

To Determine How Attitude As A Factor How It Affects The Psychological Factors On Morale Among Hiv Testing Service Counsellors In Lodwar County Referral Hospital, Turkana County Kenya.

Ibrahim Echuman Yusuf & Dr. Mokuia Gilbert Maroko

Abstract

One of the key components of the HIV testing service package is counseling, which can be integrated into general healthcare or provided as a specialized service. Engaging physicians in the private sector has the potential to improve the utilization of HIV testing services. The study aimed to assess the impact of psychological factors on the morale of HIV testing service counselors at Lodwar County Referral Hospital in Turkana County, Kenya. The study had four main objectives: to examine the influence of attitudes on counselors' morale, to evaluate the level of burnout among counselors and its contributing psychological factors, to gauge the impact of stress on counselors' morale, and to identify effective coping mechanisms. The research employed a descriptive study design, utilizing a simple random sampling method for participant selection. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 22.0. The study's findings revealed that there were no statistically significant relationships between the mentioned factors and counselors' morale. As a result, the study recommends implementing attitude training sessions, enhancing stress management strategies, and providing additional coping mechanisms and training to address the challenges faced by HIV testing service counselors at Lodwar County Referral Hospital in improving their overall work morale.

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I. Introduction

Background to the Study

Many people believe that the quality of care is significantly influenced by the workplace morale of the medical staff. Workplace morale is a word that has been used in both healthcare and broader contexts. This interest stems from the widely held belief that job morale has a substantial impact on performance. Evidence suggests that healthcare workers who feel good about their jobs are more likely to provide patients with higher-quality care, and that raising employee morale may improve job performance in settings with few or insufficient resources (Mayhew, 2020). Additionally, increased retention and recruitment of healthcare professionals are associated with higher employment morale. The regular coaching of important members of the business can help create a vibrant workplace and a sound operating system in the healthcare industry. By bridging individuals' desires with the organization's goals, coaching increases resonance among leaders. It is also acceptable to help an employee enhance their performance by focusing on long-term skills (Joshi, Girase, Kulkarni & Begum, 2017).

If job morale is not solely influenced by financial incentives, then psychological as well as material variables have a role in determining the utility that employees experience in labour relations. Therefore, when modelling contractual relationships and associated moral hazard issues, utility functions must consider "psychological components," for instance. In this regard, it is helpful to connect earlier research on job satisfaction with more contemporary studies on psychological incentives (at work), which mostly focus on experimental economics (Joshi, Girase, Kulkarni & Begum, 2017).

It is understood that morale is a crucial factor in human resource management. Motivation is the vigor and power that propels employees to meet the objectives. All methods and techniques for raising morale work together to help employees focus on this objective, which is primarily performance. Performance in the health sector and employee retention are mostly influenced by health worker morale. There are many different types of motivational factors, both monetary and non-monetary. Strategies for raising morale may differ from company to organization, but important elements include career development, financial incentives, and managerial concerns (Young et al., 2019).

Globally, the subject of work morale among healthcare personnel has been intensively researched. Mahmoud et al. (2021) explored the topic of morale among healthcare staff in the United States, noting that at

the organizational level, when healthcare workers feel reduced to a set of abilities and are utilized instrumentally to achieve organizational goals, they become less motivated to work. It was also mentioned that there are psychological factors that are used to assure the formation of a work environment that boosts worker morale. Better remuneration and the formation of a friendly work environment are two examples of causes. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2020) reported that low job morale, severe burnout, and high turnover intention are common among primary care personnel at township health centres in China due to poor psychological management.

Healthcare professionals in Africa who oversee HIV testing and counselling are often faced with various challenges based on the fact that the continent is suffering from the burden of HIV/AIDS. According to Chersich et al. (2020), in an African setting, risk "allowances" or remuneration can improve the motivation and retention of healthcare workers. Furthermore, Moshidi et al. (2020) in South Africa pointed out that it may be particularly difficult to keep HIV testing and counsellors motivated in regions of Africa where governments are thought to be corrupt and where there is little faith in the government and health system. A risk allowance may be one tactic for inspiring and keeping healthcare professionals. Iwelunmor et al. (2019) claim that in order to improve the skills of healthcare professionals and enhance staff morale among those in charge of managing HIV in Nigeria, it is necessary to provide professional development programs inside HIV clinics.

