

Assessing the Impact of Human Resource Policies on Service Delivery in Public Healthcare Facilities in Hyderabad

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Abstract

Background: Human resource (HR) policy is an important tool that can help to make sure that a healthcare organisation has an effective workforce and delivers quality services. Effective HR practices can enhance employee performance, patient care, and overall organizational efficiency.

Objective: To explore the impact of HR policies on service delivery in Services Hospital and its allied dispensaries in Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out for full-time hospital administrators, heads of the hospital, managerial level in charge, and administrative doctors in Services Hospital & allied dispensaries in Hyderabad. The data were gathered by a structured questionnaire based on the organizational characteristics, HR policies, and service delivery. All responses were analysed with SPSS 28.

Results: A total of 43 respondents were found in the study, and most of those respondents were from Services Hospital (88.4%, n=38). Outpatient services were offered in all facilities, and 88.4% offered inpatient services, and 100% offered pharmacy services. Most of the institutions also offered labor room services, operation theatre, ultrasound, and X-ray services. There was variation in how HR policies were implemented across facilities. Around 30.2% of the respondents stated that they implemented a training and development program moderately, and 18.7% said that they assessed the training needs at a high level. 39.5% of respondents were moderately satisfied with pay. 37.2% of respondents viewed the policies concerning task allocation and 41.9% the policies concerning staff deployment as

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moderately effective. In terms of service delivery, 58.1% said the quality of care was high or very high, and that prompt service was provided by 62.8% of the respondents. Service quality was higher for facilities that had more effective HR policy implementation. Results of statistical analysis showed that HR policies had a significant relationship with service quality ($p = 0.026$).

Conclusion: HR policies have a strong effect on the provision of services in public healthcare facilities. HR practices, specifically training, compensation, and workforce management, had a positive impact on service quality. The more effective HR practices (such as training, compensation, and workforce management), the higher the service quality. Enhancing HR policies might thus help to achieve better health care results and organizational productivity.

Keywords: Human resource policies; Service delivery; Healthcare quality; Public healthcare facilities; Workforce management.

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Introduction

Human resources constitute one of the most valuable assets of healthcare organizations and play a central role in determining the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of healthcare services. Effective human resource (HR) policies provide a framework for workforce planning, recruitment, training, compensation, performance management, and staff retention, all of which directly influence healthcare service delivery.¹⁻³ In public healthcare facilities, where resource constraints and increasing service demands are common, well-implemented HR policies are essential for maintaining a motivated and competent workforce capable of delivering quality patient care.⁴

Evidence suggests that HR policies significantly affect employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.⁵ Both intrinsic factors, such as professional recognition and career growth opportunities, and extrinsic factors, including remuneration, job security, and working conditions, contribute to workforce performance and engagement.⁶ Inadequate compensation, limited training opportunities, poor working environments, and ineffective staff deployment have been identified as major barriers to workforce motivation and retention, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. These challenges can negatively affect service quality, increase staff turnover, and reduce organizational effectiveness.⁷

Previous studies have demonstrated that healthcare facilities with strong HR practices tend to achieve better service delivery outcomes, including improved patient satisfaction, enhanced adherence to clinical guidelines, reduced waiting times, and better overall

health indicators.⁸⁻¹⁰ Continuous professional development, equitable staff distribution, performance evaluation systems, and supportive workplace environments have been associated with improved healthcare worker productivity and patient-centered care.¹¹ Conversely, weak HR management practices may compromise service quality and limit the capacity of health facilities to meet patient needs effectively.¹²

Despite the recognized importance of human resource management in healthcare systems, evidence regarding the influence of HR policies on service delivery in public healthcare facilities in Pakistan remains limited.¹³⁻¹⁴ Understanding how HR policies affect healthcare performance is essential for informing policy reforms and strengthening health systems. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the influence of human resource policies on service delivery at Services Hospital and its allied dispensaries in Hyderabad, Sindh.

Materials and Methods

Study Setting

A cross-sectional study was carried out in the dispensaries associated with Services Hospital in Kotri Barrage, Barrage Colony, and Latifabad Unit No. 6 Dispensary at Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan. The study was conducted for 6 months after ethics approval.

