



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**FACTORS INFLUENCE THE LEVEL OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG
FRONT LINE EMPLOYEES IN PRIVATE HEALTHCARE-
A CASE STUDY IN PUSRAWI HOSPITAL SDN. BHD.**

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Kota Samarahan

2007

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By

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**This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)**

**Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development
University Malaysia Sarawak
2007**

The project entitled Factors Influence the Level of Job Satisfaction among Front Line Employees in Private Healthcare- A Case Study in Pusrawi Hospital Sdn. Bhd. was prepared by Santi Anandarao and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)

Received for examination by:

(Supervisor)

Date:

Grade:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My first note of appreciation goes to my supervisor, Puan Surena Sabil. Without her experience and excellent guidance, the writing of this research paper would be totally impossible. Her stimulating suggestions and valuable hints have helped me all the time to write and improve my research paper.

I would like to offer my gratitude to my research location, Pusat Rawatan Islam (Pusrawi Hospital) especially Mr. Yusni Ali (Human Resource Manager) who has given permission to commence this research in the first instance and to do the necessary research work. I would also like to thank all the employees in Pusrawi Hospital for their commitment and cooperation in the data collection process.

I am most thankful to my parents, Mr. Anandarao and Mrs. Paruvathy who have always been a source of inspiration in my life. Furthermore, I am indebted to my close friend, Miss. Rajaletchumy Venugobal who has always provided me with moral support and encouragement for accomplishing this research paper.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the staffs in Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development for preparing letters for organizations and recording responses from organization. Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS INFLUENCE THE LEVEL OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG FRONT LINE EMPLOYEES IN PRIVATE HEALTHCARE- A CASE STUDY IN PUSRAWI HOSPITAL SDN. BHD.

Santi Anandarao

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of personal satisfaction, professional support, training, workload and team spirit on front line employees' job satisfaction in private healthcare. This research also aims to measure the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare and to identify the most influential factor affecting front line employees' job satisfaction. This study differs from previous studies in two ways: in dealing with private healthcare and focuses specifically on front line employees. Hypotheses were constructed by reviewing a model proposed by Chou, Boldy and Lee in the area of employees' job satisfaction. The model represents the expected relationships among five satisfaction components: personal satisfaction, workload, team spirit, training and professional support. A total of 46 front line employees at a Pusrawi Hospital, Kuala Lumpur completed self-administered questionnaire. By using Pearson correlation analysis, the relationship between the variables was measured and regression analysis was used to determine the dominant factor between the independent variables. The study found that the level of job satisfaction for 59 percent respondents is in the medium level. Findings of the study also indicate that professional support, workload and training influence the level of job satisfaction among front line employees. This study proposes that personal satisfaction and team spirit do not influence front line employees' job satisfaction. Empirical findings also suggest that the workload of employees appears to be the most influential factor affecting front line employees' job satisfaction. It is suggested that to enhance the level of job satisfaction among front line employees, managers need to actively monitor workloads and build good relationship with them. These activities could assist in maintaining and increasing job satisfaction.

ABSTRAK

FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI TAHAP KEPUASAN PEKERJAAN PEKERJA DI KAUNTER PERKHIDMATAN SEKTOR PERUBATAN SWASTA- KAJIAN KES DI HOSPITAL PUSRAWI SDN. BHD.

