

HRM Practices and Job Performance: A Study among Nurses in General Hospitals

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Abstract:

Despite facing global challenges, the Malaysia healthcare industry still gained greater attention in today's business environment and have progressed a lot in providing the best health services to the patients. A lot of efforts had been made by the government as well as the organization itself in order to ensure the provision of best health services to the clients. However, within healthcare context, a quality healthcare performance depends on their human resources' attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, job performance of nurses can be regard as mirror image of the healthcare organization since they form the biggest human resources professionals within healthcare context. Despite the various studies that have been conducted to examine the factors that affect job performance of nurses in Malaysia, this study aims to determine the relationship between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and job performance of nurses in Malaysia general hospitals. A set of self-administrated questionnaires using matching method were distributed among nurses and their respected immediate supervisors (sisters). Multiple regression analysis has been used to test the propose hypotheses. Statistical results derived from SPSS output found a positive and significant relationship between all dimensions of HRM practices and job performance of nurses. Limitations and suggestions for future research also being includes.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Job Performance, Nurses.

1. Introduction

Healthcare industry can be considered as an important industry because it serves health services to entire population. The healthcare delivery in Malaysia is divided into two tier system and both systems are under the rules and regulations of Malaysia Ministry of Health [1]. In Malaysia, public healthcare plays a significant role in providing the health services because it is a taxation-based healthcare system [2] and more focused to reduce the patient's cost. Since the public healthcare used heavily by majority of the Malaysia population, the demand for quality of nurses' care will increase.

In the same line, nursing profession in Malaysia currently faces many challenges and obstacles. For example, there is a shortage of nurses which leads to excessive turnover among nurses [3] and increasing in aging society with the rise of noncommunicable and communicable diseases [4]. Hence, in conjunction with these scenarios, nurses were expected to work long hours in order to meet the current demand of nurses' job from patients. According to [5], service employees sometimes underperform because of the pressure they received when performing their jobs. While, if nurse's job performance declines, it will lead to poor service of patient care and increasing number of patient complaint [6]. Therefore, in hospital setting, nurses are required to deliver high quality of patient care and performs in their current job because the healthcare personnel performance is directly linked to performance of healthcare organization [7].

Despite there were many factors that contributed to job performance of nurses, this study aims to determine the relationship between organizational contextual factors (i.e. HRM practices) with job performance of nurses in Malaysia general hospitals. According to [8], organizational factors were important to study when conduct a research on employee's attitudes and behaviors at workplace since they able to shape the way employees thinks, feel, and behave.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Human Resource Management Practices

According to [5], in service industry, the HRM practices are determined by statutory bodies. For example, in Malaysia, Ministry of Finance is responsible for the compensation practices while selection and recruitment for public employees is under Malaysian Civil Service Commissions [9]. Therefore, the four dimensions of HRM practices that will be used in this study are career development, employee participation, performance appraisal and training and development.

In boarder perspective, HRM practices refers to a set of function that being applied in organization to support in the effective use of human resource to attain employees and organization goals [33]. Meanwhile, career development is defined as an ongoing planned and formalized effort that focused on developing and enriching more capable employees [10]. According to [11], employee participation refers to all activities through which employees participate in decisions about their work and their workplace. [12] viewed performance appraisal as a process of making judgement and evaluating of subordinate's job performance by the supervisor. While, [13] referred training and development as strategies, methods, and procedures to enrich the capacity and competences of employee.

However, this study defines HRM practices based on employee perspective because it involves with employees' attitudes and behavior, therefore it should be interpreted by employee itself. Hence, this study defined HRM practices as nurses' subjective perceptions and understandings of HRM practices that being used by organization. For example, in healthcare setting, positive perception of HRM practices is viewed as organization provides clear career path for nurses in career development, keeps nurses participate in decision making process on matters affecting their daily duties, provide feedback on their performance and provide adequate training opportunities to enhance nurses skills.

