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Nana Gyesie

Walden University, ekuoba@gmail.com

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Exploring the Impact of Collective Bargaining Agreements on High Performance Work Practices

Nana Gyesie, PhD in Management

Abstract

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore how collective bargaining agreements (CBA) hindered or enabled managers from creating and sustaining high performance work practices (HPWP).

Relevant Literature

. The conceptual framework included Walton and McKersie's work on behavioral theories for labor negotiations; human capital theories by Becker, and Mark Huselid's work on high performance.

Procedures

I designed the study using a qualitative case study with purposive sampling of 15 interviewees who actively interact with the CBA process. The primary data collection process was face-to-face and telephone interviews, triangulated with archival records and a reflective journal.

Limitations

The primary limitation is that I focused on labor unions in the Washington DC area. I also did not compare HPWP between unionized and non-unionized workplaces.

Problem

The general problem was the lack of understanding as to whether CBAs, which are the legal basis of a union, incorporate negotiating parameters, which are designed to not only represent employee voice, but to help support the sustainability of the union organization through high performance work practices.

Data Analysis

I used NVivo 11 to analyze the transcripts from my interviews and coded the data into nodes and categories to glean themes.

Conclusions

The CBA does inhibit HPWP as it is used to negotiate benefits, rather than sustain high performance. Partnership agreements can be used as a pre-bargaining tool to facilitate performance that facilitates organizational sustainability.

Research Questions

The central research question was: How do collective bargaining agreements enable or hinder managers from creating and sustaining HPWP for their employees in private and public sector unions based within the Washington DC metro area.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to explore how CBAs hindered or enabled managers to create performance accountability and HPWP for their employees.

Findings

High level findings show that labor unions are constrained by high performance stigma, lack of comprehensive professional development and tolerance of low performance.

Social Change Implications

Labor unions may use varied hiring practices to attract millennials. Such hiring practices will infuse labor unions with relevant skills, while providing employment for qualified people. Also using partnership agreements can help facilitate organizational sustainability.

Dr. Patricia Fusch, Dr. Donna Brown and Dr. Korrapti