

Personnel Attitude Toward Power Distance In Service Sector

Authors

S. Dayal Jeyachandran

PH.D Research Scholar in Commerce

PG & Research Department of Commerce

St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli – 620 002, Tamil Nadu

&

Dr. T. Joseph Rex, M.Com., B.Ed., M.Phil., Ph.D.,

Associate Professor & Research Advisor in Commerce

PG & Research Department of Commerce

St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli – 620 002, Tamil Nadu

(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University)

ABSTRACT

Human resources have a significant role in improving organizational performance specifically in healthcare institutions. This study aimed to study the hospital staff perception toward power distance in 2018. A descriptive study was conducted among 50 hospital staff. A standard questionnaire developed by Hofstede consisted of 31 questions in seven domains including hierarchy, reward, climate, communication, decision making, learning and management was applied to gather data. Study findings showed a low level of power distance perceived by employees. The most inequality perceived by study staff belonged to decision making aspect and the method of applying managerial authority in the organization. Applying strategies to improve staff participation in work decisions and job responsibilities would help organizations maintain and develop employees with positive perception toward justice.

Keywords: Power Distance, Hospital Employee, Perception

INTRODUCTION

Power distance among several dimensions proposed for organizational culture is closely associated with relations among managers and subordinates. Hofstede defined power distance as “social acceptance of unequal distribution of the power”. The level of power distance existing in an organization actually explains the extent to which prevailing culture endures inequality. Mead in a study emphasized that in low power distance cultures employees prefer indirect supervision and have a preference for participatory managerial style. Conversely in high power distance cultures managerial style is autocratic so that the manager makes decisions without the

employees' participation and guides them through particular defined instructions of how performing the decisions. Such a condition is not unexpected or unusual for employees because in high power distance cultures inequity is accepted as something natural. Furthermore in organizations with low power distance, there are open communications with considerable amount of necessary information transferred in different hierarchical levels which help employees to be acknowledged about work objectives and actively participate in required decisions need to be made. Literature affirmed that high power distance culture in the workplace weakens the positive work atmosphere and consequently reduces personnel commitment and job satisfaction. In addition, those institutions with high levels of power distance face with employees' undesirable performance. In fact when employees recognize fairness in the organization, they definitely are provoked and organizational performance will relatively improve. In a study conducted among hospital staff in Tiruchirappalli, findings revealed a significant association between employees' attitude toward power distance, perception of discriminatory and job satisfaction. Francesco and Chen also mentioned the important role of employee participation on their job satisfaction and readiness to accept work responsibilities. Regarding the importance of the issue, we conducted a study to determine employees' attitude toward power distance in hospitals affiliated by NABH in 2018.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was a descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted among hospital employees affiliated by NABH in 2018. Study population consisted of 523 non-clinical staff working in administrative, financial and support units of five training hospitals who have been selected to take part in the research through a census method. Among 523 members who received study questionnaire, 50 individuals completed the questionnaire and returned it to the researchers (response rate=10%). The data collection tool was a standard questionnaire designed by Hofstede consisting of 31 questions categorized in 7 domains for measuring power distance index. Related questions were included: a desire to promote innovation among personnel, provide necessary opportunity for staff to pursue their own desires, respect their autonomy, receive individual recognition at work, have opportunity to play role as a leader, conform to company norms in order to reach organizational goals, keep group harmony, behave equally with subordinates and work as a team member to pursue job

objectives. These questions are belonged to seven aspects of organizational hierarchy (6 items), reward (3 items), climate (4 items), communication (4 items), decision making (4 items), learning (3 items) and management (7 items). Items were measured on a 5 point likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). A high power distance score showed that an organization affirmed a hierarchical distribution of power and inequality in work position among employees while low power distance score depicted that organizational power was equally distributed among members. The questionnaire was applied in similar studies and its validity has been confirmed. Furthermore the questionnaire reliability was tested through calculation of alpha Cronbach (0.87). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation), t-test and ANOVA analysis tests assuming normal distribution of data were used to analyze gathered data through application of SPSS.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Variables	Overall PDI					Statistical inference
	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Total	
Age						
Below 30yrs	1	1	1	1	4	$X^2=1.784$ Df=5 $P>0.05$ Not Significant
31 to 40yrs	2	2	2	1	7	
41 to 50yrs	4	3	2	2	11	
51 to 60yrs	7	4	1	1	13	
61yrs & above	9	4	1	1	15	
Educational qualification						
UG	19	10	4	3	36	$X^2=1.647$ Df=3 $P>0.05$ Not Significant
PG	4	3	3	3	14	
Experience						
Below 5yrs	22	10	5	4	41	$X^2=1.081$ Df=3 $P>0.05$ Not Significant
Above 5yrs	1	4	2	2	9	
Total	23	14	7	6	50	

Research Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant association between socio-economic profile of the respondents and their overall PDI

The Chi-Square tested table reveals that there is no significant association between socio-economic profile of the respondents and their overall PDI. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($p>0.05$). So the research hypothesis (H₁) is rejected. Findings revealed that power distance was lower than its average level from

the study population's viewpoint. In a similar study entitled “effects of power distance diversity within workgroups on work role performance and organizational citizenship behavior”, power distance dimension got a moderate to low mean value demonstrating that employees had a positive attitude toward the existence of power distance. Consequently, superiors perceived that employees were mainly acting more than organizational expectations so that they make considerable efforts in their workplace to encourage job effectiveness. In such institutions, employees were committed to work and willing to continue their job affairs in current workplace. Literature added that high power distance culture is no longer acceptable in nowadays' organizations and staff are seeking for working conditions in which autonomy, self control and equality regulations are respected. Consequently based on Hofstede viewpoint and achieved findings, it can be concluded that hospitals are no longer organized and monitored in a centralized manner; but job functions are delegated to employees with essential qualifications to solve organization problems more effectively. The decrease in power distance actually leads to participatory decision making, asking employees' opinion in work processes and approval of meaningful important tasks for the staff. Among different aspects of power distance, studies affirmed that having access to adequate information about job affairs and the way of being evaluated in an organization rewarding system play significant role in employees' attitude toward equity provoking in the workplace. Likewise, Greenberg declared that managers should behave their subordinates in a fair manner and guarantee that all existing job affairs are organized in a condition that is in line with nondiscrimination and in compliance with personnel competency.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Study findings revealed that the most dominant inequality perceived by employees belonged to decision making aspect and the method of applying managerial authority in the organization. Therefore it is suggested that in order to make employees feel motivated in showing innovative behavior and performance in their workplace managers should focus on supportive strategies and participatory management. Such a managerial strategy helps employees to successfully conduct their work affairs beyond the expectation and make considerable endeavor to encourage organizational effectiveness in line with defined objectives.

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