2.2. Job Performance

Job performance is one of the important outcomes from employee behaviors [14] that indirectly affect organizational performance. Similarly, in hospital setting, job performance of nurses is regard as central topic since nurses' attitudes and behaviors are important in determining the quality of healthcare services [15]. According to [16], job performance is viewed as quantity and quality of work whereas [17] defined job performance as actions that can be altered, behavior and product that contributed to organization's objective. Similarly, [18] refers job performance as employee' behavior that yield positive effects for the individual and valuable to the organization. In contrast, [19] claimed that job performance is traditionally measured by the core task activities of the jobs.

Meanwhile, in hospital setting, nurses who work under either public or private healthcare are obliged to carry out their job roles and responsibilities relating to healthcare tasks [20]. Therefore, this study viewed job performance of nurses as how effective the nurses are in completing their task and responsibility related to direct patient care [21].

2.3. HRM Practices and Job Performance Relationship

Garg and Sharma [22] stated that there is scarcity of studies on employees' perception for HRM practices. While, [23] claimed that less of studies were being conducted on the influenced of HRM practices with employee attitudes and behavior. Hence, [24] suggests to further examine HRM practices and job performance chain since investment in HRM practices will stimulate a positive behavior of employees. According to [25], significant relationship between HRM practices and performance in healthcare lead to higher customer satisfaction, less sickness absence and better net margin. While, in service sector, employees who perceived positive HRM practices, their self-reported individual performance in terms of task performance and innovative work behave is increased [32].

Hence, based on previous literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is significant relationship between HRM practices and job performance of nurses.

H1a: There is significant relationship between career development and job performance of nurses.

H1b: There is significant relationship between employee participation and job performance of nurses.

H1c: There is significant relationship between performance appraisal and job performance of nurses.

H1d: There is significant relationship between training and development and job performance of nurses.

3. Methodology

3.1. Samples and Procedures

After getting approval from the Medical Research Ethical Committee (MREC), 1312 set of questionnaires using matching method were distributed to the nurses and their respected immediate supervisors (sisters) of the nine general hospitals in Peninsular Malaysia. Immediate supervisors were requested to evaluate not more than four nurses under their supervision on how well nurses in their unit completed varieties of activities. A total of 1136 responses were received and 1055 were usable, yielding 80.41% as an acceptable response rate.

3.2. Instruments

For the purpose of this study, three instruments were used to measure the study variables. Career development, employee participation and training and development were measured using items derived

by [13] (1996). While performance appraisal practice was measured using [26] performance appraisal items. Both instruments for HRM practices using 7-point Likert scale with ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Job performance of nurses was measured using Nursing Performance Scale developed by [15] with ranging from 1 = much below average to 7 = much above average.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Meanwhile, in Table 1, all sisters were female (100.00%). Most sisters were in the age between 41 – 50 years old (58.60%) while 110 sisters were in the age between 31 – 40 years old. The remaining 52 (13.30%) sisters were in the age 51 – 60 years old. Majority of sisters were married (94.10%), while the percentage of those who are single is 4.30% and others is 1.50%. Some of sisters were Malay (85.10%), followed by Chinese (8.70%), and Indian (6.20%). In terms of educational background, majority of sisters had diploma (89.50%) and the remaining sisters had degree (9.70%) and master (0.80%). With regard to length of service in nursing or job tenure, some of sisters (46.80%) had 16 to 20 of work experiences in nursing area, followed by 94 (24.00%) of those with nursing experience between 21 to 25 years and 57 (14.60%) sisters had more than 25 years of nursing experiences. The remaining 55 (14.10%) and 2 (0.50%) sisters indicated that they had 11 to 15 years and 6 to 10 years of work experiences in nursing area respectively.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Immediate Supervisors (Sisters)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Female	391	100.00
Age:		
31 – 40 years old	110	28.10
41 – 50 years old	229	58.60
51 – 60 years old	52	13.30
Marital Status:		
Single	17	4.30
Married	368	94.10
Others	6	1.50
Race:		
Malay	333	85.10
Chinese	34	8.70
Indian	24	6.20
Education:		
Diploma	350	89.50
Degree	38	9.70
Master	3	0.80
Job Tenure:		
6-10 years	2	0.50
11-15 years	55	14.10
16-20 years	183	46.80
21-25 years	94	24.00
More than 25 years	57	14.60
Total	391	100.00

