

5. Case Study on “MOTIVATION”

MEDICAL TEAM AS FRONT LINERS TO FIGHT COVID-19 DISEASE

Mohammad Azuwar Bin Dol Mofti and Dr. Hemaloshinee Vasudevan

ABSTRACT

From the four key factors that determine place of work behavior, motivation is one of them. This study assessed the aspect of motivation among medical front liners in the midst of this Covid-19 attack. These front liners have to work in a harsh environment and to be willing to carry out daily tasks. Their work is, undoubtedly, methodical and centred on the following manner: they love to go by the book. Those who lack motivation would face difficulty carrying out their duties diligently. Moreover, the work of front line personnel is inherently repetitive. They need to observe patients while strictly adhering to protocols. Thus, motivation is essential for front liners to perform their tasks tirelessly

KEY WORDS: *work behavior, motivation, medical front liners*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The strong acute respiration syndrome of Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), also known as the COVID-19 pandemic or coronavirus 2019-2020 pandemic, has become a global threat. The outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China, in mid-December 2019, and was announced a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in March 11, 2020. As of March 20, more than 246,000 COVID-19 cases were

registered across 180 countries and regions, causing more than 10,000 deaths and 87,000 rehabilitation cases.

The Covid-19 virus is spread through coughing or sneezing, in a way similar to the flu. The Covid-19 virus appears to be highly contagious. The time between the exposure and the onset of symptoms is usually five days, while in some cases, the duration ranges from two to fourteen days. Some of the common signs are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Complications may

also include pneumonia and acute respiratory syndrome. At present, there is no vaccine or antiviral capsule, thus the current efforts encompass symptom relief and supportive treatment. The suggested precautions include washing hands, keeping distance from others, and keeping those potentially exposed to the virus quarantined for 14 days.

Some measures that have been taken to avoid the spread of this virus are travel restrictions, quarantine, cancellation of events, and facility closure. These measures were initially undertaken in Hubei, followed by the complete quarantine in Italy, Spain, France, the Czech Republic, and Germany, and later on, the entire globe. All borders are closed, while airports have halted their operations. In at least 115 countries, universities and schools have been closed, thus affecting more than 1.6 billion students.

This epidemic has brought about worldwide social chaos, as well as delays and cancellations of cultural, religious, and sports activities. False information and conspiracy theories

about the virus have spread online, and there have been incidents of xenophobia and racism towards the Chinese and other people in the East or Southeast Asia. Covid-19 is a pandemic that had started in December 2019 in Wuhan, China.

2.0 COVID-19 CASES IN MALAYSIA

The Malaysian government has enforced the Malaysian Movement Control Order 2020 (Malay: Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan Malaysia 2020) or the MCO, which restricts the movement of people to halt the spread of Corona virus in Malaysia. This execution of MCO is also called "Malaysia partial blockade" or "Malaysia blockade" in some regions.

It is essential for the medical front liners in fighting Covid-19 to continuously stay fit, so that they can accurately perform sampling and execute disinfection at targeted locations. The following depicts some cases that ought to be assessed.

Case I: Dr Siti works at the forefront of a government hospital and responds to the project of supporting hospitals to

treat Covid-19 patients in wards. The hospital consultant told her to be prepared because this task might also cause her to be infected, particularly by the patients due to their symptoms and travel history. Dr Siti is willing to accept this assignment, but she is worried about having direct contact with Covid-19 patients and the need for her to be quarantined for 14 days in case symptoms show up. This is very stressful for her.

Case 2: Dr Meor works at the intensive care unit (ICU) and treats Covid-19 patients. The other doctors and he have to directly treat the symptoms-laden Covid-19 patients directly. This makes them susceptible to infection at all times. They are required to wear the complete personal protective equipment (PPE) while working. The PPE is a defensive layer that consists of clothes, coats, masks, gloves, and shoes. Wearing the PPE, though as a protective measure, is tough due to its warm condition and psychological endurance.

Case 3: Dr Zulkeflee is a consultant in a government hospital. He is committed to

help the Covid-19 patients and constantly encourages his team. Even if he is not available at the hospital, he makes sure that he can be reached at any time, in case of emergency. Dr Zulkeflee, apart from assisting the front line team, generously does charity work by raising fund dedicated to Covid-19 cause. Dr Zulkeflee is often worried that he is not helping out in his full capacity. Once, he even donated a large amount of cash to his affiliation so that the front line team has adequate protective wear and support.

Case 4: Dr Anas Mat Asis, a doctor at MARA Technical University Specialised Hospital (UiTM), has experience in dealing with Covid-19 patients. He realises the fact that the clinical team is constantly exposed to the danger of Covid-19 infection. Hence, the use of PPE while treating Covid-19 patients is essential. Together with a group of engineering experts, Dr Anas has managed to devise a portable gear designed to deal with Covid-19 sampling, even if the medical staff is not equipped with PPE. This minimises the threat of

the medical team from getting infected by the lethal virus.

