Management Techniques and its Impact on Retail Stores

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Abstract

Organizational goals and objectives are better realized when a managerial style that fit an industry is applied. Often times, business failures are associated with poor management techniques, a by-product of wrong choice of management style. This paper examined the impact of two management techniques on effective operation of retail stores, reported findings, results and made recommendations on a preferred technique. Opinions were obtained from employees of 3 stores, each representing a unique area in the retail industry, (A store dealing with perishable and non-perishable goods, an Educational and service-oriented store and a restaurant). Results indicated preference for the MBWA technique as opposed to the MBO where managers were perceived as being out of touch with store operations.

Keywords*: Management by Wandering Around (MBWA), Management by Objective (MBO), retail stores, employee perceptions.*

Introduction

Management by account of most definitions is the achievement of an organization‘s goal and objectives using available resources. Human resources among others play a vital role in the success of any business. As most scholars contend, human resource management is pivotal to organizational success. Management styles have received its fair share of scrutiny over the years. Definitions, advantages and disadvantages of management styles, along with variables that control it have been written on extensively. Few if any have attempted to zero in on management styles akin to particular industries. Certain managerial styles fit particular organizations better. Organizations goals and objectives are far better realized when particular managerial styles are applied to certain businesses. Often times, business failures are associated with bad management, a by-product of wrong choice of management style. This paper will examine the impact of two distinct styles of management, vi: (Management by Wandering Around-MBWA) and (Management by Objective) on Retail stores to see if certain organizations thrive most under certain managerial styles and if so which of these two works best with retail stores.

Study Paradigm: Management by Wandering Around

The concept was first developed by executives at Hewlett Packard in the 1970‘s, this concept was rarely mentioned in the business world until Peters and Waterman wrote extensively on it in their best seller titled, ―In search of Excellence‖ in 1982. Hewlett Packard advocated Management by Wandering Around as a way of getting their managers off their corporate offices to connect, communicate and relate to all levels of employees. Management by Wandering Around assumes that there exist a layer of insulation between managers and their employees as a result of managers staying in their offices and relying only on memos from their supervisors to make decisions (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The contention is that managers

should leave the comfort of their office to the general place of work to interacts with employees, see things for themselves, ask questions if need be and makes decisions based on observations. They need informal discussions with co-workers about the problems observed and providing positive solutions with reinforcement for a job well done (Hamister, 2007). Also, Hamister (2007) posit that praise and correction are always more effective when given immediately at point, then a month later after reviewing co-workers progress.

Management by Objective

This managerial style was introduced in 1954 by Peter Drucker. The concept is an all-inclusive method, where all managers and not just top managers, participate in the objective planning and implementation process. Its' basic tenets include: 1) Participatory strategic planning and decision making. 2) Measurement of goal attainment and 3) Time management. Management by objective to be effective, individual managers must understand the specific objective of their job and how these objectives fit in with the overall goal of the organization (Drucker, 1954).

Objective of the study

The role of the customer service department has grown tremendously considering that the retail business now includes other industries like the banking, the postal agency, service and repair warrantees, gardening and money transfers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of two management techniques in enhancing an effective operation of a retail store in view of post COVID-19 era. This is in lure of best possible techniques retail managers requires to achieving their goals and overall company's objectives.

Hypotheses

The following five null hypotheses were formulated:

HO1: There is no significant difference between the mean number of employees who perceived sales volume to be higher under the MBWA technique than under the MBO technique.

HO2: There is no significant difference between levels of employee satisfaction by management technique.

HO3: There is no significant difference between the mean number of employees who perceived MBWA as a monitoring tool and the mean number who perceived MBO as a monitoring tool.

HO4: There is no significant difference between production levels of employees by management technique.

HO5: There is no significant difference between levels of employee preference about management techniques used by sex.

