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Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance in Healthcare Organisations: The Case of Selected Hospitals in Cameroon's Fako Division

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Abstract:

Following the certificate-oriented labor market of most African countries and Cameroon in particular, it has been a standard template for employers over the years to hire employees based on their intelligent quotient determined by their academic credentials in their subjects of study. Little or no attention is carefully placed on the human capital emotional competencies. Consequently, these academic certificates have failed in most circumstances to translate to the desired employee performance especially within the public sector. Thus, this study sought to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in both public and private hospitals. A descriptive and causal research design was used while a multistage sampling of stratified, purposive and convenience sampling was used. The researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. The reliability of research instrument has been assessed through a pilot study. Quantitative data was presented using templates such as bar graphs and pie charts after analysis. Spearman rank correlation coefficient was applied to determine the relationships between the dependent and independent variable. The study revealed that there has a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the performance of employees.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, employee performance

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Every organization is competing in an extremely risky environment. Every organization requires constant monitoring in their governance styles. Well-trained committed work force is needed for facing this highly competition. This is the reason why strong level of motivation is important. To improve the productivity of the organizations, many soft skills have become essential for employees to nurture and develop. Emotional intelligence is one of them (Mwangi, 2014). It is one of the prominent research areas of today's world (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2013). Many organizations are considering this skill essential to improve business community, especially employee development, employee performance (Gosling, Rentfrowand Swann, 2013). At present, emotional quotient has become for focus area for the organizations rather than a mere focus on intelligent quotient (Qualterand Pool, 2018). Goleman (2002) recommended managers to improve emotional intelligence among employees. In the similar context, it has been treated as a significant skill boosting criteria (Rexhepi and Berisha, 2017). Qualter and Pool, (2018) posit that with regards to emotional intelligence, stress, and health: when the going gets tough, the tough turn to emotions.

For healthcare organisations to survive in these increasingly challenging times, administration must face mounting interpersonal concerns. With regards to the public health sector, under normalcy the government is expected to deliver reliable effective and efficient services to its citizens. This is so because the government is not profit oriented like the private sector. The focus of the government is on service delivery at affordable prices based on the minimum wage per citizen of its country. Thus, there is a level of trust the citizens of every country uphold towards their governments with regards to service delivery. However, in some parts of the world especially in Cameroon, private hospitals are gaining a central stage of choice in the hearts and minds of patients. Despite the affordable services, the qualified staff and sophisticated equipment of government hospitals, patients are becoming fed-up with the services of government hospitals on a daily basis. Scandals from government hospitals across the national territory are on the rise as reported on national news. It has become very challenging for public hospitals in Cameroon to provide safe, reliable, quality patient care in an atmosphere plagued with discouraging remuneration while experiencing increasing costs in daily standards of living and regulatory requirements.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The primary aim of any hospital is to create an environment full of respect, kindness and empathy towards their patients. It has been highlighted that emotional intelligence creates strong interpersonal workplace behaviors. One of a

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major problem often seen in the government hospitals is that patients are being neglected maximum of the time. Nurses are busy with chatting and taking with each other and over phones. Excessive crowd of patients compared to capacity and infrastructure are some common problem. These situations create mental agony among patients. Dis-satisfaction increases up to a great extend due to this. Patients feel neglected. They have to face ignorance. One of the common examples of thisis that during this COVID-19 pandemic doctors are treating patients with touching them. Time spent between staffs, doctors and patients are becoming less with minimum mindfulness.

These have culminated to a rise in the number of dissatisfied patients in hospitals especially those owned and managed by the government. Patients are comfortable going to private hospitals despite their expensive nature in service delivery as compared to public hospitals. Patients keep reporting poor treatments from government hospitals characterised by: anger, arrogance, negligence and carefree attitudes with reckless impunity. Government hospitals are becoming the last option of most patients. If the situation is not addressed, Cameroon will find it difficult to attain sustainable development goal 3 (good health and well-being) as government hospitals will lose the confidence and trust of most patients. It becomes compelling for us to investigate the level of emotional intelligence of healthcare employees in public and private hospitals.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aimed at examining the extent to which emotional intelligence affects employee's performance in an organisation.

