

Role of Human Resource Planning in Improving the Quality of Health Care Centers' Services (An Analytical Study of Health Care Centers in the Eastern Province of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

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Abstract

This study explores the role of human resource planning in improving the quality of health care centers' services and the factors that affect the ability of health centers in the Eastern Province to plan human resources that ensure high quality of health services from the point of view of their employees. The study found that some of the main factors include a lack of enthusiasm for change among workers, insufficient attention to human resource planning, and a lack of periodic follow-up to improve and develop services. The study aimed to examine the impact of human resources planning on health service quality in health care centers. Researchers wanted to know if there was a correlation between the two variables and, if so, what the most important results were. The study used a quantitative research design. The data was collected through questionnaires distributed to employees of health care centers in the Eastern Province. A total of 200 questionnaires were completed and returned. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. The study found a positive correlation between human resources planning and increased investment in employee capabilities and skills development in health care centers. In light of the study findings, the researcher recommends the need to develop long-term plans for human resources, with the need for the heads of departments and departments to participate in their development and pay attention to internal and external training.

Keywords: Human resource, Quality, Health care, Public Sector, Health system, Health service

1. Introduction:

Health care is one of the most important sectors in the field of services, as it is indispensable to any society. Since ancient times, all mankind has known the importance of health and its impact on societies, so countries are racing to research in this field in terms of equipment and preparation of human resources in all medical and health professional disciplines.

The quality of service and products is important for many organizations, and the standards have been raised to include ensuring quality. (Mohammed, 2016) Human resources are the most important part of a business organization. (Al Sharbati, 2012). This is due to the fact that the human element is one of the most important resources of organizations and the main engine adopted for the advancement of their reality and the most influential in productivity.

1.2. Research Problem:

Many public sector organizations suffer from stumbling blocks in achieving their goals and the goals of society, because of the immaturity of their employees due to the importance of implementing a total quality system. Since the health sector is one of the important sectors to which the rest of the production and service sectors are linked, the problem in this sector takes on greater specifics and deeper aspects. The research problem is represented in the presence of challenges in the quality of the health system in health centers that need to be addressed over the coming years, including: the continuation of population and age growth in the Kingdom. The population of the Kingdom is expected to increase from 33.5 to 39.5 million in the middle of 2030. It is expected that the number of elderly people (whose ages range between 60 - 79 and 4.63 million in the middle of 2030).

The recent pandemic of the novel corona virus (Covid-19) revealed lack of importance of planning in many health systems across the countries of the world to ensure the stability of any health system and anticipate what could happen to such a vital sector by predicting what might happen in the future in terms of disasters and how to respond to them. For example, the United States is one of the countries most affected by the number of victims due to the outbreak of the virus because of poor planning and preparation.

This extended to assessing the crisis and dealing with this danger that threatened America, and all of that led it to catastrophic results according to the survey issued by the World Health Organization.

The survey, completed by 155 countries, confirmed that the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases significantly disrupted since the Covid-19 pandemic began. The most common reasons for stopping or limiting services were staff shortages due to the reassignment of health workers to support Covid-19 services. Some of the positive results of the survey were that most countries have developed alternative strategies to support the most vulnerable people in continuing to obtain treatment for non-communicable diseases and also to find innovative ways to implement those plans. We must prepare to build back better in order to strengthen health services, so that we are better equipped to prevent and diagnose non-communicable diseases and care for those who have them in the future, whatever the circumstances.

One of the lessons learned from Covid-19 pandemic is that it has shown us that business strategies that focus on the human factor are not just an option that we would like to adopt, but rather a need that must be provided. It is certain that only those heads of organizations who care about human resources issues holistically and make business decisions around human potential can succeed and thrive in the future.

1.3. Study Questions:

Thus, the main research question is:

“What is the role of human resource planning in improving service quality in health care centers?” from which the following sub-questions arise:

1. What is the reality of human resources planning in the health centers in the Eastern Province from the point of view of their employees?
2. What is the reality of improving service quality in health centers in the Eastern Province from the point of view of their employees?
3. What is the role of human resources planning in improving service quality in health centers in the Eastern Province from the point of view of their employees?

4. What are the obstacles facing improving service quality in health centers in the Eastern Province from the point of view of their employees?

1.4. Objectives of the Study:

1. Setting human resource plans in order to raise quality level of health services in health centers in the Eastern Province.
2. Studying the factors affecting human resource planning that ensure high health services quality in health centers in the Eastern Province.
3. Studying the capabilities of health care centers to develop plans for human resources to ensure the achievement of quality in the services provided there.

