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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

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Descriptive predictors of nursing faculty's job satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nursing shortages are directly impacted by the growing number of faculty vacancies in the United States. Many factors contribute to these vacancies including age, retirement, compensation, lack of funding for positions, marketplace competition, geographical area, lack of qualified applicants, and workload. The retention of qualified nursing faculty is crucial to the future health care system and to higher education institutions with nursing programs. Identifying work factors that consistently influence faculty members' intentions to remain in academia is crucial to ensuring public health with a robust nursing workforce of the future. The purpose of this article is to present an overview of the literature related to determining job satisfaction and job descriptive work-engagement levels of individuals who are employed as higher education faculty members in the field of nursing.
Description: Retention efforts for nursing faculty, due to shortage, have become necessary to examine how faculty perceive their engagement with teaching. A descriptive, correlational project study design was performed using an invitation to complete an online survey via Qualtrics as a part of a larger study of nursing faculty. This article will examine six predictor variables of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and the Job in General (JIG).
Discussion: This study explored the job descriptive index and job satisfaction of faculty in nursing schools as it relates to an assortment of descriptive variables, including demographics, pay, supervisors, rank, peers, and workload reflections. Nursing faculty perceptions of promotion opportunities, salaries, resources, and support play an important role in attracting, hiring, and retaining nursing faculty, as shown by the results of this study. The findings from this study can serve higher education institutions in ascertaining the satisfaction variables that can be altered to attract and retain faculty in nursing.

Key Words: Job Satisfaction, Retention, Nursing, Faculty

1. INTRODUCTION

The ongoing nursing shortage is impacting not only hospitals but also nursing schools within the United States.[1] Many schools are encountering their own staffing shortages as educators retire or take other higher-paying jobs in clinical areas. Nursing schools are challenged to accommodate the demand for more nurses by increasing enrollment while addressing the lack of academically qualified faculty. Without the retention of qualified nursing faculty, the expansion of the nursing workforce will remain limited.[1] The current and projected shortage of nurses and nursing faculty is well-documented. The heightened focus on retaining faculty has led to the exploration of the factors that contribute to nurse faculty vacancies. The academic work environment is complex, with faculty juggling many roles, including educator, clinical practice expert, research, and service.

Job satisfaction and engagement are topics that come up frequently when researchers examine factors that affect nursing

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faculty's intent to stay. Employment satisfaction has been an important area of investigation for organizational psychologists since the early 1900s. Over the past century, researchers have tried to determine factors that influence worker behavior and how that behavior impacts job performance.[2] Several factors affecting a nurse's work-life balance, including workload and job satisfaction, may cause burnout and/or stress, which are major contributors to nurse faculty shortage.[3, 4] Stress and perceived stress in the workplace affect occupational burnout in different ways. Organizational commitment, job stress, and occupational commitment were significant predictors of job satisfaction.[5] Lee and colleagues revealed that a healthy work environment is vital to job satisfaction in nursing faculty.[6] Another study described similar findings and found that increased levels of job satisfaction correlated with productivity and commitment to the culture of an organization.[5] Professional commitment, employment satisfaction, and administrative commitment were significant predictors of the nursing faculty's intent to stay in academia.[7]

Research design

A descriptive, correlational design of nursing faculty was conducted by completing a 195-item online survey as a part of a larger study. This article will examine six predictor variables the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and the Job in General (JIG) and their relationships between five predictor variables and one dependent variable.[8] The JDI and JIG scales are frequently used by organizational and academic researchers to measure employee attitudes such as job satisfaction. The study hypothesis states that among nursing faculty in academia, work, pay, opportunity for promotion, job supervision, and coworkers explain variation in job satisfaction.

2. METHODS

2.1 Sample

A purposive, non-probability sampling of nursing schools within the southeastern region of the United States was used which included 120 nursing schools. Approximately 2,500 nurse faculty were invited to participate in the study. Study participants were communicated with via electronic mail (email), contact information was obtained using institution internet web pages and a detailed analysis to obtain each individual nursing faculty email address publicly accessible via the world wide web. For those schools without individual email accessible on the webpages, the academic unit leader was notified of the study via email and asked to distribute the invitation to their faculty. The solicitation sent included directions for study participation by accessing the hyperlink to the landing page for the study. Included in the email solicitation for volunteer participants explaining the purpose,

consent, and assertion of confidentiality.

Of the emails sent, 1,160 faculty consented to participate (response rate 26%). Data from participant entries were evaluated and cleaned which further lowered the sample size to 1,017 eligible entries. Demographic data showed an aging faculty population of Professor (masters 51/doctoral 61), Associate Professor (masters 53/doctoral 57), and Assistant Professor (masters 51/doctoral 51) (Appendix A). Participant age ranges were comparable with national faculty data of nurses obtained via the American Association Colleges of Nursing.[1] The nurse faculty workforce is comprised of faculty with mean ages closer to retirement, which is reflective of the national demographic.

