The shortage of nursing faculty has prompted research to look at ways we can recruit and retain nursing faculty members and concepts such as the work engagement of nursing faculty are one such way 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. The construct has not been studied in full-time nursing faculty, and there is clear need to do so. 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). It is essential that we retain our quality nursing faculty, and the study of work engagement is one way 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 predictors of work engagement in nursing faculty so that they can then develop and implement strategies that will encourage the retention of valued faculty members. A study is proposed can help provide the foundation necessary for future outcomes-based research, and the economic impact of engaged nursing faculty. In addition, 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, CCNE accreditation standards and AACN position statements.

Title: Predictors of Work Engagement Among Doctorally-Prepared Nursing Faculty

Keywords: nursing faculty, nursing faculty shortage and work engagement

References:
Selected References:


Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (2013). *Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs.* Washington, DC: CCNE.


**Abstract Summary:**
The shortage of nursing faculty has prompted research to look at ways we can recruit and retain nursing faculty members and concepts such as the work engagement are one such way 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
      1. 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)

   1. 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).

5. 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).

1. 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).
      1. 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).
      2. 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).

1. A study that identifies the predictors of work engagement in doctorally prepared nursing faculty is needed.
   1. A quantitative study is proposed, utilizing the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as a framework for this study.
      1. The model provides a theoretical basis to understand how job resources and job demands influence one’s perception and response to the work environment.
      2. Job resources are defined as work related factors (physical, psychological, social or organizational) that helped individual to accomplish work goals and facilitated the individual growth and development of the employee.
      3. Job demands are the factors in the work environment (physical, social or organizational) that require persistent physical and/or mental effort on the individual.
      4. Several studies have shown job resources to help cushion the impact of job demands and job resources have also been shown to be have increased motivating potential when job demands are high (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010).
      5. The model has been shown to predict employee work engagement, and consequently organizational performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001).
      6. A descriptive, correlational study will be performed
1. Doctorally prepared nursing faculty members will be recruited from Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)-accredited baccalaureate nursing schools (n=736).

2. A demographic survey will be created and will include such variables as age, gender, years in practice, type of terminal degree held, and length of employment at current institution.

3. The revised Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) will be used to assess the work engagement of the doctorally prepared, baccalaureate, nursing faculty. The tool assesses the three components of work engagement: vigor, dedication and absorption and the 9-item survey is scored on a seven point Likert scale, with a total score ranging from 0-54.

4. The Job Demands-Resource Scale-revised (JDRS) will be used to assess organizational support, growth opportunities, overload, job insecurity and advancement via 40 items scored on a 4 point Likert scale with a total score ranging from 40-160.

5. The surveys will be self-administered and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression.

2. Several nursing, and nursing faculty-focused 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 Healthful Work Environment (HWE) Tool Kit was created to help administrators and faculty create healthful work environments

   2. 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.

3. 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.

      1. Mentoring programs have been correlated to work engagement in many areas, including academic faculty (Hultell & Gustavsson, 2011; Whitten, 2015).

4. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is another organization to consider how faculty engagement is addressed,
particularly with the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation standards.

1. The CCNE accreditation standards clearly show a requirement of qualified, engaged, and quality nursing faculty within their accredited schools.

2. In the first standard the expectations are set to clearly identify expectations for faculty, which can help with role ambiguity (negatively correlated with work engagement). Faculty expectations should be clearly defined in appointment, promotion and tenure policies.

3. Standard II key elements address the necessity of the ‘recruitment and retention of quality faculty,’ and require that job resources such as library, technology, research support and distance education support be adequate and regularly reviewed for faculty to ‘meet program requirements and achieve the mission, goals and expected program outcomes’ (CCNE, 2013).
   1. Job resources are a predictor of work engagement in the JD-R model and there are many researchers who have shown a positive correlation between the two as mentioned above.

4. Standard II also states that institutional support be available for faculty to have the opportunity for ‘ongoing development in the scholarship of teaching’ and that faculty outcomes are promoted that ‘align with the defined expectations of the faculty role’ (CCNE, 2013).
   1. The clear definitions and expectations set forth helps to eliminate role confusion and job ambiguity, which are associated with decreased work engagement.

5. The fourth standard on program effectiveness largely concerns student performance and faculty accomplishments.
   1. Data analysis must be used to ‘foster ongoing program development’ and that faculty must be engaged in the program improvement process (CCNE, 2013).
      1. The engagement in the program improvement process is one area that mentoring, collegial support and the building of a relationship with a supervisor could all be incorporated and help to increase work engagement.
      2. Nursing schools and programs can use this standard requirement as an opportunity for building an environment that supports work engagement.
      3. The program improvement is defined as a focus on the ‘validation and revision of policies, practice and curricula’ as necessary (CCNE, 2013).
         1. This is an area of opportunity for nursing faculty to have their voice be heard, and to be engaged in their work environment. Through dedication and absorption in the task, work engagement can be enhanced.
         2. Employee satisfaction (along with student and alumni satisfaction) was one area noted to address faculty outcome measurements.
1. The inclusion of a faculty-focused outcome such as the measurement of job demands and job resources with work engagement would be another way to measure and track the trending of faculty specific measures.

3. 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 stated throughout, 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.
      1. Evidence-based research is needed to help guide higher education institutions along the way.
      2. First we first must examine the correlation between job demands and job resources and work engagement amongst nursing faculty.
         1. With the added consideration of the nursing faculty shortage, a study is needed that looks at the predictors of work engagement in doctorally prepared nursing faculty so that the deans and directors of nursing programs can develop and implement strategies that will encourage the retention of the quality faculty members.
         2. The information gathered from this study will hopefully help to further the research development of work engagement, and provide a base of evidence to influence nursing education policies, standards and stances when addressing factors related to the engagement of nursing faculty, the retention of nursing faculty and the commitment to quality nursing faculty.
   3. 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.
   4. In addition, there is an increasing recognition of the potential and actual return on investment with regards to work engagement.
      1. Work engagement has been shown to have a positive relationship with daily financial returns (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).
      2. Even small improvements in work engagement are shown to have significant improvements in business outcomes (Keegan, 2016).
      3. This attention to the return on investment highlights the importance of obtaining further research on work engagement.

2. 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 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 predictors of work engagement in nursing faculty so that they can then develop and implement strategies that will encourage the retention of valued faculty members.
6. The study proposed can help provide the foundation necessary for future outcomes-based research, and the economic impact of engaged nursing faculty.
7. 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, CCNE accreditation standards and AACN position statements.

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