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Job Ethics and Service Delivery of Health Information Management Professionals in Teaching Hospitals, Ondo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The delivery of effective and efficient service within health institutions is complicated by unethical behaviour of healthcare staff. The need to provide satisfactory services demand compliance to job ethics and mutual understanding between healthcare providers. As such, this research investigate job ethics and service delivery of health information management professionals in University of Medical Sciences Hospitals in Ondo State. Descriptive survey research design, and structured questionnaire was adopted as the instrument for data collection. The study population consist of 114 HIM Professionals from two teaching hospitals in Ondo state, Nigeria. The quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics. Mean for service delivery showed a high extent of service delivery (mean=3.44). Job ethics scale has a mean of 3.50, Job ethics was found as a significant positive predictor of service delivery. The changes in the service delivery of HIM professionals as a result of job ethics is 37%. The study concluded that recognizing the significance of job ethics is crucial for HIM professionals aiming to provide exceptional service delivery. The research recommends that health administrators and directors should have a policy and circular stating that only licensed and certified HIM experts who understand their work ethics should be hired for maximum productivity and efficient service delivery.

Keywords: Job ethics, Service delivery, Health Information Management Professionals.

1. Introduction

In this era, providing services is essential to a hospital's ability to survive. The days of patients and clients seeking care at all costs and expecting to receive satisfaction from services received, as well as the health facility taking pride in its patient volume without taking patient satisfaction into account, are far gone. Service delivery remains a satisfactory effort to provide the much-expected value for customers or clients by an organization through the activities, relationship, or interaction between the employees and clients. Duke and Etim (2018) observed that when clients are satisfied with the services rendered by an organization they become more loyal and ready to engage further with such an organization. This usually generates more profits and revenue for both private and public organizations. It is a vital role of every state to provide for or deliver a range of services in the interest of its people. These services range from administration (delivery of license and permissions) to other traditional services like education and healthcare. These services have to be rendered in an effective, reliable, and citizen-friendly manner, and through competent and qualified employees. Service delivery refers to the actual delivery of a service and products to the customer or clients. It is concerned with the where, when and how a service/product is delivered to the customer and whether this is fair or unfair in nature.

Hospital service delivery refers to the disparity that arises when patients or their attendants perceive the services provided by a hospital differently from their initial expectations for the provision of such services (Singh and Dixit, 2020). In contrast to certain other service industries, it is noteworthy that service providers in the healthcare sector are considered equal partners in the service delivery process. Consequently, their expectations and perceptions of the functioning of a healthcare system carry significant importance. In the contemporary era of globalization and dynamic transformations, services play a significant role in the economic landscape of both developed and developing nations. The primary and ultimate objective of service delivery is to attain customer, client, and patient satisfaction. As observed by Nwachukwu, Ogundiwin & Nwaobi (2015), the notion of service is emphasized as the tangible or intangible components of regular socio-economic interactions executed by an individual, distinct from the types of objects that are perceptible or capable of being physically touched.

Service delivery, according to Black, Varaganum and Hutchings (2014), rest upon three major pillars which are Patient safety, clinical effectiveness, and the patient experience (compassion, dignity, and respect). It is recognized by Aburaya et. al, (2020), that the quality of health services should be safe (preventing harm to those who are meant to receive care), effective (providing evidence-based healthcare services to those in need), people-centered (providing care that responds to individual preferences, needs, and values), and timely (minimizing waiting times and potentially harmful delays).

Service delivery in Ondo State teaching hospitals has not been at the best. This could be because of the inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent salary payment, inadequate human resources of health information management professionals, unfavorable staff attitudes, and intermittent scarcity of material

resources. These factors act as significant impediments to the efficiency and effectiveness of workers' service provision. The potential issue that could impact the provision of services by health information management professionals in teaching hospitals in Ondo State include job ethics.

