Complaints as opportunities: what can the National Health Service learn from negative employee feedback?

LSE Research Online URL for this paper: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100672/

Version: Published Version

Conference or Workshop Item:

Reuse
[“licenses_typename_unspecified” not defined]
Complaints as opportunities: what can the National Health Service learn from negative employee feedback?
Sai Kalvapalle

1Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science, London School of Economics and Political Science
*Supervised by Dr. Tom Reader, Department of Psychological and Behavioural Science, London School of Economics and Political Science

1. Irony of learning in the NHS

- There persists a culture of organisational silence in the National Health Service (NHS) that discourages staff from speaking up about potential threats to safety, but staff feedback has long been identified as valuable for organisational learning and harm prevention.

2. Overcoming the irony: Glassdoor

- If staff do not speak up in the organisation – do they speak up elsewhere?
- Employee review website: Glassdoor.co.uk
- To date, there has been no attempt made to aggregate and analyse staff complaints as a facilitator for organisational monitoring and learning.

3. Project Overview

Research Questions

1) What problems are employees raising on Glassdoor?
2) How can these problems be analysed to facilitate organisational learning?

Methods

- Iteratively analysed 514 employee reviews on Glassdoor
- 2 studies, 1 deductive content analysis
  - Study 1: deductively analysed data using Healthcare Complaints Analysis Tool (HCAT; Gillespie & Reader, 2016), a patient complaints coding framework
  - Study 2: inductively analysed the data and created a bespoke Employee Complaints Analysis Tool (ECAT) that achieved Excellent inter-rater reliability. There were ~2000 issues analysed from the 514 reviews.

4. Complaint coding illustration

5. Key findings: aggregating complaints

- ECAT domain level problems reported in Glassdoor data
- ECAT problem category level issues reported in Glassdoor data
- ECAT subcategory level issues reported in Glassdoor data

6. Interpretation: what are these complaints telling us?

- This study showcases how:
  - Glassdoor.co.uk is a free, constantly populating, unobtrusive source that can provide valuable data on what employees are complaining about in an organization, and how when aggregated, analysed, and interpreted, these complaints can serve as powerful insights into safety failures in the NHS

- Contributions/implications:
  - Theoretical: furthers patient safety literature by including a new perspective crucial to patient care: employees
  - Methodological: identifies a novel, unobtrusive source of data in Glassdoor and successfully analyses the data within a social and organisational framework: the Employee Complaints Analysis Tool (ECAT) that can be used by scholars and practitioners alike

- Limitations/future research
  - More interpretation of data trends is needed
  - More statistical testing of Employee Complaints Analysis Tool (ECAT), it being a novel coding framework

7. Conclusions

- A sad cycle
  - An employee feedback hub, a unobtrusive source like Glassdoor, can provide insights into staff physical/psychological problems. This, in turn, leads to poor patient outcomes, which only increases institutional pressures.

- Better together
  - Patient safety literature shows that patients complain more about problems at the point-of-care (e.g. the nurse prescribed a wrong dosage of medicine), while the present study shows that staff complain about the back-end that patients don’t have access to (e.g. the nurse is overworked and has few resources). This is a strength. If staff complaints and patient complaints were analysed together (using tools such as the HCAT and ECAT), it could provide the NHS with a holistic view on avoidable incidents.