Two different approaches to Organizational Behavior from the perspective of Digital Humanism in the search of Sustainable Development Goal number 8 "Decent work and economic growth"

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Abstract

Digital Humanism is one of the most relevant trends within the Digital Transformation processes in companies that carry out their activity based on the motivation and empowerment of the group's potentialities over individualities. This trend of humanistic management in an increasingly technical business environment is directly linked to the management theories of Organizational Behavior.

Taking advantage of the potential for the development of practical activities within the university subject "Organizational Behavior and Change Management", a contrast plan has been designed and executed for two management models of personal assets, both real and operational in two real companies. The objective is to detect which are the pillars on which both companies build their mechanisms for loyalty of their employees and of taking advantage of their capacities within the corresponding work teams. This activity is linked to the implementation of initiatives aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 8, defined as "Decent work and economic growth".

The conclusions show that, despite the fact that both approaches (of success contrasted by the low turnover rate of its employees) are different, there is a nexus of union and convergence through certain common elements, among which are: Communication, Participation, Motivation and trust.

Keywords: Organizational Behavior; Change Management; Digital Transformation; Digital Humanism; Sustainable Development Goals; Decent work.

Introduction

Digital Humanism can be defined as an area that applies the knowledge of new technologies to the problems of the human sciences, at the same time that it values the relevance of the human aspect within the application of new technologies. It is not just about integrating new tools into the field of the humanities, but about establishing a dialogue between disciplines that gives rise to a unifying and welcoming movement (Swearengen, 2017).

Hartley (2020) brilliantly explains a topic of current relevance in business and in today's education: the importance of ethics, the humanities and social skills in an imminently technological world and its application in the technologies that will dominate the world in the future of work: big data, artificial intelligence, or robotics. It shows us that it is those trained in the humanities who play a key role in the development of business and technologies because they analyze problems and offer the best approaches to solve them by providing fundamental skills such as management, leadership, or communication. . Cases like those of the founders of the most important Silicon Valley companies such as Apple, Google, PayPal or LinkedIn, which have incorporated the humanities to become globally successful companies, show the relevance of Digital Humanism.

Barnová and Krásna (2018) explain that digital technologies have been developed to help people achieve their goals and to make their lives easier, and that therefore they can be used both in the educational field and in the productive or professional field. Knowing which are the human abilities or capacities that can be enhanced through the consideration of human assets as key in the development of valuable activities is key to the success of any initiative to improve organizational efficiency.

Żuromski et al. (2018) raises the debate about whether new technologies can have a negative impact on human relations and bring us closer to dehumanization. Finding the balance between the modernization of today's world and the need to maintain the focus on the relevance of the human factor and its impact on sustainable development is one of the objectives that digital humanism has within the humanistic and social sciences.

In line with the evaluation and enhancement of the human factor, and within the objectives set by the SDGs, this research work aims to find similarities and differences between two real and operational approaches of two highly technical companies, and draw conclusions about which ones they are the factors that favor said enhancement of human assets, personal capacities and interpersonal relationships.

Then, the objective of this study is, taking advantage of two practical sessions of the subject "Organizational Behavior and Change Management", to inquire about the pillars of digital humanism, understood as the most humanistic conception of personal interactions in a world

as technified as today . The study has been adapted to the initiative to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main objective pursued has been to compare two personal asset management models, belonging to two highly digitized and technological companies, comparable and similar in everything except the geographic location and sectorization of their clients. To achieve the objective, the work will be structured as follows: Next, a brief theoretical framework is presented, in which reference will be made to the SDGs and the university subject in which the research is carried out is framed. Subsequently, the methodology that has been carried out in the work is presented, to go to the Results and finally finish with the conclusions of the work

Theoretical Framework

2.1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

One of the most modern initiatives with which a call has been made from the United Nations (UN) to society to action, are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is about promoting prosperity and protecting the planet, through economic growth and the provision of means that meet social needs and environmental protection. The United Nations (UN) is promoting through SDG, in line with the trend of promoting the sustainability of our way of life to achieve a better life for planet Earth and for future generations that inhabit it, focusing on "17 Goals to Transform Our World" (UN, 2020c). The Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. More important than ever, the goals provide a critical framework for COVID-19 recovery (WHO, 2020).

Among these SDGs (UN, 2020d), this work is circumscribed within the scope of Goal 8 "Decent work and economic growth" (UN, 2020b), more specifically in the "Priority 8.2. Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors" (UN, 2020a).

The main motivation in choosing this SDG as the focus for this work is to study, from the point of view of the company and employees, how relevant it is perceived: the care, development, and empowerment of personal assets both at the level of their physical and intellectual capacities, as well as their interpersonal relationships.

2.2. "Organizational Behavior and Management of Change" University subject

This study has been performed in the workplace of " Organizational Behavior and Change Management ", a University Subject qualified as optative, with a load of 4.5 credits, which is placed in the 3rd year of the Degree in Informatics Engineering in the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV). This study takes part concretely in the campus that UPV has in Alcoi, formerly Escuela Politècnica Superior de Alcoi (EPSA).