1.4. Research Questions

To what extent dose emotional intelligence affects employee's performance in an organisation?

1.5. Hypotheses

(H₁):A positive association exists between the emotional intelligence and performance of the employees in healthcare organizations

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study provides an insight to the emotional intelligence of hospital employees which is a determinant of service delivery. This is expected to guide hospital administrators to identify service gaps and improve upon it. By identifying the gaps, the hospital administrators can revise their strategies and concentrate on cost effective ways of managing its limited resources to improve service delivery. The study investigates the importance of emotional intelligence and its relation with employee productivity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Framework

2.1.1. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the internal ability of an individual that exists to manage and control their emotions as well as others. Then, it is also a positive encouragement to create human relationship that can lead to the achievement of common goals and organisational effectiveness. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to manage one's own and others' feelings and emotions in such a way to guide their own thinking and actions (Shooshtarian et al., 2013). High emotionally intelligent leaders have and use self-awareness and self-control to impact others by understanding how their behavior affects others.

2.1.2. Domains of Emotional Intelligence

2.1.2.1. Self-Awareness

- Emotional self-awareness: This is when an employee knows and understands his/her emotions, especially how they are affected by their emotions and how their emotions affect others.
- Accurate self-assessment: This refers to an employee who is very conscious of his strengths and weaknesses. They are not damped by criticisms, rather they appreciate constructive criticism and feedback in order to improve their weaknesses and play on their strengths.
- Self-confidence: It is ability through which the employees can utilize their strengths. It represents a sense of presence which inspires trust and respect.

2.1.2.2. Self-Management

- Self-Control: Employees with emotional self-control are able to cope up with disturbing emotions and impulses.
- Mindfulness: Mindful employees are fully present in the moment, attending to what is 'going on,' in addition to what is 'happening.'
- Resilience: This represents the ability to 'bounce back' from disappointment, and faces challenges.

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- Flexibility: Flexible employees try to explore difficult situations. They find comfort zone even in the tough situation.
- Initiative: Employees who are confident in their abilities and have a sense of control of their choices can able to create more opportunities for themselves in future.
- Optimism: Employees who know themselves well tend to have and project a positive outlook.
- Social Awareness Self-aware employees can always take responsibility for their own actions. They can deal
 with situation honestly. They can rectify errors and mistakes. They can appreciate others and celebrate their
 success also.
- Empathy: Employees with empathy can feel for others. They have very attentive listening power. They can see other's perspective even if for some ideas where they actually disagree.
- Attunement: Employees often speak of the need for alignment with the kind of resonance that moves people emotionally as well as intellectually.
- Organisational Awareness: Employees with high social awareness are attuned to social networks and key power relationships. They understand not only the political forces at work in an organization but also the guiding value and unspoken rules that operate among people.
- Service: Healthy employees recognize the servant nature of their role by making them available within and beyond the organizational requirements.

2.1.3.. Relationship Management

- Inspiration: Reverberation can be created by the employees with clear and compelling vision. They have the ability to motivate others. They can follow integrity means they can work together with others successfully.
- Influence: Influential employees know the formal and informal networks. They are persuasive in nature. They can earn respect from others.
- Developing Others: Employees who show a genuine interest for others' problem.
- Change Catalyst: Employees who act as catalysts. They earned the trust and respect of all levels of the organization. They can feel the importance for change, make a compelling case for change, honestly attend to and act on feedback.
- Conflict Management: Employees who can manage conflict with a non-anxious presence. They are often able to help keep conflict from escalating through calm and humor, and can even turn disagreement into an opportunity for civil discourse and learning.
- Teamwork and Collaboration: Employees who 'play well with others' recognize that emotional leadership often comes from the middle of the group rather than the front.

2.1.4. Employee Performance

Employee performance is defined as the job-related activities expected of a worker and how well those activities are executed. Performance is when an employee is achieving a goal in a highly effective and efficient manner and when that goal is closely aligned with achieving the overall goals of the organization.