Statement of the problem

The health workforce, albeit essential to any health system's fundamental operations, is sometimes disregarded as a crucial component of improving health systems (Mundeva, Snyder, Ngilangwa & Kaida, 2018). Morale among healthcare professionals affects behaviour and is characterized by the motivation people have to accomplish their objectives. One of the motivating factors among healthcare professionals that may help to advance the achievement of the nation's health system goals in the context of improving health systems is morale (Lapsley, 2020).

Low morale among medical staff and the resulting pessimistic attitude have been linked to pregnant women refusing nevirapine for newborns, skipping the HIV testing and treatment cascade, and hiding their HIV status before giving birth. Sub-Saharan African health systems commonly deal with this problem (Chimbatata et al., 2017). According to Viljoen et al. (2020), the morale of healthcare personnel decreases when they are not given the chance to learn new skills required to provide more thorough HIV-related treatments.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant to various ways. The significance of the study is that it will highlight the role that psychological factors have in the morale of the HIV testing service counsellors. This is key in ensuring that the human resources department ensures that they incorporate psychological aspects when it comes to the management of the morale of the employees. Secondly, the study is significant as it will come up with recommendations that can be adopted by the hospital to ensure that there is the boosting of the morale of the HIV testing service counsellors. Thirdly, the study will be of great help to future scholars. Academicians will use the study as part of their literature review and also the gaps that will be identified in the findings can be investigated by future scholars and academicians.

The first step in addressing low participation will be to understand the present climate among counselors with regard to HIV testing and counseling. The study's findings will serve as a starting point for the development of interventions that will help clinicians offer HIV testing and counseling. Enhancing HIV/AIDS management through early treatment initiation and higher adherence to ARVs will be the ultimate consequence of more awareness, a shift in attitudes, and improved good practices for HIV testing and counselling. It will also aid in lowering stigma, complications, and HIV-related death.

The identification of psychological factors among HIV testing service counsellors is crucial for enhancing the quality of the services they provide. Counsellors who have better psychological well-being are more likely to deliver superior HIV testing services as they are better equipped to manage their emotions and communicate more effectively with clients. This results in better outcomes for both counsellors and clients. Conversely, counsellors who experience psychological distress may be less effective in their work, leading to suboptimal outcomes for clients. By understanding the psychological factors that affect counsellors, areas for improvement can be identified to ensure clients receive the highest level of care. Overall, establishing the psychological factors of HIV testing service counsellors is vital for promoting their well-being, improving the quality of HIV testing services, and ensuring the best possible outcomes for clients.

II. Literature Review

Attitudes on Morale among HIV Testing Services Counsellors

Among counselling students in the United States, Joe and Foster (2017) conducted research on moral development, awareness of HIV/AIDS, and attitudes toward the disease. The study concluded that in order to address the complicated psychological implications of the illness, people living with HIV/AIDS will probably

need the assistance of mental health specialists. Since little is known about American counseling students' attitudes and understanding of HIV, it is doubtful that they are effectively prepared to help clients who are HIV/AIDS positive. According to the study, students had prejudices against those who had HIV/AIDS, and these prejudices were negatively correlated with the moral development of the students.

Dapaah (2016) evaluated health workers' attitudes and behaviors, as well as the usage of HIV/AIDS health care services. The study discovered that, with the exception of a few, health personnel delivering these services frequently had favorable attitudes and behaviors toward clients throughout clinical meetings. Health staff greeted customers pleasantly, addressed them with civility, advised them on a wide range of topics, occasionally financially supported them, and interacted with them comfortably. The majority of studies in the literature have found that health professionals usually fail to relate to and communicate with these patients, which runs counter to this. The study found that a good customer service throughout interactions in the centers and clinics and centers and clinics interactions in the centers and clinics, The study found that a good customer service throughout interactions in the centers and clinics, The study found that a good customer service throughout

Zarei, Joulaei, Darabi, and Fararouei (2015) added that unfavourable attitudes of medical staff members who come into contact with patients put extra pressure on them. According to the authors, these views make it difficult to provide medical care to those who are HIV-positive. There is a pervasive common narrative in Ghana today that health professionals regularly treat patients disrespectfully and with harsh language. Press articles that are critical of the country's health facilities' subpar service quality can be discovered.

