

Research Article

Investigating Employee Retention of Nurses within Healthcare Sector

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Abstract

Background: Keeping nurses in their jobs was crucial to building up the healthcare sector nationwide.

Objective: The study's goal was to find out if variables associated with job satisfaction and nurse retention in the healthcare industry in one of Kuala Lumpur's tertiary private hospitals were linked.

Methods: A cross-sectional study is what this is. The research examines the relationship between job satisfaction and employee retention and variables such as family social support, employee engagement, working environment and conditions, manager and peer support, and development opportunities.

Results: A total of 104 questionnaires were handed out to registered nurses working in medical surgical wards. The data was analysed using descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, and validity analysis. The Cronbach's alpha result showed a range of 0.837 – 0.967 for each construct and the 42 total items from all the constructs. Employee retention ($r=0.336$, p -value 0.05) and job satisfaction ($r=0.223$, p -value 0.05) had the least in common.

Conclusion: According to the findings, job satisfaction and employee retention are strongly influenced by family social support, employee engagement, working environment and conditions, manager and peer support, and development opportunities.

Keywords: *Employee Retention, Nurses, Healthcare, Hospital, Malaysia*

Introduction

In the early of 19th century, hands-on skill is the medium of educating new nurses adopted by the British doctors and nursing leaders [1]. The nurses were only awarded the certificate level of qualification once their training was completed [1]. All nursing colleges are accredited and recognised by Ministry of Higher Education with approval from Nursing Board [2]. Clinical posting is one of the crucial components in nursing education for nursing students to learn in complex clinical environment, maintaining good relationship with clinical staff and accommodate themselves in learning to use high technology medical equipment [3].

However, due to limited clinical placement for nursing students, healthcare teaching institutions in Malaysia have been using different simulation modalities in their curriculum in supporting the learning development [4]. Despite having three years for Diploma in Nursing or even four years bachelor's in nursing program, if newly graduated nurses do not receive proper orientation structured program in a new workplace due to consistent hectic clinical environment and shortage of nursing personnel to carry out the duty, it will make the modulation program neglected [5].

In Malaysia, similarly like other countries worldwide, is also facing the problem of deficit in nursing workers [6]. The shortages of professional nurses and their high turnover have become a worldwide issue [7]. In the upcoming ten to twenty years, there will be an anticipation shortage of professional nurses worldwide [8]. Nurses working in medical surgical wards is one of the highest turnovers as compared to specialty area, which turnover for bedside registered nurses ranges from 8.8% to 37.0% [9]. Legal claims and adverse events are on the rise with nurses working extended shift to overcome shortage of nursing manpower [10].

Nursing serve as a profession in a progressive workplace is portrayed by high turnover and skill shortfall [11]. With regards to the working area, there is a significant association between working area and burnout whereby nurses working in surgical medical wards showed higher prevalence of burnout [12]. Nursing employees perceives that they are unhappy and dissatisfied about their accomplishment at workplace [13]. Distance own self from personal accomplishment will negatively affect the accomplishment at workplace by hindering in putting efforts towards the completion of job assignment [13]. When the number of nurse leavers are high along with the pace of rapid nursing turnover, compared to overall nurse staffing, this will lead to negative impact which become even more damaging to patients' care and organisational cost [14]. Employed women have tendencies in facing more obstacles both at work and family, especially when increased workload at workplace may influence the obligation in the family [15]. Nurses who relatively having shorter working experience are in the stage of adapting with current workforce and have less capacity in managing stressful events [16].

To be successful in the nursing field, candidates must be able to cope with the high levels of physical and emotional stress that occurs on the job [13]. In healthcare organisations around the world, one of the most difficult aspects of the job is keeping registered nurses. Nurses' current work has become more demanding and competitive as far as contributing to Malaysian society's health and well-being is concerned, given their multifaceted and cross-border responsibilities.

The foundation of social support in the context of burnout is work-related support from superiors and peers [19]. Workplace happiness is a factor in overall well-being because it measures how happy people are in their jobs [20, 21]. If you want to improve workplace happiness and thus employee retention [21], it's critical that you keep your employees happy in their jobs. This will lead to higher productivity. Employees who believe they are treated fairly in light of their organisational contributions are more likely to perform satisfactorily and remain with the same company over the long term [22]. It's been shown that employees who have a strong sense of purpose in their work are better able to manage their time and effort in order to meet their employers' expectations The degree to which employees are

satisfied with their jobs is a determining factor in their decision to stay or go [23]. High levels of employee satisfaction are associated with better employee retention [24] because of the positive influence it has on behaviour in the workplace. To find out how factors like job satisfaction and employee retention affect nursing staff at a Kuala Lumpur-based tertiary private hospital, researchers conducted this study

Materials And Methods

Cross-sectional Study

It's important to note that because this was a cross-sectional study, the findings cannot be considered conclusive. Registered nurses who worked in medical and surgical wards in a private hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, took part in the study. The study lasted for three years. There were 104 people who took part in the research. All of them responded, so the total number of people who took part was 100 percent. Survey questionnaires were distributed to each of them, and that's how the data was gathered. To find out how job satisfaction affects employee retention, researchers looked at a variety of variables including employee engagement, the working environment and conditions, manager and peer support, as well as opportunities for advancement.