Review of Related Literature

Perception of Management by Wandering Around {MBWA}

Jones (2001) said that MBWA does not mean leaving ones responsibility behind as you stroll through the workplace, that wandering through an organization can do more harm than good if not properly executed. Four tips are given to assist manager get the best from their co-workers as they wander around. First--to appear relaxed as the employees will reflect your feelings and action as you wander past them. Secondly-- observe and listen as you wander past and let them see you as do so. Thirdly--make spontaneous and unexplained visits, spending equal time in all areas within the organization. Fourthly—convey an image of a coach and not an inspector, when you cannot answer an employees' question on the spot, get back to him/her with

an answer in due time (Jones, 2001). Hamister (2007) in taking the concept of MBWA to a new level narrated how he discovered that managers indeed wanders but do not interact with employees to identify areas that need improvement and so changed his acronym on MBWA and I (Managing by Wandering Around and Interacting).

Perception of Management by Objective (MBO)

Cook, Hunsaker and Coffey (1996) examined the concept of MBO and said, ‑Formal process of management by objectives, particularly known as MBO is based on the philosophy that the manager and the managed ought to negotiate or collaborate on defining the objectives the subordinate is to pursue over the next time period‖. Therefore, the intent of MBO is for managers and subordinates to agree on a common objective to be achieved within a given time period for the overall company‘s goal (Cook, Hunsaker and Coffey, 1996). Albrecht (1978) undoubtedly said that MBO has been written to be rapidly becoming the most widely used technique in management but falls short of accommodating customers‘ needs especially when they do not participate in board room deliberations.

Empirical Review

Lorenzen (2002), narrated how MBWA could be used to eliminate the barrier between the Librarian and the Patron. The paper examined the techniques of MBWA and references roving. It was discovered that most Library Patrons are either too afraid, does not recognize they need help or do not want to appear as being dummy and as such may not approach the help desk. Comparing it to the business world, Loerenzen (2002), is of the opinion that managers like Librarians have responded similarly by leaving the reference desk behind to interact proactively with Patrons by acting as reference rovers.

Nichoff and Moorman (1993), conducted a study to examine employee citizenship behavior in a workplace. MBWA was perceived negatively as most employees, the rumor contend, would be adversely affected with the manager hovering around them. Also, Nichoff and Moorman (1993), hypothesized in their study that monitoring would negatively affect employee behavior and productivity. In another study of employees and managers of a Movie company that operated eleven theaters revealed that monitoring methods of observation negatively influenced citizenship and had a positive influence on perception of fairness and productivity.

MacNicl and Boyd (2006) examined three schools using the principles of Leadership and Managing by Wandering Around. This model assumes that being in the classroom and school ground, speaking to teachers, greeting students name by name and meeting parents would improve student learning and behavior. The principal observed that they experienced resistance from the teachers and staff about entry into their classroom and offices but that changed after the teachers realized that it was a leadership style rather than a scrutinizing style. Also, MacNcil and Boyd (2006) observed that being a principal is primarily thinking, walking and talking job. By inserting Leadership component in MBWA.

Methodology

This study intends to access the impact of the two management techniques (MBWA and MBO) to better assists managers and employees in achieving company objectives. The survey research design was adopted in gathering data in order to reach a valid conclusion. Also, the design was appropriate for gathering uniform from the respondents required for the study as it provides a way of selecting adequate representative from the population itself with the same social characteristics. In order to streamline the research, the study is restricted to Retail Stores and the study related variables.

Population and sampling

The population for this study consists of managers and low-level employees from 3 retail stores in Ruston, Louisiana. Each of these stores represents a unique area in the retail industry. (A store dealing with perishable and non-perishable goods, an Educational and service-oriented store and a restaurant). A total of 100 from 3 different stores participated in the study. The identity of participating stores was concealed at their request. See appendix 2.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument called The Retail Management Technique (RMT), was designed to solicit employees‘ opinion and performance levels in each of the management technique being considered. The instrument was developed by the researcher following an extensive review of related literature and conversations with prominent researchers who have conducted similar studies. It comprises of two sections 1 and 2. Section 1 contains 5 questions designed to solicit demographic characteristics of the respondents‘ positions and the management technique being applied in their organizations while section 2 is centred on the opinions and perceptions of both management techniques with 7 questions using Likert‘s five –points scale totally 20 items. The questionnaire solicited employee position to differentiate between response from employees in supervisory levels and those in lower positions. Data was collected from respondents personally through the help of contacts after two to three attempts within the stipulated time frame of one month. Respondents were asked not to indicate their names to encourage honesty

