

Effects of Employees' Attitudes and Behaviour on Production and Performance: Case Study of the Health Care Providers at Children's Hospital, University Teaching Hospital of Lusaka, Zambia

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Abstract

Background: Zambia, like other low- and middle-income countries, faces numerous effects of negative attitudes and behaviours among health care providers in various institutions. Stawiski et al. (2011) argued that the exploration of work attitudes enables organizations to position themselves correctly and take advantage of every opportunity to improve their corporate performance amidst economic hardship.

Methodology: The University Teaching Hospital (UTH) is the biggest and largest hospital in Zambia. A case study design was employed to explore effects of employees' attitudes and behaviour on production and performance among health care providers at Children's Hospital, University Teaching Hospital of Lusaka, Zambia. The study population was comprised of working men and women who have been working at Children's Hospital. The study conducted six in-depth interviews and a survey of 40 health care workers.

Results: The findings indicate that 50% Health Care Providers satisfaction with their work. Respondents narrated that they had positive attitude towards work, this was expressed through the manner they received, respected and cared for the patient. The majority of the respondents reported that cases whereby health care providers display negative attitude towards patients were rare.

Keywords: Health Care Workers, Attitudes, Behaviour, Production and Performance.

Introduction

Zambia, like other low- and middle-income countries, faces numerous effects negative attitudes and behaviors among health care providers in various institutions. Stawiski et al. (2011) argued that the exploration of work attitudes enables organizations to position themselves correctly and take advantage of every opportunity to improve their corporate performance amidst economic hardship. Studies conducted in Sub-Sahara and other low-income countries report that "A positive psychological contract is worth taking seriously because it is strongly linked to higher commitment to the organization, higher employee satisfaction and better employment relations (Kamina, 2002 and Stawiski et al., 2011). Unlike organization commitment, studies have also shown how motivation plays critical role in improving job performance. The study conducted by Rahman

et al. (2017) on the Impact of Employee Work Related Attitudes on Job Performance revealed that "Job related attitudes and organizational performance are the fundamental research issues in industrial psychology". However, some studies also argue that job satisfaction is associated with employee reward another component of job satisfaction is about how employees are given appreciation their good effort in health care organization (Armstrong, 2000).

Understanding attitudes in work places is critical to enhance productivity and efficiency in health care organisations. Sarah (2012) examined the factors which influence employee satisfaction in higher educational institution in Malaysia. At the same time, there are many health care facilities in low income countries like Zambia, yet there are few studies that have conducted to understand the effects health care

providers' attitude and behaviour on job performance and production. Therefore, this study seeks to explore effects of employees' attitudes and behaviour on production and performance: case study of the health care providers at Children's Hospital, University Teaching Hospital of Lusaka, Zambia.

Methodology

Study setting

The University Teaching Hospital (UTH) is the biggest and largest hospital in Zambia. It is located in the capital city Lusaka about 4Km east of the central business center. University Teaching Hospital is the principle medical training institution in the country for Medical Students, Interns, and Postgraduate Doctors. UTH also provides trained Nurses through the Nursing university college of Lusaka located within the hospital grounds as well as Clinical Officers through their college located at Chainama Hills College Hospital. The hospital has five hospitals including the Children's' Hospital among others. A case study design was employed to explore the state of affairs as it existed through direct interaction with the participants (Creswell, 2007). The study population shall comprise of working men and women who are 18years and above who have been working at Children's' Hospital.

Data collection methods

The study conducted six in-depth interviews under the qualitative design. The quantitative sample was comprising of 40 health care workers. Recruitment of participants will be done through locally acceptable procedures. Firstly, permission was sought from the hospital administrators. The officers in charge of the different departments will act as local gate keepers shall be consulted as entry points into the community.

Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis

Data analysis of qualitative data incorporates disassembling, segmenting, and reconstructing data to establish relevant findings, as a means to reaching a conclusion (Boeije, 2010). All digitally recorded in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim by the first author (CM). The transcripts or qualitative data was exported

into Nvivo version 12 for data management and analysis. Further analysis of the transcribed data involved identification of themes and concepts based on coding of statements, subjects and aspects that appeared to be revealing the subject under inquiry. After this we classified the substantive codes according to their emerging sub-categories were developed.

Quantitative data analysis

The data that was entered into excel and exported to Stata version 15 where descriptive analysis was performed. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain numbers and proportions of women by their socio-demographic characteristics. The chi-square test was performed to determine the proportion of men and women who had participated. The study used Mann-whitney U test and Chi square test to measure variables (Employment Satisfaction, and Degree of absenteeism) on a likert scale.

