

EMPLOYEES' WORK ATTITUDE AS CORRELATES OF ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria as a nation has over the years experienced poor organizational performance especially in the public health sector. All efforts to revive the situation had proved abortive. This study is therefore carried out to examine the correlation between employees' work attitude and organizational performance in the public health sector. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and a sample of 250 respondents was selected from two general hospitals in Lagos State, using multi-stage sampling techniques. A self-constructed questionnaire tagged 'Employees' Work Attitude and Organisational Performance' with reliability coefficient of $r = 0.87$ was used to obtain data for the study. Three hypotheses were tested with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings showed significant relationship between employees' work attitude and quality of service delivery in the public health sector ($r = 0.695$). Also, the data revealed significant relationship between employees' work attitude and customers' satisfaction in the public health sector ($r = 0.831$). The result equally indicated significant correlation between employees' work attitude and organizational efficiency in the public health sector ($r = 0.738$). Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that there is need for intervention training programme on positive work attitude among the public health sector employees. Also, monetary and non-monetary incentives as well as modern medical equipments be provided to facilitate health care service delivery.

Keywords: Work Attitude, Quality Service Delivery, Customers' Satisfaction, Organisational Efficiency, Public Health Sector.

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Background to the Study

Over the years, Nigeria as a nation has consistently experienced and recorded poor organizational performance in the public health sector; and all efforts to revive the situation has proved abortive (Suliamon, 2003). The inability of the public health sector employees to meet up with the expected standard in the discharge of their duties has apparently jeopardized the chances of achieving the corporate goals of the public health care organisations. Thus, the poor performance of the organisations has been and still is a source of concern to the government, the customers (health care service consumers), and members of the society at large (Kamal and Othman, 2012).

All over the country (Nigeria), there seems to be consensus on the public opinions concerning the falling standard of health workers' performance. The stakeholders in the public health sector are in total agreement that the huge investment in the sector is not yielding the desired dividend (Aremu, 2010). However, there is general assumption that the poor performance of the Public Health organisations is traceable to the negative attitude being exhibited by the employees at workplace.

Customers have always complained of insensitivity of the health workers to their plight. This is evidenced by the way the employees come late to work leading to long queue of patients at hospitals, use of abusive words on the patients, wrong diagnosis leading to wrong prescription of drugs, extortion of money from the poor patients and total neglect of patient(s) who fail to meet their monetary gratification.

Attitude as a phenomenon is all about an individual way of thinking (cognitive), feeling (affective) and behaving (connotative). Ahmad et al (2010) sees attitude as a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's like or dislike for an item. It has a very serious effect on the individual's performance. A person that has negative attitude towards his/her work would not be able to put up any reasonable or appreciable performance at workplace.

Paradoxically, positive attitude at workplace is the bedrock and foundation towards higher performance. It is an investment as well as resources that can be used to achieve good reputation, higher profit and overall corporate goals. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the relationship between employees' work attitude and organizational performance in the public health sector, using general Hospitals at Badagry and Igando as reference points.

Statement of the Problem

Today, the impact of the negative attitude to work by health care providers in public hospitals in Nigeria is extremely worrisome. Years of poor attitudinal problem particularly in the public sector has further endangered lives of patients, especially those in critical condition. Available records and experience show that attitudinal problem is at every level of care. There is no exemption. All cadres of healthcare providers (e.g. Medical Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Laboratory attendants etc) are culpable of this negative attitude.

Unfortunately, Nigerians seeking Medicare in any of the hospitals, daily have their fair shares of the worrisome trend even in the face of life threatening emergencies. It does not follow, whether a dying patient is in for emergency room treatment, routine doctor's appointment, a

laboratory test, or any appointment for that matter, the negative attitude seems to have become a way of life, doing more harm than good to the health sector. There have been arguments about legitimate expectations of health workers for better conditions of service, but this only puts the patients on the receiving end. It appears health workers tend to quickly forget they are in business only because of the patients. They are expected to ensure that the human person is maintained in the best possible state of good health in terms of their mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

There has never been a time health workers went on strike for the sake of the patients, either to protest the long waiting hours at the outpatients department, or the lack of drugs. In most other countries of the world, the patient is central to health policy. Whether it is about the basic package of care that is guaranteed, the waiting times before treatment, access to life-saving medical interventions, or vaccination coverage, the patient is always central to policy. But in Nigeria, a patient is more likely to die of heart attack as a result of the despicable rudeness by health workers than from the ailment that brought him or her to the health facility in the first place. Critical observers are of the view that health institution is losing its focus of genuine concern for patients rather their focus is on material possessions. They now consider the patient a nuisance. They see them as too demanding, a bother and waste of their time. Perhaps this explains why Nigeria records significant number of patient deaths even before they are attended to at the various hospitals.

