

Embracing Uncertainty: The Critical Role of Tolerance of Ambiguity in Weaving Human Sustainability

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Abstract:

Human sustainability is a term that mostly focuses on the welfare of the human beings as well as the welfare of the society in the present and in the future. The welfare of the human capital can be nurtured only when the human are stress averse. Life is uncertain so are the situations. The companies should take measures to preserve the four pillars: Social, Human, Economic, and Environmental Sustainability. The present paper focuses on how effectively the organizations can nurture the Human Sustainability through Tolerance of Ambiguity. Tolerance of ambiguity is an attitude towards situations which are uncertain and subject to multiple conflicting interpretations. People with high tolerance of ambiguity evaluate these kinds of objects, events and situations in a positive manner and deal with them constructively, while people with low tolerance for ambiguity adopt a rigid single perspective on unclear situations and are inflexible in their thinking about the world.

Keywords: Human Sustainability, Tolerance of Ambiguity, Adaptability, Resilience

Introduction:

Human sustainability is a term that mostly focuses on the welfare of the human beings as well as the welfare of the society in the present and in the future. Human sustainability is considered as one of the four pillars of sustainability, the other three are Social, Economic and Environmental sustainability. To talk about human sustainability in more detail, it is the ability to maintain and improvise the human capital in the society by making sure that all the people of the society have adequate and quality resources services and opportunities that will lead them to lead healthy satisfactory and dignified lives. If human sustainability is followed, it will have a significant impact on work and organizations which would promote commitment, health and well-being diversity equity inclusion and belongingness. Therefore, human sustainability should be considered as a fundamental priority for individuals, organizations, community, and society. In accordance with the Human Sustainability, Deloitte insights put forths its view:

“We are operating in a human-powered economy. Organizations are at a watershed moment, with many having transitioned from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy and now to an economy that is powered by the hearts, minds, and essential human traits of people—in short, our humanity. Today, for many organizations, nothing is more important than its people, from workers and contractors to customers and community members. These human connections drive everything of value to an organization, including revenue, innovation and intellectual property, efficiency, brand relevance,

productivity, retention, adaptability, and risk. Yet organizations' current efforts to prioritize these all-important connections are generally falling short—in part because many organizations are stuck in a legacy mindset that centers on extracting value from people rather than working with them to create a better future for organizations and individuals alike.” (Deloitte Insights)

Understanding Tolerance of Ambiguity

Tolerance of ambiguity is an attitude towards situations which are uncertain and subject to multiple conflicting interpretations. People with high tolerance of ambiguity evaluate these kinds of objects, events and situations in a positive manner and deal with them constructively, while people with low tolerance for ambiguity adopt a rigid single perspective on unclear situations and are inflexible in their thinking about the world.

Tolerance of ambiguity is a term that is referred as the capacity of an individual to facing the uncertainties and challenges that occur in one's life. It is filled with full of uncertainties and challenges. The hit of pandemic has already proved it. Uncertainties and challenges help us in overcoming them and bringing in us the strength, ability to cope up with the life's tranquilities. Facing the challenges helps an individual to bring in novelty in one's creative thinking, being adaptable, being resilient, and much more. Having a high level of Tolerance of ambiguity helps an individual to active employee engagement, managing chaos and to develop critical leadership skills. People with high tolerance of ambiguity do not limit their thoughts by functional fixedness but rather take effort to go beyond the set boundaries. Such people do not panic facing uncertainties. They are curious to grow in for new experiences.

Connection between Tolerance of Ambiguity and Human Sustainability

Uncertainties and challenges come without any intimation in today's world and the covid-19 has proven it. If we are talking about in the present time definitely life after covid-19 has changed tremendously. During the pandemic some were resistant to accept the changes that we had to adopt maybe in our personal academic or professional life. The people who gave a tough fight with the challenges and uncertainties in the midst of Covid-19 were able to sustain exhibiting there high level of tolerance and risk averse. High level of Ambiguity people do not strive for perfectionism, hence they are very comfortable with the challenges as they do not get stressed out as to what is right or wrong. Their main focus is to overcome the current uncertainty that is affecting their life at the workplace and work effectively in the environment. With this background we will next focus on how one can adopt tolerance of ambiguity at workplace. Today's business world demands to have the ability to thrive with the ambiguous and uncertain and challenging circumstances.

