

EXAMINING NURSES PERCEPTIONS OF REWARDS STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

Nurses in a hospital located in Southern U. S. were surveyed to determine their perceptions of the reward structures existent in their hospital. Reward structures were divided into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. The cluster analysis procedure partitioned the sample into two clusters based upon their level of satisfaction with the hospital's reward structure. The analysis of variance procedure comparing scale responses on Comfort, Challenge, Financial Reward, Relation with Coworkers, Resource Adequacy, and Promotion suggest that nurses in one group (Cluster 2) are less satisfied with Financial Rewards and Promotion Opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The shortage of nurses in the United States is having a significant impact on the American healthcare system (Andrews and Dzlegielewski, 2005; Bednash, 2000; Buerhaus et al, 2000). According to Upenieks (2005) nurses have felt physically exhausted and emotionally drained because of the increased patient load and the conditions under which they must work. Also, the present shortage is more acute as a result of nurses opting out of the nursing profession due to dissatisfaction with their roles in a clinical setting.

It has been estimated that, by 2010, there will be a shortage of 729,000 registered nurses with a BSN. The estimate increases to 1,119,000 by 2020 (Sigma Theta Tau, 1999). In a 2004 study, the Health Resources and Administration forecasts for a registered nurse shortage in 2020 will be between 400,000 to 1,000,000 nurses. This situation will increasingly worsen as more "baby boomer" nurses retire and, in turn, more aging "baby boomers" require care. Thus, by 2020, there will be 340,000 fewer nurses practicing than today (Auerbach et al., 2007). In the March 2008 issue of RN, it is estimated that the United States is currently facing a shortage of approximately 150,000 nurses; in the next decade, more than 650,000 new nursing jobs will be created, and about 450,000 nurses will have retired.

RESEARCH METHODS AND RESULTS

In a continuous effort in studying the factors that impact the retention of nurses, one of the initial steps would be to measure the satisfaction level of nurses. For example, the rewards offered to nurses in the hospital. In this present study an attempt is made to study the reward structure of nurses in a hospital in

the Southern United States. We have classified the reward structure into two categories, extrinsic reward and intrinsic reward. The study used the job satisfaction scale developed by Quinn and Staines (1979). The scale of intrinsic reward included the items such as: How satisfied with the chances to learn new things; How satisfied with the chances of accomplishment something worthwhile; and How satisfied the chances to do something that make them feel good about you as a person. The scale of extrinsic reward included items such as: How satisfied with the pay; How satisfied with the fringe benefits; and How satisfied with the job security. The items were measured on the scale of 1 to 7 (1=very dissatisfied and 7=very satisfied). The surveys were distributed in a hospital and forty nurses completed the survey.

The data were analyzed using the cluster analysis procedure. The procedure identified two clusters as presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
Results of Cluster Analysis

	Cluster 1 Satisfied with Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards	Cluster 2 Less Satisfied with Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards
Intrinsic Mean	6.04	4.60
Extrinsic Mean	5.36	2.55
Observation (%)	72%	28%
Scale: 1=Very Dissatisfied 7=Very Satisfied		

The analysis identified two distinct groups. The one group of nurses (72%) was more satisfied with the intrinsic reward than the second group of nurses (28%). In terms of extrinsic reward, the cluster two nurses were significantly more dissatisfied with their counterpart in cluster one.

Table 2
Results of ANOVA Procedure

Scale	Cluster 1 Mean	Cluster 2 Mean	p-value
Comfort: Seven items ($\alpha = 0.7338$) e.g., My work schedule is good I have enough time to get job done Physical surroundings are pleasant	2.70	2.53	0.2422
Challenge: Six items ($\alpha = 0.8186$) e.g., Have opportunity to develop own special ability I can see the results of my work The problems I am expected to solve are challenging	3.33	2.89	0.0037
Financial Reward: Three items ($\alpha = 0.6898$) e.g., The pay is good The job security is good Fringe benefits are good	2.98	1.87	0.0001
Relation with Coworkers: Three items ($\alpha = 0.6901$) e.g., People I work with are friendly Plenty of chances to make friends	3.39	3.03	0.0271

Scale	Cluster 1 Mean	Cluster 2 Mean	p-value
Resource Adequacy: Thirteen items ($\alpha = 0.9011$) e.g., Have enough information to get job done Enough supplies to get job done Supervisor is competent Supervisor is helpful in getting job done Supervisor is successful in getting job done Responsibilities are clearly defined Coworkers are competent Coworkers are helpful in getting job done	3.39	3.00	0.0138
Promotion: Three items ($\alpha = 0.8411$) e.g., Promotions are handled fairly Chances of promotion are good Employer is concerned about giving everyone a chance to get ahead	2.76	2.07	0.0039
Scale: 1=Not at all true 2=A little true 3=Somewhat true 4=Very true			

The review of Table 2 indicates that in general, the nurses in cluster two reported significantly more agreement (p -value < 0.05) with scales on *Challenge*, *Financial Reward*, *Relation with Coworkers*, *Resource Adequacy*, and *Promotion* than cluster one. These findings indicate that the nurses in Cluster 2 are significantly less satisfied with financial rewards, followed by the promotion opportunities. The *Comfort* scale did not provide significant difference between two clusters. The nurses in both groups viewed comfort similarly, although this scale is not highly rated by both groups.

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