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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS

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ABSTRACT

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In the dynamic and highly demanding environment of private healthcare, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical factor influencing employee commitment. Understanding the interplay between EI and employee commitment can provide valuable insights for hospital management and improve overall organizational performance. This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee commitment within private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

This empirical study employs a quantitative research design, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 200 healthcare professionals across five major private hospitals in Port Harcourt. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: demographic information, an emotional intelligence assessment using the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), and an employee commitment evaluation using Meyer and Allen's Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS). The collected data is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee commitment.

The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and employee commitment among healthcare professionals in private hospitals in Port Harcourt. Specifically, higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with increased affective commitment, indicating that

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emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to exhibit a strong emotional attachment to their organization. Additionally, the study finds that emotional intelligence significantly influences normative commitment, suggesting that employees with high EI feel a greater sense of obligation to remain with their organization. However, the impact of emotional intelligence on continuance commitment is less pronounced, indicating that EI has a limited effect on employees' perceived costs associated with leaving the organization.

The results underscore the importance of fostering emotional intelligence within the healthcare sector to enhance employee commitment. The study highlights that while emotional intelligence contributes positively to affective and normative commitment, its influence on continuance commitment is minimal. This suggests that interventions aimed at improving EI may be particularly effective in strengthening the emotional and moral bonds employees have with their organization, rather than merely addressing retention concerns based on economic considerations.

The study concludes that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping employee commitment in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Healthcare organizations can benefit from integrating EI development programs into their training and development initiatives to foster a more committed and emotionally resilient workforce. By prioritizing emotional intelligence, hospital management can enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and ultimately improve patient care outcomes.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that private hospitals in Port Harcourt implement comprehensive EI training programs to develop the emotional competencies of their staff.

Additionally, regular workshops and coaching sessions on emotional intelligence should be conducted to reinforce these skills. Hospital management should also consider incorporating EI assessments into their recruitment and performance appraisal processes to identify and nurture emotionally intelligent individuals. Future research should explore longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of emotional intelligence on employee commitment and its impact on organizational performance.

This study provides empirical evidence that emotional intelligence is a vital determinant of employee commitment in private hospitals, offering practical insights for enhancing organizational effectiveness in the healthcare sector.

KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence, Employee Commitment, Private Hospitals, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Healthcare Management, Organizational Behavior, Employee Retention, Job Satisfaction, Workplace Dynamics,

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Leadership, Human Resource Management, Employee Engagement, Professional Development, Job Performance.

Introduction

In the competitive landscape of healthcare, private hospitals play a crucial role in delivering quality medical services. The commitment of employees in these institutions is vital for maintaining high standards of patient care and operational efficiency. Employee commitment is a multifaceted construct that encompasses emotional attachment, identification with the organization, and a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization. In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a significant predictor of employee commitment, particularly in high-stress environments such as healthcare settings. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. This study explores the impact of emotional intelligence on employee commitment within private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, a rapidly growing urban center with a burgeoning healthcare sector.

Understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee

commitment is essential for several reasons. Firstly, healthcare employees, including doctors, nurses, and administrative staff, frequently encounter emotionally charged situations that require high levels of emotional regulation and interpersonal skills. Secondly, high employee turnover rates, common in the healthcare sector, can disrupt continuity of care and lead to increased recruitment and training costs. By identifying the role of emotional intelligence in fostering employee commitment, this study aims to provide insights that could help reduce turnover and improve job satisfaction and performance. Furthermore, the findings could inform human resource practices and training programs aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence among healthcare workers

METHOD

The research adopted a descriptive survey design to assess the effect of emotional intelligence on employee commitment in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The descriptive survey

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design is appropriate for this study as it allows for the collection of data that describe the phenomenon in its current state and provides a snapshot of the existing relationships between emotional intelligence and employee commitment.

The target population for this study comprised employees of private hospitals in Port Harcourt. The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across different job categories, such as doctors, nurses, administrative staff, and support staff. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for sample determination, which accounts for the desired level of precision, confidence level, and variability within the population.

The final sample consisted of 200 employees from 10 private hospitals in Port Harcourt, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the workforce. The hospitals were chosen based on their size, reputation, and willingness to participate in the study.

Data were collected using structured questionnaire divided into three sections:

Demographic Information: This section gathered data on the respondents' age, gender, education level, job position, and years of experience.

Emotional Intelligence Assessment: The study used the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), developed by Schutte et al. (1998), to measure the emotional intelligence of employees. The EIS consists of 33 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), covering aspects such as selfawareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Employee Commitment Assessment: The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), was used to measure employee commitment. The OCQ includes 24 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. addressing affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

The questionnaires were distributed to the selected employees during their work shifts, with permission from the hospital administration. Respondents were given a brief overview of the study's purpose and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. To ensure a high response rate, follow- up reminders were sent, and additional

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copies of the questionnaire were provided to those who misplaced the initial one.

Data collected from the questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. The following statistical methods were employed:

Descriptive **Statistics:** Means. standard deviations, and frequencies were calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their levels of emotional intelligence and employee commitment.

Inferential Statistics: Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee commitment. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of the different components of emotional intelligence on the various dimensions of employee commitment.