Ethics is very crucial in understanding how well an employee is doing. One of the most important activities in human life all day is work. In the field of human resource, work ethics has gained focus of research to promote ethical behavior in the workplace. Strong job ethics in the organization is the key to the ethical behavior of employees. Organizations that focus on developing strong job ethics relevant to the issues faced by employees will lead to the employees behaving ethically. Beyond salary, strong job ethics is able to influence human beings to commit or not to commit a crime. Empowerment within the organization remains weak due to lack of job ethics that are no longer able to enhance service delivery of employees. (WHO, 2021)

Job ethics is unquestionably an essential component of effective service delivery. The ethics of an organization and its delivery are inextricably linked. Any organization's survival is solely dependent on its effectiveness and efficiency in utilizing the resources provided. In the face of difficult economic times and stiff competition in the health sector in the twenty-first century, any organization attempting to survive must justify its existence through its service delivery. Ethics is essentially concerned with how one's actions affect other people and institutions. Employees must be equipped with the right values and work behaviour considering the importance of the organization's strategic direction and financial capital to support the implementation of the vision and mission. Bataineh 2020; posits that job ethics of employees should be given priority because they can affect the effectiveness and performance of the organization. The goal of ethics is to provide a template on how humans should behave rather than describe humans' behavior in real life. If job ethics are not followed in the performance of assigned duties, it would be nearly impossible for health information managers to provide effective services.

In view of the above background, this research seek to examine how professional ethics are adhere to by health information management professionals such that they will deliver quality and timely services to their patients/clients whenever the need arise.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Ethics and Service Delivery

The development, use, and maintenance of health information, as well as guaranteeing the accessibility and integrity of health information management professionals are among the ethical duties of a health information management (HIM) professional. Other ethical responsibilities include protecting the privacy and securing of health information. Adhering to organizational ethics and code of conduct has a significant effect on employee's performance (Adeyeye, et. al, 2015; Nyaribo et. al, 2015; Milton, 2015; Adewale et. al, 2015). Similarly, a study on Work Ethics, Values, Attitudes and performance in the Nigerian Public Service using content analysis as a method of data gathering and analysis was conducted. Omisore (2015) posit that the organization exerts impact on work ethics, attitudes, and values through deliberate efforts such as monitoring, motivating, and coaching. It is advisable that those in public office should demonstrate impartiality and fairness towards all individuals, rather than merely professing adherence to ethical principles. It is important that these principles are not only proclaimed, but also visibly and unquestionably put into practice.

Furthermore, Adeyeye, et. al (2015) believes that there is statistically significant correlation between ethical standards and organizational productivity in Nigeria. It is observed that integrity and discipline have a detrimental effect on the enhanced productivity of the organization. This can be attributed to the abstract nature of these virtues, which can only be discerned or observed over a period of time. Additionally, the level of adherence to the established code of ethics was evaluated (Ebitu and Baradugo, 2015). Effective performance of the service industry was dependent on the code of ethics and that the compliance level of the established code of ethics for service industry was high.

An organization can more easily project its objective accomplishment while considering the quality of her employees. Work ethics is an important part goal accomplishment. Work ethics is an essential attribute in today's environment because employee's behavior strongly contributes to the success of an organisation in society (Akinlade, et. al, 2022).

Workplace ethics is fundamentally grounded in the field of moral philosophy. The concept pertains to the manner in which an individual's or an organization's ethical principles shape their decision-making processes and actions. Gaining a comprehensive comprehension of the distinction between legality and ethics is of utmost importance. It is plausible for a particular behavior to possess technical legality while simultaneously retaining ethical concerns. Ethical workplace behaviour encompasses various principles, such as adherence to company standards, proficient communication, assumption of responsibility, accountability, demonstration of professionalism, cultivation of trust, and fostering mutual respect among colleagues.

Employees that possess strong ethical values tend to exhibit a heightened level of dedication.

Athar et. al, 2016; Udin et. al, 2022; Aflah et. al, 2021 noted that work ethics are significantly correlated with organizational commitment and turnover intention and as well affects job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment .

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the level of service delivery by Health Information Management professionals in Teaching Hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria

2. examine job ethics practiced by Health Information Management professionals in Teaching Hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria

3. examine the influence of job ethics on service delivery of Health Information Management professionals in Teaching Hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria

3.1 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_01 -There will be no significant influence of job ethics on service delivery of Health Information Management professionals in Teaching Hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria.
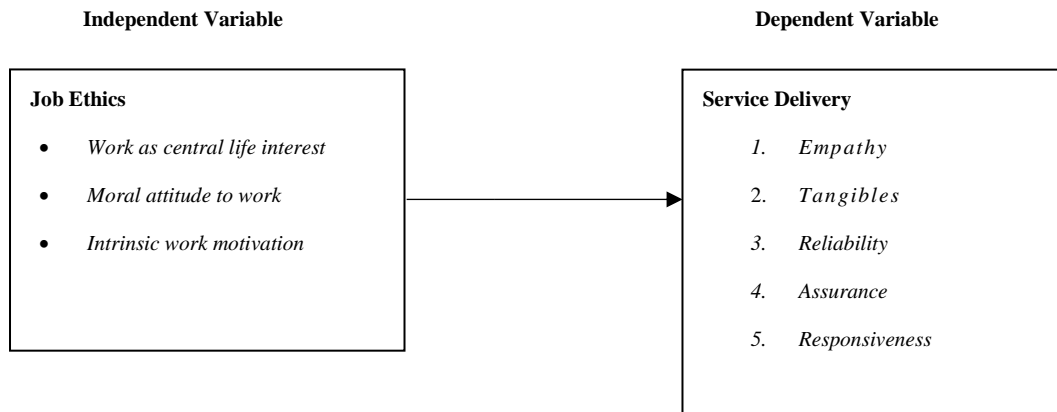
Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

Job Ethics

- *Work as central life interest*
- *Moral attitude to work*
- *Intrinsic work motivation*

Service Delivery

1. *Empathy*
2. *Tangibles*
3. *Reliability*
4. *Assurance*
5. *Responsiveness*

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Job Ethics and Service Delivery

4. METHODOLOGY

This research has adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is the 119 HIM professionals Ondo State teaching hospitals; the total enumeration was adopted because of the manageable size of the population. The instrument for data collection was the using of adopted questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondent and 114 copies were returned and analysed. The analysis was done using Mean and Standard Deviation.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Level of Service Delivery of HIM Professionals' in Teaching Hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria

Variables	VLE	LE	HE	VHE	MEAN	STD	DECISION
Empathy							
Explaining the details about patient's enquiry	2	5	41	66	3.50	0.669	HE
	1.8%	4.4%	36.0%	57.9%			
A sense of closeness and friendliness	0	6	50	58	3.46	0.597	HE
	0.0%	5.3%	43.9%	50.9%			
Listen attentively to the patient	0	4	21	89	3.75	0.512	VHE
	0.0%	3.5%	18.4%	78.1%			
Understand and consider the patient's situation	0	2	31	81	3.69	0.500	VHE
	0.0%	1.8%	27.2%	71.1%			
Polite attitudes towards patients	1	7	21	85	3.67	0.633	VHE
	0.9%	6.1%	18.4%	74.6%			
Empathy Subscale					3.61	0.407	VHE
Tangibles							
Convenient facilities	6	15	67	26	2.99	0.758	HE
	5.3%	13.2%	58.8%	22.8%			
Cleanliness of employee uniforms	1	5	53	55	3.42	0.623	HE
	0.9%	4.4%	46.5%	48.2%			
Overall cleanliness of the hospital	2	12	58	42	3.23	0.704	HE
	1.8%	10.5%	50.9%	36.8%			
Provide HIM professionals with opportunity for training advance skill and knowledge	8	40	23	43	2.89	1.002	HE
	7.0%	35.1%	20.2%	37.7%			
Securing advance and appropriate equipment	3	13	63	35	3.14	0.715	HE
	2.6%	11.4%	55.3%	30.7%			
Tangibles subscale					3.13	0.543	HE
Reliability							

