Management Commitment, Implementation, and Sustainable Work Environment in Healthcare Services

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ABSTRACT

It is crucial for healthcare service employees to have a conducive work environment to motivate them while they deliver their best services. This qualitative research aimed to explore the management commitment, implementation, and sustainable work environment in healthcare services. The qualitative data was collected through interviews with the employees. Thirty respondents participated voluntarily. The data analysis was done using NVivo software. The findings include management commitment, implementation effectiveness, leadership skills, task commitment, continuous improvement, and teamwork. This research has some limitations that offer opportunities for future research. The sample size and scope could be increased to represent respondents from other geographical areas for better reliability and validity of the information.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources in any institution are crucial for the development of that institution. Many factors directly or indirectly affect the performance of human resources. In view of the importance of healthcare services, the purpose of this study is to explore the effects of management commitment in healthcare services. This study also intended to identify the relationship between management commitment and their effectiveness in implementing policies or plans for the organization, especially for the employees. Besides that, this study also aimed to explore the effect of management commitment and implementation effectiveness towards a sustainable working environment for healthcare services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Happiness in whatever an individual does in the workplace is fundamental to such an individual lifestyle. The same goes to individuals who serve in healthcare services as their satisfaction positively impacts patients' safety, productive work behaviour, quality care and attention, turnover, dedication, and engagement to work, as well as to their profession. It is vital for the management of healthcare institutions and the government to provide a mechanism that will make healthcare workers satisfied at all times since they are vulnerable to contracting heinous diseases and sicknesses encountered in the course of their work (Olusegun & Olusoji, 2020).

It is a fact that the quality of work life in an organization is essential for the smooth running and success of its employees. Quality of work life is used for increasing motivation when following a strategy of job enrichment and it includes domains, such as job security, satisfaction, ease, and building reliance on employees (Chooran & Azadehidel, 2015).

Employee dysfunction results from exposure to psychosocial risks that impair their well-being and reduce productivity in a toxic work environment. The devastating effects of workplace toxicity frequently have far-reaching effects. Employees may experience negative work dynamics outside of the workplace, and this effect may be exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Abbas Khan, 2022). The organization's core values and interests may be compromised by a toxic work environment (Tiwari &

Jha, 2022). A toxic workplace is characterized by unfavourable interpersonal behaviours among employees, according to Anjum and Ming (2018). When used as an insulting term, "toxicity" refers to a wide range of actions, such as workplace hostility, aggression, harassment, bullying, narcissism, and exclusion. Toxic management, toxic cultures, and toxic leaders were examined by Appelbaum and Roy-Girard (2007) as three potential entry points for toxicity in organizations.

METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory investigation using the qualitative interview technique. The target respondents consist of the staff at the healthcare department, comprising policy makers and policy implementers. The respondents from policy implementers are staff from middle management, representing grades 41–56; however, they are also known as policy makers at their scope of work even though the policy is not much compared to the top management. Meanwhile, the full policy implementers are from supporting staff. The supporting staff includes Support Staff 1 from grades 22 to 36 and Support Staff 2 from grades 11 to 19.

The middle management was chosen as the respondent for this research because numerous studies demonstrate the value of middle managers for organizations in the areas of strategy formulation and change management. Middle managers are crucial in helping companies undergo changes. They serve as intermediaries between daily operations and strategy, and play a significant role in the extensive dissemination of knowledge throughout the organization.

The selection of supporting staff as the respondent is to meet the objective of this research, which is to obtain feedback or responses from the employee's perspective. Supporting staff are employees on the grounds that they are the implementers of the policy, the human capital in the organization that runs the process of the organization to meet the organization's objectives or goals to provide excellent services in healthcare.

Support staff members are generally responsible for managing administrative work, upkeep of facilities, technological support, security,

communications, and assistance to other teams or departments inside the company. Even though they might not be directly in charge of generating the company's main goods or services, supporting employees make a big difference in fostering a positive work atmosphere and making it possible for the business's essential operations to run smoothly.

Data collection method

The data collection method used for this research was through focus group interviews. The main goal of a focus group discussion is to gather comprehensive data and comprehension of participants' opinions, convictions, inclinations, and emotions regarding a specific subject. It assists researchers in finding insights that might not surface from quantitative techniques, such as surveys. Focus-group interviews are gaining popularity in health research as a means of learning about people's beliefs, emotions, and motivations for acting in certain ways. The capacity of a focus group discussion to provide data based on the collective energy of group interaction is what makes them special (Green et al., 2003). It is consequently important that group members converse and feel at ease with one another.

