

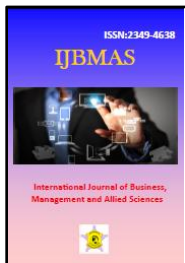
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**THE EFFECT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER
INTENTIONS - A STUDY OF NURSES IN TWO SELECTED HOSPITALS
OF HYDERABAD**

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare industry these days is faced with many challenges. One of the upcoming challenges faced by the hospitals is the maintenance of qualified and experienced staff members. It has been observed that health care workers especially nurses do quit their jobs very frequently. One of the major reasons for nurses quitting their jobs is occupational stress. The purpose of the study is to show a relationship between occupational stress faced by the nurses and their intentions to quit the hospital called turnover intentions. In order to test the above hypothesis that increased occupational stress among nurses increases their intention to quit, a study of the perceptions of nurses on occupational stress and turnover intentions is conducted in two selected private hospitals of Hyderabad. Correlation analysis is applied to study the relationship between the occupational stress among the nurses and their turnover intentions. The sampling method used is convenience sampling. At the end of the study it is concluded that there exists a strong correlation between occupational stress and employee turnover intentions which means that increased occupational stress can lead to increased turnover intentions among the nurses.

Keywords: Hospitals, nurses, occupational stress, turnover intentions.

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare industry is one of the fastest growing industry in the market but at the same time it faces many challenges (Andaleeb 1998). One of the major challenges faced by hospitals today is the retention of its potential staff members. Employees in the hospitals especially the nurses do quit for various reasons and one of the major reasons for nurses turnover is occupational stress.

According to Beehr and Newman, "Occupational stress is a condition arising from the interaction of the people and their jobs, and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning." (Shashi, K.Gupta and Rosy, Joshi 2011). Turnover intention means that intention of employees to quit the organization (Tett & Meyer 1993). Stress can yield to the problem of turnover intention. Higher the stress, the greater will be the intention to quit the job (Arshadi & Damiri, 2013). Impact of job stress on turnover intention of employees is considered very high and is a major threat to existence of employees at their job (Chathurani & Sangarandanya, 2008). V.S.P.Rao in his book human resource management described two faces of stress: constructive stress (also called eustress) where moderate amounts of stress can increase effort, stimulate creativity and

encourage diligence in one's work whereas the destructive stress (distress) may lead to overload and break down a person's physical and mental systems. Distress can lead to employee absenteeism, turnover, errors, accidents and reduced performance which is illustrated by the following figure. Thus it can be clearly understood from the following figure that an increased amount of stress leads to burnouts which causes employee turnover.

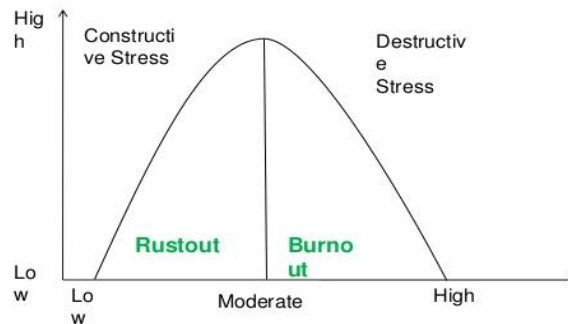


Figure: Two Faces of Stress.

Source : *Human Resource Management* by V.S.P. Rao (2010)

Nursing service is one of the most important components of hospital services. Nurses form the largest technical group of personnel engaged in patient care in hospitals next to the doctors, consuming approximately one-third of the hospital cost. The success of patient care and the reputation of the hospital depend to a large extent on the efficiency extended by the nursing staff. However, a shortage of nurses jeopardizes many aspects of health care delivery. It acknowledges occupational stress to be one of the main causes for the current nursing shortage. It is important to understand the effects of occupational stress on work behavior in nurses because stress has a cost for individuals in terms of health, well-being and job dissatisfaction, as well as for organizations in terms of absenteeism and turnover, which in turn may impact upon the quality of patient care (C.N.Rawal, Ms. Shradha A. Pardeshi, 2014).

