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Research Proposal

Gender and Job Satisfaction Among Nurses in the US

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Abstract

Nurses are an essential part of the healthcare system aiding in the treatment and recovery of patients. For a long time, the nursing occupation has been a female-dominated field. Going back to traditional gender roles, women were thought to be better suited for nursing jobs due to their roles as caregivers and nurturers. Slowly, with both men and women breaking away from traditional gender roles, more men have become interested in pursuing a career in the field of nursing as well.

Key words: Nursing, healthcare, gender, job satisfaction.

Introduction

Nursing is often filled with high levels of stress, long working hours, and challenging work demands. According to Bonnie Castillo (2021), hospitals staff at bare-bone levels to maximize profit, regardless of the number of patients and severity of their conditions. This infuriates nurses, as they strongly believe that there isn't truly a 'nursing shortage,' instead of making a case of a shortage of nurses willing to risk their well-being, license, or patients while working in these stressful conditions. The nursing field is mainly women, and men are self-aware of this. Anderson and Randle (1993) state that "self-monitoring was highly correlated with effective job performance for individuals in nontraditional occupations such as women in management, men in nursing, women in computer sales" (p. 347). With more men joining this stressful profession, research is being conducted to determine if gender affects job satisfaction and performance. Studies and surveys supervised by the US Census Bureau (2019) concluded that the nursing profession has a workforce that is 86.4% female and 13.6%, male.

It is evident that females dominate the field of nursing, but to what extent does gender impact job satisfaction and performance? Higher job satisfaction resulted in improved organizational productivity and decreased employee turnover. Job satisfaction leads to a positive

work environment and is essential to ensure higher revenues for the organization. The ultimate purpose of this research proposal is to see if there is a relationship between gender and job satisfaction in the field of nursing in the United States. We will view and decipher related studies, determine the best methodology to address this question, and configure what data would be needed to conduct this study. Discovering if there is a relationship between gender and job satisfaction in nursing in the United States will allow employers to address this issue and create an environment where all nurses, regardless of gender, excel in their work and succeed in their profession.

Literature Review

Male Nurses and Job Satisfaction

Although historically, women have made up the majority of the nursing workforce, more men have begun to be interested in nursing in recent years. A study theorized by Rochlen that male nurses face more significant social conflicts for entering a women's occupation compared to men in more gender traditional jobs. The study found that male nurses who face "greater gender-related work barriers were associated with higher levels of GRC (Gender Role Conflict), less social support, lower job skills, and less work and life satisfaction" (Rochlen, 2009, p. 52). Higher job satisfaction was seen among male nurses who reported experiencing fewer gender work barriers. Overall, this study suggests that men face more gender-related barriers in the workplace when they experience conflict in their personal lives and less family support (Rochlen, 2009).

Another article by Gedzyk-Nieman and Svoboda (2018) examined the level of acceptance of male nurses in the United States and its impact on job satisfaction. The report explained that collaboration between male and female nurses was a critical element in providing high-quality care, making it vital "to determine if there are issues with attitudes of acceptance that might interfere with teamwork, collaboration, and job satisfaction" (Gedzyk-Nieman & Svoboda, 2018, p. 647). Examining and understanding the specific expectations and roles related to gender are essential aspects in creating a suitable environment to enhance collaboration among nurses.

According to Moss and Rowles (1997) maintaining high job satisfaction is one key component to combatting the challenges that occur in the nursing field. Male nurses often consider job satisfaction an essential factor in their professional growth. Male nurses report experiencing different types of resistance from female nurses ranging from bullying, negative remarks about their performance, and gender stereotyping from their female coworkers (Gedzyk-Nieman & Svoboda, 2018). To protect themselves, male nurses feel pressured to work harder and use uncomfortable resolution and communication styles to fit in better. Female nurses report that even though male nurses bring value to the profession, they do not display the right emotion and compassion when interacting with patients. As a result, some female nurses do not think nursing requires male nurses to meet its objectives (Gedzyk-Nieman & Svoboda, 2018). These attitudes could significantly impact nurses' ability to collaborate and provide the highest quality care to patients.