It is on record that health sector workers had gone on strike more than any other sectors mainly over demand for monetary rewards. This study is therefore embarked upon to examine effects of work attitude of health workers on organizational performance in the public health sector with specific reference to Igando and Badagry General Hospitals in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to examine employee work attitude as correlate of organizational performance in the public health sector. Other specific objectives are to:

1. investigate the significant relationship between employee work attitude and quality of service delivery in the public health sector
2. find out the significant relationship between employee work attitude and customers' satisfaction in the public health sector
3. examine the significant relationship between employee work attitude and organizational efficiency in the public health sector

Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses formulated for this study are:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between employees' work attitude and quality of service delivery in the public health sector.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between employees' work attitude and customers' satisfaction in the public health sector.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between employees' work attitude and organizational efficiency in the public health sector.

Conceptual Framework

Attitudes towards work are the feelings people have toward different aspects of the work environment (Carpenter et al, 2009). Some of the elements that influence attitude towards work include: personality, person-environment fit, job characteristics, psychological contract, organizational justice work relationship and stress.

Suleiman (2013) asserted that attitudes are developed as a result of some kind of learning experiences. Also, it can be formed by simply adapting the example and opinion of co-employees, friends and managers. The inference can therefore be made that attitude to work is formed based on the social interaction a person has at workplace.

In his own contribution, Aremu(2003) said poor attitude to work is a performance that is adjudged by the owners, the customers and some significant others as fallen below expected standard. Further, Aremu (2010) stressed that poor attitude is not only frustrating to the owners and the customers, its effects are equally devastating on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all sphere of the economy and politics. Ahmad et al (2010) corroborated the view of Aremu (2010) when he said attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's like or dislike for an item.

Tek-Yew (2009) described attitude to work as an employee's overall positive or negative evaluative judgement of a change initiative implemented by their organisation. Still on the same subject matter, Qaisar et al (2011) considered attitude as the internal state that influences individual's choices of personal actions or a response tendency towards a change.

The aggregate views of various scholars expressed above showed that the attitude of a person has the capacity to influence positively or negatively his action at work and by extension, it can affect organizational performance too (Den Hartog, Boselie & Paauwe, 2004). In this study, work attitude is considered to comprise of employees' punctuality, regularity, and interpersonal relations with customers.

Organisational Performance

There is a diverse opinion among scholars on what constitute measures of performance in an organisation. Some scholars focus on financial outcomes such as sales, profits and growth while others consider organizational outcomes such as productivity, quality and efficiency (Paul & Anantharaman, 2003). There is another group that came up with HR-related outcomes such as attitudes, behaviours and intention of employees as performance (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). But in this present study, organizational performance is considered to include: Quality of service delivery, Customers' satisfaction and Organisational efficiency.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research method and selected a sample size of 250 respondents using multistage sampling technique. At first two General Hospitals that fall under Badagry and Alimosho Local Government Areas were purposively selected. Thereafter, 120 and 130 respondents were selected from Badagry and Alimosho General Hospitals respectively with the use of stratified and accidental sampling procedures. Stratified sampling method was used

to select the medical practitioners in the Hospitals while Accidental sampling method was used for health care service consumers. The Alimosho hospital is bigger in terms of buildings, staff strength and number of customers. This explains the reason for the higher number of respondents selected from Alimosho hospital compared to Badagry hospital. Out of the 250 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 223 copies were retrieved but 202 copies were certified valid for analysis.