2.1.5. Emotional Intelligence and Employees Performance

There is growing evidence supporting emotional intelligence as a better forecaster of workplace performance than is intelligence quotient (Suehs, 2015). This predictive ability includes team performance, cognitive performance, and leadership effectiveness. Concepts of emotional intelligence have become popular in business and are becoming more popular and gaining a central stage in health care management (Jensen et al., 2008). Health care leaders who are emotionally competent turn to position their employees and organisations for greater success. Emotional intelligence, affects many aspects of organisational dynamics such as communications and leadership development which directly affect the performance of the employees (Bhochhibhoya and Branscum, 2015). A conceptual framework for this study is presented in the figure bellow:

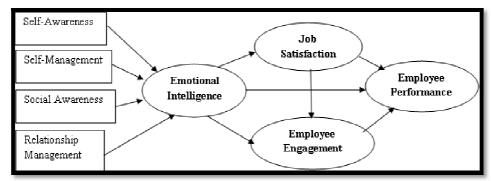


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance

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2.2. Empirical Literature

Emotional intelligence contributes to employee engagement. With today's business environment characterised by fierce and volatile competition, it has become very important for organisations to nurture, develop and engage their talents in the best possible manner. An engaged and healthy workforce is essential for the productivity and profitability of any organisation (Michelle and Bailey, 2018; Mishra, 2014). Recent researches indicate that emotional intelligence has a strong impact on the engagement level of employees. Increasingly, healthcare employers are taking steps to strengthen this people-performance link (Lowe, 2012). Emotional intelligence enhances the helping power of an employee (Yilmaz and Tasdan, 2009).

Nowadays, health care institutions face similar competition challenges like any other service-oriented institutions. Healthcare is now patient-centred, where emphases are on customer-oriented marketing (Chao-Chan, 2011). Citizenship behavior is significantly important in handling their cases.

Emotional intelligence enhances job satisfaction (Ealias and George, 2012). Shukla et al (2016) posits that high emotional intelligence enables employees to be more adaptive to various challenges in the workplace. Sony and Mekoth (2016) are also highlight that employees with high emotional intelligence are more adaptable to situation(s) and show more mature personality. According to Ioannidou, and Konstantikaki, (2008), emotional intelligence brings about sound management of customer relations. Employees are able to handle their emotions and relations in a way that leads to harmonious coexistence for the benefit of the organisation. Employees who are emotionally intelligent create within safe, functional, relieving relations that are costumer friendly. Such employees relate with customers without being subject to merge or be captive of relations. Every customer encounter is for them a link and opportunity to put a smile on someone's face

Emotional intelligence boosts patient experiences. This encompasses multiple interactions with healthcare professionals and are an integral part of the delivery of quality healthcare. Anhanget *al.* (2014) described patient experience as the patient's journey when considering the clinical and emotional interactions with the healthcare service. The need to understand patient experiences supports the objectives within healthcare to achieve positive health outcomes through a holistic and patient-centered care approach.

Emotional intelligence enhances positive employee attitudes. Employees with high emotional intelligence seek the jobs that need high ability.

Negative work conditions less affect emotionally intelligent employees. They believe negative conditions will disappear, and a positive climate will emerge in the future (Osman and Meryem, 2019). Such employees have skills to recognize and control emotion. Employees with high emotional intelligence have the higher level of self-confidence and ability to tackle problems and they have positive attitude by expanding positive emotion among group members which can facilitate participation, decrease conflict and increase job satisfaction (Shooshtarian et al, 2013). The productivity of the organization improves if the employees can able to understand and handle their own emotions along with others with whom they work with (Gaffoor, 2020).

Emotional intelligence cast positive effect on job performance and interpersonal interactions, thereby influencing work related outcomes of employees. Thus, employees who are highly emotionally intelligent are able to regulate their emotions more effectively by maintaining a positive psychological condition which ultimately results in an improved job performance (Muhammad *et. al.*,2017).

Leaders whose subordinates stay are leaders who manage with emotional intelligence (Cherniss and Goleman, 2001).

Effective work teams have been described as communicative, cohesive, motivative and grounded with individual member support. Prati et al, (2003) posits that individuals described as possessing a high level of emotional intelligence reflect characteristics that can fulfil these qualities.

