

Theorizing relational people management in micro enterprises: a multi-theoretical perspective

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Theorizing relational people management in micro enterprises: a multi-theoretical perspective

Relational people management

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper offers a theoretical explanation to a positive story of a micro enterprise found in Uganda, an African developing country that has successfully managed workplace relationships, its survival and good performance. Specifically, the paper examines multiple theories to explain the practice in this enterprise.

Design/methodology/approach – The study uses storytelling, a form of narrative inquiry embedded in qualitative methodology. Based on in-depth interviews with the owner manager and employees, a story was developed detailing their practical experience while focusing on the context, actions, results and lessons.

Findings – Findings reveal that micro enterprises that allow free generation of ideas across all levels with optimistic people who reciprocate and work together, create a friendly work atmosphere with support for one another, amicably resolve conflicts and build trust. More so, several theories that include: Social Exchange Theory, Relational Cohesion Theory, Complex Adaptive Systems Theory and Cultural Historical Activity Theory, explain the manifestations of relational people management in micro enterprises.

Originality/value – This paper is unique in its use of a positive story showing a practical experience of how workplace relationships are managed in a micro enterprise found in Uganda, an African developing country. In addition, a multi-theoretical perspective is used to explain the manifestations in the story which may be novel in the study context. Thus, a conceptual model is proposed depicting generalized reciprocity, positive emotions,