Ethical issues

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the University Teaching Hospital. And permission to conduct the study shall be sought from children's hospital. Verbal and written informed consent shall be sought from study participants.

Findings

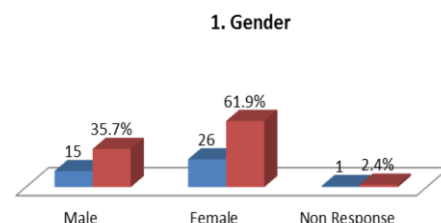


Figure 1. Gender

The graph above shows the gender distribution of participants who took part in the study. Women and men were asked to state their sex, the response; 15 (35.7%) out of 42 interviewed respondents were male and while 26 (61.9%) were female.

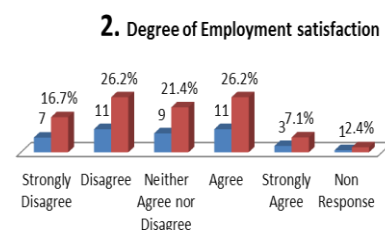


Figure 2. Degree of employment satisfaction

Graph two above indicates that eleven (11) (26.2%) out of 42 respondents agreed that they were highly satisfied with their, while 11 (26.2%) disagreed. Nine 9 (21.4%) responded indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, 7 (16.7%) participants stated that they strongly disagreed. Further 3 participants strongly agreed with the statement and only 1 person did not respond to this question.

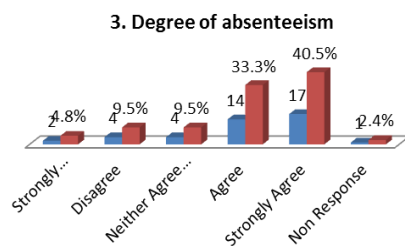


Figure 3. Degree of absenteeism

Discussion

Concerning absenteeism, 17 (40.5%) respondents reported that there are rare cases of

absenteeism without a justifiable cause in the organization and 14 (33.3%) participants agreed with the statement. Four 4 (9.5%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, 4 (9.5%) interviewees disagreed and 2 (4.8%) strongly disagreed.

Concerning absenteeism, most participants reported that there are few cases of absenteeism without a justifiable cause in the organization. An employee's late arrival, particularly if the function performed at work is critical, may disrupt an organization's production schedule (Groeneveld and Shain 1985).

Most of the respondents indicated that they are self-motivated, committed and highly productive at work. According to Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991) and Meyer and other (1989), employees who are committed to their respective organization are more likely not only to remain with the organization but are also likely to exert more efforts on behalf of the organization and work towards its success and therefore are also likely to exhibit better performance than the uncommitted employees.

Table 1. Degree stealing health related products, self-motivated highly productive employees

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very few health care providers are involved in stealing health related products	Strongly Disagree	3	7.1
	Disagree	10	23.8
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	9	21.4
	Agree	12	28.6
	Strongly Agree	7	16.7
	Non-Response	1	2.4
	Total	42	100
Most employees are self-motivated and highly productive at work	Strongly Disagree	1	2.4
	Disagree	3	7.1
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	6	14.3
	Agree	19	45.2
	Strongly Agree	1	2.4
	Non-Response	12	28.6
	Total	42	100

Table 2. Need to educate employees on the importance of having positive attitude and behaviour towards work

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	3	7.1
	Agree	12	28.6
	Strongly Agree	26	61.9
	Non-Response	1	2.4
	Total	42	100

Twelve (28.6%) respondents agreed that very few health care providers are involved in stealing health related products, 7 (16.7%) interviews strongly agreed and 9 (21.4%) participants neither agreed nor disagreed. While, 10 (23.8%) disagreed with the statement, 3 (7.1%) interviews strongly disagreed and 1 person did not respond to the question.

Most, 19 (45.2%) of the participants agreed to the statement that employees self-motivated and highly productive at work and only 1 respondent strongly agreed. Twelve (28.6%) did not respond to the question, 6 (14.3%) interviewees neither agreed nor disagreed. While, 3 (7.1%) respondents disagreed and 1 (2.45%) participants strongly disagreed.

Respondents were asked whether there is need to educate health care providers on the importance of having positive attitude and behaviour towards work, the answered as follows; 26 (61.9%) out of 42 respondents strongly agree with the aforesaid statement and 12 (28.6%) interviewees agreed. Whereas, 3 (7.1%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and only 1 (2.4%) never gave response to this question.

Factors affecting job productivity and performance

Employee attitudes and behaviour

Having positive attitude was mentioned to one of the most important attributes when it comes to manage patients at the hospital. Respondent narrated that they had positive attitude towards work, this was expressed through the manner they received, respected and cared for the patient. However, some respondents acknowledged that some employees may have such attitudes towards each other but they were not very certain whether such exist towards the patients.