Santi Anandarao

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti pengaruh kepuasan individu, sokongan pihak atasan, latihan, bebanan kerja dan semangat berpasukan terhadap kepuasan pekerja di kaunter perkhidmatan sektor perubatan swasta. Kajian ini juga dijalankan untuk mengkaji tahap kepuasan pekerja kaunter dan untuk mengenal pasti faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi kepuasan pekerja kaunter. Kajian ini berbeza daripada kajian lepas dari segi dua aspek yang penting iaitu: fokus kajian ini adalah terhadap sektor perubatan swasta dan fokus khas adalah pekerja kaunter sahaja. Hipotesis kajian telah diubahsuai daripada model kepuasan pekerja yang dihasilkan oleh Chou, Boldy dan Lee (2002). Model tersebut terdiri daripada lima faktor utama yang mempengaruhi kepuasan pekerja iaitu: kepuasan individu, sokongan dari pihak atasan, latihan, bebanan kerja dan semangat berkumpulan. Seramai 46 orang pekerja kaunter di Hospital Pusrawi, Kuala Lumpur telah mengisi borang soal selidik yang diedarkan. Korelasi Pearson telah digunakan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan antara pembolehubah bersandar dan tidak bersandar. Regresi pula digunakan untuk mengenal pasti faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi kepuasan pekerja. Analisis data menunjukkan bahawa tahap kepuasan bagi 59 peratus pekerja kaunter berada pada tahap sederhana. Dapatan kajian ini juga mengatakan bahawa sokongan dari pihak atasan, bebanan kerja dan latihan mempengaruhi kepuasan pekerja kaunter. Manakala, semangat berpasukan dan kepuasan individu tidak mempengaruhi kepuasan pekerja kaunter. Selain itu, hasil kajian ini telah membuktikan bahawa bebanan kerja merupakan faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi kepuasan pekerja kaunter. Oleh itu, pengkaji mencadangkan bahawa pihak pengurusan perlulah sentiasa memantau bebanan kerja dan membina hubungan erat dengan pekerja supaya pekerja kaunter mencapai kepuasan yang maksimum.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Healthcare is unique from any other type of industry. It is one of the fastest and largest growing industries in the service sector industry. This was proven by researches conducted by Reynolds (1991, cited in Braunsberger & Gates 2002). According to Reynolds, healthcare expenditures in 1991 totaled \$671 Billion and rose to \$1.3 Trillion in 2000. However it has been estimated that the healthcare spending will grow faster than any other industry in the coming decades.

The main responsibility of healthcare providers is to provide patients with competent, adequate and appropriate health service and care. Therefore healthcare professionals are highly dependent on each other to provide better service to the patients or customers. The health providers must make sure that they are providing the best service because healthcare organizations are in the business of caring for human being and patients entrust their lives and wellbeing to health providers.

In order to gain a competitive advantage and thus increase profitability, healthcare providers and health plans should be interested in investigating what constitutes 'better healthcare', what factors are important in determining patients' satisfaction with healthcare and health plan, and which of these factors can be managed and marketed (Braunsberger & Gates, 2002).

This is because; nowadays healthcare services are becoming more important, mainly because everyone is paying attention to quality life (Eiriz & Figueiredo, 2005). Customers are increasingly loved to choose the best health providers, who provide services which meet their needs and expectations and also satisfy them. Therefore health care organizations, especially private healthcare organizations must have employees who can attract, retain customers and satisfy them in order to increase their profitability.

Apart from attracting and retaining customers, employees especially front line employees must also address customers' feelings about their care, administrate appointment between patients and doctors, coordinate care services in the counters between different departments and handle customer complaints. Effectiveness in handling customer complaints by front line employees is essential in order to convert dissatisfied customers to satisfied and loyal customers (Johnston & Mehra, 2002; Tax, Brown, 1998 cited in Karatepe & Ekiz, 2004).

According to Newman and Maylor (2002), healthcare employees' job satisfaction is linked with patients' satisfaction. Satisfied patients will have relationship with the organization and will contribute to the increment of profits. In order to increase profit, private healthcare organization must make sure that their employees are satisfied with their job and able to attract customers. This is especially important for front line workers because they are the one who give first and final service to customers, such as receptionist and pharmacist.

1.2 Background of the Study

According to Ruiz (1999, cited from Harrington & Downey-Ennis, 2002) today's healthcare organizations have become more complex institutions where the work of each professionals and non professional employees is part of the system that has to be improved for the benefit of the patients or customers. Professionals of the healthcare organizations are often described as the doctors, physician, specialist and pharmacist who involve in treating the patients. While, non professionals are the nurses, wad boys and front line employees who involve in registering the patients and handling customers in the pharmacy counters. Professionals and non professionals are also being called as internal customers of the organization (Berry, 1976- cited in O' Neill, 2005).