The sample size for this study was based on Roscoe's (1975) rule of thumb, where over the past few decades, this set of rules for calculating sample size has been the most common choice by researchers. For this research, 30 respondents were selected based on quota sampling. The selection of the respondents also refers to Roscoe's proposal that if the data set needs to be divided into multiple subgroups for comparison analysis, such as male or female, rural or urban, local or international, 30 respondents could be the minimum for each group.

The sampling technique that was used for this study was non-probability qualitative quota sampling, as shown in Figure 1. Thirty representative respondents from the Department were interviewed. Besides that, the selection and distribution of the respondents also refer to controlled characteristics, such as gender, age, and grade, which include the employees from support staff 2 (grades 11 to 19), support staff 1 (grades 22 to 36), middle management (grades 41 and 56), and length of employment. The total population of the Department was about twenty-six thousand employees.

Data Collection and the challenges

i.   The main issue in conducting the data collection was getting the right respondent as a sample for the interview. Some employees were reluctant to offer themselves to join in this research. However, it is a common issue to convince any employees to become respondents to any research and to get their consent to be interviewed. The cooperation of the employees as respondents depends on their willingness.

Table 1
Respondents' Characteristics

Variables	Controlled Characteristics	Sample (n = 30)
Gender	Male Female	10 20
Age	25 years and below 26 to 50 years 51 years and above	12 14 5
Grade	11 - 19 Support staff 2 22 - 36 Support staff 1 41 - 56 Middle management	4 20 6
Length of Employment	5 years and below 6 years to 20 years 21 years and above	3 16 11

ii. The second issue was that the staff were reluctant to be the respondents in this research because they felt that their responses were very confidential and they were not willing to disclose them. They felt that the information might come to the top management and may affect their reputation or work.

iii. The second issue was getting the right respondents who could give responses that could meet the objectives of the research questions. It is very common to have respondents as respondents only, especially in group interviews or group discussions. Having these types of respondents may fail the objective of getting detailed and comprehensive data.

iv. The challenge in collecting the data was the last-minute information provided by the confirmed respondents to reschedule or postpone their appointment for the interview. This was greatly dependent on their availability. So, this would affect the other respondents, especially those in the same group of respondents. Hence, the interviews needed to be rescheduled to ensure the success of the data collection.

v. The next challenge was it may not provide a thorough grasp of the context, which makes it difficult to pinpoint important categories. This may lead to conclusions that are not true to the data. This was defined as internal validity within a paradigm of reliability and validity, or credibility within the naturalistic paradigm of trustworthiness by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

vi. The other challenge was managing the time to conduct the interview. With work in hand, it was a great challenge for the researcher to rearrange the interview by ensuring the daily tasks were not distracted.

Data transcription

For this qualitative data, the technique that was used to transcribe the data was manual transcription. The responses from all 30 respondents that were recorded by handphone voice recordings needed to be written in texts. Written texts (e.g. documents or field notes) as well as audio and visual data (e.g. recordings of focus groups, interviews, or consultations) can be used as data for a qualitative study. Written transcripts of recordings were made so that they could be thoroughly examined, coded, and/or paired with analytical notes.

The technique used to transcribe the data was based on exact transcription. With this technique, all verbal fillers (e.g. um, eh, etc.), pauses, laughter, and non-verbal clues (e.g. gestures and tone of voice) were recorded whether they were spoken or written. In order to provide an in-depth representation for analysis, exact transcription attempts to preserve the nuance and richness of the original data. However, to create a transcript that is more readable and concise, clean transcribing techniques being used to entail eliminating extraneous verbal fillers, repetitions, pauses, and non-verbal clues.

Besides that, transcription   convention technique was also   used. Through this technique, transcripts can remain consistent and clear if certain transcribing rules or guidelines are established and followed. Conventions can involve defining transcription standards or guidelines, designating speaker identities or turns (e.g., Participant 1, Interviewer:), employing symbols to express non-verbal cues (e.g., [laugher], [pause]), and defining formatting conventions (e.g., headings, paragraphs). Close monitoring was required for the transcription of data by repeatedly paying close attention while listening   (and/or watching), and this was a crucial preliminary stage in data analysis. Knowledge of the data and an emphasis on what was actually present rather than what was anticipated might help reveal insights or generate new ideas during analysis (Pope & Mays, 2000). It was essential to listen and focus on line-by-line feedback or responses that were being recorded through voice recordings to make sure no missing data was transcribed.

