Role of Self Efficacy in Improving Employees Performance

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Abstract:- Self-efficacy is the belief one have in their abilities and competencies. Self-efficacy determines how individuals think and feel about themselves. Self-efficacy in all forms has an impact on our thoughts, emotions, actions, and motivation. It operates mainly through the cognitive and affective channels and plays an important role in shaping an individual's perception of life experiences. Albert Bandura, a social psychologist and founder of this concept believed that we build a self-system based on our social skills, cognitive skills, observational learning, and social backgrounds. This self-system is the backbone of our personality and self-efficacy is one of the essential components of it. Self-efficacy, or a person's self-belief in his ability to perform specific tasks, can be related with workplace performance, burnout, the experience of stress and role adjustments. Given its influential role on performance, it is necessary for employees to understand the role of self-efficacy in the workplace. Self-efficacy influences how employees will approach tasks and challenges in the workplace. Thus it is important for an employee to build a strong sense of self-efficacy in order to perform well and cope with challenges in the workplace.

Keywords: Self-efficacy ,Employee Efficiency, Workplace Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to complete a task or achieve a goal. Self-efficacy also relates to the set of beliefs we hold about our ability to complete a particular task. The concept was originally propounded by the social psychologist, Albert Bandura. Albert Bandura (1977), a pioneer humanist and father of the concept of self-efficacy, defined it as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise their influence over events that affect their lives" According to him, self-efficacy is the product of past experience, observation, persuasion, and emotion. Today, psychologists contend that our sense of self-efficacy can influence whether we actually succeed at a task. Self-efficacy is linked to academic achievement and the ability to overcome phobias.

Self-efficacy is also the belief in one's capabilities to organize information and execute a course of action to navigate a prospective situation. Albert Bandura described self-efficacy as a key component of the self-system, which consists of an individual's attitudes, abilities, and cognitive resources. High self-efficacy increases the likelihood of successfully achieving a given task.

Self-efficacy is not wholly an innate characteristic, it can develop with experiences and result in form of judgments about various dimensions of life. That means a person don't necessarily have to be born with a strong sense of self-confidence or belief in your abilities, he can acquire this trait through his self learning process .

Self-efficacy has important effects on the amount of effort individuals apply to a given task. Someone with high levels of self-efficacy for a given task will be resilient and persistent in the face of setbacks, while someone with low levels of self-efficacy for that task may disengage or avoid the situation.

II. OBJECTIVES

i. To determine the role of self efficacy in employees performance

ii. To find out the ways in which self efficacy can improve employees performance.

III. ROLE OF SELF- EFFICACY IN EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE

Every employee in an organization is capable of identifying goals they want to accomplish, things they would like to change, and things they would like to achieve. At the same time many employees also realize that putting these plans into action is not quite so simple. Bandura and others have found that an individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in how goals, tasks, challenges, including crisis, failed projects, and scandals are approached.

Self-efficacy (i.e authentic self confidence) is a more important asset than skill, knowledge, or even experience. Without authentic self efficacy, an employee will find it difficult to make tough decisions, lead meetings with authority, get people to communicate with them candidly, and be open to feedback, particularly when it is of the constructive type. Without self-efficacy (and authentic self-confidence), an employee will always doubt his decisions and find himself becoming defensive, when challenged.

Without well developed self efficacy (and therefore self-confidence), an employee may also find himself lacking in leadership qualities. Self-efficacy is the cornerstone of leadership. A leader can be taught to be an effective problem solver who is more decisive or to be a better communicator who can also coach, mentor and hold team members accountable (and many other fundamentals of leadership). Yet, without that leader first believing in himself or herself, true leadership will exist only in title. A leader that is technically qualified for the position, but

Special Issue - 2019

International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology (IJERT)
ISSN: 2278-0181
NCRIETS – 2019 Conference Proceedings

lacks the confidence generated by self-efficacy, will find it difficult to lead others. Often, self-confidence comes from a life-long process of developing the sense of an internal authority of who you are. It is developed by directly engaging life in a resilient and courageous way. It requires balancing the external demands of life, work, and family that seek to influence who you are and how you behave. Moreover, it is self-efficacy.