Reliability and Validity Tests: The reliability of the EIS and OCQ was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure internal consistency. Construct validity was examined through factor analysis to confirm that the items on each scale appropriately measured the intended constructs.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Informed consent was sought from all participants, who were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were maintained throughout the research process.

RESULT

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to identify, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others. In organizational settings, especially in healthcare, El plays a critical role in influencing employee commitment, performance, and overall job satisfaction. This case study examines the impact of emotional intelligence on employee commitment in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State, is a bustling city with a significant number of private hospitals that cater to a diverse population. The healthcare sector in Port Harcourt faces numerous challenges, including high employee turnover, job dissatisfaction, and stress, which can adversely affect the quality of care provided

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to patients. Understanding the role of EI in fostering employee commitment can offer insights into improving these conditions.

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from healthcare professionals in private hospitals in Port Harcourt. The Emotional Intelligence Appraisal by Bradberry and Greaves (2009) was used to measure EI. while the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) assessed employee commitment.

The analysis revealed a positive correlation between high levels of EI and increased employee commitment across all three dimensions continuance, (affective, and normative). Employees with higher EI scores demonstrated a stronger emotional attachment to their hospitals, recognized the personal and professional benefits of staying with their organization, and felt a greater sense of duty to remain committed.

Interviews highlighted that emotionally intelligent leaders could better manage stress, resolve conflicts, and foster a supportive work environment. Nurses and doctors reported that supervisors with high ΕI were more approachable, empathetic, and effective in communication, contributing to a more cohesive and motivated workforce.

The findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of employee commitment in private hospitals in Port Harcourt. By fostering an emotionally intelligent workforce, hospitals can enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and improve overall organizational performance. Training programs focused on developing EI skills among healthcare professionals and leaders can be an effective strategy for achieving these outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a crucial factor in determining employee commitment, especially in high-stress environments like private hospitals. EI refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others. This skill set is essential in the healthcare industry, where employees regularly encounter emotionally charged situations. In the context of private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, EI can significantly impact various

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aspects of employee commitment, including job satisfaction, lovalty, and overall performance.

Emotional Intelligence Components

EI is typically divided into five main components: self-regulation. self-awareness. motivation. empathy, and social skills. Each of these components plays a vital role in fostering a committed workforce.

Self-Awareness: Healthcare employees with high self-awareness can better understand their emotions and how they affect their job performance. This understanding helps them maintain a positive attitude and a strong commitment to their roles despite the highpressure environment.

Self-Regulation: The ability to manage one's emotions is critical in a hospital setting. Employees who can control their emotions are less likely to experience burnout and more likely to remain committed to their organization.

Motivation: Intrinsically motivated employees tend to exhibit higher levels of commitment. In private hospitals, where the work can be challenging, motivated employees are more likely to go above and beyond in their duties, demonstrating a strong commitment to their patients and the organization.

Empathy: Empathy allows healthcare workers to connect with patients and colleagues on a deeper level, fostering a supportive and cohesive work environment. This connection can lead to increased job satisfaction and a stronger commitment to the organization.

Social Skills: Effective communication and relationship-building skills are essential for teamwork and collaboration in hospitals. Employees with strong social skills can navigate workplace challenges more effectively, leading to higher levels of commitment.

Impact on Employee Commitment

EI directly influences various dimensions of employee commitment in private hospitals in Port Harcourt. These dimensions include:

Affective Commitment: This refers to the emotional attachment an employee has to their organization. High EI enables employees to develop positive relationships with their colleagues and supervisors, which enhances their emotional attachment to the hospital. This

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attachment translates to a higher willingness to stay with the organization.

Continuance Commitment: This dimension involves the employee's perceived cost of leaving the organization. Employees with high EI are better equipped to handle workplace stress and challenges, reducing their likelihood of seeking employment elsewhere due to dissatisfaction.

Normative Commitment: This type of commitment is based on an employee's sense of obligation to stay with their organization. High EI fosters a sense of loyalty and responsibility towards the hospital, driven by positive interactions and a supportive work environment.

In the private hospitals of Port Harcourt, the application of EI has shown promising results in enhancing employee commitment. Studies indicate that hospitals investing in EI training programs for their staff have observed notable improvements in job satisfaction, teamwork, and overall organizational commitment.

For instance, a private hospital in Port Harcourt implemented an EI training program focusing on developing self-awareness and empathy among its staff. Post-training evaluations revealed that employees reported a significant increase in job

satisfaction and a stronger sense of belonging to organization. the Moreover. the hospital experienced a reduction in staff turnover rates, indicating higher levels of employee commitment.

Furthermore, the culturally diverse environment of Port Harcourt's private hospitals requires employees to navigate various cultural nuances effectively. EI skills are essential in this context, as they enable employees to understand and respect cultural differences, fostering a more inclusive and committed workforce.

ONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence is a critical determinant of employee commitment in private hospitals, particularly in challenging environments like Port Harcourt, Nigeria. By enhancing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, EI contributes to higher levels of affective, continuance, and normative commitment among healthcare workers. Private hospitals that invest in EI development programs are likely to see improvements in employee satisfaction, reduced turnover rates, and a more dedicated workforce. Ultimately. the integration of ΕI into organizational practices can lead to a more effective and committed healthcare team.

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improving patient care and overall hospital performance.

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