

Attitude of Health Workers (Nurses) towards Patients and the Perception Patients have about Them: A Case Study at Kropa Health Centre in Ghana

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is known as a specific hospital operating issue on employee attitude, service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in health - care organizations. The proposed research model was done using the mixed methods approach. The results indicate that hospitals can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty through efficient public relations with patients and their families, frequent in-service training for employees in terms of public relations and customer care and service quality. One of the key findings of our study was that health workers especially nurses had bad public relations with patients and their families in health – care organization’s influence employee reaction and service quality. The researchers concluded that public relations and customer care should be included in the curricula of nursing training schools to help students appreciate the need and approach to patients when they start their practice.

Keywords: customer care, employee reaction, service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, health care.

Introduction:

Health care is unique from any other type of industry in that health care professionals are highly dependent on each other to provide and coordinate services of high value for human beings. This is especially challenging for health care managers who are responsible for managing health care organizations [1]. Since one of the main goals of any health care organization is not only to meet, but also to exceed the expectations of patients, improving levels of patient satisfaction is very critical to their long-term success.

Gathering the views of service users is a key feature of recent developments in society and the health care sector has identified methods for assessing the views of patients, especially in the last decade [2]. If health care organizations are in the business to provide service for their customers, then they must strongly consider the needs and expectations of their most important customers.

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Efforts at quality improvement in health care organizations present their own unique set of challenges. As with all types of services, health care is an intangible product [3]. The services that patients receive cannot physically be viewed or touched like manufactured products such as televisions and cars. It is easier for managers dealing with manufactured products to develop and implement quality improvement measures than it is for health care organizations [3].

Therefore, the aim of this research was to bring on board and bridge the gap of uncertainty between health workers especially nurses and their relationship with patients hence improving health quality within staffs and patients and manner in which health care organizations have traditionally been operated.

Materials and Methods:

This chapter spells out in detail the research method and design that were used in the study. This involves the research design that was used, sources of data, population sample and sample procedures, data collection instruments, data processing and analysis as well as ethical issues involved and how these were addressed

Research Design:

The research was a descriptive cross – sectional and non-experimental study and both quantitative and qualitative variables was used. The qualitative variable comprised of the respondent's age, sex, ethnicity, religion, knowledge, attitude and perception of health workers especially nurses towards patients and the attitude of patients towards nurses. The quantitative variables also captured the number of respondents as well as the numerical value of respondent's perception.

Study Setting:

The study was conducted at the Kropa Health Centre in the Ashanti region of Ghana. This setting was chosen because of a news bulleting six months ago and live interviews on how patients were complaining of disrespect by nurses at the facility and their lazy attitude to work. Kropa has a population of about 500 people with only one health centre mined by a physician assistant and one supervising medical officer who only visited once a week to see to pregnant woman and seriously sick patients or those who need to undergo surgery.

The research was solely based on nurses and patients visiting the facility. The health center has a daily attendance of 70 to 85 patients per day and has 12 regular nurses of all ranks with the senior most been at the rank of a principal nursing officer and the junior most been a health assistant.

Population and Sampling:

The target population for the study consisted of two groups of people with age in general above 18 years. The groups comprised of health workers emphatically nurses and patients receiving care from them.

Sample and Sampling Technique:

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population in quantitative studies, the representation of the sample enhances generalization of the findings [4]. The sampling methods

are classified into probability and non-probability sampling method. A convenient sampling technique which is non-probable was used to sample the population of the study.

Instrumentation:

The researcher used interviews as the main instrument based on the research objectives and was used to collect the data. Straight forward questions were asked so as to suit the educational level of respondents.

Data Collection Procedure:

The instrument that was used for the collection of data was a research interviews, individual interviewing technique was used for patients all of above 18 years and points noted and written down. The health workers that are mainly nurses, the researcher used the focus group interview approached, the leader of the nurses steered the interviews and all participants worked according to time allotted. The researcher made some recordings with his phone on some of the key points raised by the nurses on their attitude towards patients and the perception they think patients have on them.

Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed using descriptive and analytical statistical test to simplify the information that was collected. Both closed ended and open-ended questions were used to obtain response. Frequency tables were used to analyze the data to enable them to be viewed easily and clearly. Open ended questions were analyzed and discussed based on the respondents' answers.

Ethical Consideration:

The researcher used his original student's identification card to seek permission from the district health director but the director could only give the researcher the opportunity if only findings were not going to be published. The researcher could not agree with the district director since it was an academic exercise to solve a problem and may be published. The researcher relied on the supervising medical officer for the Kropa Health Centre who gave him the permission to access the facility for information but not the administration for any document and with this the district director of health service accepted and paved the way for the research to be carried out. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of information given and its anonymity. Respondents were assured of the right to withdraw from the interviews at any point in time and consent was seek from all respondents before they participated in the study.

Validation and Reliability:

Validity is the state of being legally or officially accepted while reliability can be trusted to do something well or more efficient. The interviewing tool was discussed with the supervisor of the project and other experts in the subject area which helped improve on modification. This also ensured that the context was valid and reliable.

Limitations of the Study:

- i. The sample was too small due to the limited time and resources that was allocated.
- ii. There was the possibility of provided information being shallow and biased because participants provided information that was influenced by my presence.

Results:

Out of the numbers interviewed, specifically for nurses and patients, the total number of respondents was 45 respondents with response rate of 96%. The attitude of nurses towards patients and perception of patients toward nurses were assessed and analyzed as shown below.

Table 1 Sex of Respondents (Health Workers Nurses)

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	4	30.7
Female	9	69.2
Total	13	99.9

The majority of the respondents with the NURSES were (69.2%) were females (Table 1).