Pilot study

A pilot study was done to determine the test-retest reliability (Stability-one-week interval) of the instrument and to gain feedback on possible ambiguities of items. 10 subjects that represented the 3 stores examined, namely 5 managers and 5 employees were used for this pilot study. To facilitate a one on one dialogue with the employees, the questionnaires were hand-delivered.

Reliability

A test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Pearson Moment Coefficient was used to analyse data collected. A comparison between the first and second responses showed no significant deviation in their responses. Internal consistency for the instrument was established by an item by item analysis of each question in the instrument. Correlation coefficient obtained between the two responses ranges from a low of .75 for question 7 to a high of .95 for question 12. See appendix 1

Validity

A panel of 3 experts reviewed the items on the questionnaire for content and redundancy. On a scale of 1 to 10, one being –not suitable for this study‖ and ten being –quite suitable for this study, the panel rated the instrument an 8, a 9 and a 9 consecutively for an average rate of 8.67. All members of the panel are university professors with vast knowledge in instrument design.

Statistical Analysis

Data collected was analysed using the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in hypothesis 1 to determine the effect of each management technique on sales. The –t‖ test was used in hypothesis 2 to determine the level of employee satisfaction when both management techniques were used. Hypothesis 3 and 5 were analysed using the Chi Square, to examine if employees perceive the MBWA technique as a monitoring device in hypothesis 3 and in hypothesis 5.

All 5 hypotheses were tested using the Alpha level of .05 or better as a basis for rejecting or failing to reject the null hypothesis. Significant ANOVA differences were followed using the post hoc test (Schafee).

Null Hypotheses and Evaluation Questions

Five Null hypotheses were tested by analysing the effect of each of the two management techniques on sales volume, employee satisfaction, productivity, perception of management technique and technique preference by gender. The .01 and .05 level of significance was established as a basis for rejecting or failing to reject the null hypothesis. Descriptive data were tabulated and discussed followed by statistical analysis. Section one had a 100% response rate, section two a 95% rate.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean number of employees who perceived Sales Volume to be higher under the MBWA technique and those who perceived sales to be higher under the MBO technique.

Item 6: Sales volume would /did increase under the MBWA technique

On item 6 in the survey, 72% (N=72) agreed with the statement that Sales volume would increase more under the MBWA technique of governance as opposed to 21% (N=21) who disagreed

Table 1: Options about Sales Volume under MBWA Management Technique

Position	N	Agreed	%	Disagreed	%	Neutral	%
Managers	32	22	30.56%	6	28.57%	4	57.14%
Cashers	19	11	15.28%	6	28.57%	2	28.57%
Customers	29	24	33.33%	5	23.81%	-	-
Sales/Clerical	16	13	18.06%	3	14.29%	-	-
Others	4	2	2.78%	1	4.76%	1	14.29%
Total	100	72	100%	21	100%	7	100%

Item 7: Sales volume would /did increase under the MBO management technique

On item 7 in the survey, 42% (N=42) of the respondents agreed with the statement that sales volume would increase under the MBO technique. 42% (N=42) also disagreed or strongly disagreed. Those who disagreed constituted 44% of the respondents out of which 36.36% (N=16) were Managers, 18.18% (N=8) Cashiers, 13.64% (N=6) Sales/Clerical, 29.55 (N=13) were from Customers and 2.27% (N=1) were others. Those in the neutral column consists of 14 employees which constituted 14% (N=14).

