

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

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The impact of coronavirus on organizational behaviour in non-profit organizations

Several not-for-profit organizations are most times at the forefront of crisis, emergencies, and pandemics, standing in as a resource for individuals after emergency aid has been received. The coronavirus pandemic pushed many of these non-profit organizations to experience a higher demand for some of their services; however, the provision of these services have been hindered due to the stay home orders, school closures amongst other restrictive measures put in place by government of nations in order to limit the spread of the virus (Deitrick et al, 2020). Besides the fact that these non-profit establishments had limitations in providing their services, they also had to start learning how to educate and help their communities at the same time manage the adverse effects of the pandemic on their services (Broadsource, 2020). Many organizations, because of the pandemic reported operational fallout which included low revenue streams and increased demands of their services and support structures (Kuenzi et al, 2021).

According to Ivancevich et al (2014), organizations exist within societies. Within a society many factors impinge upon the effective functioning of an organization, and management must be responsive to them. Kopp (2021) further explains organizational behaviour to be the study of how people relate within groups as well as how principles are applied to ensure the smooth operation of businesses. Organizational behaviour finds diverse ways to improve job performance, job satisfaction and encourage leadership and promote innovation. Organizations that practice organizational behaviour management focus on locating problematic situations and analysing environmental factors hindering performance within workplaces. Results gotten from this identification is then used to change behaviours by using re-enforcers such as feedback, praise with the aim of improving performance at an individual, group, or systems level (Alban-Metcalf, 2018). David et al (2021) state that several organizations have increased the use of e-commerce and a few other online strategies during moments of crises. They further opine that a well-detailed crisis management plan can help these organizations reduce the drastic effects and damages caused by emergencies.

This proposal is setting out to understand and analyse the impact of coronavirus on organizational behaviour within non-profit organizations. Even though some of these non-profit work on the frontlines, their services faced a lot of unprecedented disruptions even with increased demand. This caused several of them to reduce or end some of their programs (Deitrick et al, 2020). Some of the research questions this study aims to respond to are:

- How did coronavirus impact on employee behaviour?
- What management processes had to be modified or eliminated?
- What emergent strategies were employed to mitigate the situation?

The response to these questions will further shed light on how the non-profit organisations were able to effectively manage their human resource as well as the overall organization from the devastating effects of the pandemic; this may also open further areas of research for future study. The organizations that will be studied are Brighter Futures for Children and BBC Media Action.

Literature review

The emergence of new infectious diseases such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), and COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 19) poses a great danger to human life. Vaccine and treatments are not yet available as these are novel infectious diseases. Fear and dread of new epidemics is emerging as a complex problem that is affecting society, rather than just being a medical issue. The new epidemics also cause extreme stress, which is widespread, and uncontrollable compared to stress experienced in everyday life. Therefore, new epidemics can cause enormous damage to countries, businesses, and individuals on different levels (cited in Yu et al, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has had tremendous and swift effects on workplace culture. The global lockdown and travel bans have upended assumptions about the nature of work and corporate interactions. People have discovered that they do not have to be in an office, that they can get most things done remotely. They do not need to commute to work. Others have gone from jet-set to home-bound with little effect on their business. As they adjust to operating during a pandemic and prepare for the recovery, organizational leaders need to consider which culture changes they want to retain and which they must counteract (Thomas, 2020).

Employees are integral parts that make up an organization and their engagement in teamwork is important for long-term organizational development. At the onset of coronavirus, many nations implemented numerous strategies to mitigate the effects of the virus. Some of these included new working patterns, work from home, self-isolation, quarantine amongst other measures. However, these strategies have adverse effects on communal relationships, trust, and social exchange relationships amongst organizational employees (Chen and Sriphon, 2021). A study by (Correia et al, 2020) on the economic effects on the largest influenza's pandemic, the 1918 (January 1918 – December 1920) flu revealed that 500 million people were infected with the virus, further killing about 50 million people globally. The study showed that there was a steep and persistent decline in economic activity making them conclude that there is a connection between a pandemic and increased mortality rates that constitute the shock to the economy.

From the above, it can be inferred that the onset of a pandemic has several effects on the global economy, however does it have any effect on employee behaviour? According to Mercer, a HR and workplace consulting firm, approximately 94% of 800 employees surveyed reported productivity as the same or higher before the pandemic. Another UK-based research organization, Statistica also reported that 73% of respondents opined they had better productivity from working at home whilst an online business publication, The Manifest discovered only 30% of employees surveyed reported being more productive working from home. This made Rolf Bax, the chief human resource officer of Resume.io state that the conflicting statistics is:

'that those workers who were already highly self-motivated, and for whom commuting and the office environment represented stress, happiness and productivity have gone up.' (Cited in Tansey, 2021).

The current coronavirus pandemic has definitely altered the lifestyle of people especially within the workplace and this proposal seeks to investigate more on the effects of the pandemic within non-profit organizations.

Research Methodology

Research can be defined as the process of systematic enquiry which involves the collection of data, documentation of important information, and the analysis and interpretation of the information collected, in line with acceptable methodologies set by professional fields and academic disciplines. It is also done to evaluate the validity of a hypothesis, assemble a body of substantive knowledge and findings for sharing them in appropriate manners, and to generate questions for further inquiries (Hampshire edu, 2021).

There are three known approaches to conducting research and they are: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The research questions usually determine the type of method that will be suitable. Most times, research questions that require numerical data usually adopt the quantitative approach, whilst questions that require textual data use the qualitative approach. The mixed methods are for questions that require a combination of numerical and textual data (Williams, 2007). Qualitative research focuses in understanding a research query as a humanistic or idealistic approach; it is also used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour, and interactions (Pathak et al, 2013). There are different ways in which data can be collected when using the qualitative approach: document study, observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (Busetto et al, 2020).

This study intends to use the qualitative methodology to generate data which will be further analysed to understand how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting organizational behaviour in non-profit organizations. Results gotten from this study can lead to further recommendations and open new areas of study within this academic field.

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