Table 2 Sex of Respondents (PATIENTS)

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	19	29.6
Female	45	70.3
Total	64	99.9

2). The majority of the respondents with the PATIENTS were (70.3%) were females (Table

Table 3 Marital Status of Respondents NURSES

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	9	69.2
Single	2	15.3
Divorced	1	7.6
Widowed	1	7.6
Total	13	99.7

The majority of respondents (69.2%) were married NURSES (Table 3).

Table 4 Marital Status of Respondents PATIENTS

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	45	70.3
Single	15	23.4
Divorced	1	1.5
Widowed	3	4.6
Total	64	99.8

The majority of respondents (70.3%) were married PATIENTS (Table 4).

Table 5 Religion of Respondents NURSES

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christian	9	69.2
Muslim	3	23.0
Traditionalist	1	1.5
Others	1	1.5
Total	13	95.2

The majority of the respondents (69.2%) were Christians for NURSES. (Table 5)

Table 6 Religion of Respondents PATIENTS

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christian	35	54.6
Muslim	20	31.2
Traditionalist	8	12.5
Others	1	1.5
Total	64	99.8

The majority of the respondents (54.6%) were Christians for PATIENTS. (Table 6)

Table 7 Educational Status of Respondents NURSES

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Nursing College Diploma	3	23.0
Nursing College Certificate	5	7.8
University Degree	0	0
Ward Assistants	5	38.4
Total	13	69.2

The majority of the respondents (38.4%) had 1-year training to become ward assistants

Table 8 Educational Status of Respondents PATIENTS

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tertiary	5	7.8
Senior High School	8	12.5
Junior High School	22	34.3
Middle School Leaving Certificate	29	45.3
Total	64	99.9

The majority of the respondents PATIENTS (45.3%) had attended and completed middle school.

Table 9 Attitude of NURSES to PATIENTS

Are the nurses in this facility disrespectful?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	55	85.9
No	3	4.6
Not sure	4	6.2
No idea	2	3.1
Total	64	99.8

The majority of respondents (85.9%) believe the nurses are disrespectful.

Table 10 Hard Working and Conscious Nurses

Are the nurses in this facility hard working and time conscious?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	23.4
No	48	75.0
Not sure	1	1.5
No idea	0	0.0
Total	64	99.9

The majority of respondents (75%) believe nurse at the facility are not hard working and do not respect time (Table 10).

Table 11 Perception Nurses Have for Patients

Are patients pretentious when it comes to them showing they are sick?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	7	53.8
No	5	38.4
Not sure	1	7.6
No idea	0	0.0
Total	13	99.8

The majority of respondents (38.4%) been nurses believe patients are pretentious when it comes to them showing sickness (Table 11).

Table 12 Patients' Behaviour

Are patients disrespectful when it comes to them showing they are sick?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	7	53.8
No	5	38.4
Not sure	1	7.6
No idea	0	0.0
Total	13	99.8

The majority of respondents (38.4%) been nurses believe patients are disrespectful when they visit the health facility (Table 12).

Discussion:

The majority of the respondents with the nurses were (69.2%) were females while as the majority of the respondents with the patients were (70.3%) were females. The majority of respondents (69.2%) were married nurses where the majority of respondents (70.3%) were married patients. The majority of the respondents (69.2%) were Christians for nurses whereas the majority of the respondents (54.6%) were Christians for patients. The majority of the respondents (38.4%) had 1-year training to become ward assistants whereas the majority of the respondents' patients (45.3%) had attended and completed middle school. The majority of respondents (85.9%) believe the nurses are disrespectful whereas the majority of respondents (75%) believe nurse at the facility are not hard working and do not respect time. The majority of respondents (38.4%) been nurses believe patients are pretentious when it comes to them showing sickness whereas the majority of respondents (38.4%) been nurses believe patients are disrespectful when they visit the health facility. It was also noted that majority of the nurses that work at the health center were Christians and same as the majority of patients that patronize the facility.

Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of the study was to assess the attitude of health workers particularly nurses towards patients and the perception patients have about them in the improvement of quality health care delivery. Both quantitative and qualitative variables were used for this research.

Achieving high levels of patient satisfaction through quality improvement should be one of the top priorities of any health care organization. After all, without patients, these organizations would cease to exist. There are several approaches that can be utilized to meet and exceed the expectations of the patients. Of these, measuring the views of the patients, improving patient outcomes with a community-wide effort, and using a Six Sigma program were discussed. Each of these programs can be an effective mechanism for quality improvement if used properly. One of the key components of quality improvement techniques involves collaborative efforts by all health care professionals and managers as they seek to increase patient satisfaction. Implementing quality improvement initiatives to improve patient satisfaction can enable health care organizations to position themselves for success in today's global and increasingly competitive environment.

Recommendations:

A third approach involves using devices such as surveys, written complaints and questionnaires to obtain patient feedback. This way, the views of the patients can be analyzed and appropriate actions can be taken to improve on weak areas. Here, health care organizations can implement processes to meet their patients' needs more reliably and efficiently.

Furthermore, this approach can provide indication of the direction and intensity of staff training and education to improve specific areas such customer care and relations.

The ministry of health and agencies under it should introduce public relations and customer care as a course in all nursing training schools to equip trainees with this skill to be able to serve patients well.

Health facilities, hospitals and clinic should set up public relations or customer service desk with trained personnel to assist and support patients with their complains.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest, financial or otherwise.

Availability of Data and Materials:

Due to confidentiality issues, it is not permitted to share the data.

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