In order for an employee to imply self efficacy in improving his performance at the workplace , he must understand the sources of developing effective self efficacy. According to Bandura, there are four major sources of self-efficacy. These are as follows:

A. Mastery Experiences: Bandura believed that the most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences." Performing a task successfully strengthens our sense of self-efficacy. However, failing to adequately deal with a task or challenge can undermine and weaken self-efficacy. A critical component of mastery is that it requires the leader to accurately assess what is factual versus what is imagination. When under immense stress, it is not always clear what the facts are.

B. Social Modeling: Witnessing other people successfully completing a task is another important source of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities to succeed. For example, one client was not able to get her land-legs under her. He had successfully led the organization through a multi-year growth spurt that suddenly stopped as significant competition began to erode market share. It was suggested that the client meet with other CEO's in related situations. One acquaintance became a mentor that suggested visiting the organization and providing some feedback. Besides the feedback, she shared her experiences including detailed description of actions taken. Thereafter the client reclaimed his competency and moved the organization into the direction to address the competition and streamline the organization to be more agile.

C. Social Persuasion: Bandura indicated that people could be persuaded to believe that they have the skills and capabilities to succeed. Consider a time when someone said something positive and encouraging that helped you achieve a goal. Getting verbal encouragement from others helps people overcome self-doubt and instead focus on giving their best effort to the task at hand.

D. Psychological Responses: Our own responses and emotional reactions to situations also play an important role in self-efficacy. Moods, emotional states, physical reactions, and stress levels can all impact how a person feels about their personal abilities in a particular situation. A person who becomes extremely nervous before speaking in public may develop a weak sense of self-efficacy in these situations. For example, one client tended to get tongue-tied when publically speaking. Rather than focus on the speech (and his fear of embarrassment), the focus became on telling an interesting story by being fully present to himself and to the story. His self-efficacy returned shortly after he began. He had realized that the story was as much the audience's (his direct reports) as it was his. He expressed how proud he was of their performance and flew through the presentation. Hence, it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted by the individual. By learning how to minimize stress and elevate mood when facing difficult or challenging tasks, people can improve their sense of self-efficacy.

Given its influential role on performance, it is critical for managers to understand the role of self-efficacy in the workplace. According to social psychologist Alfred Bandura, self-efficacy affects learning and performance of employees in the workplace in following five ways:

A. The Goals that Employees Choose for Themselves: Self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices individuals make, degree of challenge of their goals and their level of commitment to personal goals. Employees with low levels of self-efficacy will chose less challenging goals for themselves and vice versa.

B. Learning and Exerted effort: Employees learn, perform and exert effort at levels consistent with their self-efficacy beliefs. Employees with high self-efficacy will work hard to learn how to perform new tasks, because they are confident they will be successful.

C. Persistence in which People Attempt New and Difficult Tasks : Self-efficacy beliefs influence how long employees will persist when engaging with challenging tasks. Employees with high-self-efficacy will persist longer in the face of difficult tasks because they are more confident that they will learn and successfully execute the task.

D. How Resilient Employees Will Be in the Face of Averse Situations: Self-efficacy beliefs influence how an employee will respond to disappointment. Individuals who have higher self-efficacy will recover faster from setbacks than those who don't.

E. The Amount of Stress and Anxiety Individuals Experience When They Engage in a Task: Self-efficacious beliefs influence the physiological experience of stress. Individuals with lower levels of self-efficacy may experience a more intense physiological stress reaction in the face of challenges than those who have higher levels of self-efficacy. This in turn can affect their performance on the task and the degree to which they persevere in the face of the challenge.
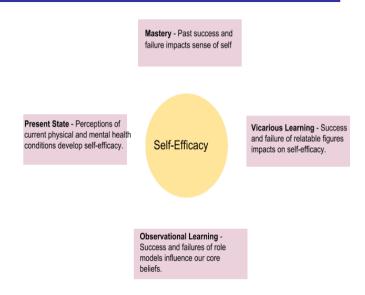
Special Issue - 2019

International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology (IJERT)
ISSN: 2278-0181
NCRIETS – 2019 Conference Proceedings

IV.   WAYS IN WHICH SELF EFFICACY CAN BE IMPROVED:

As we start growing and having diverse life experiences, our sense of self continues to strengthen itself. Positive feelings like autonomy, love, and support from family, education, and encouragement act as catalysts to self-efficacy. A person with high self-efficacy is more likely to feel confident, perceive failures as opportunities to try again, and a great team performer. Self-efficacy keeps growing throughout life as we acquire new skills, have new experiences, take risks, and keep putting efforts to succeed. It is important for an employee to build a strong sense of self-efficacy in order to perform well and cope with challenges in the workplace. Bandura recognized four salient sources of self-efficacy and asserted that it is by the interplay of these factors that we grow significant belief or disbelief in ourselves.

