

## **Role of Health Care Environments and Employee Perception: A Study on J&K Hospitals**

**Dr Parvez Abdullah, Assistant Professor, BGSBU, Rajouri**

**Sabeha Mufti, Research Scholar, BGSBU, Rajouri**

### **ABSTRACT**

*The Study investigates the work environment and employee perception in the hospitals of J&K. It aims to test a model based on three dimensions which is divided into sub dimensions and the perception of health care employees towards their work environment and how it effects their satisfaction level. The data was collected from 300 employees of three divisions in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and processed through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to apply statistical tests. This paper tries to compare the work environments in three divisions and also to know the factors responsible for higher satisfaction level of employees. The current study also suggests that improvement in the working conditions leads to better employees' performance. It could result into improved performance of the organization due to retention of employees and the retained employees try their best to perform well at their work places.*

**KEYWORDS:** Workplace Environment; Hospitals, Perception, Satisfaction.

**INTRODUCTION**

The health has always been a priority for a common man and because of this, the health care sector has acquired lot of importance as it offers cure for various kinds of illness and diseases. The hospital is a place where patients are treated, and all the hope lies with the employees working in it. The employees including both medical and para medical department are responsible from first point of contact till the recovery of patient. In service sector, the main important thing that matters for efficient performance of hospitals is the service delivery by the staff. And this quality service depends on lot of factors including from better infrastructure, updated equipment and work place environment. With increase in population, the healthcare sector needs to cater the rising level of demand for healthcare services. But today as the competition is increasing everywhere, challenges like high expenditure on healthcare, increasing demand for high quality care, growing population are putting healthcare in more pressure. The performance of healthcare gets effected by declining productivity, lack of medical staff, poor infrastructure and dissatisfied patients. Also the performance of employees in hospitals depends on the job satisfaction which is dependent on many factors related to workplace environment. So to improve the environment of the healthcare organizations is a need of an hour.

Cultural Diversity in Healthcare brings together distinct minds with varying perspectives and experiences which helps hospitals to gain medical knowledge and utilize the feedback given by employees for the betterment of organizations. In past, organizations were more centered on recruitment rather than retention despite evidence of greater attrition among women. But times have changed now, as the organizations get more diverse and competitive it's very important for hospital management to improve the service quality for its employees in order to survive in the market. Workplace environment has always been a major issue for healthcare employees and has always been a reason for employee turnover that is why it's the need of an hour to reform the environment so as to retain health care employees.

The focus on research had been more on the satisfaction level of patients in the hospitals but no much study was found on the employee perception towards the workplace environment in hospitals. Usually organizations are more concerned about the service delivery of their customers but sometimes they forget to invest on their own people which can improve the

efficiency and productivity at workplace. Hospital is a place where the human touch is more and people trust employees more than anyone. So the employees of healthcare have to be very efficient and satisfied at their workplace so that it can be reflected during their work. Satisfaction of job is always related to the quality of a work person does. It becomes very important for an employer to improve the facilities at workplace so that employees deliver their best. The organizations that focus on creating an inclusive environment may promote greater retention of a diverse workforce, reduce the costs related to attrition, and ultimately affect patient satisfaction and care quality. However, there is a paucity of research on how health care organizations should create a culture that promotes inclusive environments to achieve these goals. Prior work has conceptualized workplace culture as set of social process and social support system but today there are so many factors which are related to culture and can prove guide for improving workplace environment in hospitals. Health organizations lack sufficient understanding of the operational definition of workplace environment. To address this gap, we conducted a survey to understand from the medical and para-medical staff about the factors that affect perception of employees towards their workplace environment.

**Hawthorne Studies (Elton Mayo)** the Hawthorne effect refers to a phenomenon that observing workers' behavior in different context and compare their performance by changing the situation temporarily. Employees' behavior and performance change when there is increased attention. Mayo and his associates discovered that the answer to this phenomenon was not in the production conditions aspect, but in the human aspect. As a result of the attention lavished upon them by experimenters, the employees were made to feel they were an important part of the company. They no longer viewed themselves as isolated individuals but had become members of a congenial, cohesive work group. This led to the conclusion that the most significant factor affecting organizational productivity is the interpersonal relationships that develop on the job, not just pay and working conditions. This theory provides insight in healthcare organization interpersonal relationship is most important which will ultimately result in employee relationship and improved patient experiences.

## **Defining the workplace environment**

The concept of working conditions has been conceptualized differently by different authors.