The research showed that even though many male nurses find the profession rewarding, they are still willing to leave because of harmful treatment from female nurses. Differences in pay and gender stereotypes have a damaging impact on male nurses' ability to carry out their work, making change critical. Because more significant gender-related work barriers lead to

greater job dissatisfaction among male nurses, further studies are needed to reduce the challenges of gender barriers for male nurses.

Gender and Job Performance

Hay et al. (2019) investigated the restrictive gender norms and gender inequality issues prevalent in healthcare systems to justify the need for change. The authors conducted a literature review to effectively illuminate the effects of health systems on health gender inequality and how gender inequalities emerge within the medical staff. The latter illumination forms the fundamental focus of this paper due to its relation to gender, job performance, and nurse satisfaction in the U.S healthcare workforce.

The article explains that women are underrepresented globally at the summit of the healthcare hierarchy. It mentions how there is a gender pattern where women constitute the majority of unpaid healthcare workers in informal health districts. The authors postulate that gender biases occur even in positions where women are highly educated and trained, such as female physicians. The authors conclude that these discriminatory challenges effectively result in job-related stress, dissatisfaction, and nurse burnout that culminates in delivering poor quality care (Hay et al., 2019).

Essentially, the selected article focused on gender disparities as one of the common issues affecting U.S nurses' job performance and satisfaction. It acknowledged the presence of restrictive gender norms and gender inequality issues in the nursing workforce, such as underrepresentation and compensation disparities. It explained that the discriminatory practices against female nurses trigger job-related stress, dissatisfaction, and nurse burnout, adversely affecting patient outcomes, thus justifying the need for change.

Emotions, Gender, and Job Satisfaction

Working in an environment filled with high levels of stress and tension, it is not uncommon for nurses to face emotional labor. Though they work in the same environment, it is speculated that male nurses are better shielded from emotional labor when compared to female nurses. Stereotyped as more emotional female nurses often have to put forth more emotional labor to conceal and control their emotions while on the job. The more nurses have to manage and hide their feelings, the more significant their job satisfaction is. Prolonged emotional labor can result in a greater risk of emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions. Since male nurses are stereotyped as not being overly emotional, they are provided a social shield against emotional labor. "When male nurses do perform higher levels of emotional labor, they are shielded from the negative effects of covering emotion, and their deep acting correlates with higher job satisfaction" (Cottingham et al., 2015, pg. 377).

Unlike female nurses, higher emotional labor does not result in higher job dissatisfaction or turnover intention for male nurses. Male nurses have reported having a perception of being less emotionally involved than their female coworkers (Cottingham et al., 2015). Provided with fewer emotional rules and abuse, male nurses have received an unequal advantage over female nurses. Solutions to the inequality over emotional abuse between male and female nurses are needed to provide a fair working environment and improve job satisfaction.

Work Environment, Gender, and Job Satisfaction

One factor to consider when looking into job satisfaction among nurses is the environment in which they work. Nurses can work in various settings, including schools, laser clinics, trauma units, long-term care facilities, nursing homes, and more. A review was conducted by Aloisio et al. (2020) to determine factors that impact making a case for satisfaction among nurses who work in nursing homes.

Approximately 15,600 nursing homes serviced nearly 1.4 million residents in the United States (Harris-Kojetin et al., 2016). The authors analyzed factors associated with job satisfaction among nurses in nursing homes by identifying and examining various studies. Of the studies, 50% looked into the statistical association between job satisfaction among nurses and individual factors. Age, health status, self-determination, psychological empowerment, and job involvement positively correlated with job satisfaction (Aloisio et al., 2020). Exhaustion and stress from work also had an impact on job satisfaction. Gender and experience, however, were concluded to have no association with job satisfaction.