“The positive attitude from the workers is ok, patients here are received with care, they are attended to with care, you now this is a place where we’re dealing with human lives and all that stuff so extra care is to be observed otherwise positive attitudes are there” (1. KII, Acting Sister In- Charge, Section A).

“we can probably sometimes maybe have those attitudes maybe towards each other as nurses, I’m not sure towards patients, but overall towards patients the attitude is okay,

very much fine” (2. KII, Acting Nursing Sister, Section B).

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents reported that cases whereby health care providers display negative attitude towards patients were rare. The observed cases were related to a situation whereby health worker redirects and/ or transfer the personal problem to his or her clients. Sometimes, the patients come with the pre-conceived ideas about how nurses are viewed by society. When the clients probably do not approach them appropriately some workers, they react to such situation negatively.

“negative attitudes of the workers here is noticeable especially towards patients, you find a member of staff coming to work with their personal issue from home and releasing it all on the patient, their anger and all that, you know. And also, negative attitudes may be seen amongst workers which may hinder the positive work culture” (1. KII, Acting Sister In- Charge, Section A)

“But maybe personal experience maybe they are experiencing personal problems, maybe it can be rented on patients but rarely in children’s hospital do we find such, rarely. But sometimes you find maybe you have incidents were society has a bad picture about nurses and when they vent it to the nurses, that is where you can see someone reacts and call it a bad attitude.” (4.KII, Nursing Officer).

Role of attitudes and behaviour on job performance

The role of having positive attitude was mentioned to be an important aspect that improves job performance amongst health care workers in the health care system. Most respondents reported that employees with positive towards are more likely to provide better and quality health services compare to those who lack it. They further narrated that this helps patients to feel care for thereby assisting them to heal quickly. At the same time the care givers, the family member they also appreciate the work of health care providers who show a positive attitude towards their work.

“positive attitude brings a better nation, a positive attitude will bring out the best of quality of health provision for the society out there and then positive attitude will make our patients get well fast, will make the family say that care,

where the family that is involved appreciate the health sector” (Nursing Officer, Section D).

“Nurses and the doctors are very good; you such compliments just show how patients’ value not only your work but also the attitude you have towards them” (1. KII, Acting Sister In-Charge, Section A).

Furthermore, the importance of having positive attitudes work goes beyond providing a quality service to employees but foster good working environment and relationship among workers. When the health care workers show positive attitude towards each other it creates a good working environment. Ironically, when employees have either personal or social issues between each other, it creates conflict that can affect the way you work and affect job performance. Hence, conflict among the employees distorts the working culture whereby some employees cannot put the best when working thereby reducing the quality of service given to patients.

“The benefits I would say, obviously a positive environment people smiling here and there, it makes even those patients get better faster. Yes, I guess.” (Acting Nursing Sister, Section B).

“the social issues are the most issues that are affecting, even just the relationship towards each other at work, you would find this one answered me wrongly or this one did not talk to me nicely, you get that or you have a grudge against the person. The moment you find you are working together you won’t perform well because the person that you are working with is like you, even if they say they correct thing it is because you’ve carried something for them so you won’t even put much effort (Acting In-charge, Section C)

Strategies to reduce negative attitude

Motivation

Among other strategies of reducing negative attitudes towards work, motivation was mentioned to critical. Motivating employees through various incentives such as allowances and salary increment was highly acknowledged to be one of the solutions that increase positive attitude towards work.

“A positive attitude can be increased by motivating the employees by giving them allowances, bonuses and paying them even when they work overtime, maybe even a salary

increment and all. Yeah in those lines I can say” (1. KII, Acting Sister In- Charge, Section A).

Apart from motivating employees through incentives, another factor that reduce negative towards work is called team. Team work was mentioned to very vital aspect when it comes to providing a health service. Respondents indicated that communicating and resolving work related challenges among them was crucial in a health set up. This helps them to complement each other’s effort.

“Just talking to each other like, hearing out their challenges, their difficulties, and just been there for them, just even working as a team of course where I fall, they’re there for me, here they’re falling I am there for them in that case.” (Acting Nursing Sister, Section B).

Resting and leave days

Job productivity was affected by a number of factors, lack of giving employees resting time and incentives associated to it affected productivity. Respondents reported that they need to go on leave in order to rest as opposed to working without leave. Giving employees leave days, and breaks as they work was highlighted to be important its terms refreshing them and also improve there working culture. Furthermore,

“So one of the incentives is that each employee has to get their leave benefits, so when they have their leave, they have to go on leave so that they are able to rest, then after resting they are able to have that energy and work, and then the other thing that we do is off, they work their night duty, they have their nights off, and another days off. And now we have what we call employee of the month, you’re given that trophy, a certain amount of money, so it motivates the people to work so that they can have that positive energy.” (Nursing Officer, Section D).