Table 2: Options about Sales Volume under MBO Management Technique

Position	N	Agreed	%	Disagreed	%	Neutral	%
Managers	32	10	28.81%	16	36.36%	6	42,86%
Cashers	19	8	19.05%	8	18.18%	3	21.43%
Customers	29	13	3O.95%	13	29.55%	3	21.43%
Sales/Clerical	16	9	21.43%	6	13.64%	1	7.14%
Others	4	2	4.78%	1	2.27%	1	7.14%
Total	100	42	100%	44	100%	14	100%

Table 3: **Difference in Means for Number of Employees who perceived Higher Sales Volume under the MBWA and MBO Management Techniques**

Variable/Groups	N	M	S	T	Df
Sales volume would/did increase under MBWA technique	100	3.85	1.38	*27.88	99
Sales volume would/did increase under MBO technique	100	3	1.33	22.5	

* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

Ho2: There is no significant difference between levels of employee satisfaction by Management Techniques.

Item 10: Employee level of satisfaction increased under thew MBWA management Technique

Of the 100 respondents, 66% (N=66) agreed that employee level of satisfaction increased under the MBWA technique. When level of satisfaction was weighed against age, 66% (N=66) agreed with the statement. 45% (N=45) of them are 28 years old and above, while 31% (N=31) of those who disagreed are between 18 to 27 years old which is seen as (teenagers and young adult)

Item 11: Employee level of satisfaction increased under the MBO Management

Table 4: Response to survey by Number and Age disparity for items 10 and 11

Options	MBWA	Age	MBO	Age
S. agree/Agree	66	Above 27	40	Below 27
Neutral	6		15	
S. disagree/Disagree	28	Below 27	45	Above 27
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 5: Differences in Means for levels of Employee Satisfaction under the MBWA and the MBO Management Techniques

Variable/Groups	N	M	S	T	Df
Employee satisfaction level under MBWA technique	100	3.63	1.34	27.12	99
Employee satisfaction level under MBO technique	100	2.94	1.36	21.59	

* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

The mean number of employees who indicated satisfaction under the MBWA technique was 3.63 (S=1.34), while the mean number who indicated satisfaction under the MBO technique was 2.94 (S=1.36). Therefore, reject the Null Hypothesis. The difference will occur by chance less than 1% of the time. More employees indicated satisfaction with the MBWA management techniques than did with the MBO technique.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the mean number of employees who perceived MBWA as a monitoring tool and the mean number who perceived MBO as a monitoring tool.

Item 18: Employee perceived MBWA technique as more of a monitoring tool than MBO as a monitoring tool.

Of the 100 employees surveyed, 66% (N=66) agreed that MBO is a monitoring tool compared to 53% (N=53) who agreed that MBWA is a monitoring technique. 27% (N=27) disagreed that MBO is a monitoring technique compared to 42% (N=42) who disagreed that MBWA is more of monitoring technique than the MBO method.

Table 6: Response to Employee Survey by Number and Percentages For Item18

Options	MBWA	%	MBO	%
S. agree/Agree	53	53.00%	66	66%
Neutral	5	5.00%	7	7.00%
S. disagree/Disagree	42	42.00%	27	27.00%
Total	100	100%	100	100%

Table 7: Differences in Mean for Number of Employees who perceived MBWA as of a monitoring technique and the Mean. Also, number that perceived MBO as a Monitoring Technique

Variable/Groups	N	M	S	T	df
Employee perception of MBWA as a monitoring technique	100	3.4	2.42	14.07	99
Employee perception of MBO as a monitoring technique	100	3.4	1.4	26.07	

*Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

The mean number of employees who perceived MBWA as a monitoring technique was 3.40 (S=2.42) while the mean number for the MBO technique as a monitoring technique was higher at 3.64 (S=1.40). Therefore, reject the Null Hypothesis and state that the difference will occur by chance less than 1% of the time. More employees perceived the MBO technique as a monitoring tool than do the MBWA technique.