1. Mastery Experiences : Success directly impacts the way we think about ourselves. Succeeding in a task boosts confidence and increases the likelihood of achieving similar tasks again. We gain a sense of 'mastery' over it. Failure, on the other hand, does just the opposite. It breaks our confidence and leaves us in self-doubt. Building efficacy through self-mastery requires resilience to manage expectations about success and accept failure positively. People who succeed after overcoming the obstacles and recuperating from the breakdown have a strong sense of self-belief efficacy.

2. Vicarious Experiences : The second source of efficacy roots from seeing others around us, especially people who we can relate to. Watching similar people succeed or hearing their success stories motivate us to believe that if they could, we can too.

3. Modeling Experiences : Role models have a vital role to play in building self-efficacy. Those are the people we follow, admire, and want to replicate. Their actions, principles, and achievements indirectly teach and persuade us to repeat the same. We are more willing to put in efforts and work in the direction that they show us. The only challenge of this source is that if the role models are wrong in their ways, it is likely that their failures destroy our self-efficacy or we too get tempted to go astray.

4.   Emotional   and   Physical   Experiences: Our present mental and physical states influence self-efficacy to a great extent. For example, a depressed person, or a person who is fighting with a rough disease, is less likely to feel very confident and optimistic about themselves. Negative experiences and stress make us vulnerable whereas positive experiences and happiness make us feel good about ourselves. Bandura (1977) said that the cues that we receive from our mind and body at any given moment and the way we perceive these cues shape our sense of self.

Internal and External Sources Of Self-Efficacy

Figure: Sources of Self-Efficacy

V.   TECHNIQUES THROUGH WHICH SELF-EFFICACY CAN IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE:

Self-efficacy improves self-control. It effects all the functional aspects of human functioning – from personal relationships to professional commitments, and social interactions, and relates to a low risk of mortality (Taylor, 2012). For an employee, self-efficacy helps in achieving goals and acquiring a sense of accomplishment in life. Listed below are some techniques that can help employees in enhancing their self-efficacy which will ultimately help them improve their performance:

1. Stay in the stretch zone : Goal-setting is crucial to building self-efficacy. Studies have shown that out of the three personal zones of achievement (the comfort zone, the stretch zone, and the panic zone), highly productive people lie at the stretch zone where they can make the most of their abilities.

In the stretch zone, employees are more willing to take reasonable chances and are resilient to failures and setbacks. Unlike in the panic zone or the comfort zone where they are unwilling to take chances or extend our efforts, the stretch zone allows employees to have an insightful perception about themselves and increases the likelihood of achieving self-contentment.

Employees can try entering the stretch zone by:

- Setting goals.
- Doing things that they like to do.
- Trying new things and facing challenges.
- Accepting failures and criticisms positively.
- Approaching the goals slowly and not over-stressing about results.

2. Set simple goals : Low self-efficacy makes employees either doubt their abilities or perceive the tasks to be more difficult than they are. As a result, employees don't make enough effort, blame themselves for their under achievements, and destroy the trust in themselves. A good

Special Issue - 2019

International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology (IJERT)
ISSN: 2278-0181
NCRIETS – 2019 Conference Proceedings

idea to build and sustain self-efficacy is to set goals reasonably and approach them one by one. Employees can break the goals into smaller sub-goals and work on achieving them one at a time. By doing this, employees can rejoice our small successes, and their goals become more manageable and accessible.

3. Look at the bigger picture : One of the most significant qualities of employee with high self-efficacy is the power to look beyond short-term losses and not letting them break their self-trust. Employees have higher goals to achieve, and sticking to this perspective helps in maintaining a high self-efficacy. Self-efficacy allows employees to sort their priorities, make better plans, and focus on them more efficiently.

