional association theory is a connection framework that advocates for the unity of several concepts that promote fruitful workplace relations. It is a framework that illustrates how the emotional intelligence of managers can motivate employees and enhance their productivity. The theory incorporates biological foundations and psychological knowledge with some behavior. Notably, emotions are responses from the central nervous system, and they provide primary incentive stimuli. Top organizational managers need to identify the basic principles that promote unified feelings, enhance human behavior, and improve employees' sense of belonging within the corporation [2]. Modern organizations can be primarily client-driven or employee-centered. Some can

be both employee-oriented and customer-driven. The EA theory adopts both approaches for the clients', management's, and workers' emotional fulfillment.

Emotions shape the belief of an individual about a job and its value to the team or company. Also, they affect workplace behaviors. [5] asserts that there is a connection between attitude and practices at work and emotions. [1] have identified the significant kinds of emotions at work. These emotions include fear, anger, surprise, sadness, love, and joy. The authors argue that specific events in the workplace can cause different types of emotions. In turn, emotions inspire motives and actions that can impede other people or benefit them in the workplace.

The main objective of the emotional association theory is the creation of positive psychology in the workplace. Psychology arises from the interplay between culture and leadership. The culture of an organization and its leadership determine the quality of emotional unification in the workplace. Emotional standardization is high in organizations that use a top-bottom approach. The approach allows leaders and managers to use the necessary people skills to make employees feel appreciated [4]. As a result, workers become energized, and their performance and productivity improve. Organizations' leadership should, therefore, foster human connection as a progression of the existing management theories. Affirmatively, the EA theory helps the management to develop a culture that creates a sense of unity, communal existence, and mutual objectivity through the cultivation of behaviors, language, and attitudes that mirror the employees' strengths.

Conversely, employees' needs are often centered on sentiment. Therefore, management should display empathy towards their team by focusing on fulfilling their necessities rather than concentrating on high productivity and cost reduction. Also, this model is only possible where both the leadership and subordinate groups show efforts. Leaders should strive to motivate their workforce by offering support and showing appreciation for their efforts. In return, employees would gain motivation to diligently observe company policies and increase their productivity as the receptor stimuli. The 3E leadership model, therefore, holds the perspective that personal attention and attitudes to all corporate matters would lead to better performances where the entire organization collectively contributes to productivity.

The EA theory is actionable as a 3E leadership model of (Expectation + Empathy + Effort). Based on today's work environment interrelationship, the model should lead to a high-level emotional connection. Organizational leaders must have the ability to recognize, acknowledge, and attend to emotions in the workplace. It should happen both at the individual and collective levels. The capability should be built within a firm's routines. These routines ought to demonstrate the collective skills and knowledge that are reflected in local contexts and can be used in managing emotions related to strategic implementation and change [4]. Firms can develop procedures for the management of emotions and systematically train their managers on how to enhance the emotional capabilities of the organization. As a result, the emotional capability of an organization can be higher than the emotional intelligence of

individual members put together. The building of emotion management skills within organizations that have a large number of employees that have different degrees of emotional intelligence requires a sustained organizational effort. It should be a long term project that prioritizes the gradual development of emotional, organizational capability. Such an organization can provide its employees with a unified identity that enables them to achieve missions, visions, and objectives. Also, the emotional capacity of an organization provides workers with a sense of belonging [3]. Such an organization has platforms in which employees can air their opinions about the company's operations and receive respectful treatment. It directly influences the willingness of employees to dedicate their efforts to the achievement of organizational goals.

An organization with strong organizational capabilities ensures that the emotional needs of its employees are prioritized. The managers in such an organization are empathetic and prioritize the welfare of employees, thereby enhancing their productivity. Its leaders motivate employees by offering support as well as by recognizing and rewarding their efforts [3]. When employees receive such treatment, they are motivated to help the organization achieve its goals and objectives. Also, they are more likely to be ethical and professional in their day to day operations.

#### IV. THE BLIND SPOTS THAT THE EMOTIONAL ASSOCIATION THEORY COULD LEAD

Despite its strengths, the proposed emotional association theory has several potential blind spots. Prioritization of the emotional needs of employees can motivate the workplace. However, such treatment cannot motivate workers in isolation. Motivation is a broad concept that arises out of multiple factors. For example, if an organization prioritizes its employees' emotional needs without providing monetary and non-monetary incentives, it would be difficult to achieve the required levels of motivation [3]. Neglecting these other variables that foster motivation to concentrate solely on human connection can affect an organization's productivity negatively.