As per World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that the work environment constitutes an important factor in the recruitment and retention of health professionals, and the characteristics of the work environment affect the quality of care both directly and indirectly. Addressing the work environment, therefore, plays a critical role in ensuring both the supply of a health workforce as well as the enhancement, effectiveness and motivation of that workforce.

A healthy practice environment can be defined as a work setting where policies, procedures and systems are designed in such a manner that they meet the organizational objectives and succeed in personal satisfaction at work.

Employee's perceptions of their professional environment influence their job satisfaction. Traditional job satisfaction relates to the feeling an individual has about his/her job. It is affected by intrinsic (recognition, work itself or responsibility) and extrinsic factors (working conditions, company policy or salary), which have an influence on job satisfaction but in this paper we will see what other factors affect the perception of healthcare employees today.

## **Review of Literature**

Oscan and Hornby (2005). The study found that one of the reasons for poor performance of employees in government hospitals in Turkey, was mainly due to lack of interest by the managers of head departments in government hospitals to provide better conditions to hospital's staff and develop incentives system. The study recommended the adoption of incentives system and rewards for staff and nurses who perform good and choosing a group each month as a role model for individuals working in the hospital and pay them special bonuses to encourage other staff who have not been selected, and the study emphasized that adopting this system will improve the performance of all individuals working in the hospital dramatically.

A study conducted at in the UK (Zurn, Dolea and Stilwell 2005) reports that a survey of London national health service staff showed that when health workers were asked for suggestions to improve their working lives, 'better pay' ranked only fourth on their 'wish list', behind 'more staff, 'better working conditions' and better facilities'. However, there is growing recognition that organizational and environmental factors (e.g. job design, patient flow, management style, ward structure, noise/heat levels) must also be addressed in order to stop the increasing spiral of workplace violence.

There is a growing recognition that work-environment factors affect health system performance (Graham S Lowe, 2006). Basically, the work environment factors affect the quality of work life, individual quality of work life outcomes, and organizational outcomes. The study mainly focuses on various factors such as work hours, schedules, time off, professional development and training, job quality, workload, job satisfaction, work team or unit, quality of supervision and management, organizational change, work-life balance, health and well-being, career plans and basic demographic and employment characteristics affect the work environment and work life of healthcare providers particularly nursing staff (Teresa M et al, 1996, Linda Flynn, 2007, L Dugdill and J Springett, 1994).

Songstad, Rekdal, Massay, and Blystad (2011: 2) defines working conditions as the working environment and all existing circumstances affecting labour in the workplace Another author defines working conditions as the environment in which an individual performs his work.

Salah Mahmoud Diab (2012) in his study entitled "measuring the dimensions of the quality of medical services provided in the Jordanian government hospitals from the perspective of patients and staff". The study found an increase rate to quit job among doctors and nurses working in hospitals and the Ministry of Health, and the low degree of satisfaction and low desire among the staff to continue working in the hospital, and this giving impact to the low quality of health services provided to patients. The most important recommendations by the study with regard to the condition of individuals working in the hospital, the provision of material and moral incentives for employees working in government hospitals to generate their desire to continue to work and provide medical services appropriately. Training courses for workers in the hospitals in the area of the dimensions of medical service quality, and to

deepen the quality concept between the staff and to achieve the quality dimensions at the best degree.

C. Maslach (2018) supported the moderation effect of job control on the relationship between workload and exhaustion. Also showed the importance for hospital managers to carry out management practices that promote job control and provide employees with job resources, in order to reduce the burnout risk.

## **Material and Methods:**

The present study has been conducted with the help of primary data collected from a total of 200 health workers working in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh divisions of Jammu and Kashmir, India. The health centers that are under consideration in this study are categorized as district and private hospitals. Data and information collected from respondents (both male and female) were analyzed statistically.

## **Objectives**

This paper proposes to conduct the study with the following objectives:

- To identify the impact of workplace environment on the perception of health care employees in J&K.
- To analyze the differences in workplace environment score of all three divisions.
- To suggest strategies further which could improve the workplace environment of hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir.