Instrument Development

The research instrument will be a questionnaire that was used in this study. There was a cover letter attached to the first page of every questionnaire in the set. Besides serving as a preface, it reviews the researcher's identity, reflecting the necessity of disseminating an informational questionnaire about the field of nursing involvement in medical surgical wards and the researcher's own personal identification. The questionnaires used in this study were developed by Bhatia and Srilatha (2016) [25], Jain & Nair (2017) [26], Motlou et al. (2016) [27], Rosales et al. (2013) [28], and Razak et al. (2016) [29]. It was Section A's task to create a questionnaire with five questions about respondents' demographic profiles such as ethnicity, age bracket and the length of time they'd been employed on a nominal and ordinal scale. The survey also asked about the number of hours per day that respondents worked, and these were broken down by gender, race, and age. Nominal scales were used to determine gender and race. Age, experience, and average number of hours worked per day were all determined using ordinal scales with the nurses. A set of questions were based on the independent variables of family social support, employee engagement (including job satisfaction), working environment and conditions, manager and peer support, and development opportunities were included in Sections B through D. Section C then addressed the dependent variable of job satisfaction, and section D addressed the dependent variable of employee retention. On a five-point Likert scale, we scored Sections B, C, and D. One was assigned to indicate strong disagreement, two indicated disagreement, three indicated neither agreement nor disagreement, four indicated agreement, and five was assigned to indicate strong agreement. Using a Likert scale of one to two, Section A was judged on whether or not the author strongly disagreed with it.

Statistical analysis

IBM SPSS version 23.0 was used for the statistical analysis. Using descriptive statistics, we analysed the demographic data and the mean score. Each individual and overall construct's internal consistency was examined using reliability analysis. The Pearson correlation coefficients were used to see if there was a connection between the variables of family social support, employee engagement, working environment and conditions, manager and peer support, development opportunities, job satisfaction and employee retention.

Result

Demographic Profiles

The demographic profile of the respondents described on gender, race, age, nursing working experience in the current hospital and average working hours per day. 100% of the registered nurses are female. Majority of the respondents were Malays at 63.5%, followed by Indians at 26%, others at 9.5% and Chinese at 1% (Table 1). Majority of the respondents were aged 30 years old and below at 80.8%, followed by age group of 31 to 40 years old at 17.3% and the remaining of 1.9% in between 41 to 50 years old. 74% of the respondents had nursing working experience at the current hospital fall in between 1 month to 5 years which constitute of 77 registered nurses. 20.2% of the respondents achieve nursing working experience in between 6 – 10 years equal to 21 registered nurses, followed by 4.8% having working experience ranging in between 11 – 15 years and finally 1% had more than 15 years of working experience. Majority of the respondents' average working hours per day fall in between 7 – 10 hours in total of 87.5% and followed by 6.7% fall in between 11 – 13 hours. Average working hours per day of 2.9% ranging same percentage both in between 14 to 16 hours and more than 16 hours.

Table 1. Demographic profiles.

Demographic Information	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Gender:			
Female	104	100	100
Male	0	0	
Race:			
Chinese	1	1	1
Malay	66	63.5	64.5
Indian	27	26	90.5
Others	10	9.5	100
Age:			
30 years old and below	84	80.8	80.8
31 – 40	18	17.3	98.1
41 – 50	2	1.9	100
Above 50	0		

Nursing working experience in the current hospital:			
	77	74	74
1 – 5	21	20.2	94.2
6 – 10	5	4.8	99
11- 15	1	1	100
More than 15 years			
Average working hours per day:			
7 – 10	91	87.5	87.5
11 – 13	7	6.7	94.2
14 – 16	3	2.9	97.1
More than 16 hours	3	2.9	100

The mean score range fall in between 3.53 to 3.88. Out of score 5, family social support gained the highest mean value (3.88), followed by development opportunities (3.83), manager and peer support (3.86), working environment and condition (3.69), job satisfaction (3.65), employee engagement (3.62) and lastly employee retention (3.53) in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean score for family social support, employee engagement, working environment and condition, manager and peer support, development opportunities, job satisfaction and employee retention.

	Family Social Support	Employee Engagement	Working Environment and Condition	Manager and Peer Support	Development Opportunities	Job Satisfaction	Employee Retention
N	(n=104)	(n=104)	(n=104)	(n=104)	(n=104)	(n=104)	(n=104)
Mean (\pm SD)	3.88 (\pm 0.77)	3.62 (\pm 0.57)	3.69 (\pm 0.57)	3.86 (\pm 0.63)	3.83 (\pm 0.63)	3.65 (\pm 0.62)	3.53 (\pm 0.58)

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis of all constructs were measured using Cronbach's alpha level as depicted in Table 3. The highest value in Cronbach's alpha found in development opportunities (0.950), manager and peer support (0.926), followed by job satisfaction (0.910), employee retention (0.891), family social support (0.886), working environment and condition (0.876) and employee engagement (0.837). The overall Cronbach's alpha value all the construct is 0.967.