In a population-based study conducted in Kenya and Uganda, Camlin et al. (2022) examined the attitudes of providers toward and experiences with the administration of pre-exposure prophylaxis. According to the study, the HIV counsellors who participated in it had a bad opinion of volunteer HIV testing. These unfavourable sentiments are a result of the worry over finding out if you have HIV and what that would mean. The study also indicated specific or special anxieties HIV counsellors have with taking the HIV test due to the nature of their profession. The study found that while HIV counsellors understood the value of taking an HIV test, they appeared to be paralyzed by their dread of finding out they were HIV positive. Participants in this study who were HIV counsellors were also made aware of their personal susceptibility to HIV/AIDS.

Yousefzadeh, Zohani, Mazlom, and Feyzabadi (2017) in their study highlighted the significance of receiving training on human sex trafficking. The implications of these findings are discussed in the contexts of counselling, counsellor education, and counsellor supervision. These discussions include tackling stigmatizing notions about people who have been subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, including human sex trafficking in counsellor education courses, and learning about tools and trauma-informed techniques that support counsellor supervisees and empower clients who have been trafficked.

In a different study, Sambah et al. (2019) noted that healthcare professionals in a hospital in Ghana used their level of education to set themselves apart from particular patient groups. They distinguished between patients who were eligible for excellent care and those who were not. Some patients, especially the uneducated ones who were mockingly referred to as "villagers," were harshly treated and given less time and information. They were yelled at, given strict orders, and accused of lying. Among other things, Kwarteng, Skokova, and Agyemang-Duah (2020) noted that when clients feel verbally disregarded a nurse may utilize the force of words or behave in a paternal way, which has a detrimental effect on patient involvement in nursing care.

Tambunan and Sarumpaet (2020) also noted that patients are put under extra pressure due to the poor attitudes of medical staff members who are in direct contact with patients. According to the authors, these views make it difficult to provide medical care to those who are HIV-positive. Health professionals are widely perceived as being harsh and frequently treating patients without respect. Press articles that are critical of the country's health facilities' subpar service quality can be discovered.

However, other studies have found that the majority of nurses meet their professional goals when they interact with patients or clients while providing care. For instance, Vega-Ramirez et al.'s study in Mexico (2022) discovered that 81% of the healthcare professionals surveyed were eager to provide AIDS care. It suggests that certain nurses give their patients careful, compassionate, and respectful care. Similar findings were found in a study conducted in Kentucky, United States of America, by Duong et al. (2022), which found that 81% of social workers had favorable attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, Licata et al. (2022) found in their Italian study that although though HIV was the nurses' top fear for contracting an infection at work (54%) the vast majority of them (98%) never declined an assignment to care for patients with HIV/AIDS. These practices imply that while some healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, are patient and respectful of their patients, others are irritable and impatient with patients who do not adhere to their treatment plan.

Coping Mechanisms that lowers Morale among HIV Testing Services Attitude

A study conducted at the University of Ghana showed that many students would only get VCT in specific obligatory situations such as marriage, work, travel, and insurance. However, research conducted in Malawi and Uganda showed that the public had a positive view of VCT and counsellors were respected for their knowledge and privacy. In Tanzania, a significant number of participants would have preferred to take an HIV test, but the fear of receiving a positive result deterred them. Fear was also the main reason given by participants in Tanzania who chose not to return for their test results. A study in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania found that the majority of respondents had a favourable attitude towards attending VCT, but fear was still a significant barrier. Similarly, participants in Nairobi, Kenya, saw VCT as playing a critical role in the prevention and care of HIV/AIDS. However, a survey conducted in Nyanza Province, Kenya, found that 90% of household heads still had reservations about undergoing VCT due to fears of stigma, prejudice, exclusion, and lack of confidentiality in the results. A study among fishermen and women in the Kisumu District, Kenya, showed a favorable attitude towards VCT, with the majority indicating a willingness to use the service in the future.