The challenge of Human Sustainability demands multidisciplinary connection between various departments. Thus, the connection between the Tolerance of Ambiguity and Human Sustainability lies in their mutual facilitation of adaptability, decision making ability, creative problem-solving skills, resiliency, accepting the criticism in a positive way, leading to a good mental health, having a high level of emotional intelligence resulting into higher level of job satisfaction. Cultivating tolerance of Ambiguity will help the organizations and individuals to address the interconnected challenges of sustainability.

How one can adopt the high level of tolerance, of ambiguity and become an asset at the workplace

- 1. Have a positive perception towards uncertainty:** No situation is good or bad not right or wrong, our perception towards the situation define our response. Actually we view any uncertain or ambiguous situation as threatening that is our own perspective. So there is a need to change our mind set. We need to encounter the uncertainties with a positive aspect which would enhance the advanced thinking giving way to fight respond attitude, deepen the thought process, enhancing the skill in handling complex situations. One needs to focus on one's strengths and strive to enhance them and not on what one lacks in. Besides an individual needs to have control on emotions, should be able to manage the stress level and obtain a high level of emotional intelligence.
- 2. Being focused and assertive:** One need to minimize the distractions that come in the midst of our tasks to be completed. Also one needs to be a good presenter of their opinion without having any expectations from others to lead the show. Assertiveness leads to projecting confidence, helps in presenting your views though the views are in contrast to others views resulting into low level of stress
- 3. Practice Adaptability:** High level of tolerance of ambiguity people welcome change in a positive way and believe that being adaptable to uncertainties will make them grow. Ambiguous situations definitely lead us to stress disturbing our emotional equilibrium so instead of reaching to uncertainties with a flight response mode it is better to respond with a fight response mode on in respond mode on. Respond mode use your valuable energy to focus on how to overcome or face the current uncertainty. Consider the situation as an opportunity which will strengthen you and develop your self -efficacy and self- awareness.
- 4. Build in Eagerness & Exhibit your confidence:** High level of tolerance of ambiguity people are more communicative. Try to be more communicative among the groups with the co-workers which should lead to good exchange of views and ideas with respect to problem solving, decision making, building strong interpersonal relations, strengthening network system, people are courageous enough to come out of their comfort zones, raise their voice when needed for one self and others. Our brain has two parts, one is the primitive brain which believes and the second is the advanced brain. The primitive brain is featured by a feeling of urgency, rigidity, and repetitiveness whereas advanced brain improves the brain's executive function, reduces impulsivity and emotional reactivity. Every one of us have these two types of thinking, but the tolerance of ambiguity people strongly and maximal use the advanced brain. Advanced thinking helps you to have a clear vision of the future.

To make the point on Tolerance of Ambiguity more strong, Samantha believes that ambiguity tolerance is a skill that can equip an organization to perform in dynamic and volatile environment. She further says that tolerance of ambiguity is the new super capability that can enhance current and future performance while also supporting well-being.

According to the world economic forums global risk report 2024 climate change, demographic changes, AI generated mis and dis information, cost of living crisis cyber-attacks of social political polarization are already upon us. Despite of such above mentioned uncertainties what is needed is tolerance of ambiguity which is very well expressed by Gill and Einhorn, Head innovation and transformation center for nature and climate world economic forum. He says “what is needed is a mindset that recognizes the full scale of the risk while maintaining the optimism that we can and will respond in a way to avoid and mitigate the worst from occurring”

Thus Tolerance of ambiguity is one of the top skills and leadership qualities of ambiguity leader which has the ability to keep up the team United, delegate the tasks, come out of the comfort zone, and has a

sion and who isn't susceptible to the negative impact.

Conclusion:

It's high time to understand the urgency and need to develop the Tolerance of Ambiguity among the employees in the organizations. In order to develop the ambiguity tolerance the first thing required is to understand the symptoms of low tolerance of ambiguity, which leads to not to re-invent the wheel. People believe in functional fixedness wherein they are reluctant to innovative solutions and believe to adopt the old ways of solution. Being in the comfort zone people fear to take any sort of risk or are adaptable to the new demands. They are too rigid to cross the boundaries of their cognitive abilities. People do not consider the uncertainties as opportunities but they consider as a threat. They remain more focused on the obstacles rather than experience the adversities and coming up with innovative and creative ideas of overcoming such obstacles. Ambiguity is certain there is no escape. Taking the symptoms of ambiguity into consideration we need to take measures to improve the level of tolerance of ambiguity. The organizations should take necessary steps to make their employees ambiguity resistant and who would be able to navigate the upcoming uncertainties with a fight response attitude.

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