Ho4: There is no significant difference between production levels of employees by either management technique.

Item 19: Employees perceive MBWA technique more appropriate for retail store Operations than do the MBO technique.

The percentage of employees who agreed that production level increased under the MBWA technique was 81% (N=81) as compared to 38% (N=38) who said the same for the MBO technique. Only 15% (N=15) disagreed with the premise that employee production would increase under the MBWA technique as compared with the 47% (N=47) for the MBO technique.

Table 8: Response to Employee Survey by Number and Percentages For Item 19

Options	MBWA	%	MBO	%
S. agree/Agree	81	81.00%	38	38.00%
Neutral	4	4.00%	15	15.00%
S. disagree/Disagree	15	15.00%	47	47.00%
Total	100	100%	100	100%

The mean for production level under the MBWA technique was 4.08 (S=1.09) while the mean under the MBO level was 2.95 (S=1.35), indicating higher level of production under the MBWA technique. Therefore, reject the Null Hypothesis and state that the chances of having a higher production level under the MBO technique is less than 1%

Table 9: Differences in Mean for production level under two management techniques (MBWA and MBO)

Variable/Groups	N	M	S	T	Df
Employee productivity increased under MBWA	100	4.08	1.09	37.47	99
Employee productivity increased under MBO	100	2.95	1.35	21.83	

*Significant at .05 level

**significant at .01 level

Ho: 5 There is no significant difference between employee preference of either the MBWA nor the MBO management techniques by Sex.

Of the 100 respondents, 45 were male while 55 were female. Out of the 45 males, 71.11% (N=32) agreed that MBWA technique would lead to increased sales volume compare to 40% (N=18) of the men who sided with MBO technique.17.11% (N=8) of them disagreed that the MBWA would yield more sales volume than MBO as compared to 44.44% (N=20) of them who disagreed that MBO technique would yield more sales volume. Of the 55 female respondents, 72.72% (N=40) agreed that the MBWA technique would yield more sales volume while only 43.64% (N=24) took side that MBO technique is a way to increase sale volume

Table 10: Response to Employee Survey by Number and Percentages for Item 4

Options	MBWA	%	MBO	%
S. agree/Agree (Male =45)	32	71.11%	18	40.00%
Neutral	5	11.11%	7	15.56%
S. disagree/Disagree	8	17.78%	20	44.44%
Total	45	100%	45	100%
S.agree/Agree (Female=55)	40	72.73%	24	%
Neutral	2	3.64%	7	7.00%
S. disagree/Disagree	13	23.64%	24	27.00%
Total	55	100%	55	100%

The mean number of male employees who indicated that employees perform better under the MBWA technique was 4.23 (S=1.15) compared to female employees which was 4.18 (S =1.14). Under the MBO technique, the mean for male employee lower at 3.67 (S=1.15) and for female 3.47 (S=1.54). Both male and female agreed that employee performance was better under the MBWA than the MBO technique.

Table 11: Difference in Means for male and female employees regarding MBWA techniques

Variable/Groups	N	M	S
Male	32	4.23	1.15
Female	32	4.18	1.14

Table 12: Differences in means for male and female techniques regarding MBO techniques

