Job Satisfaction of Nursing Home Administrators

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Abstract

**Background:** The older adult population, age 65 and older, in the United States has increased 30% since 2005 and is projected to continue to grow. Nursing homes have become the living arrangement for some older adults. Nursing home administrators (NHAs) can play a vital role in the long-term care industry. Job satisfaction is important as it can enhance retention of NHAs.

**Methods:** A purposive sample of NHAs was utilized for this descriptive correlational research study to examine job satisfaction. A researcher developed demographic questionnaire and the Nursing Home Administrator Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (NHA-JSQ), which has six specific domains, were utilized to collect data.

**Results:** The findings indicated overall job satisfaction of NHAs in each of the domains. The domain with the highest mean was regarding work skills.

**Conclusion:** Based on findings from this study, there are factors that could be examined to increase the already positive satisfaction of NHA.

**Introduction**

The older adult population, age 65 and older, in the United States (U.S.) has increased 30% since 2005 and is projected to continue to grow. This group represented 14.9% of the U.S. population in 2015 which means about one in every seven persons falls into this category. It is projected that by 2060, there will be approximately 98 million older adults. This number is twice the number of 47.8 million reported in 2015. Nursing homes have become the living arrangement for some older adults. About 42% of Americans over age 70 are likely to spend some time as a nursing home resident. In 2016, of the 3.1% of the 65+ population that reported living in an institution, 1.2 million resident resided in nursing homes.
Nursing home administrators (NHAs) can play a vital role in the long-term care industry. Job satisfaction is important as it can enhance retention of NHAs. Castle and Lin\textsuperscript{3} noted that nursing home administrator (NHA) turnover may be related to a decrease in quality for certain indicators such as pain, pressure sores, and physical restraint use.

The quality of care in long-term care facilities is of great interest to many stakeholders. NHA turnover may be a factor that can be addressed to promote improvement of care.\textsuperscript{4} If factors that promote job satisfaction for nursing home administrations can be identified, it could result in modification of work environment and/or duties which would enhance job satisfaction which could decrease turnover.

**Method**

Approval from an institutional review board (IRB) at a university located in the southern United States (U.S.) was obtained prior to initiating the research study. The purpose of this descriptive correlational research study was to examine job satisfaction of NHAs. The research questions were:

1. What is the job satisfaction of NHAs regarding concepts of *coworkers, work demands, work content, work load, work skills*, and *rewards*?
2. Is there a relationship between job satisfaction and certain demographic variables?

**Sample**

The purposive sample for this study included NHAs in a south central state in the U.S. Names of all current facility NHAs were obtained from a government agency. Of the 317 listed NHAs, 88 (28%) responded to the survey. The age of respondents ranged from 22 to 72 ($M = 48.65$, $SD = 11.59$) and 33 (37.5%) were male and 54 (61.4%) were female. One subject did not respond to this specific question. The years of experience as a NHA ranged from one to 41 ($M = \ldots$)
12.58, $SD = 10.58$) and the tenure at their current facility ranged from less than 1 year to 29 ($M = 5.55, SD = 6.14$). Additionally, 58.5% of subjects reported planning to stay at their current facility for five years or greater. The highest academic preparation of the majority (61.4%) of subjects was a Bachelor’s degree and 37.5% reported having a Master’s degree. The size of the facility in regards to number of beds ranged from 20 to 336 ($M = 107.93, SD = 52.87$). Of the 86 responding to facility ownership, 53 (61.6%) reported being owned by a corporation, 27 (31.4%) reported being privately owned, and only six (7%) reported being owned by local or state government.

**Data Collection**

The list obtained of individual NHAs included facility name and address. A hard copy of instruments, cover letter, and consent form was sent to each administrator. The two instruments employed to collect data included a researcher developed demographic questionnaire and the Nursing Home Administrator Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (NHA-JSQ). The demographic questionnaire was utilized to collect personal and professional characteristics of the subjects and facility for which they work. The NHA-JSQ utilized consist of 18 items and includes a 10-point visual analog scale with lower scores being less favorable. Six domains are specific for this questionnaire: **Coworkers, Work Demands, Work Content, Work Load, Work Skills, and Rewards.** The domain of **Coworkers** includes items asking individuals to rate their satisfaction regarding people they work with, if they feel part of a team, cooperation among staff, and demands placed by staff; the **Work Demands** domain allows rating support available; the domain regarding **Work Content** poses questions related to working with residents and autonomy; the **Work Load** domain is regarding workload and schedule; questions regarding demands and training are noted in the **Work Skills** domain; and the **Rewards** domain items address pay and
advancement opportunities.\textsuperscript{5,6}