## **Result and Discussion:**

The analysis part in the current study presents the values regarding the number of respondents chosen from health centers from Jammu and Kashmir along with their experience, level of qualification, workplace environment perception level of respondents, and difference in terms of gender. The values listed in Table 1 represent the number of respondents from the hospitals of J&K. Out of 300 total respondents, 100 are offering their services in Kashmir and other in Jammu and Ladakh respectively. The table 2 represents the experience level of respondents. 65 respondents hold an experience of up to 05 years, 80 have experience between 05 to 10 years, 90 hold experience between 10 to 15 years and 65 possess experience

above 15 years. The table 3 shows the designation status of respondents and from a total of 300 respondents, 80 are doctor, 120 are nurses and 100 others like diploma etc.

**Table 1: Categorization of Respondents**

Type of Hospital	No of Respondents (N=300)
District Hospital (Jammu)	50
Private Hospital (Jammu)	50
District Hospital (Srinagar)	50
Private Hospital (Srinagar)	50
District Hospital (Ladakh)	50
Private Hospital (Ladakh)	50

**Table 2: Experience**

Below 05 Years	Between 05-10 Years	Between10-15 Years	Above15 Years
65	80	90	65

**Table 3: Designation**

Doctor	Nurse	Other
80	120	100

**Table 4: Perception of employees towards workplace environment in Health Care sector of three divisions.**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Sub Dimensions</b>	<b>Kashmir</b>	<b>Jammu</b>	<b>Ladakh</b>
Employee Behavior	Relationship with co-workers	3.48	3.40	3.41
	Social support	4.15	4.17	4.16
	Sense of Community	4.29	4.17	4.02
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>11.92</b>	<b>11.74</b>	<b>11.59</b>
Hospital Policies	Possibility for Development	4.24	4.21	4.18
	Compensation	3.80	3.68	3.60
	Reward	3.72	3.65	3.54
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>11.76</b>	<b>11.54</b>	<b>11.32</b>
Communication	Access to top management	2.87	2.77	2.78
	Counselling	4.36	4.30	4.24
	Feedback from employer	4.29	4.17	4.01
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>11.52</b>	<b>11.24</b>	<b>11.03</b>

The table 4 holds the values that show response of individuals towards their perception of workplace environment. The findings revealed that health workers who are working in Kashmir district have higher level of satisfaction about the employee behavior towards each other with an overall score of 11.92 followed by employees of Jammu district with score of 11.74. However health workers working in Ladakh district have low perception level and satisfaction about employee behavior as evident from the score of 11.59. In case of perception and understanding level of Hospital Policies of an organization, health workers working in Kashmir are leading with score of 11.76 followed by employees of Jammu district and Ladakh with scores of 11.54 and 11.32. In case of ease of communication with the employees of an organization, it can be seen employees working in Kashmir healthcare setup are more satisfied with their support from higher authorities with score of 11.52 followed by healthcare workers in Jammu district with score of 11.24 and least satisfaction level is seen in employees working in Ladakh with score of 11.03.

**Findings and Suggestions**

It can be seen that workplace environment plays an important part in the satisfaction level of employees and with this survey we are able to understand the factors that cause an effect on the perception level of employees which acts as a force to stay or leave an organization. As per the results above, the first dimension of the study “Employee Behavior” is further divided into sub dimensions: Relationship with co-workers, Social support and Sense of Community. The healthcare employees who are working in Kashmir are of strong opinion that they share a very good bond or relationship with their colleagues at workplace with score of 3.48 reason being the employees are of opinion that because of small set up they are able to see their colleagues or meet them easily. While as Ladakh division stands second with score of 3.41 followed by Jammu division 3.40. Social support refers to the support of employees from their seniors or colleagues and it can be seen that healthcare employees working in Jammu are highly satisfied with the support they get from their colleagues with score of 4.17 followed by Ladakh 4.16 and Kashmir 4.15 respectively. Sense of community refers to the sense of belongingness towards a group or team and it is found that employees working in Kashmir division share a good bond with score of 4.29 followed by Jammu with 4.17 and Ladakh 4.02 respectively. The overall score of Kashmir is higher with score of 11.92 followed by Jammu with 11.74 and then Ladakh with 11.59.