Table 3. Summary of reliability analysis.

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Family social support	6	0.886
Employee engagement	6	0.837
Working environment and condition	6	0.876
Manager and peer support	6	0.926
Development opportunities	6	0.950
Job satisfaction	6	0.910
Employee retention	6	0.891
All constructs	42	0.967

Validity Analysis

Table 4 shows that employee engagement, working conditions, manager and peer support, development opportunities, job satisfaction, and employee retention all have a positive relationship with each other. Employee retention had the lowest correlation ($r=0.336$, p -value 0.05) with job satisfaction ($r=0.223$, p -value 0.05) when looking at family social support. A strong correlation was found between employee engagement and job satisfaction ($r=0.715$, p -value 0.05) and employee retention ($r=0.686$, p -value 0.05). Working conditions and environment were found to have a strong correlation with job satisfaction ($r=0.709$, p -value 0.05) and employee retention ($r=0.688$, p -value 0.05).

Table 4. Correlation between study variables.

		Job Satisfaction	Employee Retention
Family Social Support	Person Correlation	0.223	0.336
	Sig (2 tailed)	0.017	0.000
Employee Engagement	Person Correlation	0.715	0.686
	Sig (2 tailed)	0.000	0.000
Working Environment and Condition	Person Correlation	0.709	0.688
	Sig (2 tailed)	0.000	0.000
Manager and Peer Support	Person Correlation	0.775	0.661
	Sig (2 tailed)	0.000	0.000
Development Opportunities	Person Correlation	0.702	0.651
	Sig (2 tailed)	0.000	0.000

Discussion

All registered nurses working in medical surgical wards in a Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, tertiary hospital were given the survey questionnaire, which was developed using a five-point Likert scale. There were no male registered nurses in medical surgical wards after these findings were made (100 percent). Nurses registered in Malaysia are overwhelmingly Malays (63.5 percent). About 87.5% of the nurses in the hospital have between six and ten years of experience, and about 87.5% of them work between seven and ten hours per day. Family social support received the highest mean score (3.88). Job satisfaction and employee retention had the lowest correlations with family social support ($r=0.233$, p -value 0.05), with the former having a $r=0.336$ and the latter having a $r=0.233$, respectively.

A study conducted by Zhang et al. (2015) [30] found a strong correlation between work-family facilitation and job satisfaction ($r=0.35$), which was very similar to this finding. But this was found to be false by Das et al. (2015) [31], who found that there was a positive relationship between family support and job satisfaction, with a $r=0.0758$. Between manager and peer support and job satisfaction, the strongest correlation ($r=0.775$, p -value 0.05) was found ($r=0.775$, p -value 0.05). It has been discovered that a leader who demonstrates a high level of concern for her subordinates contributes to greater employee satisfaction because both can sense the respect and warm relationship [20]. It has been shown that when an

employee receives positive supervisory, peer and organisational support, they will feel more engaged within the organisation and will be more loyal as it is fulfilling in job satisfaction and will remain with the same organisation for a long period of time [32]. When it comes to employee retention, the working environment and condition had the strongest correlation with employee retention ($r=0.688$, $p\text{-value}0.05$). When it comes to employee performance on the job, the working environment and conditions are both critical factors to consider [33]. These factors have an impact on the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees as evidenced by increased engagement, commitment, and even an increase in job retention. Cronbach's alpha values for each of the constructs range between 0.837 and 0.950, with the overall construct having an alpha value of 0.967 (see table). In challenging work environments, nurses who have access to career development opportunities are more satisfied in their jobs and are more likely to stay in their positions for a longer period of time [34]. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to go above and beyond to meet the needs of their customers because they are motivated to work. As a result, they tend to stay in their jobs for longer periods of time, resist competitive job offers, and even recommend the organisation to others as a good place to work and practise [20]. Employees' trust and loyalty assist the company in achieving long-term objectives, and in return, when they receive internal promotion, this will result in increased job satisfaction [24] [24, 25].

Conclusion

The findings confirmed that job satisfaction and employee retention are significantly influenced by factors such as family social support, employee engagement, working environment and condition, manager and peer support, and development opportunities, among others. It is critical to develop, promote, and retain talent in order to meet the current and future needs of the healthcare industry in terms of growth and sustainability. Because development opportunities are considered to be one of the most important values, the organisation should place a high priority on this element in order to ensure that employees continue to grow with the organisation for a longer period of time. Training and development programmes for all nursing employees should be implemented, and the organization's human resource department should work to continuously improve the skills of its employees and develop their potential. A customised training programme can be implemented to accommodate employees' career advancement, allowing for the development of long-term relationships with employees and an increase in nursing retention.

Ethics Approval And Consent To Participate

This study was conducted after approved by the Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur Research and Ethics Committee (PHKL REC Approval Number: PHKL-EC-2020-0004).

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