					MEAN	STD	DECISION
The teaching hospital provide comfortable environment for rendering services	4	10	60	40	3.19	0.739	HE
	3.5%	8.8%	52.6%	35.1%			
Services are well rendered at all times	4	16	34	60	3.32	0.845	HE
	3.5%	14.0%	29.8%	52.6%			
Management take right decision regarding HIM professionals	4	20	54	36	3.07	0.795	HE
	3.5%	17.5%	47.4%	31.6%			
Maintaining error free records	0	17	32	65	3.42	0.739	HE
	0.0%	14.9%	28.1%	57.0%			
Reliability subscale					3.25	0.589	HE
Assurance							
Making patient feel safe while rendering services	0	5	20	89	3.74	0.533	VHE
	0.0%	4.4%	17.5%	78.1%			
Instilling confidence in patients	0	7	30	77	3.61	0.602	VHE
	0.0%	6.1%	26.3%	67.5%			
Consistently courteous	0	8	30	76	3.60	0.620	VHE
	0.0%	7.0%	26.3%	66.7%			
Possess the knowledge to answer patients inquiries	0	12	28	74	3.54	0.680	VHE
	0.0%	10.5%	24.6%	64.9%			
Assurance subscale					3.62	0.520	VHE
Responsiveness							
Prompt service to patients	2	12	23	77	3.54	0.755	VHE
	1.8%	10.5%	20.2%	67.5%			
Readiness to respond to patients enquiries	2	7	23	82	3.62	0.683	VHE
	1.8%	6.1%	20.2%	71.9%			
Willingness to help patients	0	6	21	87	3.71	0.560	VHE
	0.0%	5.3%	18.4%	76.3%			
Keeping patients informed about when the services will be performed	2	7	24	81	3.61	0.685	VHE
	1.8%	6.1%	21.1%	71.1%			
Responsiveness subscale					3.62	0.573	VHE
Total Service Delivery scale					3.44	0.390	HE

VLE: Very Low Extent; LE: Low Extent; HE: High Extent; VHE: Very High Extent; STD: Standard Deviation.

Table 1 shows the level of HIM professionals' service delivery. The table reveals that respondents agree to a high extent to explaining the details about patient's enquiry with mean response of 3.50. The mean response of 3.49 also shows respondents to a high extent have a sense of closeness and friendliness. The table also show that respondent to a very high extent can listen attentively to the patient, understand and consider the patient's situation, and have polite attitudes towards patients with the mean response of 3.75, 3.69, and 3.67 respectively .More so, the table shows that respondent to a high extent have convenient facilities, cleanliness of employee uniforms, overall cleanliness of the hospital, can provide HIM professionals with opportunity for training advance skill and knowledge, and securing advance and appropriate equipment with the mean response of 2.99, 3.42, 3.23, 2.89, and 3.14 respectively .Also, the table shows with the mean of 3.19, 3.32, 3.07, 3.42 respectively that to a high extent the teaching hospital provide comfortable environment for rendering services, services are well rendered at all times, management take right decisions regarding HIM professionals, and maintaining error free records. Table 1 reveals that at a very high extents respondents are making patient feel safe while rendering services with mean response of 3.74, and also at very high extent respondents are instilling confidence in patients, and are consistently courteous with the mean response of 3.61, and 3.60 respectively, while also at a very high extent possess the knowledge to answer patients inquiries with mean response of 3.54. Furthermore, the table 4.3 above shows that to a very high extent respondents offers prompt service to patients, ready to respond to patients' enquiries, willing to help patients, and keep patients informed about when the service will be performed with the mean response of 3.54, 3.62, 3.71, and 3.61 respectively.

Summarily the table shows that with the mean of 3.61 to a very high extent respondents shows empathy in their service delivery while at high extent respondents service delivery are tangible with mean response of 3.13 and to high extent the respondents service delivery are reliability with mean response of 3.25 likewise at a very high extent shows assurance (mean=3.62) coupled with a very high extent of responsiveness (mean=3.62). The grand means for service delivery revealed that the respondents' service delivery is at a high extent with the mean response of 3.44.

