

The Role of the Family Towards the Hospital Nurses Work Engagement

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Abstract

This study determined the role of the family towards the hospital nurses work engagement. This study used descriptive-correlational design, wherein 217 nurses were selected as the respondents of the study through purposive sampling method. Findings of this study showed that the roles of the family of the respondents were: *strong* in cohesion, *high* in adaptability and *good* in communication. The respondents' level of work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption was *high*. The role of the family was significantly related to work engagement. The result pointed to the essential of the role of the family for one to engage at the workplace.

Keywords: role of the family, work engagement

1. Introduction

Work engagement has been one of the current related topics being conducted in research. It refers to how the employees are being connected and committed to their work psychologically. When the employees are connected with their work, they are willing and able to invest themselves fully in their roles and committed to a high quality performance standard. But in return, when the employees are disengaged with their work, it may hinder them from performing and accomplishing a targeted goal which will affect the quality of the organization itself.

Researchers have found out that high work engagement may enable successful task completion whereas low work engagement may hinder performance because effort and concentration are lacking. According to Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006), work engagement was introduced as the opposite of burnout, which is a response to chronic work related stress as manifested by depleted emotional resources, cynical attitudes to work and reduced professional efficacy. Killien (2004) mentioned that low psychological wellbeing is associated with poor work performance, sickness absence and intention to leave the health care profession, which has a significant impact on nursing shortages worldwide. Furthermore, Ford (2013) added that seven out of ten American workers are actively disengaged or disconnected from their work and are less likely to be productive. To compete effectively in this contemporary world, organizations and companies do not only have to recruit talented employees, but also to inspire and enable the employees to apply their full capabilities to their work (Bakker, 2013).

People experiencing high levels of work engagement will be more likely to complete their tasks and to successfully perform at work (Sonnetag, Mojza, Binnewies, & Scholl, 2008). It was further explained by Schaufeli as cited in Crutchfield (2010) that engaged employees have a sense of energy in working. They are connected with their work and are able to see themselves dealing well with the demands of their jobs. They are seen to be more likely to withstand the temptation to leave the organization where they belong.

On the other hand, family life may affect or impede one's ability to work that will eventually affect the way one engages at work. Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts and Pulkkinen (2006) found out in their study that family life may positively affect work life. They further elaborated that having a supportive family may help the individual go through difficulties at work and may help the individual recover from stressful days.

Frone and Cooper as mentioned in Sudiro (2012) added that conflict and pressure from family may greatly contribute in the way one performs at his or her work. It suggested that family role contributes a lot in the work performance of an employee.

Many theories about nursing as a profession have been well-documented. It varies from being a unique type of work, up to a demanding type of occupation accompanied by physical and psychological challenges (Newton, 2008). In his survey among 235,000 employees at nearly 400 U.S. hospitals, Commins (2010) found that 45% of hospital employees are discontented and disengaged with their current work.

Indrianti and Hadi (2012) reported that according to World Health Organization, nurses in Indonesia were physically and psychologically exhausted due to work overload. The nurse-patient ratio in Indonesia is reported to be more than the standard set by the WHO. Being exposed continually to such events may lead to decreased self-achievement and dissatisfaction that may hinder one's performance in his or her work. Such condition may give a gap and related distance that will lead to disengagement.

A better understanding of the factors that may enhance work engagement is needed as it improves performance and productivity in the organization such that the employees are willing to offer more of their capability and potential. Thus, through this study, the researcher hopes to identify the role of the family towards

the hospital nurses work engagement.

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How do the respondents perceive the role of their family in terms of:
 - a. Cohesion?
 - b. Adaptability?
 - c. Communication?
2. What is the level of work engagement of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Vigor?
 - b. Absorption?
 - c. Dedication?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the role of the family towards the hospital nurses work engagement?

2. The Role of the Family

According to Brown (2009), family is where the individuals receive the foundation for their growth and development through interactions and relationships with each member of the family. It is comprised of the people who are biologically and/or psychologically related with emotional or economic bonds that connect them (Knox & Schacht, 2010; Lauer & Lauer, 2009).