Variable/Groups	N	M	S
Male	12	3.67	1.15
Female	19	3.47	1.54

Findings

1. It was found that there was a significant difference between employees who perceived increased sales volume under the Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) technique and those who perceived increased sales volume under the Management by Objective (MBO) technique, with majority of the employees in agreement that more sales would be realized using the MBWA method of management in a retail store. The mean of employees in favour of the MBWA technique was higher than those in favour of the MBO technique.
2. There was a significant difference between levels of employee satisfaction as it pertains to the use of Management by Wandering Around technique and the use of Management by Objective technique, with majority of the employee expressing greater satisfaction with the MBWA technique than with the MBO technique. More of the older employees see MBWA as a useful tool than the younger employees.
3. A significant difference was found between the mean number of employees who perceived the MBWA technique as a monitoring tool and the MBO technique as a monitoring tool with those who see the MBO technique as a monitoring tool having a significantly higher mean. Employees perceive the MBO technique as a monitoring tool especially among younger age employees. This phenomenon was mainly noticeable among employees who have been on the job less than 4 years.
4. The percentage of employees who indicated that production level will increase under the MBWA style of management was much higher than those of the employees who indicated that it will increase under the MBO style, with a majority in agreement that the MBWA style of management will result in more productivity than the MBO style, in a retail setting.
5. There was a general acceptance from both men and women that MBWA is more effective in a retail store setting than the MBO technique with more women than men in favor of the MBWA technique as a means of increasing sales volume.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were based on the findings of the data analysed. Results for the investigation indicated that the mean number of employees who perceived increased sales volume under the Management by Wandering Around technique was significantly greater than that of those who perceived increased sales under the MBO technique. The findings indicated that the mean number of employees who were satisfied with the MBWA technique was greater than the mean number of employees who expressed satisfaction with the MBO technique. When older employees were compared with younger employees, a greater acceptance percentage for

the MBWA technique was found among older workers than younger workers. The findings indicated that the mean number of employees who perceived the MBO technique as a monitoring tool was significantly higher than the employees who perceived the MBWA technique as a monitoring tool. Further investigation revealed that a higher percentage of employees with less than 4 years' experience perceived the MBWA technique as a monitoring tool than employees with more than 4 years' experience.

Results of the findings showed that the percentage of employees who indicated that production level would increase under the MBWA style of management was higher than those of the employees who indicated that it would under the MBO technique. Results of the findings showed a general acceptance from both men and women that MBWA is more effective in a retail store setting than the MBO technique.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. To facilitate increased sales, obtain greater employee satisfaction and greater production level in retail stores, it is recommended that Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) techniques be instituted. Results showed a significant difference in the number of employees who see it as a viable method of increasing sales, employee satisfaction and employee productivity in retail stores.
2. To avoid the misconception that the MBWA technique is a monitoring tool, especially among younger workers and employees with less than 4 years' experience, who see it as a way for the Managers to look over their shoulders, supervisors should be advised to minimize personal contacts with employees and instead maximize observations while wandering around the store floor.
3. Considering the fact that almost an equal number of men as women indicated preference for the MBWA technique especially among older employees and those with more than 4 years' experience, it is recommended that this style of management be inculcated into the orientation curriculum of retail store to acquaint new employees with the advantages MBWA.

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APPENDIX 1

Reliability

N	ITEMS	RATE
6	Sales volume would/did increase under the MBWA technique.	0.973
7	Sales volume would/did increase under the MBO technique.	0.899
8	Sales volume would not/did not change under the MBWA technique.	0.813
9	Sales volume would not/did not change under the MBO technique.	0.905
10	Employee level of satisfaction increased under the MBWA technique.	0.971
11	Employee level of satisfaction increased under the MBO technique	0.942
12	Employee level of satisfaction showed little or no change under the MBWA technique	0.961
13	Employee level of satisfaction showed little or no change under the MBO technique	0.978
14	Employee level of productivity increased under the MBWA technique	0.963
15	Employee level of production increased under the MBO technique	0.934
16	Employee level of production showed little or no change under the MBWA technique	0.81
17	Employee level of production showed little or no change under the MBO technique	0.826
18	Employees perceive MBWA more of a monitoring technique than do MBO as a monitoring technique	0.882
19	Employees perceive MBWA technique to be appropriate for retail store operation than do the MBO technique	0.917
20	Retail stores do not need any management technique. Just sell.	0.868

APPENDIX 2

Number of employees by companies		
Stores	No. of Managers	No. of other employees
Perishable and non – perishable store.	**10**	**30**
Restaurant	**10**	**25**
Educational Services Store	**5**	**20**
Total	**25**	**75**