Study Population and Sampling

Full-time managerial staff working in the public health care institutions, like medical superintendents, additional medical superintendents, civil surgeons, departmental in-charges, out-patient department (OPD) in-charges, and dispensary in-charges, were included in the study. Clinical physicians, those who

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did not want to participate, retired workers, and those who did not work in a managerial position were omitted from the study. 43 subjects were recruited using convenience sampling.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was used to gather data and had three sections: organizational characteristics, HR policies, and service delivery. The HR policy component assessed training and development, training needs assessment, compensation and reimbursement practices, working environment, and staff deployment. Quality of patient care, availability of drugs, promptness of services, availability of emergency services, adequacy of equipment, and referral mechanisms were used to assess service delivery. The responses were recorded with the use of a Likert scale against HR policies and service delivery.

Variables

HR policy domains (training and development, compensation policy, working environment, and staff deployment) were used as the independent variables and service delivery as the dependent variable.

Statistical Analysis

The data were entered and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. Frequencies and percentages were used to present descriptive statistics. Chi-square test was used to investigate the relationship between HR policies and the provision of service quality. The p-value of <0.05 was set as the cut-off value for statistical significance.

Results

There were 43 health care administrators and managerial staff in the study, consisting of 88.4% (n=38) from Services Hospital and 11.6% (n=5) from allied dispensaries. Table 1 indicates that the majority of facilities were in operation for over 20 years (90.7%, n=39). All facilities had outpatient and pharmacy services available (100%), while 88.4% (n=38) of facilities had inpatient services, labor rooms, operating theaters, and ultrasound facilities. 95.3% (n=41) of the health facilities had X-ray services, as shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Organizational characteristics of health facility (n=43)

Organizational characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
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Frequency of respondents from health facilities	Primary	5	11.6%
	Secondary	38	88.4%
	Total	43	100.0%
How long has the hospital been operational	10-20 years	4	9.3%
	Above 20 years	39	90.7%
	Total	43	100.0%

Table 2. Services availability in health facilities (n=43)

Services availability	Category	Frequency	Percent
Indoor patient services	Not available	5	11.6%
	Available	38	88.4%
Outpatient department (OPD)	Not available	--	--
	Available	43	100.0%
Labour room	Not available	5	11.6%
	Available	38	88.4%
Operation theatre (OT)	Not available	5	11.6%
	Available	38	88.4%
Pharmacy	Not available	--	--
	Available	43	100.0%
X-ray facility	Not available	2	4.7%
	Available	41	95.3%
Ultrasound	Not available	5	11.6%
	Available	38	88.4%

In the case of human resource policies, 30.2% (n=13) of respondents found that training and development were being implemented at a moderate level, with only 14.0% (n=6) and 4.7% (n=2) reporting a large and very large extent of training needs assessment, respectively. Adequate employee remuneration was perceived to a moderate extent by 39.5% (n=17) of respondents. 51.1% (n=22) reported a large or very large extent of awareness of the reimbursement rights for medical expenses. Likewise, for working environment, 37.2% (n=16) and 41.9% (n=18) were moderately effective in the areas of proper task allocation and staff deployment policies, respectively, as shown in Figure 3.

Table 3. Human resource policy indicators in health facilities (n=43)

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Indicator	Category	Frequency	Percent
Training undertaken frequently	Moderate extent	13	30.2%
Training needs assessment	Large/Very large extent	8	18.7%
Adequate remuneration	Moderate extent	17	39.5%
Awareness of reimbursement rights	Large/Very large extent	22	51.5%
Proper task allocation	Moderate extent	16	37.2%
Staff deployment policies	Moderate extent	18	41.9%

As far as service delivery, 39.5% (n = 17) and 18.6% (n = 8) rated service delivery as high and very high, respectively. 62.8% (n=27) reported that they received prompt service provision to a large or very large extent. In total, the impact of HR policies on service delivery was rated as low to moderate (79.0%) and high (16.3%) impact. Service quality was rated as moderate in 27.9% (n=12), good in 44.2% (n=19), and excellent in 9.3% (n=4) of facilities, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Service delivery indicators and their association with human resource policies (n = 43)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Quality of Patient Care	High	17	39.5%
	Very High	8	18.6%
Prompt Service Provision	Large/Very Large Extent	27	62.8%
Influence of HR Policies on Service Delivery	Low to Moderate	34	79.0%
	High	7	16.3%
Overall Service Quality	Moderate	12	27.9%
	Good	19	44.2%
	Excellent	4	9.3%

This study found a significant correlation between service quality and HR policy implementation (χ^2 test, $p = 0.026$), which means that the stronger the

implementation of HR policies, the more the facilities reported high service quality in service delivery.

Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of HR policies on service delivery in the public health care facilities of the city of Hyderabad. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between HR policy implementation and service quality ($p = 0.026$), which means that HR policy implementation was more likely to have an impact on the provision of quality healthcare services in facilities that showed strong HR practices. The results of this study align with the generally accepted notion that good human resource management (HRM) practices are crucial to enhance the performance of the organization and healthcare outcomes.¹⁵⁻¹⁶

Most facilities reported a moderate level of training and development. Ongoing staff training is essential to keeping staff competent and providing good quality patient care. Previous studies have documented that regular training programs improve employee performance, employee satisfaction, and service delivery results.¹⁷ The relatively low percentage of respondents who indicated having performed extensive training needs assessment in the present study, however, indicates opportunities for enhancing workforce development activities in public healthcare facilities.¹⁸

However, compensation and reimbursement policies were also seen to impact employee perceptions. While a large percentage of respondents felt their compensation was "fair" or "fair enough," the lack of satisfaction with compensation has been cited as one of the most significant factors in reducing motivation, the productivity of employees, and staff turnover in previous studies. Compensation structures need, therefore, to be fair and competitive to attract and retain qualified health care practitioners and to ensure the quality of service.¹⁷⁻¹⁸

The study also shed light on the significance of the workplace setting and the deployment of staff. The general opinion of the respondents was that these policies were moderately successful, which implies that better allocation of the workforce and working conditions would help to improve the efficiency of the organization. This has been confirmed in literature on healthcare management and operations, where evidence suggests that the right staffing and a positive work atmosphere are linked to better employee performance and patient satisfaction.¹⁹

When it came to service provision, the majority of facilities reported high or very high quality of patient

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care and prompt service delivery. The results indicate that, although there are certain challenges, services are satisfactorily provided in public healthcare facilities in Hyderabad. However, the high proportion of low to moderate HR policy influence reported by respondents suggests that further strengthening of HR policies would result in further improvements in service quality.²⁰

A significant relationship was found between HR policies and service delivery, which is similar to the previous findings showing that HRM has positive effects on healthcare performance. Strategies geared toward training, wage equality, employee motivation, and productive use of staff improve staff commitment and productivity, resulting in improved patient care.²⁰

This study gives important information on the role of HR policies in the public healthcare institutions in Hyderabad. The cross-sectional design does, however, preclude causal inference, and the limited sample size may impact generalizability. Further research using a larger sample of healthcare providers and institutions across multiple settings is recommended to further investigate the impact of specific HR policy elements on healthcare service delivery. The study results overall highlight the need to reinforce HR policies as a strategic tool to enhance the quality of services and organizational performance of public healthcare facilities.

Strengths and Limitations

The findings of the present study provide valuable insights into the role of HR policies in service delivery in the public healthcare facilities in Hyderabad. It evaluated various aspects of HR policies such as training, salaries, work environment, and staff deployment, providing a comprehensive overview of the effects of these policies on the quality of healthcare services. In addition, the use of both hospital and allied dispensary settings adds to the relevance of the results.

It was a cross-sectional study, and a limitation was that no causal relationships between HR policy and service delivery were established. It should be noted that the findings are not necessarily representative of other public healthcare facilities, as this was a relatively small sample of facilities that were selected. Further, self-reported responses could have skewed the results due to reporting bias.

Conclusion

The present study has shown that HR policies have a significant impact on the service delivery in the public healthcare facilities in Hyderabad. HR practices, particularly training and development, remuneration,

staff deployment, and working conditions, were revealed to be related to enhanced service quality and healthcare performance. The implementation of HR policies was moderate among most facilities; however, there was a significant relation between HR policy implementation and service quality ($p = 0.026$). The results underscore the need to improve HRM policies and practices to ensure the effective functioning of the workforce and better quality of patient care. Policies and institutional strategies to build the healthcare workforce, healthcare wages, and a work-friendly environment should be prioritised to improve the delivery of healthcare services and the effectiveness of health organisations at public health facilities.

Recommendations

The findings of the present study suggest that the public health care facilities should pay attention to the implementation of HR policies to improve their service delivery and organizational performance. More such training and professional development programs should be promoted on a regular basis to enhance the knowledge and skills of employees. Healthcare organizations should also regularly assess training requirements, provide equitable pay and incentives to boost staff motivation and satisfaction, and offer further career growth opportunities. In addition, it is important to encourage efficient staff deployment and supportive working conditions to maximise the performance of staff and provide quality service to patients. HRM should be integrated into the health care quality improvement framework and must be at the top of the list of policy makers and health care administrators' priorities. Further research is also suggested; large and multi-center studies to investigate specific HR policy components that impact the provision of healthcare services.

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