Last but not least, in order to guarantee accuracy, coherence, and clarity in the transcripts, proofreading and editing procedures must be carried out after the initial transcribing was finished. The quality and dependability of the qualitative data for analysis could be improved by going over the transcripts for mistakes, inconsistencies, omissions, or misinterpretations and making any necessary edits or corrections.

When transcribing qualitative data, confidentiality and anonymity must be guaranteed, particularly when handling sensitive or private material. Pseudonyms, identity removal, and safe handling, archiving, and management of transcripts and recordings are some ways that qualitative research can uphold ethical norms while safeguarding participant privacy.

Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data analysis technique used for this research was content analysis. The reason for using this technique is because it is more systematic in nature. Analysis of textual, visual, or audio content can be done in an organized and methodical way with content analysis. Scholars can methodically analyse patterns, themes, trends, meanings, representations, or linkages within the content by using preset coding schemes, categories, or criteria.

The second reason for choosing this technique was because it involves large amounts of textual, visual, or audio data that make content analysis very helpful. Using content analysis approaches, researchers can quickly and effectively examine large datasets, including those found in archives, databases, journals, social media posts, news stories, and recorded recordings.

The third reason is content analysis is very objective and repeatable. By using uniform coding systems, criteria, and analytical techniques, content analysis seeks to provide objective, trustworthy, and repeatable results. Subjective biases, interpretations, or variances in the content analysis and interpretation among various researchers or numerous analysis iterations can be minimized by researchers.

Through content analysis, characterize and comprehend the traits, meanings, depictions, themes, settings, or patterns that can be investigated or explored in the content. Content analysis can help researchers find new themes, patterns, correlations, differences, contrasts, or stories around the particular subjects, problems, groups, or study questions.

Content analysis can also be used as comparative analysis. By contrasting and comparing various sources, contexts, historical periods, groups, or categories within the material, content analysis helps researchers perform comparative analyses. Content analysis technique enables researchers to compare, contrast, analyse, and analyse changes in the content across several dimensions, contexts, or factors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data collected from the quota sampling done through interviews with the 30 respondents was compiled. The data collected from the interviewees was transcribed into words. The following are the qualitative findings generated from the NVivo software.

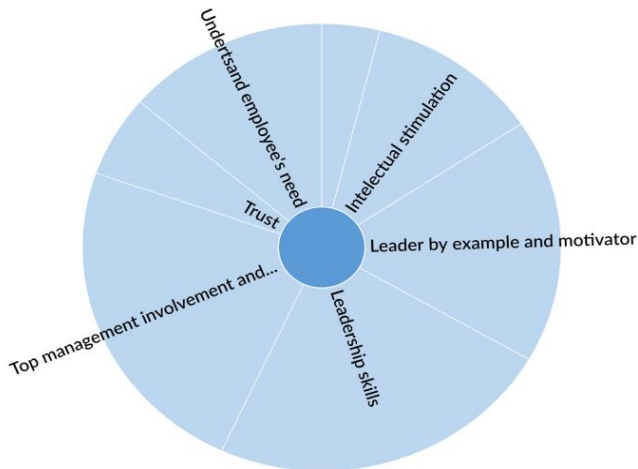### Management commitment: The employee's perspective

The findings suggest that the most common management commitments in healthcare services from the employee's perspective are top

management involvement and support, leadership skills, leader by example and motivator, understanding employees' needs, intellectual stimulation, trust, and lastly, clarity and focus in setting goals. These findings are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below:

Figure 1
Hierarchy chart of management commitment

Management commitment		
Top management involvement and supportive	Leader by example an Motivator	Understand employee's need
Leadership skills	Intellectual stimulation	Trust
		Clear and focus in setting goals

Figure 2
Pie chart of management commitment

Top management involvement and supports

The most crucial management commitment in the healthcare services from the employee's perspective is most probably the top management involvement and support. As described by Siagian and Tarigan (2021), it is how the management backs and takes part in the business's operations and strategies. To accomplish successful supply chain integration, the management does this by establishing and communicating the organization's goals and vision, participating in management, allocating time and resources, and motivating and enabling employees to internalize company's values and monitor operations. The dimensions are mentioned by the respondents, as follows:

"My feeling about the commitment of the Department, compared to the previous is much more supportive compared to the present management. For example, in the previous management, the director and the deputy director will work together and support any department's event internally or externally, especially in terms of financial support, such as sports activities." (Individual No. 2).