Nurses who work in hospitals with high patient volume and inadequate staffing are more likely to be burned out and unsatisfied with their jobs (McHugh & Ma, 2014). One of the significant elements of burnout is job overload. Some ways to help resolve this are by changing staffing policies and creating a better work environment. Work burnout can cause emotional stress and contribute to physical symptoms. This burnout can lead to job dissatisfaction, and although it affects both male and female nurses, it is more evident with female nurses (McHugh & Ma, 2014).

It is crucial to apprehend that although there may be gender bias in the workplace, many other factors are proven to have a significant association with job satisfaction. This systematic review allows us to conclude that gender is not a contributing factor in the relation between nurses in nursing homes and their job satisfaction.

The Nursing Profession, Diversity, and Wages

Job satisfaction is the primary concern for researchers. In recent years, experts from various disciplines have paid increased attention to job happiness. There are, however, few studies on nurse job satisfaction and the impact of gender on nurse job satisfaction.

Nurses' job satisfaction significantly impacts the quality of patient care, nurses' dedication to healthcare organizations, their well-being, and turnover. Job satisfaction is defined as an emotional state or attitude about a job that results from positive and negative job events and how such experiences correspond with the nurses' ideas and expectations (Moore & Continelli, 2016). Nurses' job dissatisfaction has various effects; staff turnover, poor motivation, and undesirable clinical outcomes are linked to lower job satisfaction. Nurses with better job satisfaction are more likely to be highly engaged and more motivated to work (Moore & Continelli, 2016).

Lack of diversity in the nursing profession has gotten a lot of attention. Access to quality patient care is linked to the diversity of the healthcare workforce (Moore & Continelli, 2016). The RN profession is still less diverse than the rest of the US workforce. The reason for nondiversity in this profession is high school students' lack of motivation and courage to join this career. There are fewer male nurses than females and fewer female nurses who are people of color compared to their white counterparts. The heterogeneous structure of the healthcare environment increases job satisfaction in the nursing profession. Recently, we have been observing significant changes in such a field. We notice more men, nurses, and people of color in

our nursing industry. Wage disparities between whites and minorities contribute to dissatisfaction and inequality, resulting in a lack of attractiveness to the nursing profession.

Wage variance is a significant factor in any industry, including the nursing profession (Moore & Continelli, 2016). McHugh and Ma identified that low wages were linked to work dissatisfaction and the desire to leave or change jobs. Wage disparities in nursing and other occupations have been studied, and it has been discovered that wage disparities can occur for various causes, such as cost-of-living differences. The gender and ethnicity pay gap is another issue that creates discrepancies in the nursing career. According to Moore and Continelli (2016) men generally earn higher wages than women. Fisher and Houseworth (2012) discovered that black female nurses earned more than white female nurses at the mean and median. Moore and Continelli (2016) argue that in New York City, minority RNs made less on average than white RNs. Researchers discovered that inequalities might explain some wage disparity in the distribution of factors like education level and experience among racial and ethnic groups. However, differences in the salary value of the same feature accounted for a large portion of the disparity, which could indicate discrimination. To increase the diversity of the nursing profession, a variety of activities will be needed, including addressing gender and pay disparities, encouraging minorities to enroll in nursing programs, expanding graduation rates, and providing mentorship programs to assist them to succeed in their careers.

Methodology

Research methodology refers to the specific procedures or techniques used to identify and analyze information about a topic. To combat whether or not there is a relationship between gender and job satisfaction in nursing in the United States, we will be using the qualitative approach. This approach mainly focuses on opinions, and/or experiences not necessarily statistics. Concurrently, we will be using an ethnographic approach. Ethnography is a study of an entire group, or more precisely, a group with a shared culture (Leedy et al., 2019). A culture group refers to a group that shares the same career and familiar environment. For this study, our culture group is individuals who work in Making a case for nursing in the United States.

There may be some limitations in using the qualitative method, such as the number of interviewees available. Due to the short period allotted and our incapability to reach a massive number of RNs in the pandemic, we plan on construing analytic descriptions from our data to capture the research proposal's complexity. We could benefit from both qualitative and quantitative techniques since mixed-methods designs that include both quantitative and qualitative components can frequently provide a case for a complete view of a phenomenon than either approach alone. However, the benefit of the qualitative method is that from a small sample, we get comprehensive results. This method will provide us with the data we need.

