



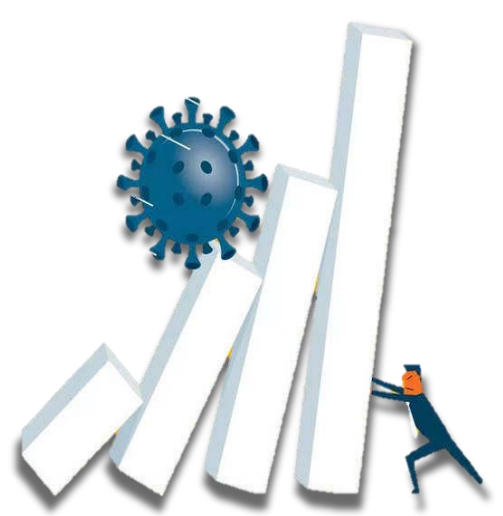
Enhancing Porters' Morale during COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Introduction

In 2020, COVID-19 pandemic swept across the whole world and caused heightened fear and stress across many sectors, especially healthcare. Many healthcare workers quit their jobs, unwell staff who reported respiratory symptoms were issued 5 days of sick leave, and job seekers shunned the healthcare industry. These daunting challenges impacted the coping responses and morale of the porters on the ground. Specifically, three factors such as turnover rate, sickness rate, and fulfilled manpower requirement affect the quality of service delivery to the patients.

2. Aim

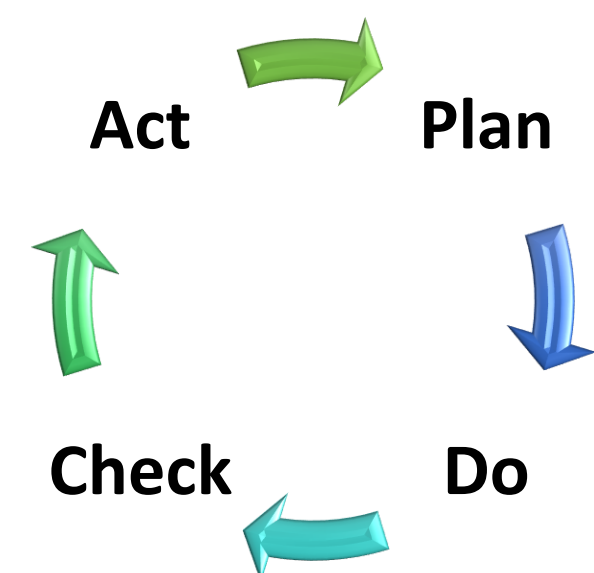
The improvement project aimed to boost porters' morale to rapidly adapt to the pandemic, ensure adequate manpower to support segregated deployment and minimize disruption to the delivery of essential services. The objectives to be fulfilled within the next 9 months (Apr-Dec 2020) are:



- ✓ To reduce turnover rate by 10%
- ✓ To decrease sickness rate by 10%
- ✓ To increase fulfilled manpower requirement by 2%

3. Methodology

The project team adopted the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) methodology.



4. Intervention

Safe Working Environment	<p>Update porters on the latest work practices and standard operating procedures.</p>	<p>Implement employee sickness surveillance and temperature monitoring process.</p>	<p>Enforce safe distancing measures and audit compliance</p>	<p>Ensure PPE compliance and adequate supplies.</p>
Supportive environment	<p>Provide educational info on prevention, risk management and travel policies.</p>	<p>Use official info to clarify and explain misconceptions around the virus.</p>	<p>Deliver appreciative meal, beverages, & care products from community & SGH.</p>	
Alternative Work Arrangement	<p>Place & approve vulnerable porters on long leave to protect them.</p>	<p>Work from home to minimise contact and ensure key personnel remain operational.</p>	<p>Roll out staggered work shift, split team and split location arrangements to reduce crowding and contact at workplace, reducing risk for cross-contamination.</p>	
Incentives	<p>Review perfect attendance policy – Converted attendance incentive into fixed allowance for more take home pay.</p>	<p>Pay \$1,000 Hero incentive (in three tranches in May, Jul, & Oct 20) to ALL staff who have worked in the frontline tirelessly during the period (Feb-Oct 20).</p>	<p>Recognise porters deployed to hot zones handling suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients with about \$250 per month.</p>	
Accommodation Benefit	<p>Provide temporary accommodation for locked-down Malaysian porters in Singapore who used to commute daily via borders. Ensure well being and peace of mind.</p>		<p>Enhance further housing allowance for affected Malaysian porters to defray the higher cost of living in Singapore.</p>	

5. Results

Average Improvement Results From Period Jun 2019-Feb 2020 To Period Apr-Dec 2020

Implementation - Mar 2020	Average Turnover Rate	Average Sickness Rate	Average Fulfilled Manpower
Improvement in Result (%)	-27.2%	-23.3%	3.0%

6. Conclusion

The effective pandemic response measures were swiftly implemented which helped to address porters' concerns, support their coping mechanism and enhance their morale, thereby reducing their sickness rate and turnover rate, optimizing available manpower and minimizing any impact on the delivery of services for all users and patients, amidst a heightened COVID-19 landscape.

This project is scalable not only to portering departments but also to other sectors and industries for pandemic preparedness and mitigation. Future research directions can explore whether these measures remain effective in the new normal environment.