"To the top management, they think that it is a waste to organize such activities or events, for example, sports, family day, or festive celebrations. However, through these kinds of activities, the management can create good rapport, networking and relationship between the management and the support staff. Through these activities also, we can get acquainted with each other from various programmes that will make our work process become easier and faster." (Individual 24).

"To me, top management must be involved in any activities organized by the department to show their commitment. This will help to motivate the employees." (Individual 28).

Leadership skills

The second crucial management commitment is must having leadership skills. Different leaders have different types of leadership skills, approaches, and behaviours that influence the behaviour of their followers. Employees will perceive management with no commitment if they lack

leadership skills because they fail to influence the employees. The dimensions are mentioned as follows:

"It depends on the person who is managing. Each management has its own ways to manage but the purpose is still the same. It's still ok." (Individual 9).

"I am saying there is a need for improvement in the top management because the quality of leadership includes a few issues in terms of participation of the top management. This is my personal opinion." (Individual 16).

"However, the management depends a lot on the top management leadership." (Individual 29).

Leadership by example and motivator

The third important management commitment is that the leaders act as a role model that can inspire the employees through their behaviour and action, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Failure to show good examples will contribute to a negative perspective to the employees. Below are the statements pertaining to this dimension:

"Most of the top management will send their representative, whereby they as the top management of the department are supposed to show their existence and not send their representative. This is another commitment of the management that they should comply with the top management in the department." (Individual 1)

"When this situation continuously happens, it becomes a culture in the department and affects all the staff, including the head unit or section, and moreover, the supporting staff. Since the top management themselves show these types of attitudes as their commitment, they influence the motivation and commitment of the lower rank staff too." (Individual 1)

"It is very common if the top management does not show a good example, of course the supporting staff will follow exactly the same attitude or action." (Individual 4)

Understanding the employee's needs

The fourth dimension is that the management needs to be open to listening and trying to understand the needs of the employees to enable effective work performance. The following are some examples of the respondents' feedback:

"It is important for the management to understand the issues and difficulties faced by the lower staff or employees." (Individual 13)

"So, in conclusion, to me the top management commitment is not focusing on the needs of the employees but more interested with their target or KPI. Even if there are requests from the employees, the top management will channel the issues to the related section for further action." (Individual 11)

"I also feel that the management of the Department is less committed. Using the same example, the head division meeting. There are a lot of issues being discussed in the meeting pertaining to problems in division. A lot of ideas are also being shared from various heads of divisions in order to solve the issues raised. However, because less commitment from the top management, the heads of divisions are also demotivated in highlighting their issues or problems." (Individual 29)

Implementation effectiveness

The findings show several themes or child codes in answering management commitment, which affect the implementation effectiveness from an employee's perspective. They are task commitment, continuous improvement, simplification of work processes, delegation of power, conflict resolution, and budget allocation (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

Task commitment

Implementation effectiveness is important whereby the objectives and priorities of the task can be understood and the importance of employee's roles in achieving these objectives. The proof for this as follows:

"In my point of view, the management, especially the top management, is very effective in implementing their commitment. However, in order to ensure the effectiveness, they will pressure the staff or officer until the work is completed. This affects the emotion and morale of the officer or staff which can contribute to unhappiness." (Individual 22)

"To me, since the top management is very selective in terms of their commitment, of course they are very effective in implementing their commitment. The staff will do the best in order to achieve and fulfil the top management's target." (Individual 23)

"In my opinion, the top management is very effective in implementing their commitment if it is aligned with their interest. They will do their best to go on the ground to understand and study the situation. They will give their best support to ensure things can be solved." (Individual 29)

Figure 3
Hierarchy chart of implementation effectiveness

Implementation effectiveness		
Task commitment	Simplify the work process	
Continuous improvement	Delegation of power	Conflict resolution
	Budget allocation	