Employees are also called as internal customers because high satisfaction has been linked to retention of both customers and employees. Customers who are satisfied have higher repurchase intentions, which in turn translate into repeat purchases (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Rust and Zahorik, 1993, cited in Rust, Stewart, Miller & Pielack, 1996)

However, employees who are satisfied have higher intentions of staying with an organization, which results in decreased turnover (Mobley, 1979, cited in Rust, Stewart, Miller & Pielack, 1996). Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, cited in Rust, Stewart, Miller & Pielack, 1996) argued that theory of reasoned action is at the heart of both the employee and the customer links between satisfaction and behavior. Therefore, employees are being called as internal customers.

According to Chang and Kelly (1994), from the time the organization starts producing its product or service to the time they deliver it to the external customer, the product or service being changed for consumption through an internal chain of

events. This internal chain is being called as internal customers who consist of organization's employees.

Chang and Kelly (1994) added that, before the organization tries to satisfy the external customers' needs, it would be better if the organization satisfy the internal customers' needs. This is because, without the support and cooperation of internal customers (colleagues, employees, bosses and other departments) it is difficult to satisfy those commonly viewed as external customers (those who buy products or services). Satisfying internal customers provides a vital link in the chain that leads to satisfying customers outside of the organization (Scott, 1988).

When we talk about internal customers' satisfaction, the front line workers should be the organization's priority. The frontline employees must be viewed as not just someone who must listen to management, but also as someone who management must listen to. This is because front line workers are often viewed as the representative of the organization. This is particularly true in healthcare organization.

Since healthcare organization is a service recovery organization, it is important for the healthcare staff to know how to respond quickly and appropriately to customers' needs. Tax and Brown (1998, cited in Ashill, Carruthers and Krisjanous, 2005) stated that successful service recovery is highly influenced by the effectiveness of front line employees who receive complaints and interact with customers. The importance of front line employees and the service recovery they perform is a critical component in health service quality and an organization's reputation (Ashill, Carruthers and Krisjanous, 2005).

According to Darby (1999, cited in Ashill, Carruthers and Krisjanous, 2005), front line employees are normally the key to clients perceptions of the delivery of high quality services because they have a major influence on forming expectations

and controlling customer experiences and as such they cannot be separated from the focal point of the actual service. Therefore the performance of front line is a key component in the delivery of healthcare and patients often judge their healthcare experience based on this interaction (Ashill, Carruthers and Krisjanous, 2005).

Therefore it is essential for the healthcare organization to ensure that the front line employees are happy and satisfied with their work in order to provide better service. Moreover, frontline employees who display energy in complaint resolution are likely to convert dissatisfied customers into satisfied and loyal customers (Karatep & Ekiz, 2004). This is particularly important for private healthcare organizations.

To survive in highly competitive markets, organizations need to provide goods and services that yield highly satisfied and loyal customers. When customers are satisfied, they are more likely to return to those who helped them, while dissatisfied customers are more likely to go elsewhere (Gilbert, 2000). Therefore private healthcare should prepare its employees to serve better and provide better service in order to lead the healthcare market.

Against this background, the purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing the front line employees (internal customers) satisfaction in private healthcare organization. This study will be using Five Factor Model-staff satisfaction structural model which was proposed by Chou, Boldy and Lee (2002) to measure the employees' job satisfaction in private healthcare organization.

This model consists of five job satisfaction factors which are training, team spirit, professional support, personal satisfaction and workload. These five factors will be used to measure the front line employees' satisfaction against the work they do. This study will be conducted in one of the private healthcare organization.