4. Reframe obstacles: A practical psychological tool to increase self-efficacy is identifying obstacles, thought blocks, and reframing or replacing them with positive interventions. Reconstructing the way we look at failures and feel about them help a lot in changing the way we think of ourselves. Building self-efficacy allows us to understand that challenges and failures are inevitable; by continuing to believe in ourselves and our abilities, we can surely attain fulfillment.

Besides above measures organizations must also take few measures in order to ensure high self efficacy among their employees which will also help them improve their performance. Below are few tips to help managers increase self-efficacy in the workplace.

❖ **Recruit applicants with high self-efficacy:** Careful hiring practices and utilization of specific interview questions that probe an applicant's general level of self-efficacy are important to developing a team with high self-efficacy. Selecting individuals who have higher self-efficacy beliefs will increase the probably that they will be more motivated to perform well.

❖ **Ensure job demands are appropriate :** The complexity of job demands has an impact on self-efficacy. Individuals who gain mastery completing complex, challenging and autonomous jobs increase self-efficacy. Individuals who lack the opportunity to engage in challenging work are often bored and disengaged, leading to a decrease in self-efficacy.

❖ **Improve training and professional development practices :** Employee's self-efficacy expectations for tasks can be increased through guided experience, mentoring and role modeling. Assign a team leader who exemplifies self-efficacious behavior and identify them as a role model. Additionally, enhance self-efficacy with professional development opportunities for all employees.

❖ **Enhance self-management :** Systematic self-management training enhances self-efficacy expectations. Encourage employees to set realistic personal goals, delineate clear priorities, be well-organized and enhance time-management skills.

❖ **Set reasonable goals and expectations:** Goal difficulty should match the individual or group's level of perceived self-efficacy. As self-efficacy and performance increase, so should the complexity of the task demands and the level of the goal. Goals that are too ambitious result in performance failure and can have a negative impact on self-efficacy and future performance. They can also precipitate a downward efficacy spiral. Goals that are set too low can result in a false sense of self-efficacy. This will lead to greater frustration and discouragement when the employee faces more difficult tasks. Goals that are challenging and attainable lead to both the highest performance levels and more resilient self-efficacy beliefs. Break larger goals into tangible steps. The achievement of mini-goals which lead toward a larger goal provides a sense of task mastery and competence, increasing self-efficacy.

❖ **Improve coaching strategies :** Increase the quality and quantity of constructive pointers, feedback, guidance, support and education you provide your team. This feedback must be accurate, timely and specific in order for the individual or group to understand the cause-and-effect relationship involved in performing the task and to increase performance in the future.

❖ **Have confidence in your employees :**It is necessary to have confidence in employees and to convince them that they have the ability to succeed at a particular task. When managerial confidence increases, so does employee performance. Communicate your confidence in your employees in various ways to have the largest impact.

❖ **Improve leadership and mentoring :** Identify your top performers and promote them to leadership or mentoring positions. Improve the quality and quantity of positive role models within team in order to increase self-efficacy of the individuals and team. Encourage managers and team leaders to engage in supportive leadership activities.

❖ **Acknowledge and reward :** Both small and large successes should be acknowledged and rewarded. These will enhance self-efficacy and lead to greater achievements. Also, point out to the team when an employee succeeded at a particularly demanding task. This will increase other employee's self-efficacy to perform similar tasks.

Special Issue - 2019

International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology (IJERT)
ISSN: 2278-0181
NCRIETS – 2019 Conference Proceedings

VI. CONCLUSION

Self-efficacy beliefs have an important influence on the choices employees make and goals they set for themselves . Self-efficacy beliefs also strongly affect their approach to a task, motivation to engage in a task, the level of effort they exert, degree of persistence when facing a difficult task and their performance on the task. It is therefore critical that managers seek to enhance self-efficacy beliefs in employees in an effort to improve performance. Increasing self-efficacy in both individuals and teams should be made a managerial priority. When executed properly, increasing employee self-efficacy will lead to enhanced capabilities of employees and will have a major impact on the performance of individual employees as well as the team.

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