Original article

Factors influencing turnover intention among registered nurses in Samar Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Despite the massive nurse migration and turnover of nurses in the Philippines, there remains a lack of studies describing factors influencing the migration of Filipino nurses. This study explored the effects of nurses' characteristics, work satisfaction, and work stress with the intent to leave an organization among registered nurses in the Philippines.

Methods: This study utilized a descriptive, cross-sectional approach. One hundred sixty six (166) nurses participated in the study during the months of September 2015 to December 2015. Three standardized instruments were used in the study: Job Satisfaction Index (JSI), Job Stress Scale (JSS), and Turnover Intention Inventory Scale (TIIS). Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools.

Results: Nurses' ages were found to significantly influence their turnover intentions. Job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.47$, $p = 0.001$) and job stress ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.001$) strongly predicted turnover intentions in the nurses. The mean values for the job satisfaction scale, job stress scale, and turnover intention inventory scale were 3.13 (SD = 0.60), 2.74 (SD = 0.71), and 2.43 (SD = 0.67) respectively.

Conclusions: Several predictors of turnover intentions were determined in this study through nurses' age, job satisfaction, and job stress as being the most influential factors. Efforts to increase nurses' job satisfaction and reduce job stress should be implemented to halt further loss of these skilled groups of healthcare professionals.

1. Introduction

Nursing turnover remains a challenging issue within the concerns for those in nursing management. Intentions for nurse turnover has been defined in the literature as the individual nurses' decision for leaving a nursing unit and perhaps even leaving the facility (Brewer, Kovner, Greene, Tukov-Shuser, & Djukic, 2012; Flinkman, Leino-Kilpi, & Salanterä, 2010; Toren et al., 2012). The literature suggested that nurse turnover intentions range from 4% to 68% (El-Jardali, Dimassi, Dumit, Jamal, & Mouro, 2009; Flinkman et al., 2010; Hasselhorn et al., 2008; Sabanciogullari & Dogan, 2015). In a cross-sectional observational study conducted in 10 countries, 33% of staff nurses reported the intention to leave their current hospital facility while 9% reported the intention to leave their current profession (Heinen et al., 2013).

The cost and burden of turnover intention in nurses are well documented in the nursing literature. High turnover in nurses are attributed to the high incidence of medical errors, adverse patient events and errors, and the low quality of patient care (North et al., 2013; O'Brein-Pallas, Murphy, Shamian, Li, & Hayes, 2010). Turnover affects the morale of the remaining staff, reduces their motivation to work, and eventually their productivity (Hayes et al., 2012; Jones & Gates, 2007). For the organization, turnover may impact the hospital budget as it entails the need for use of temporary overtime, orientation and training for new staff, continuous recruitment, advertising and hiring (North et al., 2013; O'Brein-Pallas et al., 2010; Roche, Duffield, Dimitrelis, & Frew, 2015). Approximations of turnover costs ranged from around $20,561 (USA) with an upper range to $48,790 (Australia) per nurse turnover (Duffield, Roche, Homer, Buchan, & Dimitrelis, 2014). In light of these current trends in nurse turnover, efforts must be made to maintain an organizationally committed nursing workforce and prevent massive nurse turnover.

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2. Review of literature

2.1. Nurses' characteristics and turnover intention

Scholars have identified factors attributed to turnover intention in nurses which were classified into two areas. These include the organizational and individual – related factors. Individual – related factors are linked to the nurses' decision to leave their institutions and included the following: age (Abubakar, Chauhan, & Kura, 2014; Delobelle et al., 2011; Lee, Lee, & Bernstein, 2013; Takase, Teraoka, & Kousuke, 2015; Toren et al., 2012), academic qualifications (Delobelle et al., 2011; Flinkman et al., 2010; Toren et al., 2012), gender (Flinkman et al., 2010), marital status (Toren et al., 2012) working status (Brewer et al., 2012), being childless (Al Asmari & Douglas, 2012), and work experiences (Arslan Yurumezoglu & Kocaman, 2016; Lagerlund, Sharp, Lindqvist, Runesdotter, & Tishelman, 2015). More recent evidence showed that having a university degree and those who have been in the profession a short period of time as good predictors of turnover in the Ethiopian nurses (Ayalew et al., 2015).

Organization – related factors known to influence the turnover intentions have additionally been identified in the literature. In one study involving nurses and unit managers, the turnover intention was attributed to inadequacy of team support, professional effectiveness, and the perceived lack of care and concerns from employers (O'Brein-Pallas et al., 2010). Tummers, Groeneveld, and Lankhaar (2013) identified the following factors associated with turnover intention: low job autonomy, lack of career development opportunities, and a poor working climate. In a prospective study involving 799 nurses in Turkey, several factors predicting their intention to leave the organization were found and revealed burnout, working relations between nurse and physician, and inadequate staffing (Arslan Yurumezoglu & Kocaman, 2016). Lack of recognition from their immediate supervisor, poor leadership style, unethical climate, poor staffing levels, high nursing workloads, poor relationships with co – nurses and nurse managers, and the presence of workplace bullying were also cited as strong predictors of turnover intention (Al Hamwan, Mat, & Al Muala, 2015; Hart, 2005; Lee et al., 2013; Tourangeau, Cummings, Cranley, Ferron, & Harvey, 2010). Despite the abundance of studies on these management issues, there is a need to further investigate other factors that may influence turnover intention in nurses such as nurses' monthly income, rank or position, and characteristics of the hospital setting. Thus, the hypothesis is that:

Hypothesis 1. Nurse's characteristics and hospital variables will be related to nurses' turnover intentions.

