Chapter 18
Leadership Behavior Predictor of Employees' Job Satisfaction and Psychological Health

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ABSTRACT

Research about relationship between the leadership behavior and the psychological health is still limited. The effect of job dissatisfaction on health is important not only from medical but also from the economic perspective. The association between leadership behavior, job satisfaction and psychological health in nursing was tested. 640 hospital nurses from surgery and internal medicine departments in Slovenian hospitals participated. Data analysis was carried out by using SPSS, 20.0. The transformational leadership style, leaders' characteristics, job satisfaction predicted better psychological health. More frequent exposure to stress and the lack of stress management was associated with poor psychological health. Job satisfaction is at a medium level. The results indicated that 85% of employees in nursing had good psychological health. The psychological health of employees does not affect only on individual, but also on the quality and effectiveness. It is important to monitor employees' job satisfaction and take care for health by providing a healthy work environment.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitals play an important role in the health care system. They are health care institutions that have an organized medical and other professional staff, and deliver medical, nursing and related services 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Hospitals offer a varying range of acute, convalescent and terminal care using diagnostic and curative services in response to acute and chronic conditions, arising from diseases as well as injuries and genetic anomalies (WHO, 2016a).

The importance of effective leadership in health care was exposed (Carney, 2006; Greenfield, 2007; Sutherland & Dodd, 2008). Leadership in nursing is pivotal because nurses represent the most extensive discipline in health care, they are also the main working group in hospitals and play a vital role in the caring system of every country (Marquis & Huston, 2009; Roussel, Swansburg, & Swansburg, 2009; Sullivan & Garland, 2010; WHO, 2013). The nurses' job assignment as health team members is very important, they must to preserve and promote the quality of care to a standard level (Mohammmadi et al., 2011), but there is a problem because the average age of nurses in developed countries increasing (WHO, 2013). Nursing is a profession that involves interaction with different people (patients, their families, other nurses, doctors and various specialists), emotional and physical work in a very challenging environment (Purcell, Kutash, & Cobb, 2011; Scheick, 2011) and heavy load (Aiken et al., 2001). According to the progress and development, working conditions are constantly changing, including strategies for increasing productivity and reducing costs and maintaining quality of care (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Sochalski, & Silber, 2002). Nursing is an emotional and physical strenuous job, and studies show that work in health care poses a major risk for the occurrence of stress, anxiety and depression (Gershon et al., 2007). Aiken et al. (2002) also noted that nurses in hospitals with a higher ratio patient to nurse, more likely to experience burnout and job dissatisfaction, what can lead to different symptoms or illness (Aiken et al., 2001; Miller & McGoven, 2000; West, Tan, Habermann, Sloan, & Shanafelt, 2009). Burnout is associated with psychological disorders, physical illness, decrease work productivity and an increase work absence (Ahola et al., 2008). Chronic work stress and burnout in nursing are related to consequences for psychological and physical symptoms (Melamed, Shirom, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2006; Tsutsumi, Kayaba, Tsutsumi, & Igarashi, 2001). The field of work, as well as age, education (Schulz et al., 2009) and gender (Bauer et al., 2006) play an important role of nurses' burnout.

BACKGROUND

Psychological Health

Psychological health is an integral and essential part of health. Some people say psychological health as "mental health" or "emotional health" or "prosperity", but is just as important as good physical health (Mental Health Foundation, 2016). The WHO (2016b) states: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorder or disability. Mental or psychological health is a state of well being in which the individual realizes his own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to contribute to the community. On the other hand, psychological health is defined as the absence of symptoms related with depression and anxiety, including the ability to concentrate and irritability in the last few weeks (WHO, 2001). Psychological health is the successful performance of mental function, resulting in activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and providing the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity (National Alliance of Mental Illness, 2011). Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of psychological health of a person at any point of time. Poor psychological health associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, discrimination, social exclusion, unhealthy lifestyle, risks of violence, physical ill-health and human rights violations (WHO, 2016b).

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