Table 2: Job Ethics Practiced by HIM Professionals' in Teaching Hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria

VARIABLES	SD	D	A	SA	MEAN	STD	DECISION
Work as central life interest							
	0	3	28	83	3.70	0.514	SA

I consider my occupational career to be one of the most important activities in my life	0.0%	2.6%	24.6%	72.8%			
I believe a person is known in the society by the work he does	0	9	41	64	3.48	0.641	A
	0.0%	7.9%	36.0%	56.1%			
Work provides a powerful channel to express one's knowledge	0	5	55	54	3.43	0.579	A
	0.0%	4.4%	48.2%	47.4%			
One's work provides the best source of achieving perfection in life	1	12	55	46	3.28	0.685	A
	0.9%	10.5%	48.2%	40.4%			
Even if I don't have to work to earn a living, I would still prefer to continue working	8	40	32	34	2.81	0.949	A
	7.0%	35.1%	28.1%	29.8%			
Work provides a powerful channel to express one's ability	0	6	50	58	3.46	0.597	A
	0.0%	5.3%	43.9%	50.9%			
Work as central life interest subscale					3.36	0.490	A
Moral attitude to work							
Sincerity is the golden key to success in one's work life	0	5	22	87	3.72	0.541	SA
	0.0%	4.4%	19.3%	76.3%			
I feel a moral obligation to give a full day's work for a full day's pay	1	6	29	78	3.61	0.631	SA
	0.9%	5.3%	25.4%	68.4%			
I believe one should never be late to work unless there is some real emergency	0	7	25	82	3.66	0.592	SA
	0.0%	6.1%	21.9%	71.9%			
Integrity continues to be the golden key to success in one's work life in this fast-changing world	0	8	26	80	3.63	0.613	SA
	0.0%	7.0%	22.8%	70.2%			
Hard work continues to be golden key to success in one's work life	0	5	27	82	3.68	0.556	SA
	0.0%	4.4%	23.7%	71.9%			
Moral attitude to work subscale					3.66	0.481	SA
Intrinsic Work Motivation							
I believe a job well done is a reward in itself	1	5	36	72	3.57	0.624	SA
	0.9%	4.4%	31.6%	63.2%			
I welcome jobs that involve greater responsibility as they contribute to my learning and growth	1	1	59	53	3.44	0.565	A
	0.9%	0.9%	51.8%	46.5%			
I take pride in doing my work as well as i can	1	5	40	68	3.54	0.627	SA
	0.9%	4.4%	35.1%	59.6%			
I welcome work that involve greater challenge as they contribute to my learning and growth	0	6	50	58	3.46	0.597	A
	0.0%	5.3%	43.9%	50.9%			
I enjoy doing what i do at work everyday	1	0	53	60	3.51	0.552	SA
	0.9%	0.0%	46.5%	52.6%			
Intrinsic work motivation Subscale					3.50	0.389	A
Job Ethics Scale					3.50	0.360	A

SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree; STD: Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows the Job ethics practiced by the HIM professionals' in Teaching Hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria. The table reveals that the respondents strongly agree that they consider their occupational career to be one of the most important activities in their life with mean response of 3.70. The table further reveals that respondent agree to the believe a person is known in the society by the work he does, that work provides a powerful channel to express one's knowledge, and that one's work provides the best source of achieving perfection in life with the mean response of 3.48, 3.43, and 3.28 respectively. The table shows that with the mean of 2.81 that respondent strongly agree that even if they don't have to work to earn a living they would still prefer to continue working. The table reveals that respondents agree that work provides a powerful channel to express one's ability with the mean response of 3.49 and the respondents also strongly agree (3.36) with the ethics of work as central life interest.