Data Collection

For this study, we will implement a qualitative research method approach to collect data. We plan to compose a survey and hold one-on-one interviews in U.S. hospitals. Qualitative research methods will allow us to understand the emotions, feelings, behaviors, challenges, and other experiences associated with male and female nurses in the U.S. The interview session will be video-recorded, and a transcript of the discussion will be made. By consenting to participate in the study, nurses agree to the tape recording of the session. Please note that nurses' names or

any other identifying information will not be recorded at any time during the interview. Nurses have the right to stop the interview at any moment, and we will comply. We will be interviewing 10 female nurses and 10 male nurses.

A receptionist station will be set up at each hospital for the interview to be smoothly executed. Participants will be provided a cash incentive to thank them for their time and participation. The value of the incentive will be discussed with the assigned hospital's Human Resources department to determine an appropriate amount. The cash incentive will continue to be provided until sufficient data is collected or saturation is reached.

The research will use in-depth semi-structured interviews with nurses among males and females who have varying levels of job satisfaction. The interviews will be conducted by the assigned hospital's Human Resources workers. The team will comprise six research assistants three males and three females. The lead researcher will guide the six research assistants. Interviewers will use an in-depth interview guide. The topics will cover the feelings and emotions of working as a nurse, individual experiences working in different environments, and challenges of the profession.

In the following brief survey(A,B,C, and D), under the structure of The Job Descriptive Index (Castanheira, 2014), we will ask nurses questions regarding their five dimensions of job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision, coworkers, pay, promotional opportunities, and the work itself.

A. Personal Experience(s) with Working as a Nurses
1. How long have you been working as a nurse?
2. What gender do you identify as?
3. How many hours do you work a day?
4. In terms of salary, do you see yourself getting paid on average, below or high?
5. Have you ever encountered any work challenges that lead to high stress?
6. Do you currently want to quit your job due to low job satisfaction?

B. Social Settings and Interactions
1. What are your emotions working as a nurse under long hours? Please explain.
2. Who are the people you receive support from? Please explain how they provide support for you.
3. Is there a stigma around low job satisfaction within your organization? Tell me more about it.
4. Does your supervisor or coworkers know about your job satisfaction condition?

C. Human Resources Services
1. What are the solutions offered for individuals who have low job satisfaction?
2. Why did you choose this solution for low job satisfaction?
3. Does this solution provide you with helpful information? Please give examples.
4. Have you ever had a negative experience with a solution? Please explain. How did that make you feel?
5. In terms of opportunities for promotion, where do you see yourself in the chance of getting promoted?

D. Closing Questions
1. What advice, tips, or words of encouragement would you give to people who have recently been feeling low job satisfaction?

2. Is there anything else you feel we have left out or was not discussed that you would like to share?

Limitations

This research examines the relationship between nurses' job satisfaction and performance among males and females in the U.S. The proposed study has several limitations. First, the availability of participants may be difficult. Participants may have issues arriving or may have to cancel due to last-minute staffing updates or personal obligations. Consistent communication between the HR staff and participants may help solve and minimize this problem. Second, the study presents a generalized interpretation of the nurses' results because each participant offers their perspective and performance which is unique to them. As a result, the findings might not be consistent and more data would need to be collected to assist U.S. hospitals to create an environment where all nurses, regardless of gender, excel in their work and succeed in their profession.

Conclusion

Our research proposal aimed to explore the relationship between gender and job satisfaction among nurses in the U.S. Based on our research, it is evident that more studies need to be conducted and reported to establish if there is a link. Although gender may not be directly linked to job satisfaction in the field of nursing, we can conclude that some factors that do contribute to job satisfaction include acceptance, work environment, discriminatory challenges, and wages. Customer satisfaction starts with employee satisfaction, so it is crucial to ensure that employers listen to their employees and act on their requests to achieve a healthy working environment.

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