Nurses' turnover due to occupational stress is very common in the hospital industry and there has been an increase in this phenomenon day by day. Nurses experience a lot of stress during their career and most of them do quit their jobs voluntarily. Retaining experienced employees has become a challenge for hospitals. Nurses' turnover is an ongoing problem in most countries and has become intense in recent years (World Health Organization, 2006). More than one thousand studies have been conducted about nurse turnover and related issues, mostly in Western countries with a few exceptions in Asia - Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, China, and Philippines (Cai & Zhou, 2009; Omar et al., 2013; Fang, 2010). Although these studies yielded a lot of information, we know very little about nurse turnover in India.

The employees in the hospitals when faced with stress tend to leave the organization as they can get better pay and opportunities anywhere else in the market very easily. When nurses leave the hospitals it not only costs to the management but also affects the patients who are well acquainted with them. Experienced and qualified health care staff is also very difficult to be replaced. It is therefore required to get a profound understanding of the causes of their turnover so that suitable action can be taken to overcome the problem.

Hyderabad is a metropolitan city and the growth rate of private hospitals in the city is blooming. People prefer to opt for a corporate hospital rather than public hospitals as the medical treatment and infrastructure of the private are far better than the public hospitals. Foreign investments in the hospital industry in the city are also very prevalent as it yields high profits with cheap labor. There are upcoming opportunities for the health care staff and a little ignorance in maintaining the staff leads to high employee turnover.

It has been observed that nurses turnover in the hospitals in Hyderabad city is very high which is very concerning. Nurses in these hospitals suffer from various problems like inadequate pay, low quality of work life and occupational stress. However it has been observed that majority of the nurses in these hospitals suffer from occupational stress. Therefore a detailed research is needed in this field to understand the causes of nurses turnover as these areas are less researched and they are of great importance for the well being of the society. Proper research in this field can help to provide a solution to the above mentioned problem.

The present study is thus undertaken to study the relationship of occupational stress experienced by nurses and their turnover intentions in two private hospitals of Hyderabad.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To study the relationship between the occupational stress faced by the nurses and their turnover intentions.

Research Question

Based on the above research objective, the following question is formulated:

Research question: Is there any relationship between occupational stress of nurses and their turnover intentions?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Health care, with excessive workload, difficult working conditions, dealing with difficult patients, uncertainty concerning treatment of patients and numerous occupational health and safety hazards is essentially a stressful profession. Several researchers have tried to identify sources of stress among health care employees (Ali Mohammad Mosadeghrad, 2013).

Basically, stress results from the customer's behavior (sometimes demanding and aggressive) and complaints. Stress may also result from poor work conditions, particularly lack of control (autonomy), poor social relations and lack of social support (De Jonge J, 1999).

Hospital industry is an industry which needs 100% competency unlike any other industry. Employees departing from the organization take with them the valuable knowledge and expertise gained through experience. A closed relationship is established among clinicians, nursing, paramedical and support staff. It becomes very difficult to replace the same quality of worker with the same skill. Some of the hospitals can even sink if the quality consultant leaves the organization. Studies have found that the cost of replacing lost talent is 70 to 200 percent of that of employee's annual salary. An Organization's efficiency increases if the organization is able to retain the experienced and skilled workers of its system, as they are the people who ensure the continuity of the best practices of the system. Losing one effective experienced and skilled person loosens the functioning of the concerned department. (Kavita & Mitu Matta 2013).

Healthcare market is one of the fastest growing across the world. Due to this scenario healthcare employee's demand is increasing and it is creating new jobs in the market. Many organizations are developing and expanding their business on national and international levels. Nowadays healthcare people can get high package jobs easily. New companies offer attractive pay packages and people change their jobs. There are so many reasons behind employee job change. It has been noted that the healthcare professionals are frequently changing their job when compared to other industries. So a high turnover trend is found in healthcare industry. Because of this turnover highly skilled employees are becoming very expensive and disruptive for firms and it affects their business. Losing highly skilled staff members may incur substantial costs connected with planning, advertising, recruiting, re-skilling and train a new staff. This process is time taking and expensive. (I. Anand Pawar, V. Chakravarthy, 2014).

The rate of turnover is high in private sectors than in public sectors. The levels of turnover also vary from region to region. The highest turnover rates are found where unemployment rate is lower and where it is easy for people to get alternative employment (Rankin, 2008). Sometimes employee turnover benefits the organizations positively. This might happen when a poor performer is replaced by a more skilled employee and when a retired employee is replaced by a younger one.

Employee turnover may also be costly as it requires different cost to take account such as administrative costs of recruitment, training cost for the new employee etc (Philips, 1990).