1.5. Significance of the Study:

The study found that health services are vital to human health and should be provided at the best level possible. Therefore, the significance of research can be limited to the following matters:

- 1- Demonstrating the importance of health services provided in hospitals.
- 2- Highlighting the importance of human resources as an essential element in health services quality.
- 3- Facilitating the strategic decision-making process.
- 4- Increasing investment in employee capabilities, training opportunities and skills development

1.6. Study Hypotheses:

1. **The main hypothesis: There is a relationship between human resource planning and health services quality in health care centers, and the following sub-hypotheses branch from it:**

- 1.1. There is a relationship between human resource planning and reliability or credibility in health care centers in the Eastern Province.

- 1.2. There is a relationship between human resource planning, response speed and client assistance in health care centers in the Eastern Province.
- 1.3. There is a relationship between human resource planning, trust and safety in health care centers in the Eastern Province.
- 1.4. There is a relationship between human resource planning and increased investment in staff capabilities and skills development in health care centers in the Eastern Province.

2. Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

The researcher referred to the literature of the study in order to better understand human resource planning and its impact on service quality in health service centers.

2.1. Human Resource Planning

Any organization needs to determine its needs for human resources in order to perform its activities.

Concept of Human Resource Planning:

There are multiple definitions of the concept of human resource planning, and the following are some of the definitions related to it:

Human resource planning is defined as the process of ensuring the availability of the right quantity and quality of human resources in the appropriate place and time and doing what is required of them (Durra and Al Sabbagh, 2010).

(Derry, 2011) defines human resource planning as a means of estimating the needs of the workforce and working on preparing them, and it is an organized and continuous process by which human resources are identified and evaluated in the organization,

Walton defined human resource planning as measuring or evaluating the current human resources and forecasting the needs of human resources through supply and demand, to develop a plan to implement the strategic plan of the organization. (Wilton, 2013).

Importance of Human Resource Planning:

The importance of human resource planning can be summarized in the following points (Fadlallah and Suleiman, 2016):

1. Increasing Senior Management's awareness of the importance of the human element in order to achieve the goals of the organization and its continuity of success.
2. It contributes to showing the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of human resource performance.
3. It distributes and allocates human resources and controls costs.
4. It works to bring about a stable dynamic equilibrium between the organization's human resources needs.

Dora and Al Sabbagh (2010 AD) identified the importance of human resource planning in the following points:

1. helps to determine the future needs of human resources
2. Helps to identify weaknesses in human resources that are reflected in their performance.
3. It prepares for any changes that occur in the internal or external environment of the organization.
4. It achieves the coherence of the activities of human resources management and directing them towards its goals.
5. It ensures proper distribution and use by the educational institution of its human resources in all performance areas.

The researcher concludes from the foregoing that the importance of human resource planning is that human resource planning helps to make the organization's strategy workable, and also contributes to directing efforts towards the set goals.

Objectives of Human Resource Planning:

The most important goals of human resource planning in the organization can be identified as follows (Zakaria and Melody, 2017,):

- 1- Obtaining the necessary number and the right type of employees.
- 2- Assisting the organization's management in achieving its goals.
- 3- Preserving and investing the energies of the workers, and enhancing their motivation to work.
- 4- Preparing the human resources budget.

Human Resource Planning Stages:

(Zakaria and Melody, 2017) identified several stages and steps for human resource planning, as follows:

- The first stage: defining the goals of the organization
- The second stage: forecasting the needs of human resources (determining the demand)
- The third stage: forecasting what is available within the organization and in the labor market (internal and external supply)
- The fourth stage: Comparing demand with supply (deficit and surplus)
- The fifth stage: Develop an appropriate action plan
- The sixth stage: evaluation and follow-up of implementation

The human resources planning steps begin with studying the general objectives of the organization or project, and the impact of this on the number of workers required. This means that it has to analyze the demand and supply conditions in human resources as follows (Al Sharbati, 2017):

1. Demand Conditions
2. Supply Conditions

3. Determining the surplus or deficit
4. Implementation

Quality Objectives of Health Services:

The continuous endeavor to improve service quality provided to citizens aims primarily to focus on one of the aspects of sustainable human development, which is related to health. The most important goals sought by medical services quality can be identified as follows (Radwan, 2021):

1. Ensuring the physical and psychological health of the beneficiaries.
2. Excellence in providing health services to support the satisfaction of beneficiaries.
3. Maximizing the level of productivity, by maintaining the health status of the beneficiaries.
4. Enhancing and developing communication channels between health service beneficiaries and providers.
5. Gaining the satisfaction and support of the beneficiary of the provided health service.