1.3 Problem Statement

The Five Factor Model which was proposed by Chou, Boldy and Lee (2002) is mainly for staff satisfaction and its components in residential aged care. In other words, this model was used to examine the job satisfaction for aged care staff only. Researchers have not examined the appropriateness of this model in private healthcare organization. Therefore the present study will test the appropriateness of this model in private healthcare organization.

As stated earlier, front line employees are the representatives of the healthcare organization to face the customers and to receive complaints (Boshoff & Allen, 2000). A very little attention has been given to the understanding of front line employees' performance and their job satisfaction in healthcare setting (Ashill, Carruthers and Krisjanous, 2005). Therefore the context of this study is to focus the front line employees' job satisfaction (internal customer) in private healthcare setting.

To date, studies of service recovery performance and job satisfaction of front line employees have largely focused on private sectors such as banking and retailing (Hoffman, 1995; Boshoff and Allen; 2000; Yavas, 2003, cited from Ashill, Carruthers and Krisjanous, 2005), hotel industry (Karatep & Ekiz, 2004), nurses' assistants in nursing home (Rust & Stewart, 1996) and organizations which had been running TQM programs (Lam, 1996). However, the job satisfaction of front line employees in private healthcare is less emphasized. Therefore the present study is conducted to examine factors influence the job satisfaction of front line employees in private healthcare.

Furthermore, according to Chou, Boldy and Lee (2002), professional support has a significant effect on employees' (internal customer) satisfaction. According to them professional support has a strong and positive effect on all other aspects of staff

satisfaction. However, according to Castel, Navarro and Torres (2005), professional support does not have any effects on employees' satisfaction. These authors argued that employees' satisfaction is only affected by perception of employees against their work, industrial relation, economical aspects and working conditions only. Therefore, the present study aims to find the relationship between employees' satisfaction and professional support.

Extensive research has been conducted on the characteristics and quality of organizational effectiveness from the perspective of those who are the organization's external customers (Parasuraman, 1988; Zeithaml, 1996; Fisk, 1993; Bojanic, 1996; Nicholls, 1993, 1998; Taylor, 1994, cited from Gilbert, 2000). Much less has been reported about organizational effectiveness from the perspective of internal customer (employees) satisfaction. Therefore the present study will study about the organizational effectiveness from the internal customer (Front line employees) satisfaction.

The basic argument for this study is identification of factors that influence the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare. Therefore this study will provide solutions for the above mentioned problems in order make an important and clearly articulated contribution to the understanding of job satisfaction among front line employees in a private healthcare environment.

1.4. Objective of the Study

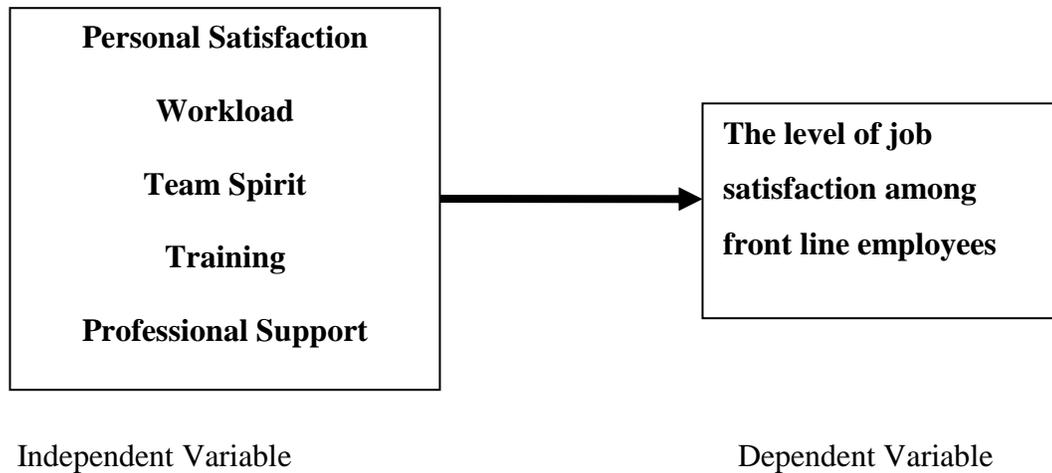
1.4.1 Main Objective:

To identify the main factors that influence level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives:

- a) To examine the relationship between personal satisfaction and the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare.
- b) To examine the relationship between team spirit and the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare.
- c) To examine the relationship between training and the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare.
- d) To examine the relationship between professional support and the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare.
- e) To examine the relationship between workload and the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare.
- f) To examine the most dominant factor influencing the level of job satisfaction among front line employees.

1. 5. Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted from Chou, Boldy and Lee, (2002), a structural model of staff satisfaction components.

1.6 Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between personal job satisfaction and front line employees' job satisfaction in private healthcare.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between workload and front line employees' job satisfaction in private healthcare

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between team spirit and front line employees' job satisfaction in private healthcare.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between training and front line employees' job satisfaction in private healthcare.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between professional support and front line employees' job satisfaction in private healthcare

Ho6: There is no dominant factor in influencing the level of job satisfaction among front line employees in private healthcare

1.7 Importance of the Study

1.7.1 Practitioners

The practitioners (management) will understand that employees' satisfaction is vital for the organization to grow and produce quality service to the external customers. It has been stated that satisfied customers will produce quality service to customers. Through this research, practitioners will undertake actions to improve internal customer satisfaction and will make changes to the management if the employees are not satisfied.

1.7.2 Theory

This research proves that Path Goal Leadership Theory is applicable in every organization which encourages employees for self satisfaction. The theory is a contingency theory of leadership based on expectancy theory of motivation that relates several leadership styles to specific employee and situational contingencies (McShane & Von Glinow, 2005). This is because; one of the variables in Five Factor model- staff satisfaction structural model is professional support which explains the role of leaders in organization.

1.7.3 Future Research

This study would be a guide for the future researches which will examine the internal customer- front line employees' satisfaction in private healthcare. Since, there are small numbers of the study in private healthcare about the front line employees; this study will help the future researchers to deepen their study in this field.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

1.8.1 Internal Customer

Conceptual Definition: Internal Customers are those who work in an organization and involve in production of products or services (Chang and Kelly, 1994).

Operational Definition: Internal Customers are the front line employees who work in service counter in Pusrawi Hospital Sdn. Bhd.

1.8.2 Personal Satisfaction

Conceptual Definition: Employee (personal) satisfaction has been defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of ones job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, cited in Rust & Stewart 1996).

Operational Definition: The feeling of pleasure of the employees when they are happy with their job and working environment.

1.8.3 Healthcare

Conceptual Definition: Healthcare is a center or building containing various local medical services, facilities, doctors, specialist, professionals and none professionals such as nurses, wad boys and front line employees to serve patients.

Operational Definition: Pusrawi Hospital Sdn. Bhd. is a private healthcare organization which provides medical services and customers have to pay a high amount to get them.

1.8.4 Team Spirit

Conceptual Definition: Two or more people in a group who interact and influence each others, are mutually accountable for achieving common objectives and perceive themselves as a social entity within the organization (McShane & Von Glinow, 2005).

Operational definition: A group of people have a strong interpersonal relationship and encourage each others to achieve a goal set by the organization. This team also has a good communication channel which let the team to operate in effective manner.

1.8.5 Workload

Conceptual Definition: The amount of work that should be done by the employee during working hour (McShane & Von Glinow, 2005).

Operational definition: The amount of work or task that should be done by the employees and a list of duties that must be done by the employees during the working hours.

1.8.6 Training

Conceptual Definition: It is a planned process to bring a change in attitude of the employees, increase knowledge and skills in order to improve performance (Ibrahim Mamat, 2001).

Operational Definition: It is viewed as a learning process to improve performance among front line employees in Pusrawi Hospital in terms of changes in attitude,