Secondly, EA theory can easily lead to the conclusion that a harmonized environment among employees builds a favorable condition for creativity to flow. However, creativity is an intrinsic attribute. People would still be innovative even when their emotional needs are not adequately met. Creativity is dependent on other factors, such as the availability of capital resources. Therefore, having a connection culture is not sufficient to foster the levels of creativity that can enhance organizational competitiveness. For the success of the EA theory, other tangible factors have a significant impact on the productivity of employees.

#### V. PERSONAL VALUES WHICH UNDERLIE THE EMOTIONAL ASSOCIATION THEORY

Notably, there are several personal values influenced by human behavior that underlie the EA theory. Respect, empowerment, compassion, and dedication are the individual values that support this theory. However, their existence should

be two-way: they should emanate from the managers directed to employees as a critical strategy to motivate staff towards corporation and efficiency.

#### VI. THE IMPLICIT ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT HUMAN NATURE OR HUMAN MOTIVATION

The EA theory makes various assumptions about human motivation. Personal connection and mutual respect for others' achievements are vital in any work environment. In fact, in today's work conditions, every formal relationship is branded upon rules and regulations. In this regard, implicit assumptions should exist for this theory to flourish. Therefore, EA assumes that:

- Employees are more resourceful when working in teams rather than as individuals
- Proper working conditions and financial incentives are less critical compared to human motivation and a sense of belonging.
- Informal groups have a substantial impact on the employees' motivation towards becoming more productive.

#### VII. SKILLS NECESSARY TO BECOME A "MASTER" MANAGER

There are several skills and competencies that one needs to be a manager. The most important ones are communication skills and the ability to motivate workers. These sets of skills are essential for a result-oriented, cohesive, and productive work setting. Others include the ability to build trust and leadership.

By frequently communicating one-on-one with employees and team members, the workers feel connected to the organization and highly valued. Also, this form of interaction keeps the leadership updated on workforce issues. Managers become aware of any problem and take the ideal measures to overcome them. Therefore, the right communication techniques help the leadership address employee concerns and avoid slowing productivity.

Similarly, the ability to motivate a team is a master skill that could foster success. When a manager encourages a team member, they give the person a reason to add more effort in their work. Additionally, when the need to perform a particular task arises, a master leader should be able to inspire employees and inform them of the possible outcome of their efficiency. Moreover, delegating responsibility to someone is often not enough. Managers need to provide them with an eagerness to commit to duty and fulfill the task. Conversely, the skill of motivating does not involve the use of threats or an absolute authority but requires a leader's influence to convince employees to commit towards a shared course.

As a master manager, the ability to build trust not only enhances an organization's reputation but also results in a favorable outcome. Superior performance is the most effective strategy for building trust. Also, trust among team members and the management is built through mentorship and the creation of opportunities for personal development. Sharing success and credit, particularly in an open work environment, also nurtures

trust. The master skill is an indicator of a leader's expertise, abilities as well as their commitment to success.

Leadership is another skill necessary for master managers. As leaders continue improving themselves towards full potential, they should be able to influence team members to accomplish shared objectives within the organization. Again, leadership involves active participation by the managers to help employees achieve the company mission. Sharing a common goal and vision between a leader and their subordinates promotes human connection. Possessing leadership skills, therefore, increases a manager's ability to influence employees and drive change, which is accomplished not by threats and authority but through persuasion. Master managers exercise leadership as a crucial skill to motivate and build an environment where each employee can realize their highest potential.

#### VIII.SUMMARY

The recommended EA theory of management involves applying positive psychological influence as the framework of employee motivation. This theory impacts employee productivity and their ability to adopt organizational policies by assessing and controlling their perception. The application in the EA theory, using the aforementioned 3E leadership model, would form a workplace connection culture of unified identity and responsiveness. Underlined by personal values, master managers who seek to use this theory should possess communication, motivation, leadership, and trust in their employees as crucial skills. This theory supports positive work engagement resulting in the creation of a sense of belonging and responsibilities. All in all, the successful implementation of the EA theory and effective influence on employee productivity require the application of the critical-thinking managerial skills of understanding and supporting the staff's emotional response.

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