Timely payment of salaries

Another factor that can improve having positive attitude towards work was paying all the workers on time. The responded indicated new recruited members of staff have not been remunerated for a long time. This problem can make employees get discouraged with work as well as affect their performance and productivity at the place of work.

“the factors I can say are really on the motivation part, there is not much motivation from the higher authorities, an example is this issue of the newly deployed nurses who have not been paid their salaries and all, you know things like that are so discouraging” (I. KII, Acting Sister In- Charge, Section A).

Fair treatment to all employees at the hospital is crucial. This can only take place if there is good working environments whereby deserving members of are denied opportunities that improves their person development. Therefore, participants narrated employers needed to come up deliberate plan for study and staff development training whereby each employee is given opportunity to for further studies and attend continuous professional development programmes.

good environment, a very good attitude, been motivated, in terms of, maybe been made to go to school, to go on study leave, been put on study plan, going for more trainings, stuff like that. (I. KII, Acting Sister In- Charge, Section A).

Educating employees on having positive attitude

While it was reported that negative hinders job performance and productivity at the work facility, participants indicated that educating employees who display negative towards work was important. Educating employees on embracing positive towards work, among fellow workers and patients can help reduce the situation.

“well the attitudes that are on the negative part can be reduced by talking to those people who portray negativity maybe to change their attitude either towards their co-workers or the patients.” (I. KII, Acting Sister In- Charge, Section A).

Discussion

The findings indicate that 50% Health Care Providers satisfaction with their work. Responded narrated that they had positive attitude towards work, this was expressed through the manner they received, respected and cared for the patient. Similarly, Armstrong (2006) revealed that health care provider's attitude and behaviour influences Job satisfaction that in turn may improve job production and performance. Job satisfaction

entails feelings attitudes or preference of individuals regarding work. On the other hand, it also points out to how content an employee is towards his or her work. Velnampy (2005) adds that a full satisfaction of the employees will make them to give their best to the organization and then improves their performance. The majority of the respondents reported that cases whereby health care providers display negative attitude towards patients were rare. The observed cases were related to a situation whereby health worker redirects and/ or transfer the personal problem to his or her clients.

52% of the employees are commitment with their work and the organization. The role of having positive attitude was mentioned to be an important aspect that improves job performance amongst health care workers in the health care system. Most respondents reported that employees with positive towards are more likely to provide better and quality health services compare to those who lack it. This in line with Stawiski., et al. (2011), who indicated that commitment is critical positive attitude in health care organization. In addition, organizational commitment, organizational support, and job satisfaction are related to decreased absenteeism, lower turnover, and better job performance and production, all these issues are critical to the organization's bottom line. Furthermore, Meyer and Allen (1993) indicated that affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with its organization and goals. On the other hand, commitment instil belief in and acceptance of the organization 's goals and values, willingness to focus effort on helping the organization achieve its goals, and desire to maintain organizational membership.

Most health care providers put a lot of effort and perform their duties very well. The study further reveals that employees who may either personal or social issues between each other, it creates conflict that can affect the way you work and affect job performance. Further, Job involvement and engagement is the degree to which health care employees submerge themselves in their jobs, devote their time and energy in them, and vision work as a fundamental measure of their overall lives. Job involvement and engagement upshots in a health care providers' tendency to outdo the normal expectation associated with his or her job.

Contrary, an employee with little job involvement will see it as just something to do to earn a living. Thus, all of his/her motivation is extrinsic and she/he has little or no interesting on learning how to perform the job better. On the other hand, a person with a lot of job involvement and engagement will derive intrinsic satisfaction from the job itself and will want to learn more and more about how to perform the job efficiently. Job involved and engagement employees are likely to believe in the work ethic, to exhibit high growth needs, and to enjoy participation in decision making. As a result, they hardly ever will be tardy or absent, they are willing to work long hours and they will attempt to be high performers.

Commitment is critical positive attitude in health care organization. Stawiski, S., et al. (2011) revealed that it is significant to understand attitudes of employees at all levels of an organization because those attitudes affect job performance and production within the difficult economy. Hence health care organizations need to take advantage of every opportunity to improve corporate performance and production. In addition, organizational commitment, organizational support, and job satisfaction are related to decreased absenteeism, lower turnover, and better job performance and production, all these issues are critical to the organization's bottom line.