Hospital Policies is the set of guidelines which set the code of conduct and terms and conditions of working in an organization and it plays an important part in the retention of employees. If the policy of an organization is good, employees love to serve the organization and vice versa. In case of “Possibility for Development”, the opportunities one has in his organization is high in case of healthcare employees working in Kashmir division with score of 4.24 reason being they have less expectations from their job or from the place they are working. There is less chance of comparison between the facilities offered by their and other hospitals. While as the healthcare employees working in Jammu division stand second with score of 4.21 followed by Ladakh with score of 4.18. Compensation refers to the amount of salary an employee receives in return of his services. It is high in case of healthcare employees working in Kashmir division with score of 3.80 reason being they know the maximum limit hospitals can pay across Kashmir because of less privatization. While as healthcare employees working in Jammu division stand second with score of 3.68 followed

by Ladakh division with score of 3.60. Rewards are the benefit which an employee avails after his brilliant performance. In case of reward system, satisfaction level is higher in employees working in Kashmir division with score of 3.72 reason being no expectations set from their jobs. While as the healthcare employees working in Jammu division stand second with score of 3.65 followed by Ladakh with score of 3.54. The overall score of satisfaction is higher in employees working in Kashmir division with score of 11.76 followed by Jammu with score of 11.54 and then Ladakh with score of 11.32.

Communication refers to the interaction between employees and employers or between employees and employees. In case of Access to Top Management, satisfaction level is higher in employees working in Kashmir division with score of 2.87. While as the healthcare employees working in Ladakh division stand second with score of 2.78 followed by Jammu with score of 2.77. In case of Counselling, satisfaction level is higher in employees working in Kashmir division with score of 4.36. While as the healthcare employees working in Jammu division stand second with score of 4.30 followed by Ladakh with score of 4.24. In case of “Feedback from Employer”, satisfaction level is higher in employees working in Kashmir division with score of 4.29. While as the healthcare employees working in Jammu division stand second with score of 4.17 followed by Ladakh with score of 4.01. The overall score of communication is higher in healthcare employees working in Kashmir division with score of 11.52 followed by Jammu with score of 11.24 and then Ladakh with score of 11.03.

## **Conclusion**

Today, Workplace Environment is the important factor employees look before joining any organization especially the employees working in hospitals. In this survey we could see employees who are happy with the facilities provided by the hospitals are more satisfied than others. The employees in Kashmir division are more satisfied with the environment and the reason is they have not kept any expectations from their jobs or organizations. Also because of lack of privatization in the valley, employees feel that whatever they are getting is sufficient and also they see a lot of development in health care setups from the past. They compare the hospitals with the earlier ones where it was difficult for a common man to have an easy access to the hospital but now they can see lot of healthcare units have come up in the

valley and lot of up gradation has been done from past. So we can conclude that organizations are successful only when they provide good environment to its employees.

## Recommendations:

- **Give Employees an Audience**

Our research found that healthcare colleagues who say managers consistently keep them informed are twice as likely to say they're willing to give extra to get the job done. That means better communication from leadership links directly to staff productivity. Keeping a two-way channel of communication is essential for a healthy culture in any organization. And this holds especially true in an industry where evolving technology and uncertainty surrounding health care reform bring constant change.

- **Bring Education In-House**

However it is offered, training pays off. Employees at surveyed health care workplaces who receive training and professional development are three times more likely to say they look forward to coming to work and twice as likely to say they want to stay with their organizations for the long term.

- **Share Resources That You Already Have on Hand**

A team of specially trained staff members offers peer support to colleagues confronting traumatic patient outcomes, serious professional challenges and other crises. People usually pursue a career in health care for the work, not the workplace. But the environment and people that surround them on the job matter. An average of 88 percent of employees at the Best Workplaces in Health Care say their facilities contribute to a good working environment

## References

1. Buchan J. *How can the migration of health service professionals be managed so as to reduce any negative effects on supply?* Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2008.

2. Needleman J et al. Nurse-staffing levels and the quality of care in hospitals. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2002, 346(22):1715–1722.
3. Rafferty AM et al. Outcomes of variation in hospital nurse staffing in English hospitals: cross-sectional analysis of survey data and discharge records. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 2007, 44(2):175–182.
4. Dawson J. *Does the experience of staff working in the NHS link to the patient experience of care? An analysis of links between the 2007 acute trust inpatient and NHS staff surveys*. Birmingham, Aston School of Business, 2009.
5. Positive Practice Campaign. *Positive practice environments for health care professionals [factsheet]*. Geneva, International Council of Nurses, International Hospital Federation, International Pharmaceutical Federation, World Confederation for Physical Therapy, World Dental Federation, World Medical Association, 2008.
6. WHO. *Increasing access to health workers in remote and rural areas through improved retention. Background paper for the first expert meeting to develop evidence-based recommendations to increase access to health workers in remote and rural areas through improved retention; Geneva, 2–4 February 2009. Geneva, WHO, 2009* Harris, C