2.2. Job stress and turnover intention

In the literature, stress related to work was also consistently cited as an important predictor of turnover intention in nurses. Job stress is defined "as any work situation perceived by the participant as threatening because of the mismatch between the situation's demands and the individual's coping abilities" (AbuAlRub, 2004, pp. 75). Chronic exposure to job stress may result in poor health and impaired functioning in nurses (Lim, Bogossian, & Ahern, 2010) and eventually may affect job performance (AbuAlRub & AL Zaru, 2008). Most frequently cited sources of stress that has plagued nurses for several years included: workload, emotional labor, leadership style of the manager, role conflict, and workplace aggression (McVivar, 2003; Lim et al., 2010). AbuAlRub and AL Zaru (2008) conducted a cross-sectional study with 206 Jordanian staff nurses. Their study indicated strong positive associations between work stress and turnover intentions in the nurses. The same result was obtained in a descriptive study conducted by Tourangeau et al. (2010) where nurses who described being stressed or burnout, reported a higher degree of intention to leave employment. In one study, stress related to duty, interpersonal relations, and organizational policies were identified as key predictors of nurses' turnover

intentions (Mosadeghrad, 2013). It is therefore hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2. Job stress will be positively related to the nurses' turnover intentions.

2.3. Job satisfaction and turnover intention

Growing evidence has demonstrated a clear connection between these two constructs: work satisfaction and turnover intention. Job satisfaction referred to nurses' affective orientation towards the job (Price, 2001). Sources of nurses' job satisfaction included the: working environment, remuneration, promotion, interaction, job autonomy and security, and leadership styles of the supervisor (Lu, While, & Barriball, 2005). Previous studies consistently highlighted satisfaction with work as an important construct predicting nurses' decisions to leave their work. For instance, Cho, Lee, Mark, and Yun (2012) explored factors related to turnover intentions in 351 Korean nurses. The findings revealed nurses who were not satisfied with their current work tended to quit their current job when compared to nurses who were happy and content.

Among the different dimensions of work satisfaction, interpersonal relationships had a higher impact on turnover followed by work content and physical work environment (Arslan Yurumezoglu & Kocaman, 2016). A few more studies cited dissatisfaction with nurses' salary and lack of professional advancement opportunities as the main reason for leaving the organization (Arslan Yurumezoglu & Kocaman, 2016; Ayalew et al., 2015; Cho et al., 2012; Li et al., 2010; Lynn & Redman, 2005; Sabanciogullari & Dogan, 2015). A recent study suggested that nurses in the U.S. who experienced higher levels of occupational stress, were dissatisfied with the organization's leadership, unsatisfied with their lack of career advancement, and were not adequately compensated, more likely left their organization (Mazurenko, Gupte, & Shan, 2015). In one study involving nurses in South Africa, turnover intentions were predicted by job satisfaction along with the nurses' age and educational background (Delobelle et al., 2011). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3. Job satisfaction will be negatively related to nurses' turnover intentions.

2.4. Nursing situation in the Philippines

Globally, the Philippines is the leading source of recruitment for professional nurses. In the last decade, the country experienced a massive exodus of nurses as a result of an increasing demand for nurses abroad such as in the Middle East, United States, and United Kingdom. From 2004 to 2010, about 20% of all emigrating professionals were nurses (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 2010). A number of factors have driven this trend. These include such concerns as low salaries, lack of a benefit package, high patient – nurse ratios, lack of opportunities and professional growth, and poor enforcement of nursing laws (Brush & Sochalski, 2007; Perrin, Hagopian, Sales, & Huang, 2007). This has had adverse consequences on the provision of health care services as the country will lose its experienced and skilled workers while increasing the workload in the healthcare facilities. This, in turn, has had a negative impact on the provision of quality care for patients (Masselink & Lee, 2010).

Despite the massive nurse migration and turnover in this country, there remains a lack of studies describing factors influencing the migration in Filipino nurses (Lorenzo, Galvez-Tan, Icamina, & Javier, 2007). This hampers the formulation of management strategies that can aim to increase the retention in nurses and prevent continued turnover. Therefore, this study explored the influences of nurses' characteristics, work satisfaction, job stress on their intention to leave their organization among Filipino nurses. Identification of these factors is essential in the formulation of management strategies in order to decrease the