Figure 4
Pie chart of implementation effectiveness
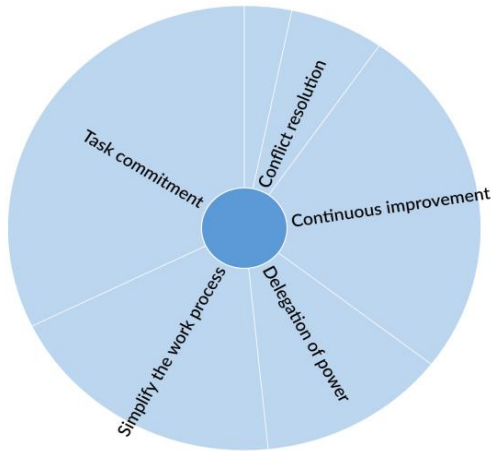
Continuous improvement

Employees will view positive management of their performance, careers, training, pay, and selection favourably, and they will respond by showing a strong level of commitment to the organizations. Below are the statements from the respondents:

"There is a need for face-to-face trainings or courses. Today's trainings or courses all are conducted through hybrid or video conferencing. There is a need for trainings, such team building to build the relationship among employees from various schemes or divisions. This will help speed up the work." (Individual 12)

"In my opinion, the top management needs to give fair opportunities to the employees, not only to a certain scheme or grade because this will affect the employees' emotions and they will feel isolated or marginalized." (Individual 17)

"Yes, I also agree that courses or trainings need to be given to the top management. Not only they are related to leadership, but the soft skills, such as effective communications and the good values, are also need to be introduced in the courses." (Individual 27)

Simplifying the work processes

Implementation is effective when the work processes that are not complex can be shortened so the processes can be faster. This was mentioned by the respondents, as follows:

"A lot of new effective work processes are implemented to make the tasks easier and faster." (Individual 2)

"In my opinion, for the process of procurement, everything runs smoothly. In terms of letter delivery, it depends on the division of whether the end user receives it or not. Overall, the management runs effectively in terms of operations and service delivery." (Individual 8)

"To me, whether the management is effective or not, actually, we are back to the old time. We have a good system and technology, such as ICT in implementing our work, but sadly today, we turn back to the old method. This causes the delay in the process." (Individual 17)

Delegation of power

The management transfers authority and responsibility to the trusted employee and allows the subordinate to make decisions, take actions, and perform tasks on behalf of the management. The need for this dimension was stated in the following:

"Apart from that, I think there is a need for delegation of power from the top management in implementing the tasks in order to reduce delay or bureaucracy in the process, especially in decision making." (Individual 16)

"In my opinion, some top management individuals are very committed. They can deliver their tasks that have been delegated." (Individual 25)

"The work process is much faster compared to today's work process. This is because, previously, there was a delegation of power compared to the present. Today's work process takes time because everything needs to go through all levels of management." (Individual 28)
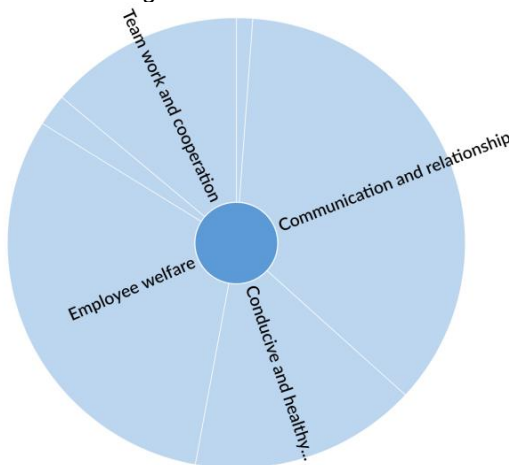
Towards sustainable working environment

The last research question, the themes or child codes that constitute a sustainable working environment in healthcare services from the employee's perspective, is about communication and relationships, employee welfare, a conducive and healthy environment, and lastly, teamwork and cooperation. These findings are shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6 below:

Figure 5
Hierarchy chart of sustainable working environment

Sustainable working environment	
Communication and relationships	Conducive and healthy environment
	Teamwork and cooperation
Employee welfare	
	Generation gap / Appreciation

Figure 6
Pie chart of sustainable working environment

Communication and relationship

The important dimension for a sustainable work environment is the ability of management to share information and knowledge with the employees and communication among employees that will lead to quality relationships within the organization. Examples of the respondents' statements are as follows:

"For me, overall, the management the Department is okay, except for issues in terms of communication and relationship because there are a lot of units and sections today in the department." (Individual 12)

"In my opinion, the working environment in Sarawak's Health Department is good, especially within the section. However, if this involves different sections, by strategies, I will look for someone that I am familiar with to get engaged with the section. For example, if I want to get some information, I will look for the person that I know from that section first, then I will slowly create my relationship with the rest of the members in that particular section." (Individual 11)