Simplified close-ended questionnaire was the major instrument used. It is formatted on four (4) point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The face and content validity of the instrument were ascertained by measurement and evaluation unit. The instrument was pilot tested and reliability co-efficient of 0.86 was obtained. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀: There is no significant relationship between employees' work attitude and service delivery in the public health sector.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	No
Employee Work Attitude	1.9109	.94736	202
Quality of Service Delivery	1.7723	.82113	202

Nonparametric Correlations

Correlations

		Poor Work Attitude	Service Delivery
Employee Work Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.695
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
	N	202	202
Quality of Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.695	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-
	N	202	202

Correction is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision Rule

If the P-value is less than 5% ($P < 0.005$), then the null hypothesis is rejected, otherwise accepted.

Interpretation of Result

The result above illustrates that the Pearson's Correlation $r = 0.695$ computed for relationship between employee work attitude and quality of service delivery was significant with P-value = 0.000 which is less than Alpha = 0.01. This hypothesis is therefore rejected which implies that there is a significant relationship between employees' work attitude and quality of service delivery in the public health sector.

Hypothesis Two

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between employees' work attitude and customers' satisfaction in the public health sector.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Employee Work Attitude	1.8564	.86627	202
Customers' Satisfaction	1.9208	.95348	202

Descriptive Statistics

Correlations

		Poor Work Attitude	Job Performance
Employee Work Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.831
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000
N		202	202
Customers' Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.83	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N		202	202

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision Rule

If the p-value is less than 5% ($P < 0.005$), then the null hypothesis is rejected, otherwise accepted.

Interpretation of Result

The result above illustrates that the Pearson's Correlation $r = 0.831$ computed for relationship between employee work attitude and customers' satisfaction was significant with the P-value = 0.000 which is less than Alpha = 0.01; this hypothesis is therefore rejected which implies that there is a significant relationship between employee work attitude and customers' satisfaction in the public health sector.

Hypothesis Three

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between employee work attitude and organizational efficiency in the public health sector.

Descriptive

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Employee Work Attitude	2.0842	1.16236	202
Customers' Satisfaction	2.0297	1.05995	202

Correlations

		Poor Work Attitude	Job Performance
Employee Work Attitude	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1 - 202	.738 .000 202
N			
Customers' Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.738 .000 202	1 202
N			

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Decision Rule

If the p-value is less than 5% ($P < 0.005$), then the null hypothesis is rejected, otherwise accepted.

Interpretation of Result

The result above illustrates that the Pearson's Correlation $r = 0.738$ computed for relationship between employee work attitude and organizational efficiency was significant with the P-value = 0.000 which is less than Alpha = 0.01. This hypothesis is therefore rejected which implies that there is a significant relationship between employee work attitude and organizational efficiency in the public health sector.

Discussion of Findings

It was found from the result of this study that there is a significant relationship between employees' work attitude and quality of service delivery in the public health sector. This result conforms with the view of Okeke(2008) that the paucity of access to quality health care services and fragmentation of services arising from negative attitude of health workers have constrained countless number of Nigerian patients to fall back to medical tourism in foreign countries to acquire quality medical services.

Also, the result of study indicated significant relationship between employees' work attitude and customers satisfaction in the public health sector. This result lends credence to the study of Aremu (2010) that poor attitude is a performance that is adjudged by the owners and customers as fallen below expected standard, which implies that poor or negative attitude can affect adversely customers satisfaction.

In the same vein, the result showed significant correlation between employees' work attitude and organizational efficiency. This result is in line with work of Qaiser et'al (2011) that considered attitude as the internal state that influences individual's choices of personal action or a response tendency towards a positive change.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The result of this study has clearly shown that employees' work attitude has strong relationship with organizational performance in the public health sector. In other words, positive attitude from the health sector workers can tremendously enhance the quality of their services to the customers. It is envisaged that if the quality of services is improved upon, customers would be satisfied and this will encourage them to increase their patronage of the public health sector. By so doing the performance of the public health sector would be greatly improved.

The overriding policy implication of this finding for government and other health care providers is that they should create enabling environment for the health workers particularly those in the public sector. Also, provision should be made for modern medical equipments that can facilitate their services. More importantly, regular training on some generic behaviour modification skills such as emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills and communication skills that can make the health employees to be humane in the discharge of their duties should be organized on regular basis.

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