2.3. Theoretical Literature

Emotional intelligence is a form of intelligence which uses cognitive processing. It relates with general intelligence (Cassady and Eissa, 2008:93; Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey, 2016:290; Mayer and Salovey, 1997:3). Mayer and Salovey (1997) introduced a four-branch model on the emotional intelligence. This model highlights emotional intelligence as mental abilities. Emotional intelligence also allows appraisal, expression, and regulation of emotion (Salovey and Grewal, 2005:281; Salovey and Mayer, 1990:185).

3. Methodology

This study adopted a mix research designs made up of descriptive research design and causal research design. Medical practitioners/employee of public and private hospitals in Fako Division constitute the population of the study. A multi-staged sampling was used for the study. Stratified random sampling was used taking into consideration the study population was not homogeneous as it consisted of, doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, and medical/nursing students working hospitals making it the most appropriate sample to come up with the target sample. Purposive sampling was used to select the frontline medical practitioners of the selected hospitals such as doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians and medical/nursing students working hospitals taking into consideration these are the category of medical practitioners who have direct contact with patients and are equally directly concerned with service delivery. From the study population, a sample size of 250 medical practitioners where conveniently selected. This study used both methods of data collection that is primary and secondary sources to answer the research question and attain the research objective. A pilot study was conducted to ascertain the reliability of research instrument. DataAfter the collection, data was edited, coded, classified

and analyzed through tabulation in terms of statistical measure of central tendency such as means, medians as well as getting the measure of dispersion like range and standard deviation. Statistical analysis of percentages was done in order to simplify study findings presentation and the obtain data was then analyzed using Statistical Packages of the Social Science (SPSS version 17.0) to come up with graphs, and pie charts to explain the outcomes. Moreover, quantitative data collected was summarized to ensure that it is in the right form suitable in addressing research questions; methods of data analysis and after that the researcher used templates such as bar graphs and pie charts in reporting and presenting the obtained data. A correlation coefficient was used to analyse the hypothesis of the study and the formula for the correlation is indicated below:

r = Covariance / (XRa St. Dev. * YRa St. Dev.)

Kev

XRa = Ranks of X Values; YRa = Ranks of Y Values

YRa - My = Y rank minus mean of Y ranks

The correlation coefficient is always between -1 and +1. A numerical value greater than 1, indicates an error. A correlation of -1 occurs when there is a perfect negative linear correlation, that is, all points in the scatter diagram lie exactly on a line sloping down from left to right. A correlation coefficient of 0 occurs when there is no linear correlation. This does not necessarily imply that there is no relationship but that it is non-linear. A correlation coefficient of +1 occurs when there is perfect positive linear correlation, that is, all the points in the scatter diagram lie exactly on a straight line sloping upwards form left to right. A correlation coefficient between -1 and 0 indicates that the variables are partly negatively correlated. This implies that as one variable increase, the other tends to decrease but the relationship is not exactly linear. A correlation coefficient between 0 and 1 implies some degree of positive correlation, that is, as one variable increases, so does the other. However, the relationship is not exactly linear. The closer the coefficient is to -1 or to +1 the stronger the degree of correlation and the nearer the relationship is to being truly linear.

4. Data Analysis

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4.1. Presentation of Correlation Distribution

Emotional Intelligence (Independent Variable)								
1	Awareness of others will enhance employee relationship							
2	Employees with understanding attitude relate well with patients							
3	There is little bickering in the organization when employees understand each other							
4	Duty conscious employees who serve with passion are very much engaged with work	95						
5	Establishing personal relationship with others increases employee's satisfaction at work	6						
6	Encouraging employees to share their private problems with management brings them closer to the organization	17						
7	Valuing an employee will enhance commitment of that employee	6						
8	Ability to manage pressure and stress enhances adaptability	44						
Employee Performance (Dependent Variable)								
1	The frequency of conflicts among employees will reduced if employees understand themselves better	17						
2	Patient experience is at its best when employees are empathetic	48						
3	Collaboration and team spirit exist when there are healthy employee relations	21						
4	Employee engagement is high when employees are satisfied with their job	102						
5	Employees won't be searching for new job opportunity if they are satisfied with their present job	2						
6	Employees identify themselves with the organisation if there is a feeling of belonging	10						
7	The commitment level of employees is high when their employment is secure	2						
8	Employees with high adaptability can fit-in under most circumstances	48						