Most employees are highly engaged and involved with their work. Educating employees on Having Positive Attitude: While it was reported that negative hinders job performance and productivity at the work facility, participants indicated that educating employees who display negative towards work was important. Further, Job involvement and engagement is the degree to which health care employees submerge themselves in their jobs, devote their time and energy in them, and vision work as a fundamental measure of their overall lives. Job involvement and engagement upshots in a health care providers' tendency to outdo the normal expectation associated with his or her job. Contrary, an employee with little job involvement will see it as just something to do to earn a living. Thus, all of his/her motivation is extrinsic and she/he has little or no interesting on learning how to perform the job better.

There are rare cases of absenteeism without a justifiable cause in this organization. Mowday et

al. (1979) argues that employee commitment can benefit organization in a number of ways such as it can improve performance; reduced absenteeism, and turnover thereby resulting in sustained productivity. Commitment to organization is positively related to such desirable outcomes as motivation. Schuler and Jackson (1996) further stated that organization commitment could result in less turnover absenteeism, thus increasing organization productivity. Employees with high level of organizational commitment provide a secure and stable workforce (Steers 1977) and thus providing competitive advantage to the organization.

Our study indicates that only a few employees report for work late for work always. Other studies show that lateness has both economic and psychological implications. When productivity or output levels are affected, an organization's efficiency may be compromised (Blau 1994; Steers and Rhodes 1978). An employee's late arrival, particularly if the function performed at work is critical, may disrupt an organizations production schedule (Groeneveld and Shain 1985). If employees are part of a service-oriented organization, their lateness may affect the quality or quantity of service offered, especially when fellow workers or consumers depend directly or indirectly on the latecomer's presence.

This study reports that they are very few health care providers are involved in stealing health related products. However, other studies conducted in other contexts demonstrate that approximately 35% of employees steal from their employers and the financial losses are in billions. Bennett and Robinson (2000) who stated that 52% of people reported taking property from work without permission. This may include large embezzlements or the pilfering of pencils and paperclips, but the losses in the aggregate are substantial (Hollinger et al. 1996 & Kuhn 1988).

Most employees are self-motivated and highly productive at work. High productivity was associated with giving incentives to workers such as allowing them to Rest via leave days and paying them timely. Hence Job productivity was affected by a number of factors, lack of giving employees resting time and incentives associated to it affected productivity. Respondents reported that they need to go on

leave in order to rest as opposed to working without leave. Majority respondent indicated that educate employees on the importance of having positive attitude and behaviour towards work. Liao et al. (2012) study explored work values, work attitude and job performance of health care settings employees in Taiwan, indicated that work attitude is the behaviour tendency at work, which has a direct impact on work behaviour. Better work attitude leads to better job performance. At the same time work satisfaction and work involvement have a positive effect on job performance. However, this cannot be achieved without organizational commitment, organisational commitment influences job performance via the identification and internalization of individuals within the organization. When employees are emotionally committed to an organization, their sales improve (Hunter and Thatcher, 2007).

Conclusion

The findings indicate that 50% Health Care Providers satisfaction with their work. Responded narrated that they had positive attitude towards work, this was expressed through the manner they received, respected and cared for the patient. The majority of the respondents reported that cases whereby health care providers display negative attitude towards patients were rare. The observed cases were related to a situation whereby health worker redirects and/ or transfer the personal problem to his or her clients. Furthermore, 52% of the employees are commitment with their work and the organization. The study also indicates that very few participants have positive attitude and behaviour towards work. Most health care providers put a lot of effort and perform their duties very well. The study further reveals that employees who may either personal or social issues between each other, it creates conflict that can affect the way you work and affect job performance. Commitment is critical positive attitude in health care organization. Because of that most employees are highly engaged and involved with their work.

Our study indicates that only a few employees report for work late for work always. Other studies show that lateness has both economic and psychological implications. There are rare cases of absenteeism without a justifiable cause in this organization. This study

reports that they are very few health care providers are involved in stealing health related products.

Most employees are self-motivated and highly productive at work. Majority respondent indicated that there is need to educate employees on the importance of having positive attitude and behaviour towards work.

Recommendation

1. Among other strategies of reducing negative attitudes towards work, motivation was mentioned to critical.
2. Another factor that can improve having positive attitude towards work was paying all the workers on time.
3. Apart from motivating employees through incentives, another factor that reduce negative towards work is called team. Team work was mentioned to very vital aspect when it comes to providing a health service
4. There is also need to educate health care providers on the importance of being commitment, involved and engaged with their job.

Author's contribution

MC conceived, designed, conducted interviews, analyzed the study and drafted the manuscript, whereas, MPC guided the development & implementation of the study and revised and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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