III. Research Methodology

In this research, a descriptive cross-sectional study design was employed. This design is appropriate for examining the relationship between study variables within a specific study population at a particular point in time, as described by Kate (2006). The design helped to create a relationship between the attitudes, level of burnout, level of stress affecting counsellors and to establish coping mechanisms that can be employed among the counsellors towards the morale among HIV testing service in Lodwar County Referral Hospital, Turkana County Kenya. Turkana County was the site of the study. The current research unit of analysis was HIV testing service counsellors in Lodwar County Referral Hospital, Turkana County Kenya. Data available at the Lodwar County Referral Hospital as per of January 2022 indicated that there were 98 HIV testing service counsellors who were the target of the study.

Simple random sampling was used to implement sampling. Systematic random sampling was used to implement random sampling, ensuring that each person is represented. This guaranteed that each participant in the study had a fair chance of being selected for the final sample. The study questionnaire was developed using a five-point Likert scale in accordance with the study's objectives. variables were Data from the respondents will be gathered using a standardized questionnaire. The questionnaire was pretested and measures of each of the four altered to ensure that the threshold reliability coefficients are met from the reach variable/construct, which assured the reliability of the instruments (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The questionnaire achieved a value of over 0.7, as determined by Cronbach's alpha.

Quantitative information was collected. Based on the responses to each question, data was properly recorded. The statistical package for social sciences, SPSS 22.0, was used to analyse the quantitative data. The link between the dependent and independent variables was assessed using inferential statistics, more especially the regression coefficient.

IV. Results And Findings

Influence of attitude on morale among HIV testing services counsellors

The study sought to find out the influence of attitude on morale among HIV testing services counsellors. The findings of the study are presented in table 4.3.

Key: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4- Agree, 5-strongly Agree.

Table 1: Influence of attitude on morale among HIV testing services counsellors

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev
I feel like I am not satisfied with the work and duties that I have currently	14 (14.3%)	20 (20.4%)	11 (11.2%)	21 (21.4%)	29 (29.6%)	3.406	1.658
HIV testing and counselling is boring, it lacks excitement	40 (40.8%)	29 (29.6%)	9 (9.2%)	11 (11.2%)	7 (7.1%)	2.125	1.278
I experience happiness whenever I am discharging my duties	22 (22.4%)	27 (27.6%)	15 (16.3%)	15 (15.3%)	18 (18.4%)	2.80	1.428
I feel better whenever I serve and help clients who come for HIV testing and counselling	22 (22.4%)	26 (26.5%)	15 (15.3%)	14 (14.3%)	19 (19.4%)	2.812	1.453
My work is very important to me and I love what I do	19 (19.4%)	17(17.3%)	17 (17.3%)	21 (21.4%)	22 (22.4%)	3.104	1.434
Overall						2.850	.9898

Source: Researcher (2023)

The study findings on the statement I feel like I am not satisfied with the work and duties that I have currently indicates that 14.3% strongly disagreed with the statement, 20.4% disagreed, 11.2% were neutral, 21.4% agreed and 29.6% strongly agreed. The statement had an overall mean of 3.406 which on the Likert scale indicates that a majority of the responses leaned towards neutral. The statement had a standard deviation of 1.658 indicate a slight deviation from the mean.

The statement HIV testing and counselling is boring, it lacks excitement had 40.8% of the respondents strongly disagreeing with it, 29.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 9.2% were neutral, 11.2% agreed and 7.1% strongly agreed with the statement. Then mean of the statement was 2.125 and the standard deviation of the statement was 1.278. The mean indicates that the average responses were leaning towards disagreement with the statement.

Regarding the statement I experience happiness whenever I am discharging my duties, 22.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with it, 27.6% disagreed, 16.3% were neutral, 15.3% agreed and 18.4% strongly agreed with the statement. The statement had a mean of 2.80 indicating that average response indicated disagreement with the statement, additionally the statement had a standard deviation of 1.428 indicating insignificant differences when it comes to the responses that were issued by the respondents.