Table 1: Correlation Distribution

X	Y	X_{Ra}	X_{Ra} - M_x	Y_{Ra}	Y_{Ra} - M_y	Sum Diffs
9	17	3.00	-1.50	4.00	-0.50	0.75
52	48	7.00	2.50	6.50	2.00	5.00
21	21	5.00	0.50	5.00	0.50	0.25
95	102	8.00	3.50	8.00	3.50	12.25
6	2	1.50	-3.00	1.50	-3.00	9.00
17	10	4.00	-0.50	3.00	-1.50	0.75
6	2	1.50	-3.00	1.50	-3.00	9.00
44	48	6.00	1.50	6.50	2.00	3.00

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Table 2 Source: Spearman's Rho Calculator

Calculating the spearman rank correlation coefficient of the ranked data

Calculation

 $R = Covariance / (X_{Ra} St. Dev. * Y_{Ra} St. Dev.)$

Kev

 X_{Ra} = Ranks of X Values; Y_{Ra} = Ranks of Y Values

 X_{Ra} - M_x = X rank minus mean of X ranks

 Y_{Ra} - M_y = Y rank minus mean of Y ranks

Sum Diffs = $(X_{Ra} - M_x) * (Y_{Ra} - M_y)$

4.2. Result Details

X Ranks Mean: 4.5

Standard Dev: 2.43

Y Ranks Mean: 4.5

Standard Dev: 2.42

Combined

Covariance = 40 / 7 = 5.71 R = 5.71 / (2.43 * 2.42) = 0.97

4.3. Interpretation

The first hypothesis states, 'There is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence employee performance in healthcare organisations.' In order to test this hypothesis, the spearman rank correlation coefficient was used. From the calculations and indications: $r_s = 0.96972$, p (2-tailed) = 7E-05.

By normal standards, the association between the two variables would be considered statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there exist a positive relationship between increase in emotional intelligence and increase in the performance of employees. That is to say when there is an increase in aspects of emotional intelligence of employees; there is also a corresponding increase in employee's performance.

5. Summary and Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study sort to examine the extent to which emotional intelligence affects employee performance in an organisation. This study significantly highlighted the positive association between emotional intelligence and employee performance. These findings are in line with the finding obtained by Ngari (2014; Anari, 2012:Ealias and George, 2012:Faye et. al., 2011:Gaffoor, 2020: Kahtani, 2013: Osman and Meryem, 2019: Rexhepi and Berisha, 2017: Sony and Mekoth, 2016).Result also indicated that the more the level of emotional intelligence is the more the performance increases. This is in line with the findings of Afzaal and Taha (2013). They also found that emotional self-management and emotional self-awareness and job satisfaction are positively associated. Chiva and Alegre (2008), found a contradictory result where insignificant relationship exists between both variables. According to Daus and Ashkanasy (2005), emotional intelligence is a key predictor of the organizational performance. More emotional intelligence means better performance which ultimately indicates higher job satisfaction (Shukla et al, 2016).

6. Conclusion

On the basis of the findings, the researcher concludes that emotional intelligence has a significant positive correlation with employee performance in an organisation. Thus, within the healthcare sector, if hospitals desire higher employee performance, it is critical for hospital administrators and managers to pay attention to employee's levels of emotional intelligence. Looking at the comparison between public and private hospitals, there are areas of similarities and areas of disparities. However, generally speaking, the competitive nature of the private sector gives private hospitals an upper hand in majority of the aspects of emotional intelligence. Administrators and managers should always remember that it's the people that drive organization to succeed or fail. As long as they do not lose sight of this straight, unvarnished truth, they will be on the right path to building a truly people-based organization – one that requires managers to master the art of people management in order to be successful in the 21st century and beyond. There is no other route or detour to creating a high-performance organization. Organisational transformation from effectiveness to greatness starts with the recognition that the people are indeed your most important asset and deserve to be managed every day as such.

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