The objectives of health service quality can be summarized in the following points (Abbas, 2019):

- 1- Ensuring the physical and psychological health of the beneficiaries.
- 2- Providing a health service of distinguished quality that will achieve the satisfaction of the beneficiary.
- 3- Knowing the opinions and impressions of the beneficiaries.
- 4- Developing and improving communication channels between health service beneficiaries and providers.
- 5- Achieving better levels of productivity.
- 6- Gaining the satisfaction of the beneficiary.

Al Mughairy (2020) adds other goals to health services quality, which are as follows:

- Improving the level of performance of service providers through the application of standards in line with scientific progress.
- Active participation in establishing and developing a national accreditation system in the health sectors.
- Applying the skills and principles of total quality, which will reflect positively on the performance and satisfaction of service providers and recipients.
- The ability to reach an effective level of health services within the available capabilities.
- Contribution with the Ministry's institutions in planning and developing work policies.
- Optimizing the use of resources in order to reduce waste.
- Ensuring providing health services of all kinds in all parts of the Kingdom.

The main objectives of improving health services quality services can be stated in several of the following points (Dreedy, 2014):

1. Improving the morale of the workers.
2. Increasing demand for various types of modern health services.
3. Increasing competition between similar health institutions.
4. Adequacy of the treatment and services provided for various disease states.
5. Achieving the best clinical results for various pathological conditions.
6. Adopting distinct clinical procedures to reduce complications and events that can be avoided or prevented.
7. The employees' adoption of positive behavior when dealing with patients

Factors Affecting Health Services Quality:

There are several factors that affect health services quality, and these elements are as follows (Dreedy 2014,) (Ocean, 2018):

Aspects of Quality in Health Services:

The aspects of service quality can be identified in the following (Ocean, 2018,) (Dreedy, 2014):

1. Reliability
2. Response
3. Tangibility
4. Security (Guarantee)
5. Empathy
6. Technical Mastery
7. Continuity
8. Effectiveness and Efficiency

Bouabbas (2010) specified that the aspects of quality in health services are as follows:

1. Effectiveness of care
2. Efficiency of service provision
3. Technical ability
4. Continuity of service provision
5. Work safety and health safety
6. Access to services
7. The relationship between individual

Quality in the health field is defined by effectiveness, impact, efficiency, technical merit, justice, security and safety, availability and good relationships between people. (Al Abshihi, 2011)

From the above, the researcher believes that the aspects of health services quality can be defined in several main aspects, namely: safety, effectiveness, appropriateness, beneficiary participation, efficiency, and ease of service access.

Measuring Medical Services Quality:

There are two main ways to measure the quality of health services, by looking at the purpose of measurements and the type of variables measured. (Dreedy, 2014):

- 1- The technical component
- 2- The human element

Among the aspects of measuring service quality in the health sector are the following: (Omar, 2014):

1- **Measuring service quality by service recipients:** Among the common methods of measuring service quality according to this aspect are the following:

- (A) Scale for number of complaints
- (B) Satisfaction Scale
- (C) The Gap Scale
- (D) Actual performance scale
- (E) Value scale

2- **Professional Quality Measurement:** The professional quality measure aims to know the organization's ability to fulfill its various services through the optimal use of its resources.

The following are measures emanating from this scale:

- (A) Measuring quality in terms of inputs
- (B) Quality measurement in terms of operations
- (C) Measurement of quality in terms of outputs

3. Methodology

The study aimed to identify the role of human resources planning in the quality of health care center services in Eastern Province.

3.1. The Study's Methodology:

The study used the descriptive method in the survey method, which is concerned with describing the phenomenon as it exists in reality, and therefore it is the appropriate approach to achieve the goals.

3.2. Sources of Data and Information:

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following sources were relied on to obtain data and information:

1. **Secondary Sources :** These are represented by several sources such as books, relevant Arab and foreign references, articles and reports, previous research and studies that dealt with the subject of the study, and research and reading on various relevant Internet sites.

- 2. Primary Sources:** To address the analytical aspects of the subject of the study, the primary data collection was resorted to through a questionnaire as a main tool for research, designed specifically for this purpose. The questionnaire included a number of paragraphs that measure the variables of the study, and the five-year Likert scale will be used, so that each answer takes relative importance, and for the purpose of analysis, SPSS statistical program will be used.

3.3. Study Population:

The study population consists of 55 health care centers in the Eastern Province in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in Al Khobar (9 centers), Dammam (20 centers) and Qatif (26 centers).

Overview of the study population

The employees of health care centers in Al Khobar at total of 220

The employees of health care centers in Dammam at a total of 386

3.4. Sample of the Study:

The study sample is made up of workers in health care centers in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.

