

Effect of Organizational Culture on Nurses' Turnover Intention: The Mediating Effect of Workplace Bullying and Work Burnout

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Abstract. We investigated the causal relationships between nurses' organizational culture, workplace bullying, work burnout, and turnover intention. A questionnaire survey was conducted on 243 nurses working for general hospitals in South Korea from February 12 to March 20, 2015. Data obtained from completed questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS Windows 18.0 and AMOS 16.0. Although the innovative and relational organizational cultures were found to have an indirect negative effect on nurse turnover intention through the mediating factors of workplace bullying and work burnout, a hierarchical culture was found to have an indirect and positive effect on turnover intention. This has important implications in that it provides baseline data for a turnover intention prediction model that hospital managers can use for effective human resource management of nursing staff.

Keywords: Culture, bullying, burnout, turnover

1 Introduction

The average turnover rate of nurses in South Korea is around 16.9%, which is much higher than average of public health and social welfare workers, at 2.4% [1]. This high turnover rate may make it difficult for hospitals to provide high-quality nursing services, further decrease the timeliness of pain or bedsore management, and threaten patients' safety by leading to increased rates of falls or red-grade incidents. In addition, it will lead to reduced organizational productivity and organizational operation efficiency, thereby threatening not only individual nurses' socioeconomic status but also their well-being through decreasing their job satisfaction and mental health [2]. Many previous studies on nurses' turnover intention have emphasized the correlation between nurses' psychosocial work environment and organizational culture. Nurses experience various kinds of workplace bullying depending on their work environment and organizational culture. Authoritative or strict hierarchical organizational atmospheres in hospitals promote workplace bullying [3]. Workplace bullying weakens nurses' organizational bond, reduces their job satisfaction, and causes stress-based disorders such as loss of confidence, nervous breakdown, and depression, ultimately leading to a reduction in organizational productivity and

turnover [4]. Organization members who have experienced workplace bullying show a higher degree of job burnout because of the stress imposed on them by their job environment and interpersonal relations. Burnout is one of the most severe job stress phenomena, characterized by physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion due to constant and repetitive emotional pressure [5]. When experiencing burnout, nurses lose their drive to work, which can not only lower the quality of their services but also cause them to become indifferent to patients, ultimately leading to turnover [6]. Thus, this study aimed to devise a model that could predict nurses' turnover intention, organization culture, workplace bullying, and burnout, and to verify the suitability of this model based on previous studies. We believe such a model will be useful for effectively managing human resources.

2 Methods

This study was conducted from February 16 to March 20, 2015. A total of 243 nurses who had worked for over 6 months for any of the five general hospitals located in Seoul and Gyeonggi Province and who agreed to participate were selected as study subjects. Using SPSS Windows 18.0, we analyzed the demographic characteristics of the research subjects as well as the reliability and validity of the research tools employed. To verify the validity of the path model for predicting nurses' organizational culture and turnover intention, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 16.0.

3 Results

We found that both innovative and relational organizational cultures have a direct negative effect on workplace bullying. Furthermore, the relational culture has a direct negative effect on work burnout as well as an indirect effect on the same through the mediating effect of workplace bullying. A hierarchical organizational culture, however, had a direct positive effect on work burnout as well as an indirect effect on the same through the mediating effect of workplace bullying. We also noted that workplace bullying had a direct positive effect on work burnout, and that both workplace bullying and work burnout have direct and positive effects on turnover intention. As for nurse organizational culture, both the innovative and relational cultures had indirect negative effects on nurses' turnover intention through the mediating factors of workplace bullying and work burnout, while the hierarchical culture had an indirect positive effect on nurses' turnover intention.

4 Discussion

We found that nurses' organizational culture has a direct effect on workplace bullying. According to a study conducted by Hutchinson et al. [3] on nurses and another study

[7] conducted on employees in public and private universities in Pakistan, organizational atmosphere/culture has an effect on workplace bullying, which is similar to what we found. This finding suggests that because organizational culture affects organization members' values, beliefs, and behavior patterns, it can lead to positive or negative group behaviors [4]. We discovered that among all nurse organizational cultures, the innovative and relational cultures had negative correlations with workplace bullying. As not many studies have looked at differences in workplace bullying by organizational-culture type, our results cannot be easily compared to those of previous studies. One previous study [8] reported, however, that smooth communication and cooperation between organization members are important factors that can reduce workplace bullying, and this study seems to have confirmed this finding. Organizational culture also had a direct effect on burnout among nurses. This finding is similar to the result of a study [9] on Italian nurses and to the result of another study on casino employees [8]. In particular, in the present study, the relational culture was found to have a negative effect on work burnout while the hierarchical culture was found to have a positive effect. In other words, organization members who work in a tense organizational atmosphere with a stronger hierarchical or authoritative structure are likely to experience greater job stress and are more likely to perceive the surrounding circumstances negatively [3]. Moreover, this study confirmed that workplace bullying has a direct effect on work burnout, which is similar to the result of a study on Australian nurses [10]. When organization members perceive that they are not being supported by their organization, they may become more emotionally unstable [4] and lose sight of the significance of their jobs. We also confirmed that workplace bullying and work burnout have direct effects on nurses' turnover intention, and that the organizational culture has an indirect effect on turnover intention through the mediating effects of workplace bullying and work burnout. These findings are similar to the results of a previous study on nurses [11], wherein nurses' perceived work environment was found to shape their feelings towards their jobs, which in turn affected the organization as a whole. Consequently, we confirmed that nurses' work environment and organizational atmosphere are important factors in reducing their turnover intention, and that organization members' psychological stability—partially sustained through an organizational culture characterized by support and recognition—has a direct relation with the organization's productivity [12].

5 Conclusion

First, of all the types of organizational culture, the innovative and relational cultures had direct negative effects on workplace bullying; furthermore, the relational culture had a direct negative effect on nurses' work burnout as well as an indirect effect on the same through the mediating factor of workplace bullying. The hierarchical culture, in contrast, was found to have a direct positive effect on nurses' work burnout and an indirect effect on the same through the mediating factor of workplace bullying. Second, we found that workplace bullying had a direct positive effect on nurses' work burnout, and that both workplace bullying and work burnout had direct positive

effects on nurses' turnover intention. Third, nurses' organizational culture had an indirect effect on nurses' turnover intention through the mediating factors of workplace bullying and work burnout. This study is significant in that it provides basic data that can be used by nursing managers to reduce nurses' turnover intention. However, there is a need to carry out further studies on the correlation between the types of organizational culture and turnover intention.

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