

Introduction

- Inpatient nurse managers serve a vital role in acute care settings and influence the achievement of many organizational goals.
- Despite efforts to improve organizational metrics for nurse satisfaction/retention, nurse manager satisfaction/retention remains a challenge that negatively impacts a hospitals' ability to achieve positive patient and staff outcomes (Djukic et al., 2017).
- According to Warshawsky et al. (2014), job satisfaction and retention are well-researched among staff nurses; but few studies have examined these concepts among nurse managers.
- Factors influencing nurse manager satisfaction/retention are multifactorial. The literature identifies workload and work-life balance as common incentives for recruitment into leadership positions, job satisfaction and retention, especially among the millennial generation (Saifman et al., 2019; Shirey et al., 2010, & Zwink et al., 2013).

Objectives

This study explored factors that impact nurse manager satisfaction and retention by implementing an eight-week intervention that reduced the typical 10-day nurse manager schedule to a self-directed 9-day, 80-hour work schedule.

Research Question

RQ: Is there a significant difference in the perception of **work-life balance, job satisfaction, and intent to leave** among inpatient acute care nurse managers before and after the implementation of self-directed compressed work schedules?

Methods

- This pilot study was conducted at a faith-based, Magnet hospital in Central Virginia.
- A convenience sample of 16 nurse managers volunteered for an 8-week intervention that compressed the work schedule to 9 days.
- A pre-test, post-test research design was used with one group of participants.
- A pre-intervention survey was given prior to the intervention to establish baseline data.
- A post-intervention survey was completed and matched with the pre-survey for data analysis.

Sample

- 16 inpatient nurse managers participated
 - 14 were married
 - 1 was single
 - 1 was widowed/divorced/separated
 - 4 males and 12 females
- 10 were parents/legal guardians of children < 18 years of age in the household
- 6 had no children < 18 years of age living in the household
- 32 to 59 years of age with an average age of 45.

Survey Tools

The Daily Staffing/Scheduling Satisfaction Survey was created by Dr. Richard Nelson and Dr. Millicent Nelson at Middle Tennessee State University (Nelson et al., 2010). A modified version of the tool was used to measure nurse manager satisfaction with scheduling and the perception of work-life balance. This survey included an ordinal level of measurement supported by a 6-point Likert scale.

Warshawsky's Job Satisfaction Questionnaire was used to measure job satisfaction among nurse managers (Warshawsky et. al., 2014) This survey included a 3-item questionnaire using an ordinal level of measurement supported by a 6-point Likert scale.

Houser's Intent to Leave Survey was used to measure intent to leave among nurse managers (Warshawsky et al., 2016). This tool included a 3-item questionnaire using an ordinal level of measurement supported by a 3-point Likert Scale.

Results

After an 8-week period of compressed work schedules, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed no significant difference in perception of work-life balance ($Z = .000$, $p = 1.000$), job satisfaction ($Z = -1.205$, $p = .228$) or nurse manager intent to leave ($Z = .997$, $p = .319$). There was a statistically significant difference in satisfaction with work schedules after the 8-week intervention ($Z = -2.549$, $p = .001$).

Analysis for Perception of Work-Life Balance

Dependent Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Statistic
Pre-WLB	16	6.8125	1.83371	Z-score = 0.000
Post-WLB	16	6.8750	2.06155	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = 1.000

Analysis for Nurse Manager Job Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Statistic
Pre-NM Satisfaction	16	11.8750	2.41868	Z-score = -1.205 ^b
Post-NM Satisfaction	16	12.5625	3.68725	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.228

Analysis for Intent to Leave

Dependent Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Statistic
Pre-Intent	16	5.8750	1.78419	Z-score = -0.997
Post-Intent	16	5.5625	1.78769	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.319

Analysis for Satisfaction with Work Schedule

Dependent Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Wilcoxon Signed Rank Statistic
Pre-schedule Satisfaction	16	7.2500	2.35230	Z-score = -2.549 ^b
Post-schedule Satisfaction	16	9.0625	2.56824	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001

Conclusion

- While the perception of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and intent to leave were not significantly different after the pilot intervention, inpatient acute care nurse managers were more satisfied with compressed work schedules.
- Nurse managers reported that compressed schedules afforded them more time to participate in personal/family activities during the workweek.

Limitations

- This study had a small sample size of 16 nurse managers from one study site.
- The study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic which added anxiety and stress for nurse managers.
- The principal investigator serves in a position of authority at the study site which could have contributed to some response bias.
- Nurse manager satisfaction and retention is a complex process. Influenced by factors other than work schedule.
- Several items in the Daily Staffing/Scheduling Satisfaction Survey used reverse wording. If participants did not read carefully, their choices may not reflect their intended response.

Implications

This study contributes to the existing body of literature and bridges the knowledge gap regarding factors that impact nurse manager satisfaction and retention, thereby enhancing strategies to recruit younger generational nurses into the role of nurse manager in acute care.