The subject of Organizational Behavior (OB) treats about behavior and psychological processes in contexts related to work. Individual, group, social, and organizational variables are part of the global scenario that may lead to improve firm performance (Robbins et al., 2013). Everything   that people may do in an organization in order to facilitate the understanding of the complexity of the interpersonal relationships and people interactions, constructs the base of the hypothesis about how that behavior affects the performance of the organization.

The main variables covered by this subject are:

1. personal: perception, learning and change of attitudes, motivation and satisfaction, design, and stress at work.
2. grouped: group work, group communication, leadership and conflict.
3. organizational and social: politics, climate and culture and organizational change.

Besides, the following competences are developed during the subject course:

- Ability to understand and apply the principles of risk assessment and apply them correctly in the preparation and execution of action plans.
- Ability to integrate Information Technology and Communications solutions and business processes to meet the information needs of organizations, allowing them to achieve their objectives effectively and efficiently, thus giving them competitive advantages.
- Ability to understand and apply the principles and practices of organizations, so that they can act as a link between the technical and management communities of an organization and actively participate in the training of users.
- Locate relevant information from different sources and investigate technological developments in their field of work and related areas.
- Reason in an abstract, analytical and critical way, knowing how to elaborate and defend arguments in their area of study and professional field.
- Know how to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and possess the skills that are usually demonstrated through the elaboration and defense of arguments and the resolution of problems within their area of study.

Given the objectives of the subject, as well as the competencies established for the students, and this subject being eminently focused on preparing students to face the challenges of teamwork in their immediate and next stage of personal and professional development, participation of external professionals seems a good reference activity in the teaching of this subject (Guerola-Navarro et al., 2019).

Methodology

The research work has been carried out based on the realization of two practical sessions within the teaching planning of the Organizational Behavior and Change Management subject, using the active learning methodologies and collaborative tools (Araújo et al., 2014; Ponsa et al., 2009). Following Boud and Feletti (2013), and applying problem-based learning methodology, both practical sessions have been developed in the format of the general approach of the project and coordinated development through the active participation of the students, using the necessary accelerators by the teacher.

3.1. Research development plan

The procedure followed for the development of the investigation is detailed below. The work has been developed during two practical sessions of four hours each. Both sessions have had:

- a presentation by an external professional
- a time for questions from the students to the speaker
- a time of debate between students, speaker, and teacher
- a session closure with the consolidation of conclusions
- an elaboration of a summary report, with both the presented arguments and the conclusions obtained, all seen through the critical criteria of the students.

The speakers have been carefully chosen as:

- responsible for relevant departments in their companies
- with high responsibility in the management of personal assets
- belonging to companies in the same sector, specifically the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) consultancy sector, characterized by high technification, both internally and in the provision of their services; this is very relevant as the work tries to confront and / or combine the technological reality and the personal reality of modern business management
- the companies being comparable in their size and in their highly sectorized target market (only differing in their geographical location)
- with a recognized ethical and moral behavior regarding the management of its human resources

In each of the two sessions, an external speaker of recognized prestige and experience in digital humanism and in the management of personal assets (Human Resources), has followed the following scheme in his presentation:

1) the professor introduces the speaker, including details about his professional experience and the reason why he has been selected to participate in the session and share his experiences on digital humanism and its relevance within Organizational Behavior

2) the speaker states:
   a) Self-presentation of the speaker as a person (values, family, something that makes the speaker a person "close" to the students who are going to listen to him) and as a professional (studies, work experience, current profession, and professional future expectations).
   b) Presentation of the company to which it belongs
   c) What is "Organizational Behavior" for the speaker? What is "resistance to change" for the speaker? (All within the framework of a company, and from the point of view of the speaker as head of department and therefore with people under his charge to motivate, direct, and coordinate the staff)
   d) How does the speaker manage organizational behavior, and resistance to change? (with practical examples as real as possible)
   e) How does the speaker see the future of human asset management in the future (inside and outside the covid situation and telework "imposed" by the COVID-19 pandemic)?

3) The students ask the speaker. The teacher acts as a facilitator.

4) The teacher activates the debate on what is the new perception that students now have about "Organizational Behavior" and "Change Management", based on the practical experience presented by the speaker.

5) Conclusions are obtained and a descriptive, comparative, and critical work is elaborated in groups on both models of digital humanism management

With the conclusions obtained by the 6 working groups, considered as the results of the research work, we proceed to the comparison of the results and obtaining the general conclusions of the study.

2.2.- Goal to obtain

The primary objective in this work is to differentiate and value two personal asset management models, which have shown recognition in their respective professional fields, which is reflected in:

- high degree of employee satisfaction (through anonymous and periodic surveys)
- low employee turnover rate, and therefore high employee loyalty

- awards and public recognition obtained.