In terms of the statement I feel better whenever I serve and help clients who come for HIV testing and counselling, 22.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 26.5% disagreed, 15.3% were neutral, 14.3% agreed and 19.4% strongly agreed with the statement. The statement had a mean of 2.812 indicating there was a neutral response on average and a standard deviation of 1.453 indicating minimal fluctuation of the responses given.

Regarding the statement my work is very important to me and I love what I do, 19.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 17.3% disagreed, 17.3% were neutral, 21.4% agreed with the statement and 22.4% strongly agreed with the statement. The statement had a mean of 3.104 indicating an average agreement when it comes to the responses given and a standard deviation of 1.434 which means there was small changes on the responses.

The overall mean of the statement is 2.850 indicating that a majority of the respondents were disagreeing with the some respondents were neutral that attitude influences the morale of HIV testing services counsellors. A standard deviation of 0.9898 indicating that there is slight variation of the mean but it cannot affect the overall mean of the responses.

The findings of the study disagrees with the findings of Dapaah (2016) that discovered that, with the exception of a few, health personnel delivering these services frequently had favourable attitudes and behaviours toward clients throughout clinical meetings. Health staff greeted customers pleasantly, addressed them with civility, advised them on a wide range of topics, occasionally financially supported them, and interacted with them comfortably. Additionally, a good customer service throughout interactions in the centers and clinics and centers and clinics interactions in the centers and clinics, The study found that a good customer service throughout interactions in the centers and clinics and clinics, The study found that a good customer service throughout interactions in the centers and clinics, The study found that a good customer service throughout.

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Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	3.802	.423		8.986	.000
	Attitude	-.099	.065	-.158	-1.515	.133
	Burnout	.081	.119	.103	.683	.496
	Stress	.017	.120	.020	.138	.890
	Coping mechanisms	-.031	.068	-.053	-.451	.653
a. Dependent Variable: Morale						

The regression equation used was $Y = \alpha + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \epsilon$

Application of the coefficient in the equation is as follows;

$$Y = 3.802 + (-.099) + (0.081) + (0.017) + (-.031) + e$$

The technique for determining the coefficients was run as part of the study. The researcher did a linear regression analysis with an objective of determining the affiliation between firm specific factors and financing

structure. According to the regression equation developed, putting all factors into account (coping mechanisms, attitude, stress, and burnout) constant at zero psychological factors will have a value of 3.802 as indicated in table 4.10.

Hypotheses Testing

The study had three null hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression. The following are the findings of the study;

H01 There is no statistically significant relationship between the attitude factor affecting psychological factors on morale among HIV testing service counsellors in Lodwar County Referral.

The study findings indicate that a p value of .133 was obtained which is higher than 0.05 and thus indicating that the null hypothesis was accepted. However, the influence of attitude factor affecting psychological factors on morale among HIV testing service counsellors is positive but not significant enough.

V. Summary, Conclusions And Recommendations

Summary Influence of attitude on morale among HIV testing services counsellors

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Conclusions

The study made various conclusions based on the findings that were obtained. The conclusions are as follows;

In terms of influence of attitude factor and morale of the HIV testing service counsellors in Lodwar County Referral, the study concludes that there are is no strong relationship. However, there is a positive relationship, but it is not strong enough. One of the attitude factor that was found to have some positive effects on morale is job satisfaction. However, factors like lack of excitement, lack of happiness and absence of feeling of betterment when serving were found to be having negative effects on the morale of the HIV testing service counsellors in Lodwar County Referral.

Regarding the influence of the level of burnout on morale among HIV testing service in Lodwar County Referral Hospital, Turkana County Kenya, the study concludes that there is no significant relationship between the two, however, the relationship is positive, but it is not strong enough to have an effect. Additionally, the study concludes that the HIV testing service counsellors often feel nervous, emotionally drained, the work environment is relaxing, there is some sense of accomplishment with the work and also they feel that they like to care for patients.

Recommendations

The study has made the following recommendations based on the findings of the study;

The study findings indicate that that attitude factors do not have an influence on the morale of the HIV testing service counsellors in Lodwar County Referral. Thus, the study recommends that there should be attitude training sessions to ensure that the HIV testing service counsellors are better placed of developing positive attitudes to enhance a positive morale at work.

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