

The Impact of Job Engagement on Employee Performance Within the Medical Sector in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The issue of job engagement has been central around the performance of employees as evidenced by the negotiations which have been aimed to serve as an impetus vehicle to seek attention for engagement. The process of engaging employees is vital for any organisation to succeed, but it appears employees within the Zimbabwean medical sector feel neglected. The issue of job engagement has led to a standoff within the health sector. The study adopted the positivism research philosophy and the case study research design. The sample size was 140 respondents drawn from a population of 180 respondents, and a structured questionnaire was adopted as the main research instrument. Findings revealed there is a positive relationship between job characteristics and job engagement. Findings revealed also that there is a positive relationship between rewards and recognition and job engagement. Recommendations are that the medical sector should as a matter of urgency review its rewards systems to all of its employees to enhance job engagement and organisational performance.

KEYWORDS

Employee Performance, Health Sector, Job Characteristics, Job Engagement, Perceived Organisation Support

1. INTRODUCTION

Human capital is the most important asset that an organisation can ever have and as such it must always be engaged for it to be always motivated to perform. The process of job engagement has never been important more than ever before because of the dynamics ever-changing within the work environment which employees work (Oz Yilmaz, 2020). Employees who are engaged within their jobs by their management tend to get intrinsic & extrinsic motivation which yields enhanced performance (Kim & Koo, 2017). Employees who are engaged as they perform their duties tend to work extra hard and are passionate about producing results for the organisation (Ozyilmaz, 2020) The importance of job engagement is to keep employees motivated and retain them at work. Employees who are highly engaged in their jobs strive to ensure that they make use of their abilities and skills to provide desirable results for their organisation (Robberts & Davenport, 2002).

Job engagement is widely related to organisational commitment but there is a sharp contrast between them. The issue of job engagement in Zimbabwe has been topical and has permeated

discourse amongst employees regarding the manner in which they are performing. The health sector in Zimbabwe is compounded by a lot of challenges which are threatening service delivery to the citizens. The issue of job engagement has led to a standoff within the health sector. There is a stand-off between the health sector employees and their employer in Zimbabwe (Bishi, Shamu, Dijk & Stam, 2017). This has led to the ongoing strikes which have now gone for over 60 days as reported by the local media prints within the country. According to Ro and Lee (2017) job engagement in the country has not been possible because of cited problems which amongst include poor working conditions, poor salaries and lack of protective equipment. The issue of job engagement has been a problem within the sector for over a prolonged period of time and this demotivated a lot of employees which has led to many of the professionals seeking jobs outside of the country (Owens, Baker, Sumpter & Cameron, 2016).

Employees have been over time expressing disgruntlement over the state of the conditions within the sector which were now affecting their performance in their jobs. Employees have been citing the lack of freedom within the workplace as well as lack of training & development opportunities (Bailey, Madden, Alfes & Fletcher, 2017). The mortality rate, the number of clients and patients who are being turned back to go home without services continues to rise because the health workers are not capacitated to work (Kanyumbaya & Msosa, 2020). Job engagement in Zimbabwe has failed to bear fruits even though there have been efforts by those in leadership as well as the government to try to solve the impasse but concrete results have failed to manifest. In a bid to engage the employees the employer has offered car schemes, increased salaries but as Mutizwa (2020) notes these have been selectively been awarded to other employees namely doctors. There has been a neglect of other staff such as nurses as well as junior doctors rendering the prospects of job engagement useless (Behera, Prutipinyo, Sirichotiratana & Viwatwongkasem, 2019).

Zimbabwe is a signatory of the Abuja declaration stipulating that 15% of the budget should be allocated to the health sector, but it appears the government has been failing this task. This has led to the challenges of job engagement which are emanating from shortage of resources (Taderera, Hendricks & Pillay, 2016). The health sector continues to have a surge in the number of cases of employees leaving their jobs for other countries despite efforts by the employer to engage them. The situation appears to be worsening as each day passes as evidenced by the shortage of medical personnel within the health sector (Chinyamurindi & Tsvangirai, 2019). Despite a surge in labour turnover they are continuous strikes by the remaining employees signalling their discontent over poor salaries, poor working conditions amongst other factors with their unions spearheading them (Makoni, 2019). The medical sectors as a result has experienced poor service delivery to its citizens resulting in the loss of life, which has caused manifestation of social unrest within the country attracting world attention. The employer has on several sought to engage the workers to break the impasse (Kanyumbaya & Msosa, 2020). The strikes have been on and off appearing to suggest that at some point there is a mutual agreement or rather concessions on employee demands to have them retained. It appears the employer has been not following on the agreements made or the engagement packages which are being offered lose value to the employees quickly and thus they require a review from time to time (Makoni, 2019).

The issue of job engagement has been central around the performance of employees as evidenced by the negotiations which have been aimed to serve as an impetus vehicle to seek attention for engagement. The process of engaging employees is vital for any organisation to succeed but it appears employee within the Zimbabwean medical sector feel neglected over this issue (Masvaure & Maharaj, 2014). The employees appear to have lost a sense of attachment to their work because they are not engaged despite their passion to work and save lives. As Mutizwa (2018) and Makoni (2019) argue in their studies organisations which do not value employee job engagement will ultimately collapse, sadly it appears this might be the situation which the Zimbabwe medical sector is faced with in itself a national disaster as this will lead to loss of life.

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