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for each domain have been reported ranging from 0.70 to 0.80.\textsuperscript{5,6} Cronbach’s alpha’s coefficients computed for this study for the domains included 
\textit{Coworkers} (0.79), \textit{Work Demands} (0.79) \textit{Work Content} (0.64), \textit{Work Load} (0.87), \textit{Work Skills} (0.84), and \textit{Rewards} (0.73)

\textbf{Results}

To answer the question regarding job satisfaction of NHA related to concepts of 
\textit{coworkers, work demands, work content, work load, work skills}, and \textit{rewards} the means of each domain was determined. The domain with the highest mean was \textit{Work Skills} ($M = 8.62, SD = 1.31$). This was followed by \textit{Work Content} ($M = 8.54, SD = 1.12$), \textit{Coworkers} ($M = 8.13, SD = 1.25$), \textit{Work Load} ($M = 7.78, SD = 2.41$), \textit{Demands} ($M = 7.44, SD = 1.69$), and \textit{Rewards} ($M = 7.04, SD = 2.13$). Means of each individual item was also examined. The two items with the highest means were both from the domain of \textit{work content}. The item with the highest mean ($M = 9.36, SD = 1.00$) asked individuals to respond to an item regarding how much they enjoy working with people who need their help. The second highest mean ($M = 9.05, SD = 1.27$) was for an item asking them about how their role directly enhances the lives of the residents. The item with the lowest mean ($M = 6.44, SD = 2.69$) was regarding opportunity for advancement.

When examining relationship between the each domain related to job satisfaction and certain demographic variables (age, years of experience as a NHA, years in current position, and number of beds) a statistical significant positive correlation was noted between age and \textit{Work Skills} ($r = .321, p = .005$) and age and \textit{Demands} ($r = .238, p = .025$). Also, a statistical significant positive correlation was noted between years of experience as a NHA and the domain of \textit{Work Skills} ($r = .433, p = .000$). Additionally, statistical significant positive correlation was
noted between years in current facility and the domain of Work Skills \((r = .233, p = .047)\) and number of beds and Work Skills \((r = .233, p = .044)\).

**Discussion**

It is important to note, that all subscales of the NHA-JSQ, had a mean of greater than seven. This indicates overall job satisfaction in all areas examined. Subjects indicated greatest satisfaction with work skills. This indicates NHA believe they have had training necessary to perform their job and the demands of a NHA are compatible with their personal skills. Findings also indicated a positive correlation between the domain of work skills and age, indicating the older a NHA is, the more satisfied they are with their skills. It would be interesting to examine this further to determine if this is related to ongoing educational opportunities offered by the company they work for or their formal academic program. This could also be related to individuals becoming more satisfied with their personal skills due to experience as a positive correlation was noted between years of experience as a NHA and work skills indicating the greater the number of years of experience, the greater the satisfaction with work skills. Additionally, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between work skills and the number beds and years in current facility.

The second highest mean was noted in the area of work content. As previously noted the two individual items with the highest means were from this domain. This indicates that in general, NHA enjoy working with residents and are pleased with the fact that they are able to influence their lives. NHAs also reported a favorable opinion of the degree of autonomy offered them in their role. Findings indicated the third domain with a mean greater than eight was that of coworkers. This supports believing there is a cooperation among staff and feeling part of a team.

The domains of work load, demands, and rewards had means less than eight, but between
7.0 and 7.78. Even though the means indicated satisfaction in each area, this finding might offer consideration of factors that could be addressed to improve job satisfaction and thus retention and recruitment of NHAs. NHAs do not always have an assistant, thus often the work schedule may not be able to be adjusted. Letting NHAs understand they do have flexibility of adjusting their own schedule at times, which is not possible in many other employment areas, might be beneficial. Regional directors could ascertain that NHAs understand they are available to discuss concerns and provide support. Also, providing ongoing feedback could possibly increase satisfaction. *Rewards* was the domain with the lowest mean. Individuals in higher administration positions or human resource should consider reviewing compensation packages and revising if possible. If opportunities for advancement occur, assuring that currently employed NHAs are aware of these opportunities openings would be helpful as well as reviewing/revising policies concerning promoting from within.

**Conclusions**

The finding of overall satisfaction of NHAs should to be disseminated to prospective candidates. The fact that over half of the respondents plan to stay in their current role for the next five years is also significant to note as this supports the job satisfaction of this professional group of individuals. As the population ages, there will be a greater number of individuals requiring care in nursing homes. It is imperative that the recruitment and retention of NHAs is addressed as this can affect quality of care. Having job satisfaction is important to retention. Based on findings from this study, there are factors that could be examined to increase the already positive satisfaction of NHA.
References