More specifically, and in each of the models, it is intended to identify and evaluate for each model:

- the principles, priorities, and basic factors on which both models are based
- the criteria followed when prioritizing one or other actions in the balance between technology and humanism
- the control and recognition mechanisms, both in case of success and failure
- the ultimate goal that each model pursues with these tools and initiatives

Based on the methodology followed and the objectives pursued, we now present the results on which the general conclusions are based.

Results

The results obtained from the study are structured based on the key points identified in each digital humanism management model analyzed.

3.1.- Model A.

In the case of the first model analyzed, after the presentation and the debate between the speaker and the students, four key factors have been identified for the management of interpersonal relationships within a highly technical company with a high commitment to ethical and moral management of personal assets:

1. Communication:
   a. Without a high flow of information, both horizontally (between people of the same hierarchical level) and horizontal (between people of different hierarchical levels), it is very difficult for employees to feel that they are part of a team and that they are personally involved in the objectives of the company.
   b. This communication must be effective, respectful, and sincere, so that it serves decision makers and all levels of the organization efficiently and effectively.
2. Participation:
   a. It's very important to encourage the participation of all employees in the processes that affect organizational behavior increases the bond of employees with the organization, and with it their functioning as a team and their collective productivity.
3. Consistency and Coherence
   a. Human resource management policies must be known and shared.

    b. The satisfaction of employees and their pride of belonging will largely depend on the coherence of the measures to find the balance between technology and the human factor.

4. Commitment and Motivation

    a. Related to all of the above, the greater the participation of employees in decision-making, the better the flow of information, and the greater the coherence in personnel management policies, the greater the commitment that each employee will reach with the ultimate goals of the company, and the greater the motivation of each employee to work in the same direction and as a compact team.

Based on these principles, the company of model A ensures that with all this it has managed to reinforce the commitment of its employees to the objectives of the company, through greater motivation, and in search of greater collective global productivity.

3.2.- Model B.

After analyzing the second model, after the presentation and the debate, four key factors have been identified for the management of digital humanism, again within a highly technical company with a high commitment to ethical and moral management of personal assets:

1. Trust:

    a. A relationship of trust between two or more people guarantees an adequate flow of information, based on empathy and respect.

    b. Trust arises the ability to work as a team and face challenges with the security of being on the right track.

2. Belonging and Community

    a. It is key for a company, and even more so if the technical component is the most relevant, that personal assets have the conviction that they belong to a team, and that they are part of a whole.

    b. The conception of the company as a community of people favors the bond and pride of belonging, and with this the commitment of the employee with his team and the company in general is favored.

3. Team

    a. The firm conviction of belonging to a work team, in which each individual feel respected and an important part of it, prints the character determined to work for the common good, resulting in a greater probability of success as a group and as a collective

4. Emotionality
   a. It is not possible to retain employees and generate an ethical, moral, healthy and sustainable work environment, if it is not counted on that people are emotional and emotional.
   b. Empathy and care for the emotional factor leads companies to generate a climate of trust, respect, and highly effective motivation in the search for group and collective productivity.

Based on this model, the main motivation in the area of digital humanism is based on the conviction that a compact and emotionally healthy team must lead to a management model that prioritizes the bond and commitment of its employees, and thus obtaining of better results as a team and as a collective.

Conclusions

This study, of an eminently practical and empirical nature, and with the joint participation of university students and professionals from the business world, has shown the relevance of digital humanism within the modern management models that are a trend in highly technical companies.

A first conclusion shows that, despite the fact that there is not always the awareness of applying the principles of digital humanism, the participants in the study intuit that probably all companies that have a high component in personal assets, and that are intensive in technology, they are applying the criteria of this management trend.

It is also concluded, in second place, and considering both the results of the study and the employee satisfaction rankings of the leading technology companies, that digital humanism is key to generating a good work environment, as well as for the feeling of Team membership leads to a compact and cohesive functioning that leads to better collective results.

From the comparison of results obtained in the study of both models, it is inferred that for a good functioning as a team, in the search for increased business productivity, the following are key:

- Employee commitment to the organization
- Feeling of belonging and pride in the social impact of work activity
- Motivation of employees, both in terms of personal and professional development

Key factors to achieve all these determining components for good group functioning, it is concluded that they are, following and consolidating the results of both models:

- Empathy, putting yourself in the other's place
- Trust in the rest of the team members

- Fluid communication both horizontally and vertically
- Promotion of the active participation of all members of the company

As a general conclusion, and after the critical analysis of the results obtained, it can be affirmed that both models are compatible and coherent with each other, since through different paths both converge in the interest of involving all employees in the objectives of the company and the personal asset management model itself, thereby achieving greater commitment and motivation and better group and collective functioning.

The study has the limitation that only two companies have been compared, but at the same time it has the virtue that both are an example of the most relevant characteristic of Spanish technological SMEs with a high level of satisfaction and commitment on the part of their employees.

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