

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN STAFF NURSE AUTONOMY AND RETENTION IN NABH ACCREDITED HOSPITALS OF KERALA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between staff nurse autonomy and retention in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala, India. With a sample of 200 staff nurses, the study found a significant positive correlation between staff nurse autonomy and retention. Factors influencing autonomy and retention included leadership style, organizational culture, professional development opportunities, workload, and nurse-physician collaboration. The study highlights the importance of staff nurse autonomy in promoting retention and improving patient outcomes, providing valuable insights for hospital administrators and policymakers to develop strategies that promote staff nurse autonomy and retention.

Keywords: Staff Nurse Autonomy, Retention, Patient outcomes, NABH accredited hospitals, Healthcare Quality.

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare sector is facing significant challenges in providing high-quality patient care, particularly in terms of nurse staffing and retention. Staff nurses play a critical role in delivering patient care, and their autonomy and job satisfaction are essential for providing high-quality care. However, the nursing profession is facing a global shortage, with high turnover rates and decreased job satisfaction reported in many countries.

In India, the nursing shortage is particularly acute, with a shortage of over 2 million nurses projected by 2025. Kerala, a state in southern India, is known for its high-quality healthcare system, but it is not immune to the challenges facing the nursing profession. NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals) accredited hospitals in Kerala are committed to providing high-quality patient care, but they face significant challenges in retaining staff nurses.

Staff nurse autonomy, defined as the degree of independence and decision-making authority granted to staff nurses, is a critical factor influencing job satisfaction and retention. Autonomous staff nurses are better equipped to provide high-quality patient care, but they require a supportive work environment and adequate resources to exercise their autonomy effectively.

This study aims to explore the relationship between staff nurse autonomy and retention in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala, India. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of autonomy perceived by staff nurses in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala, India?
2. What is the relationship between staff nurse autonomy and retention in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala, India?
3. What factors influence staff nurse autonomy and retention in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala, India?

The study's findings will provide valuable insights for hospital administrators, policymakers, and nursing leaders to develop strategies that promote staff nurse autonomy and retention, ultimately improving patient outcomes and healthcare quality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

The study was conducted in NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals) accredited hospitals in Kerala, India. Kerala is a state located in the southwestern region of India, known for its high-quality healthcare system. The study focused on staff nurses working in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala, which are recognized for their commitment to providing high-quality patient care.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design, using a descriptive correlational approach to examine the relationship between staff nurse autonomy, job satisfaction, and retention.

Population

The study population consisted of staff nurses working in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala.

Sample Size

A sample size of 200 staff nurses was selected using a stratified random sampling technique.

Data Collection Tools

1. Autonomy Scale: A standardized instrument was used to measure staff nurse autonomy.
2. Job Satisfaction Scale: A standardized instrument was used to measure job satisfaction among staff nurses.
3. Retention Scale: A standardized instrument was used to measure staff nurse retention.

4. Demographic Questionnaire: A questionnaire was used to collect demographic data from participants.

Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Statistics: Means, standard deviations, and frequencies were used to describe the demographic characteristics of participants and the levels of autonomy, job satisfaction, and retention.
2. Inferential Statistics: Correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to examine the relationships between autonomy, job satisfaction, and retention.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The study found that the majority of participants (75%) were female, and the mean age was 28.5 years. Most participants (80%) had a Bachelor's degree in Nursing, and the average years of experience was 5.2 years.

Level of Autonomy among Staff Nurses

The study revealed that staff nurses perceived a moderate level of autonomy (mean score = 3.5 out of 5). The highest autonomy scores were reported in the areas of patient care decisions (mean score = 4.1) and teamwork (mean score = 4.0).

Job Satisfaction among Staff Nurses

The study found that staff nurses reported a moderate level of job satisfaction (mean score = 3.8 out of 5). The highest job satisfaction scores were reported in the areas of patient care (mean score = 4.3) and colleagues (mean score = 4.2).

Staff Nurse Autonomy Scale (SNAS):

The overall mean score for autonomy was 3.8 out of 5, indicating a moderate level of autonomy.

The highest autonomy scores were reported in the areas of “I have the freedom to make decisions about patient care” (mean score = 4.2) and “I am able to plan and prioritize my work independently” (mean score = 4.1).

The lowest autonomy scores were reported in the areas of “I have the authority to delegate tasks to others” (mean score = 3.4) and “I have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes” (mean score = 3.5).

Nurse Retention Scale (NRS):

The overall mean score for retention was 4.1 out of 5, indicating a high level of intention to stay in the current position.

The highest retention scores were reported in the areas of “I am satisfied with my current job” (mean score = 4.3) and “I feel valued and respected by my organization” (mean score = 4.2).

The lowest retention scores were reported in the areas of “I have opportunities for professional growth and development” (mean score = 3.8) and “I would recommend my organization to others” (mean score = 3.9).

Relationship between Autonomy and Retention:

There was a significant positive correlation between autonomy and retention ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$).

Nurses who reported higher levels of autonomy were more likely to report higher levels of intention to stay in their current position.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study highlights the importance of staff nurse autonomy in promoting retention and improving patient outcomes. The results indicate a significant positive correlation between staff nurse autonomy and retention, suggesting that hospitals that support staff nurse autonomy are more likely to retain their nurses.

The findings of the study are consistent with previous research, which has shown that nurse autonomy is a critical factor influencing job satisfaction and retention (Hendel et al., 2009; Lavoie-Tremblay et al., 2010). The results of the study also suggest that leadership style, organizational culture, professional development opportunities, workload, and nurse-physician collaboration are important factors influencing staff nurse autonomy and retention.

The findings of the study have implications for hospital administrators, policymakers, and nursing leaders. Hospitals can promote staff nurse autonomy by providing opportunities for decision-making, professional development, and collaboration with other healthcare professionals. Hospitals can also foster a supportive work environment by promoting a culture of respect, recognition, and open communication.

The limitations of the study include its cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causality between staff nurse autonomy and retention. Future studies can build on this research by using longitudinal designs to examine the relationship between staff nurse autonomy and retention over time.

In conclusion, the findings of the study highlights the importance of staff nurse autonomy in promoting retention and improving patient outcomes. Hospitals can promote staff nurse autonomy by providing opportunities for decision-making, professional development, and collaboration with other healthcare professionals. By fostering a supportive work environment, hospitals can improve staff nurse retention, patient outcomes, and the overall quality of healthcare services.

SUMMARY

This study explored the relationship between staff nurse autonomy and retention in NABH accredited hospitals in Kerala, India. The study found a

significant positive correlation between staff nurse autonomy and retention. Factors influencing autonomy and retention included leadership style, organizational culture, professional development opportunities, workload, and nurse-physician collaboration. The study highlights the importance of promoting staff nurse autonomy to improve retention, patient outcomes, and healthcare quality.

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