The shortage of nursing faculty has prompted researchers to look at ways we can recruit and retain nursing faculty members and concepts such as the healthful work environments and work engagement of nursing faculty are ways we can do so. The existing research creates a strong knowledge base to understand work engagement, and to understand the organizational effects work engagement can have in academic environments. Work engagement is measured by the vigor, absorption and dedication one has to their job. A growing body of research supports the study of work engagement within individual occupations and roles as researchers have found that different occupations and roles within experience different types of job demands and job resources (Rothmann, 2005). Additionally, it has been shown that the work engagement of faculty at a university may have a direct influence on student retention (McDonald, 2015). The NLN's Healthful Work Environment (HWE) tool kit addresses many aspects of work engagement, and the Job Demands-Resources Scale (JDRS) can be the way we measure the components of the nine areas listed in the HWE tool kit. Correlations between the JDRS and a work engagement tool can be made to help give a baseline and track the progress made when creating and sustaining a Healthful Work Environment. It is essential that we retain our quality nursing faculty, and the study of healthful work environments and work engagement are ways we can address the issue.

Work engagement has been shown to decrease turnover, increase organizational commitment and increase career satisfaction (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2005). In addition, work engagement among faculty has been shown to have a positive correlation to student outcomes (Mancz, 2013; Sokolov, 2017; Parker et al, 2012). It is essential for nursing administration to understand the relationship between healthful work environments and work engagement in nursing faculty so that they can then develop and implement strategies that will encourage the retention of valued faculty members.

Title:
Work Engagement as a Component of a Healthful Work Environment in Nursing Faculty

Keywords:
healthful work environment, nursing faculty and work engagement

References:


Abstract Summary:
The shortage of nursing faculty has prompted researchers to look at ways we can recruit and retain nursing faculty members and concepts such as the healthful work environments and work engagement are ways we can do so. The research aims to evaluate this and the effect on relevant stakeholders.

Content Outline:

1. Introduction
   1. The most recent data shows the vacancy rate continues to be high at 7.9%, with over 1500 unfilled faculty positions nationally (AACN, 2017). In addition, approximately 64,000 baccalaureate and graduate nursing students were not accepted to nursing programs due to insufficient faculty clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and budget constraints (AACN, 2017)
   2. Work engagement has been shown to decrease turnover, increase organizational commitment and increase career satisfaction (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2005). In addition, work engagement among faculty has been shown to have a positive correlation to student outcomes as well (Mancz, 2013; Hamilton, 2017; Parker et al, 2012).

2. Body
   1. The overarching idea of work engagement is not a new concept, nor is it a concept that is new to the field of education
   2. The most prominently discussed definition of work engagement is defined as a “positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work related wellbeing” that is “characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008).
      1. Vigor is defined as the “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, and the willingness to invest effort in one’s work and persistence, even in the face of difficulties.
      2. Dedication is a “sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge.”
      3. Absorption is characterized by a “complete and happy immersion in one’s work, to the extent that it is difficult to detach oneself from it.” (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002)
   3. Extensive use of the term engagement has been found in research from many countries and in many fields, such as education, human resources and psychology, as well as in nursing and academia.
      1. Employees with high levels of work engagement have higher productivity compared to their counterparts without work engagement (Yeh, 2012).
      2. A positive correlation with organizational commitment and a negative relationship with intention to quit have also been associated with work engagement (Saks, 2006).
      3. Researchers have shown a positive correlation between employee engagement and an organization’s success as measured by such outcomes as turnover rate, customer satisfaction, productivity and profit (Cascio & Boudreau, 2011; Harter et al., 2002; Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Wollard & Shuck, 2011).
      4. Employees that are engaged report higher levels of health and wellbeing, are more productive at work and reported increased job satisfaction over those that were disengaged (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).
   4. A subset of research on work engagement has focused on academic faculty.
      1. Researchers studying occupational stress have found that different occupations, and roles within, experience different types of job demands and job resources (Rothmann, 2005), therefore have difference predictors related to their work engagement.
      2. Researchers have shown that the career satisfaction, engagement and success of faculty are affected by factors such as heavy workload, multiple role expectations, insufficient time, lack of mentoring and lack of collegial support
(Gazza, 2009; Gerolamo & Roemer, 2011; Gormley, 2010) and is related to lower levels of attrition (Mayer, 2006; Runhaar, Sanders & Konermann, 2013).

5. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model can be used to explain stress and work engagement of those working in academia (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).
   1. The JD-R model links job resources and job demands to work engagement, so that when work engagement is present, positive organizational outcomes such as decreased turnover and job satisfaction, and career satisfaction occur (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).
   2. There are three job resources are of specific interest when studying the work engagement of academics, namely supervisor (management) relations, role clarity and the intrinsic characteristics of the academic job (Barkhuizen, Rothmann & van de Vijver, 2014).
   3. Faculty who experience greater demands on their time, attention and energy, while receiving fewer rewards and less recognition, run a higher risk of becoming burned out and alienated from their work lives (Blix, Cruise, Mitchell, & Blix, 1994; Lackritz, 2004). As such, workload is one of the most significant job demands to address in faculty (Barkhuizen, Rothmann & van de Vijver, 2014).

6. Several nursing organizations have addressed aspects of work engagement in their standards, tool kits, and position statements.
   1. In 2005, the NLN released their findings from a study on nurse faculty work satisfaction and productivity. They identified nine areas that were essential to the creation of a healthful work environment.
      1. The nine areas that are essential to the creation of a healthful work environment are: salaries, benefits, workload, collegial environment, role preparation and professional development, scholarship, institutional support, marketing and recognition, and leadership.
      2. The nine areas clearly relate to identified areas necessary for work engagement as well, and their commitment to retaining quality, engaged faculty is a step in the right direction.
      3. The Healthful Work Environment (HWE) Tool Kit was created to help administrators and faculty create healthful work environments
   4. However, there was not guidance given as a way to reliably measure faculty work engagement, and one author even recommended that each institution independently develop a survey based on the adaptation of questions from the Healthful Work Environment (HWE) Toolkit.
      1. The Job Demands Job Resources Scale (JDRS) measures the components listed in the HWE Tool kit and is a validated, reliable tool to use.
      2. Correlations made with the UWES work engagement tool as proposed in the above study is recommended, so that the data can be reliably measured and replicated across multiple sites as well as repeated by one institution on a regular basis.

7. In 2006, NLN released a position statement titled Mentoring of Nurse Faculty, and over time, an assessment tool kit was created as well (2008).
   1. The position statement promotes the deliberate use of mentoring nursing faculty as a way to “foster the career development of faculty, enhance the recruitment and retention of nurse educators, and establish healthful academic work environments.”
   2. The associated toolkit encourages the assessment of mentoring practices at both individual and program levels.
   3. A baseline assessment of work engagement in nursing faculty prior to implementing mentorship programs would give some evidence-based research and help build the scientific knowledge base necessary in this population.
   4. Mentoring programs have been correlated to work engagement in many areas, including academic faculty (Hultell & Gustavsson, 2011; Whitten, 2015).
8. After reviewing the current policy statements, standards of practice and other leading nursing educational organization stances, it is clear that there is a call for quality, engaged faculty.
   1. Reassurances that nursing faculty will be supported are part of the a healthy work environment, but the guidelines and/or recommendations given do not recommend any standardization or reliable tool be used to first measure the job demands and job resources nursing faculty currently has.
   2. Evidence-based research is needed to help guide higher education institutions along the way.
9. There are several key stakeholders involved.
   1. These include nursing faculty, their students, nursing deans and/or program directors as well as other institutional leadership including the president and provost of the university.
   2. It all includes other healthcare personnel affected by the nursing shortage as well, including all hospital administrators and outpatient program directors/administration.
   3. Lastly, all potential patients within our country’s healthcare system have a key stake in this discussion as well.

3. Conclusion
   1. A growing body of research supports the study of work engagement within individual occupations and roles as researchers have found that different occupations and roles within experience different types of job demands and job resources (Rothmann, 2005). Additionally, it has been shown that the work engagement of faculty at a university may have a direct influence on student retention (McDonald, 2015).
   2. It is essential that we retain our quality nursing faculty, and the study of healthful work environments and work engagement is one way we can address the issue.
   3. Work engagement has been shown to decrease turnover, increase organizational commitment and increase career satisfaction (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2005).
   4. In addition, work engagement among faculty has been shown to have a positive correlation to student outcomes (Mancz, 2013; Sokolov, 2017; Parker et al, 2012).
   5. It is essential for nursing administration to understand the how work engagement is an essential part of a healthful work environment in nursing faculty so that they can then develop and implement strategies that will encourage the retention of valued faculty members.
   6. It can hopefully provide support for the allocation of funding and support to include work engagement in quality improvement projects, education-based research and the evidence-based support for inclusion into education policies, accreditation standards and position statements.

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