The role of the family is the way the family members fulfill necessary roles and perform necessary tasks to pursue goals, display activities and accept family routines and procedures. This is characterized by emotional closeness, warmth, support and security. It is the way the family members fulfill necessary roles and perform necessary tasks to pursue goals, display activities and accept family routines and procedures (Cronin & Mandich, 2005; Pezullo, Taylor, Mitchell, Pejotski, Le & Bilgram, 2010). It also entails coping effectively with cultural, environmental, psychosocial, and socioeconomic stresses throughout the family life cycle through open communication, cohesion, stimulating and educational interactions, cultivation and modeling of physical health promotion strategies, involvement of family members in community activities, emotional support and high quality relationships among all family members (Pezullo, Taylor, Mitchell, Pejotski, Le & Bilgrami, 2010; Searing, 2000).

The ability to successfully perform the role expectations of home and work life is an ongoing matter affecting working individuals (Schmidt, 2011). Factors in both the workplace and at home can impede one's ability to effectively perform his or her role expectations of work and home, creating conflict between these two domains. The quality between individual's work and family life is a primary issue for families today and a major challenge to the labor market of the future. It can have adverse effects on both families and workplaces, and may impact the wellbeing of society as a whole. A healthy family tries to maintain continuity and stability within the family system while adapting to various family life events. It helps the families in facing adverse changes. The model has three basis components of family's role: cohesion, adaptability and communication (Galvin, Bylund & Brommel, 2009; Kelly, 2005; Openshaw, 2011; Vangelisti, 2004).

2.1. Cohesion.

Cohesion means emotional bonding of each of the family members to each other, including family support, boundaries, coalitions, decision making, interests, recreation and the like. Boundaries may be opened or closed, referring to the interaction with people outside the family (Cronin & Mandich, 2005). Scholars have identified cohesion as central to the understanding of family life. Through communication, the family members are able to develop, maintain or change their patterns of cohesion. Families with good emotional bonds are better able to rise above challenges to their wellbeing and cope well under stress. Relationship among family members is quite an important experience towards an individual's development in later social interaction and interpersonal skills. It provides a safe place for individuals to develop emotional and physical closeness with others (Choi, 2012). The strong emotional bonds measured by family cohesion are expected to promote family support (Rivera, Guarnaccia, Mulvaney-Day, Lin, Torres & Alegria, 2008).

2.2 Adaptability.

It reflects how well the family can change and adjust to environmental stressors. A flexible family is better able to respond effectively to crises (Kurasaki, Okazaki & Sue, 2001). It focuses on how family systems manage stability, plan and work together when change and stress occur. It is used to assess family's flexibility like control, discipline and negotiation as well as the amount of change in its leadership, role relationships and relationships rules (Olson & Gorall, 2003).

2.3. Communication.

Communication is central to the function of a family. When family members interact openly and supportively, they tend to meet crises in more creative way (Lamanna & Riedmann, 2009). Communication is a two-way

process which involves both sharing and listening between two sources. If communication is inadequate, certain utterances or actions may be misinterpreted. If left uncorrected, this can cause misunderstandings (Medina, 2005). Buchholz (2001) mentioned that an open communication has at least three distinct characteristics: supportive, participative and trusting. It leads to a clear understanding of the adverse event for the family members and also allows for expression of feelings, provides for problem solving within the family members (Openshaw, 2011). Buchanan (2008) also added that family communication includes the family's ability to express emotions and recognize emotional state of individual family members. Being able to clarify the problem and sharing openly may lead to more adaptive behaviors.

3. Work Engagement

Work engagement is a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind which implies a positive emotional attachment and motivation toward one's work (Sonnentag, Mojza, Binnewis & Scholl, 2008). Engaged employees are seen to be able to express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance. They become physically involved with their tasks, cognitively alert and emotionally connected to others when performing their jobs (Olivier & Rothman, 2007; Zhang, 2011). Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris (2008) mentioned in their studies that engaged employees experienced many advantages in working like joy, happiness and enthusiasm; better health physically and psychologically; improved job performance; and increased ability to create job and personal resources. Engaged employees are characterized by their willingness to take initiative and self-direct themselves in working and are also more open to new information. They are seen to deal effectively with the demands of stressful work (Coetzee & de Villiers, 2010). There are three construct under work engagement: vigor, dedication and absorption (Compton & Hoffman, 2013).