Employee turnover has increased over the last decade in Indian hospitals. In addition to the recruitment of nurses, meeting their needs to retain them is a huge challenge for the human resources (HR) personnel (Srinivasan & Chandwani, 2014).

The assumption that nurses are prone to job stress and burnout is grounded in a vast literature on occupational stress demonstrating that nursing is a stressful occupation. The following quote is testimony to the embedded nature of stress in nursing. Nursing is, by its very nature, an occupation subjected to a high degree of stress. Every day the nurse confronts the tasks which are suffering, faces grieving people and death as few other people do. Many tasks are mandatory and unrewarding. Many are, by normal standards, distasteful, even disgusting, others are often degrading; some are simply frightening (Hingey, 1984).

Given the significance of employee turnover, it is critical for human resource (HR) managers to develop and deploy a retention strategy based on the understanding of the influence that job satisfaction and organizational commitment have on turnover intention to effectively manage employee turnover, or rather employee retention (Phillips & Connell, 2003). Investment in the human capital can improve the retention of the nurses in the hospitals and can lead to decreased turnover intentions and actual turnover.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study examines the occupational stress and turnover intentions of nurses in two private hospitals of Hyderabad to understand whether correlations exist between them. Secondary data: The secondary data for the study has been collected from various printed and online journals, articles, online libraries and thesis. Primary data: A structured questionnaire is used for collecting the perceptions of the nurses on occupational stress and their turnover intentions. Descriptive and quantitative research method was found to be suitable for this study because this study focuses on gathering of numerical data through a structured questionnaire to objectively answer research questions which involves opinions, attitude and behaviors of the respondents. The questionnaire was distributed to the nurses in two private hospitals of Hyderabad and their responses are recorded and analyzed using IBM SPSS 20 version. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first part measuring the demographic profile of the employee, the second and third part measured the occupational stress and turnover intentions using a Likert scale starting from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

SAMPLE: The target sample of the study are the nurses in two private hospitals of the city namely Olive hospital and Premier hospital. Convenience sampling method was used to select a sample from each hospital.

Dependent Variable: Turnover intentions of the nurses were taken as a dependent variable in the study.

Independent Variable: There is only one independent variable in the study and that is the occupational stress in nurses.

Hypothesis :

H0: There is no significant relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions of the nurses.

H1: There is a significant relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions of the nurses.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data obtained through the responses in the questionnaire are coded and analyzed by using IBM SPSS software. The tool of correlation is used to study the relationship of occupational stress of nurses and their turnover intentions in two selected private hospitals of Hyderabad.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS OF THE NURSES IN OLIVE HOSPITAL:

		OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	NURSES TURNOVER INTENETIONS
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.696
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	25	25
NURSES TURNOVER INTENTIONS	Pearson Correlation	.696	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	25	25

INTERPRETATION: The p value (0.002) is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions of the nurses is rejected and the r value (0.696) shows that there is a strong relationship between stress and turnover intentions.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS OF THE NURSES IN PREMIER HOSPITAL:

		OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	NURSES TURNOVER INTENETIONS
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	.590
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	25	25
NURSES TURNOVER INTENTIONS	Pearson Correlation	.590	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	25	25

INTERPRETATION: The p value (0.001) is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions of the nurses is rejected and the r value (0.590) shows that there is a strong relationship between stress and turnover intentions.

Hence it can be finally interpreted from the above two tables that when there is an increase in the occupational stress of the nurses, there will high turnover intentions among the nurses.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are two main limitations of the study:

1. The study focused on the effect of occupational stress of nurses and turnover intentions only in two selected private hospitals of Hyderabad city and need not apply to all the hospitals in the city.
2. All variables measured are self-reported (via structured questionnaires) and from different hospitals, thus common method variance may have influenced the validity and reliability of the data and the integrity of the findings.

CONCLUSION

The present study is conducted to study the effect of occupational stress experienced by the nurses on turnover intentions in two private hospitals of Hyderabad. A structured questionnaire is used to gather the data from the respondents. The tool of correlation is used to study the relationship between the two variables. It has been observed that there exists a strong relationship between the occupational stress of the nurses and their turnover intentions from which it can be concluded that

when there is an increase in the occupational stress of the nurses there will be a positive increase in the turnover intentions of the nurses. The study is conducted only in two selected private hospitals of the city. Hence a study can be done in future covering various private hospitals of Hyderabad.

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