Factors of happiness in the workplace and intentions to leave among female professional care workers in geriatric facilities

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Introduction: The number of dementia patients is rising worldwide, but many geriatric facilities face high turnover and staff shortages. Understanding the factors associated with intentions to leave and positive psychological feelings towards work among professional care workers is critical in developing workforce strategies in geriatric facilities.

Aim: To examine the factors involved in intentions to leave and happiness in the workplace among female professional care workers in geriatric facilities.

Methodology: A cross-sectional design was used to collect data after obtaining approval from the relevant ethics committee. We distributed questionnaires to professional staff (N = 1,396) at 26 geriatric facilities (response rate: 68%). Data from female nurses and other professional caregivers were used for the final analysis. The questionnaire included items on basic attributes, work and organizational characteristics, subjective adequacy of wages, work orientation, and the Social Capital and Ethical Climate at the Workplace scale (SEW), plus two dependent variables (intention to leave and happiness in the workplace). We conducted a multivariate logistic regression analysis.

Findings: In both types of professional, greater work orientation showed a consistently significant relationship with higher happiness in the workplace, and subjective adequacy of wage showed significant relationship with lower intentions to leave. Regarding the SEW sub-scales, higher 'social capital' showed significant relationships with two better outcomes in nurses. While greater 'ethical leadership' showed a significant relationship with higher happiness in the workplace, an 'exclusive workplace climate' showed a significant relationship with greater intentions to leave in professional caregivers. Binary data of happiness in the workplace did not show significant relationships with intentions to leave.

Conclusions: The findings suggested that supportive and ethical work environments are important to female professional workforces in geriatric facilities.

Table.1. Basic attributes and characteristics of participants¹⁾.

Variables		Professional caregivers (N=402)		Nurses (N=141)	
		N	%	N	%
1. Marital status	Single	226	56	37	26
	Married	176	43.8	104	73.8
2. Education	Junior high school graduate	8	2.0	3	2.1
	High school graduate	152	37.8	13	9.2
	Junior college or vocational school equivalency degree	201	50.0	119	84.4
	College graduate	40	10.0	2	1.4
	Graduate school graduate	1	0.2	2	1.4
	Others	0	0.0	2	1.4
3. Employment status/type	Non-regular employee	102	25	49	35
	Regular employee	300	75	92	65
4. Facility type	Special nursing homes	155	39	93	66
	Geriatric intermediate care facilities	224	56	2	1
	Nursing home with an additional benefit for dementia care	13	3	46	33
	Others	10	2	0	0
5. Average overwork hours per week	0 - 4 hours	300	75	112	79
	5 - 9 hours	67	17	20	14
	≥ 10	35	9	9	6
6. Frequency of working on days off per month	None	359	89	128	91
	One to two days per month	39	10	10	7
	Three to four days per month	3	1	3	2
	More than five days	1	0	0	0
		Mean (SD)	Median	Mean (SD)	Median
7. Age		40.57(12.26)	40	49.02(12.09)	50
		6.81(5.08)	6.00	6.97(6.54)	5.00
8. Length of experience for current position					

Table.2. Multivariate logistic regression model for happiness at workplace and intention to leave.

	Professional caregivers' happiness in the workplace ^{a,c}			Professional caregivers' intention to leave ^{a,b}		
	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	p-value	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval	p-value
Individual characteristics						
Work orientation ^d	2.51	1.94 - 3.24	***	0.57	0.44 - 0.74	***
Work and organizational characteristics						
Special nursing homes ^e				3.38	1.09 - 10.50	*
Subjective adequacy of wage ^f				2.40	1.12 - 5.13	*
The Social capital and Ethical climate at the Workplace of a hospital						
Social capital in the workplace ^d	1.44	0.96 - 2.18	***			
Ethical leadership ^d						
Exclusive workplace climate ^d				1.82	1.40 - 2.38	***
Happiness in the workplace						
	Nurses' happiness in the workplace ^{a,h}			Nurses' intention to leave ^{a,g}		
	Odds ratio	confidence interval	p-value	Odds ratio	confidence interval	p-value
Individual characteristics						
Work orientation ^d	2.44	1.55 - 3.84	***			
Work and organizational characteristics						
Subjective adequacy of wage ^f				3.85	1.59 - 9.33	**
The Social capital and Ethical climate at the Workplace of a hospital						
Social capital in the workplace ^d	3.04	1.37 - 6.74	**	0.39	0.23 - 0.65	***
Ethical leadership ^d						
Exclusive workplace climate ^d						

^a The results of the multivariate logistic regression analysis for outcomes (the upper quartile of the intention to leave score and the upper fifty percentile of happiness in the workplace), after controlling variables of basic attributes and employment characteristics using a stepwise method (backward selection method).
^b Hosmer-Lomeshow goodness of fit $\chi^2=3.580$, df=8, p=0.892. ^c Hosmer-Lomeshow goodness of fit $\chi^2=3.580$, df=8, p=0.893.
^d Continuous variable. ^e 1 = special nursing homes, 0 = others. ^f 1 = insufficient at all, 0 = others.
^g Hosmer-Lomeshow goodness of fit $\chi^2=9.944$, df=8, p=0.269. ^h Hosmer-Lomeshow goodness of fit $\chi^2=2.203$, df=8, p=0.974.