2.2 Data collection and instruments

The electronic invitation sent for this study included a hyperlink to the landing page, consent, and surveys. The survey remained active for 4 continuous weeks, and subsequently at 2 and 3 weeks after the initial solicitation, a reminder email was sent. A survey methodology for the original study was used and included the following five instruments: Nurse Educator Technostress Scale (NETS), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Attitudes Toward Electronic Learning (AtEL), Demographics, Job in General (JIG), and the Job Descriptive Index (JDI). This article focuses on the Job Descriptive Index and the Job in General which contains 90 questionnaire items and is used to measure job satisfaction using a "yes", "no", and "?" to each query. Forty-one items of the main survey were negatively articulated and required reverse-coding. A review of literature to examine content endorsement revealed validity for the JDI/JIG indicated an (JDI) α.0.88 to 0.92 and (JIG) α.0.92.[8]

2.3 Procedure

Study data were pulled from the online survey management system and converted to a compatible electronic format with variables analyzed by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24.[9] For relevant variables, recoding was performed in accordance with the instructions on each instrument. To evaluate normality and homogeneity of variance, histograms, skew, and kurtosis were used in exploratory data analysis. Data found that were not distributed normally were transformed, but they did not produce improved results. The sample was characterized by descriptive analytics such as degree/education, academic rank, gender, and age (see Appendix A).

3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the satisfaction rank based on the faculty rank and overall results. Although there was not a significant

correlation between Job in General Satisfaction and the 5 variables, there were notable themes for Promotion and Pay. Overall, faculty felt ambivalent toward their opportunities

for promotion. Faculty also in the instructor rank was overall ambivalent toward their pay.

Table 1. JDI and JIG data per rank

Category	Overall	Instructor	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor
Job in General	48.9	49.6	48.4	48.4	49.7
Work on Present Job	46.7	47.4	46.1	46.8	48.1
Pay	33.5	31.7	32.4	33.9	39.3
Opportunities for Promotion	29.0	24.9	30.6	27.6	33.1
Supervision	44.1	44.7	43.9	43.8	43.8
People on Your Present Job	48.9	48.9	48.5	49.0	50.4

Score Ranking: 0-22 score Dissatisfied; 23-31 ambivalence; 31-54 satisfied.

Data indicated that instructors and junior rank professorial faculty had a higher probability of staying at their current institution than that of their higher-ranked colleagues; this could be attributed to their current work toward tenure and/or promotion initiatives. Since junior faculty are in the early stages of their careers, these results are not surprising considering their desire to strive for a confident level of positive performance. Academic ranking reinforced perceptions that faculty are extremely driven toward promotion to be successful and receive a higher rank or tenure, although overall they were not satisfied with the opportunity.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in People on Your present Job between those who identified as Black and Caucasian ($F(1,664) = 7.654$, $p = .03$). Those who reported a race of Black faculty rated lower than those of Caucasian regarding satisfaction with those individuals that they work with. According to Ponjuan, Conley and Trower, nursing faculty who are African-American presented with lower levels of work satisfaction in higher education.[10] A one-way ANOVA also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in Promotion opportunities among those who identified as Hispanic ($F(1,752) = 13.857$, $p = .00$). Those who reported as Hispanic faculty rated lower than not Hispanic regarding satisfaction with opportunities for promotion. Further study is warranted regarding nursing faculty race, and cultural origin noted from these correlations.

4. Conclusion

Nursing faculty retention is critical as schools of nursing implement strategies to meet workforce needs. An inclusive, diverse, qualified, and competent nurse educator workforce must be developed in sufficient numbers to meet the healthcare needs of the populations we serve. Job satisfaction continues to be an important area of investigation for orga-

nizations to gather meaningful data related to factors that influence intent to stay or leave. A survey by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing conducted in 2021 identified 1,965 nurse faculty vacancies at 935 U.S. nursing schools.[11] According to these findings, the nurse faculty vacancy rate (8%) is at its highest level since 2013, 84 percent of the vacancies were faculty positions requiring or preferring a doctoral degree. The purpose of this study was to explore job satisfaction and the job descriptive index of faculty in school's of nursing and their correlation to an assortment of descriptive variables, including demographics, pay, rank, supervisors, peers, and workload observations related to work atmosphere. Institutions can use the findings to identify satisfaction variables that can be altered to attract and retain nursing faculty. The occupational aspects associated with recruiting and retaining qualified and committed nursing faculty remain multifaceted.

The National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP) has recently identified three key areas for consideration to address the shortage of nurse faculty and strengthen nursing education and include: Improve Training of Advanced-Degree Nurses for Educator Roles; Pilot Residency Programs for Nurse Faculty; and creation of a National Center for Nurse Faculty.[12, 13] This national advisory group proposes creative and collaborative approaches for nurse faculty to educate and prepare the next generation of professional nurses. Moreover, NACNEP also plans to advance the nation's health by advancing nursing research, promoting scholarship, and providing leadership in forming health policy.

Higher education administration remains a key factor in job satisfaction in nursing education. Lee et al., recommends that institutional leadership develop 1) personal policies tailored for faculty success, 2) a culture of faculty support, and 3) translate clear expectations for faculty, particularly those

seeking tenure and/or promotion.[6] The results of this study show the necessity of a positive relationship between nursing faculty and the organization, since faculty perceptions of promotion opportunities, salaries, resources, and support help to attract, hire, and retain nursing faculty.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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