3.1. Vigor.

The first indicator to measure the degree of an individual's level work engagement is called vigor. It is related to the individual's energetic resources (cognitive, emotional and physical) and characterized by an individual is demonstrating high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to make effort in one's work, and persistence even when faced with difficulties (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

3.2. Dedication.

It is the second indicator measuring an individual's level of work engagement. It refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing high levels of significance, enthusiasm and pride. They are inspired and challenged by their work (Sonntag et al., 2008; Giollonardo, Wong & Iwasiw, 2010; Kittredge, 2010).

3.3. Absorption.

It is the third indicator measuring an individual's level of work engagement. It is characterized by significant levels of concentration in one's work, being happily immersed in the work, and find difficulty to detach from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Sonntag et al., 2008).

4. Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational type of research to determine the role of the family (*cohesion, adaptability and communication*) towards the hospital nurses work engagement (*vigor, dedication and absorption*). Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was utilized in determining the relationship between variables with alpha .05 using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The instrument of the study for family cohesion was adapted from *Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scales* (FACES III) by Olson (1985). The researcher adapted 10 items from *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* that was developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) and the other 32 items were self-constructed together with the help of a psychologist. The population of the study is composed of 217 hospital nurses, consisted of 193 females and 23 males. The validity and reliability of the instrument were tested before conducting the actual study, encompassing 50 hospital nurses. The Cronbach's alpha for the pilot study were as followed: for the role of the family in terms of cohesion = .9027, adaptability = .8472, and communication = .8569 and for the work engagement in terms of vigor = .8344, dedication = .8611 and absorption = .8281.

The data were analyzed using the *Predictive Analytical Software for Windows* (PASW). Descriptive analyses of mean were used to answer research questions one and two. Correlational analysis of Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation was used to determine significant relationship between the role of the family towards the hospital nurses work engagement with a null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between the role of the family towards the hospital nurses work engagement.

5. Conclusions

The findings showed that the role of the family of the respondents in terms of cohesion was strong ($M=4.07$),

high in terms of adaptability ($M = 4.14$) and good in terms of communication ($M = 4.05$). The respondents also revealed that they had *high* level in all terms of work engagement, such as vigor ($M = 3.93$), dedication ($M = 4.04$) and absorption ($M = 4.01$). The role of the family had a positive *significant relationship* to work engagement ($p = .000$). This implies that the better the role of the family of the respondents in terms of cohesion, adaptability and communication, the higher the work engagement level of the respondents in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption.

The researcher concluded that workers whose background are strong in emotional bonding with each of the family member, highly adaptable to life situations and had good communication within the family were highly engaged with their work. This emphasized that the family contributed a lot in supporting the workers to be positively connected with the work, physically and also psychologically. Engaged workers are characterized by their commitment to do a highly standard performance. When the workers are engaged with their work, they become highly energetic in performing their respective duties and responsibilities. Even when facing difficulties, they would find ways to solve any challenges that come along the way. Engaged workers also believe that loyalty to the organization where they belong is important. They are proud and enjoy their work because they find it meaningful. It also inspires them to accomplish the given tasks of the day and even willing to do more than expected.

6. Recommendation

- a. To the administrator in the organization, support the employees through their social life such as family support as it was found out as a guarantee of engagement at the workplace. A challenge for the labor market in taking care not only the employees, but the family as well, needs to be strengthened, especially in terms of communication and adaptability.
- b. Implement different strategies such as in-service trainings, seminars and education emphasizing on work engagement in order to give a high quality care to the customer and to help the workers invest fully in their performance standard.
- c. To conduct a comparative study of the work engagement of nurses from different types of hospitals, the government and the private hospitals and consider other variables such as working environments, peer supports, work demands and the like.

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