3.5. Statistical Analysis Used in the Study:

To achieve the objectives of the study and analyze the data that will be collected using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), after coding and entering the data into the computer. The responses were given as follows: Strongly agree: (5) marks, agree: (4) marks, neutral: (3) points, disagree: (2) marks, strongly disagree: (1) mark. Then the researcher calculated the mean of the answers by the study members.

To determine the length of the cells of the pentatonic scale (maximum and minimum limits) used in the study aspects, the range ($5-1 = 4$) was calculated, then divided by the number of scale cells to get the correct cell length i.e. ($4/5 = 0.80$). Then this value was added to the lowest value in the scale in order to determine the upper limit of this cell.

3.6. Tool of the Study:

The researcher reviewed previous studies and literature on the subject of the study, then built an initial questionnaire and presented it to (4) arbitrators.

To serve the purposes of the study and analyze the data collected through the field study tool, a number of statistical methods were used to find out the attitudes of the study members about the questions raised, using the following statistical treatment methods:

1. Calculating the frequencies and percentages to describe the study sample.
2. Using Pearson's correlation coefficient to measure the validity of internal consistency.
3. Using Cronbach's alpha equation to calculate the reliability coefficient of the study tool.
4. Calculating the arithmetic mean of the responses of the study members to each phrase.
5. Calculating the standard deviation to calculate how far the values are from their arithmetic mean.
6. Using Pearson's correlation coefficient to find out the relationship between human resource planning and health service quality in health care centers.

The first item: the reality of human resources planning in health centers in the Eastern Province:

The second item: the level of services quality in health centers in the Eastern Province:

The third Item: Factors that affect the ability of health centers in the Eastern Province to plan human resources that ensure high quality of health services.

3.7. Validity and reliability tests of the study's tool:

The validity of the questionnaire means making sure that it will measure what it was prepared to measure (Al Assaf, 2012: 429)⁽¹⁾. Validity also means “the inclusion of the study tool for all the elements that the study must contain on the one hand, as well as the clarity of its paragraphs and vocabulary on the other hand, so that it is understandable to those who use it” (Obaidat et al. 2014: 179)⁽²⁾. The researcher verified the validity of the questionnaire through the following:

4. Findings and Recommendations

Researchers looked at how human resources planning affects health service quality in health centers.

¹ Al Assaf, Saleh Hamad (1995AD, 1416 AH), Introduction to Research in Behavioral Sciences, 2nd Edition, Riyadh: Al Obaikan Library

² Obaidat, Thouqan, Adas, Abdel-Rahman, Abdel-Haq, Kayed, “Scientific Research: Its Concept, Tools, and Methods”, Amman: Dar Al Fikr, 6th edition (2001 AD)

4.1. Findings:

Human resources planning positively correlates with health service quality in health care centers.

The most important results of the first sub-hypothesis:

The study found that there is a positive correlation between human resource planning and reliability or credibility in health care centers in the Eastern Province.

The most important results of the second sub-hypothesis:

There is a relationship between human resource planning, speed of response and client assistance in health care centers in the Eastern Province.

The most important results of the third sub-hypothesis:

The study found that there is a positive correlation between human resource planning and increased investment in employee capabilities and skills development in health care centers.

4.2. Recommendations:

In light of the study findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The need to develop long-term plans for human resources, with the need for the heads of departments and departments to participate in their development, and to pay attention to internal and external training.
2. The importance of human resources planning and how to overcome obstacles to increase worker efficiency.
3. Provides instructions on how to train and develop human resources for strategic planning and human resource planning.
4. The company is providing databases of human resources to employees to help with strategic planning and human resources planning.
5. The importance of measuring the performance of directors of human resources departments in health centers is to ensure that the performance development process is effective.
6. Encouraging creative ideas to motivate employees and using creative thinking in generating appropriate alternatives, and spreading awareness and a culture of quality in health centers.
7. The researcher believes that it is possible for health center departments to work to attract foreign medical workers, in order to benefit from their expertise and medical capabilities.
8. The researcher suggests that the health center management work to increase the level of health services it has.

9. The researcher recommends that the health center management be aware of the possible shortage of human resources working for it as a result of retirement or secondments.

4.3. Suggestions for Future Studies:

The researcher suggested a set of studies that could be applied in the future:

1. Applying the current study to other health centers in other regions in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
2. Conducting more future studies related to the role of human resources planning in raising the efficiency of workers' performance.
3. Studying the impact of technological change on health service quality in health centers.

5. Conclusion:

In order to keep up with the changing environment, organizations should engage in human resource planning to ensure continuity and achieve goals.

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