Table 2 above also shows that respondents strongly agree that sincerity is the golden key to success in one's work life, respondents also feel moral obligation to give a full day's work for a full day's pay, they believe that one should never be late to work unless there is some real emergency, that integrity continues to be the golden key to success in one's work life in this fast – changing world, hard work continues to be golden key to success in one's work life with mean response of 3.72, 3.61, 3.66,3.63,and 3.68 respectively. The table also reveal that respondent strongly agree, with mean response of 3.66 the ethics of moral attitude to work. More so, the table above shows that with the mean response of 3.57 that the respondent strongly agree that a job well done is a reward in itself and agreed that they welcome jobs that involve greater responsibility as they contribute to their learning and growth with the mean response of 3.44. The table above shows that the respondents strongly agree that they take pride in doing their work as well as they can with the mean response of 3.54, the table further reveals that respondents agree that they welcome work that involve greater challenge as they contribute to their learning and growth with the mean response of 3.46. The table also shows that the respondent strongly agree that they enjoy doing what they do at work every day. The respondent agree with the ethics of intrinsic work motivation (mean=3.50).

Table 3 Ordinal Regression Analysis on the Influence of Job ethics on service delivery of HIM professionals in teaching Hospitals in Ondo state, Nigeria.

Model Fitting Information				
Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	496.913			
Final	444.445	52.469	1	.000
Goodness-of-Fit				
		Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson		789.418	629	.000
Deviance		346.717	629	1.000
Pseudo R-Square				
Cox and Snell	.369			
Nagelkerke	.370			
McFadden	.075			

As presented in table 3 showing the result of the ordinal regression analysis of the influence of job ethics on service delivery of HIM professionals in teaching Hospitals in Ondo state, Nigeria. The Model fitting information is statistically significant (p=0.000). This shows that the model fits the data appropriately. Judging by the deviance test the model has a good goodness of fit (p=1.000), as a non-significant result is an indicator that the data fits the model well.

More so, the result shows that 37% of the changes in the dependent variable is as a result of the independent variable (Nagelkerke=0.370) which implies that 37% of the changes in the service delivery of HIM professionals is as a result of job ethics.

Table 4: Parameter Estimates for the Influence of Job ethics on service delivery of HIM professionals in teaching Hospitals in Ondo state, Nigeria.

Parameter Estimates							95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Location	Job ethics	4.173	.574	52.831	1	.000	3.048	5.299

Test of Parallel Lines[a]				
Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	444.445			
General	429.963[b]	14.481[c]	29	.989

The table 4 above reports the parameter estimate of the model; However, the test of parallel lines is checked to ensure the assumption of proportional odds (this test the null hypothesis that the odds of the explanatory variable is consistent or is the same across the different thresholds of the outcome variable) is not violated. The result showed that the test of parallel line is not significant (p=0.989) thus the assumption is not violated as a non-significant result is an indicator of not violating the assumption of proportional odds.

The parameter estimate showed that Job ethics has a positive influence on the service delivery of HIM professionals (estimate=4.173). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant influence of job ethics on service delivery of HIM professionals in teaching Hospitals in Ondo state, Nigeria is not accepted. Job ethics is a significant positive predictor of service delivery. For every one unit increase in job ethics, there is a predicted increase of 4.173 in the log odds of being a higher level of HIM professionals' service delivery.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Job ethics are powerful and significant factors that influence how well employee provide services. Job ethics are too important to minimize in the health information management department and among its professionals since they work for a service-driven organization where people lives are prioritized over profit. Job ethics (work as central life interest, moral attitude to work & intrinsic work motivation) will help to guarantee that HIMs do their utmost to provide the services that they are hired to provide.

The fact that UNIMEDTHs are health facilities meant to provide treatment, training, and research is one of the main reasons HIMs should adhere to their professional ethics. In order to serve a wide range of patients and clients, the health information management department and HIMs are essential, and any shortcomings in their services would have detrimental effect on society as a whole.

Thus, this study suggests the following:

1. That all new employees should receive thorough job ethics training and experienced staff members should receive on-the-job or off-the-job retraining.

2. That the Health Records Officers Registration Board of Nigeria and Association of Health Records/ Information Management Professionals of Nigeria should ensure that they enforced ethical practices among professionals through routine checking and monitoring.

3. That the hospital's management should devise strategies to inspire the staff members who handle health information for better performance.

4. That the management should note and appreciate the efforts of HIMs in carrying out their responsibilities.

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