It has been reported that a total of 2359 volunteers have provided an assortment of volunteer offerings; composing of 65 health workers in numerous fields, 159 scientific employees, 909 nurses, 220 medical laboratory technicians, 704 assistant medical personnel, 106 X-rays, 56 bodily therapists, 70 clinical officers (microbiology), 7 pharmacists, 44 pharmacist assistants, 11 occupational safety and health officers, 2 psychology officials, and 6 counsellors. In April 1, 2020, the Director of the General Administration of Health extended his appreciation to the front liners due to their tireless services offered 24 hours a day. In shouldering their assigned responsibilities, health workers need to leave their spouse, children, and parents. Upon making such sacrifice, turbulent emotions are bound to haunt these medical workers. However, these unrest emotions should not get in their way while treating their patients.

Table I: Number of Clinical Specialists

State	Emergency Medicine	Internal Medicine	Others	Anaesthesiol	Total
WP KL & Putrajaya	-	-	5	6	11
WP Labuan	-	-	1	-	1
Selangor	1	7	6	11	25
Sarawak	-	-	1	-	1
Sabah	-	-	1	-	1
Perak	-	-	1	1	2
Penang	-	2	1	-	3
Pahang	-	-	-	2	2
N. Sembilan	-	1	-	1	2
Melaka	-	-	1	2	3
Kelantan	-	-	1	1	2
Kedah	-	1	2	1	4
Johor	1	4	1	2	8
Total	2	15	21	27	65

Source: The Desk of the Director-General of Health Malaysia

Table 2: Number of Volunteer Medical Officers by workplace origin or current work/job status

Workplace origin or current work status	Number of MO's
Private hospitals	16
Private clinics	44
Retirees	5

Previously resigned from public sector	55
Public Universities	30
Private Universities	9
Total	159

Source: The Desk of the Director-General of Health Malaysia

Table 3: Number of Volunteer Allied Health Personnel by service schemes

Service scheme	No.
Nurse	909
Medical Laboratory Technologists	220
Assistant Medical Officers	704
Radiologists (Diagnostic)	106
Physiotherapists	56
Science Officers (Microbiology)	70
Pharmacists	7
Assistant Pharmacists	44
Occ. Safety and Health Officers	11
Psychologists	2
Counsellors	6
Total	2,135

Source: The Desk of the Director-General of Health Malaysia

3.0 MEDICAL FRONT LINERS NEED MOTIVATION TO FIGHT COVID-19

The medical team has to work under high pressure for long hours. Many have inadequate management and organisational guide, which appear to be the largest source of strain. In addition, the emotions stemming from fear, danger, and human suffering are very worrying and can affect the mental fitness of the medical workers. Therefore, motivation is imminent to minimise the psychosocial impact of labour during this critical condition.

The term "workforce" on this task description refers to paid workers and volunteers, as well as national and global personnel. However, there are some structural variations among them. For instance, country-wide personnel are typically recruited from disaster areas and are more likely to face extreme pressure events or conditions. In addition, compared with global resource workers, if the security state of affairs deteriorates, they and their families are frequently unable to leave the crisis area,

whereas international aid employees often have the opportunities for evacuation. For international workers, specific pressures consist of separation from their help base, cultural shock, and coping with hard living situations. These and other differences are regularly forgotten or cannot be resolved at times due to the critical condition at hand. Humanitarian agencies, thus, must strive to enhance their performance in facilitating the medical team, while reducing differential help practices for both national and global personnel.

Any man or woman can be emotionally affected in the course of the Covid-19 crisis. Everyone responds in a different way to pressure conditions. A person's response to a disaster is dictated by his personal historical past, differences from others, and the network in which he lives. Individuals generally feel pressured, concerned, and disturbed. Fear and anxiety towards the spread of Covid-19 may be overwhelming and cause depression in the front liners. Studies are unable to distinguish how incentives are evaluated differently by means of specific health professional cadres, which in itself

suggests that similar studies are warranted. In the social and political surroundings, other problems have to be weighed in as well, but how those elements affect the incentive of healthcare workers have been neglected.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Front line personnel, along with the medical team, although seem to be facing diverse demanding situations when treating Covid-19 patients, are able to provide the patients top service and care. In order for them to keep on carrying out their obligations conscientiously, motivation is crucial. Their bravery to address the Covid-19 virus has touched the hearts of many Malaysians, whereby they are seen as heroes – similar to superheroes in fictional films; Iron Man, Spiderman, Wonder Woman, and Superman. Nevertheless, one should also reckon that their life is frequently at the verge of lethal infection, thus the significance of guaranteeing their safety. In combating the spread of this virus, those at the front line demand constant motivation to keep the country safe. Since every individual has a significant

role in line with their job scope, motivation is equally important for them to continue serving the country.

5.0 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is Covid-19?
2. Who are the front liners, as gazette by the Malaysian government?
3. Where are the treatment centres for Covid-19 patients?
4. How the health workers are at risk due to the novel Coronavirus?
5. When does the medical team need motivation? Why?

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest affecting the publication of this case study because the respective people's names and organization were not mentioned in the case study.

Name of First Author: Mohammad Azuwar Bin Dol Mofti
Designation of first author: Master Candidate
Email address of first author: elmutiara@gmail.com
Contact Number of first author: 019-71888228

Name of Second Author: Dr. Hemaloshinee Vasudevan
Designation of Second author: Lecturer
Email address of Second author: hemaloshinee25@gmail.com

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