"In my opinion, there is a need for improvement in terms of communication, especially in transferring information. For example, in procurement, we are dealing directly and indirectly with the end users. So, through good communication, both parties will be informed with any current status of the process." (Individual 8)

Employee's welfare

This second dimension is also very essential to ensure a sustainable working environment. It comprises all issues pertaining to workers' health, safety, comfort, and overall welfare including programmes. The related statements are as follows:

"Here, in the working environment, the management encourages the support staff to continue their studies, such as HLP. However, if in the division, the top management is reluctant to release their staff to continue their studies without replacement. It is good for the staff's welfare." (Individual 6)

"In my opinion, the relationship among sections is not very close. Previously, the top management used to go to the ground having activities with the support staff. They are very keen to know the   problems or issues on the ground. This really creates a good and happy environment. Compared to today's environment, we never see the top management going to the ground even at any section to get some feedback or responses from the employees." (Individual 13)

"Besides that, the top management also needs to contribute activities or events as this can create and build relationships between the top management and the employees within the department." (Individual 16)

Conducive and healthy work environment

A conducive work environment motivates employees to show up, give their all, and ultimately feel satisfied with their work. What did the respondents mention about this?

"Here, we can see the working environment is not so conducive, or in other words, there is a toxic environment in the department. This toxic working environment can be overcome if the top management takes early preventive actions. However, at present issues, the toxic working environment is caused by the top management." (Individual 16)

"To me, the most important thing is the working environment. If the working environment is good or positive, the staff will be highly committed and motivated to do extra work. But if the working environment is negative, not only doing extra work but implementing their job scope is also difficult because there is no more motivation to do work. So, at the end, we just do our work to fulfil what the top management wants and have no initiative to do more or extra work." (Individual 21)

"For me, the working environment is not so happy. We are happy doing our work even though there is a lot of work but we are not happy with the environment. The reason is because of lack of top management's involvement in non-official activities." (Individual 22)

Teamwork and cooperation

The management and employees work as a team and work side by side in the organization. This will help create a teamwork culture. Some statements mentioned were:

"We can see the teamwork from the main six (6) programmes. All programmes can work together to deliver the services." (Individual 24)

"Based on my working experience at the department, I can see each programme understand what their job scopes are and the relationship is quite good because we can help each other even from various programmes like the procurement section, finance section under the administrative programme with the dental and pharmacies programme, we keep continue to help each other." (Individual 25)

"For example, for myself, even during the peak situation of workload, we still can work with less stress and pressure, and still can work as a team. So, the work can be completed within the time frame." (Individual 8)

Testing of the Propositions

Figure 7 shows the seven child codes identified through the NVivo process. These child codes are the main dimensions that show the management commitment towards a sustainable working environment. These are the crucial dimensions from the employees' perspective of management commitment.

Figure 8 shows the implementation effectiveness. The management has a positive relationship with implementation effectiveness. These dimensions show how the management commitment can be effective in implementing the organization's plans or policies.
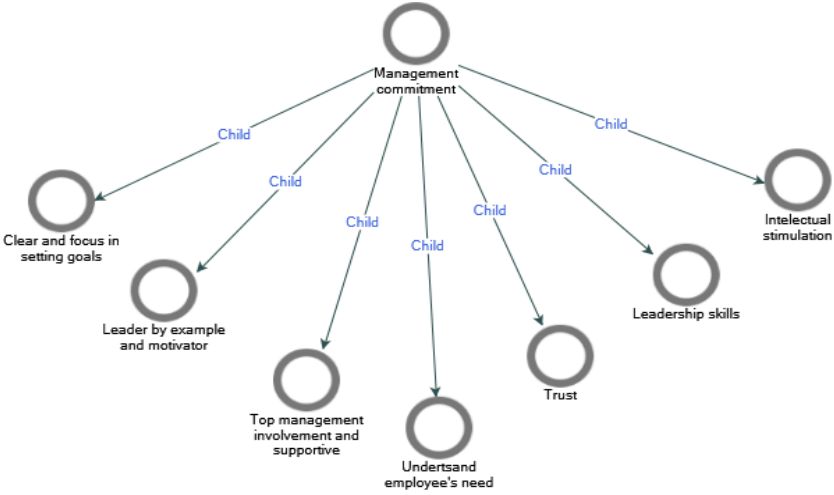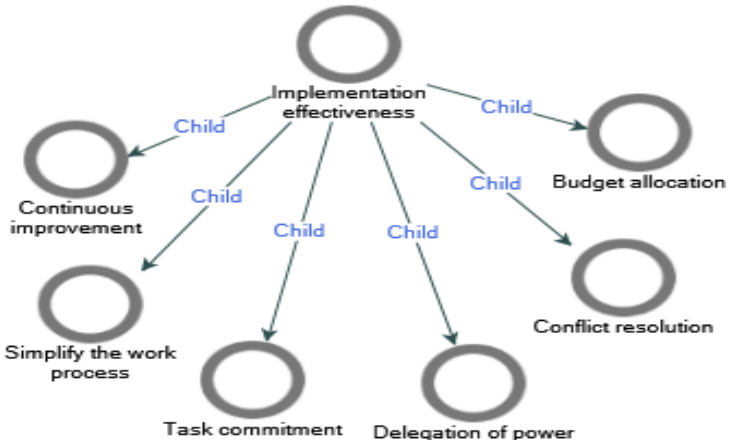
Figure 7
Map of management commitment

Figure 8
Map of implementation effectiveness

Lastly, the Figure 9 shows the relationship of management commitment and implementation effectiveness with a sustainable working environment. The child codes show the dimensions that need to be taken into consideration by the top management. These child codes open the mind of top management to ensure the working environment can be sustainable.

Figure 9
Map of sustainable work environment
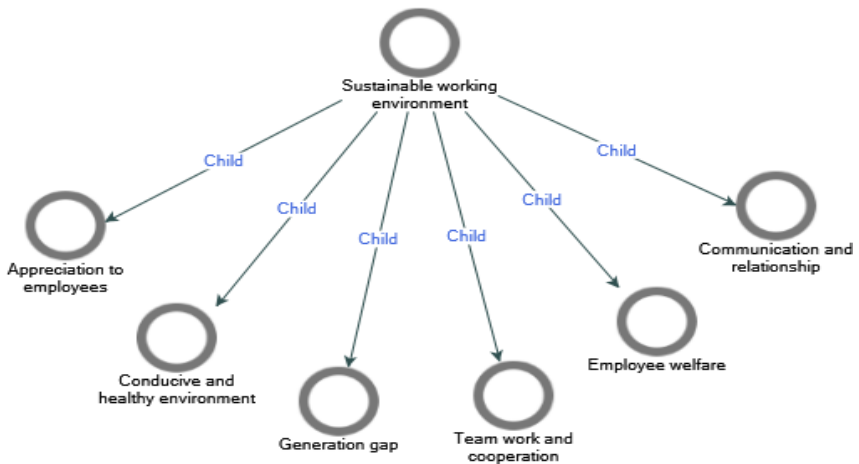
CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In a nutshell, it is very important for the management to be committed in ensuring the quality of healthcare services. The management also needs to continuously implement effectiveness. This will help employees improve their work performance. Management commitment and implementation effectiveness will also contribute to a sustainable working environment. It is crucial for healthcare services to have a better environment to motivate them while they deliver their best services.

This exploratory research has some limitations that offer opportunities for future research. The first limitation is that the sample size can be improved and respondents to be from different geographical locations to get more reliable and comprehensive information.

The second limitation is that the respondents for this research only focused on the employee's feedback, which may lead to biasness in the findings. For future research, it is proposed that the top management's feedback is also needed to improve the relationship between the data. One problem with this kind of analysis is that it may not provide a thorough grasp of the context, which makes it difficult to pinpoint important categories.

The third limitation is that the study did not consider gender and age as main controls of characteristics. Future research should take these controls into account in order to determine true characteristics and management commitment that typically impact the organization.

The fourth limitation is data collection. For this study, the data collection was only done through interviews, and the data analysis was only for qualitative analysis. This is also because of time constraints and dependency on the availability of the respondents. For future studies, it is suggested that questionnaires are also needed to get better data sampling and sample size. A mix or data analysis, including quantitative analysis, can be used to have a depth analysis.

As a recommendation, this research can be improved in terms of data collection techniques. The mix method can be used to collect the data to have more in-depth feedback from the respondents and to protect the sensitivity of respondents who are reluctant to be interviewed. Other techniques can be used to build credibility, including peer debriefing, extended engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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