Meanwhile, in Table 2, majority of nurses were female (95.90%) and the remaining were male nurses (4.10%). Most nurses were in the age between 21 – 30 years old (59.50%) while 346 nurses were in the age between 31 – 40 years old. The remaining 69 (6.50%) and 12 (1.10%) nurses were in the age between 41 – 50 years old and 51 – 60 years old respectively. Most nurses were married (66.3%), while the percentage of those who are single is 32.70% and others is 1.0%. Majority of nurses were Malay (90.70%), followed by Chinese (3.30%), and Indian (6.00%). In terms of educational background, all of nurses had diploma (100.0%). With regard to length of service in nursing or job tenure, some of nurses (48.20%) had less than 6 years of work experiences in nursing area, followed by 315(29.90%) of those with nursing experience between 6 to 10 years and 150 (14.20%) nurses had 11 to 15 years of nursing experiences. The remaining 52 (4.90%), 17 (1.60%) and 12 (1.10%) nurses indicated that they had 16 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years and more than 25 years of work experiences in nursing area respectively.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Nurses

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Female	1012	95.90
Male	43	4.10
Age:		
21 – 30 years old	628	59.50
31 – 40 years old	346	32.80
41 – 50 years old	69	6.50
51 – 60 years old	12	1.10
Marital Status:		
Single	345	32.7
Married	699	66.3
Others	11	1.00
Race:		
Malay	957	90.70
Chinese	34	3.30
Indian	64	6.00
Education:		
Diploma	1055	100.0
Job Tenure:		
Less than 6 years	509	48.20
6-10 years	315	29.90
11-15 years	150	14.2
16-20 years	52	4.9
21-25 years	17	1.6
More than 25 years	12	1.1
Total	1055	100.0

5. Regression Analysis

In this study, multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between HRM practices and job performance of nurses (H1a-H1d). The result presented in Table 3 shows that all dimensions of HRM practices (i.e. career development, employee participation, performance appraisal, and training

and development) were able to explain 20.00% of the observed variations on job performance (R^2 change = 0.20, F -change = 65.50, $p < 0.001$). Hence, it confirmed that career development practice, employee participation practice, performance appraisal practice, and training and development practice were positively and significantly associated with job performance of nurses. The multiple regression results also reveals that performance appraisal practice ($\beta = 0.21$, $t = 6.51$, $p < 0.001$) was more important factor in explaining job performance of nurses because of its highest beta value. Therefore, these findings support H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d.

Table 3. The Multiple Regressions HRM Practices and Job Performance

Predictors	Criterion Variable	
	Job Performance	
	t value	Std. β
Career Development	3.04	0.10**
Employee Participation	6.28	0.20**
Performance Appraisal	6.51	0.21**
Training and Development	4.14	0.12**
R^2	0.20	
R^2 change	0.20	
F -change	65.50	

Note: ** $p < 0.001$

6. Discussions

The main objective of this study was to examine the association between HRM practices and job performance of general hospitals nurses at Peninsular Malaysia. The findings of this study present that all HRM practices, namely career development, employee participation, performance appraisal and training and development had a significant and positive effect towards job performance of nurses. That is to say, when nurses perceived high positive perception towards organizations practices (i.e. HRM practices) their job performance will eventually increase. Since nurse's daily job was confronting with multiple occupational stressors such as workloads and poor working conditions [27], HRM practices are the practices that able to assist nurses to achieve their work goals as well as reduce their job demands [28] and enhance their performance by providing greater intrinsic motivation and opportunity to perform [23].

The results of this study are tandem with previous findings that career development, employee participation, performance appraisal, and training and development practice had significant and positive effect on job performance [24, 29]. Similarly, study done by [30] among employees

working in commercial bank found that career planning, employee participation, performance appraisal, and training practice are correlates with employee job performance. Further, based on Social Exchange Theory [31] perspective, nurses tend to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors (job performance) when they are provided with enough resources and support (HRM practices) from organization.

7. Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research

Based on the study outcomes, the findings of this study provide several opportunities for future research. First, a longitudinal study would help future researcher to validate the findings gathered from cross-sectional study since individuals' attitudes and behaviors could change over time. Second, larger sample covering all nurses either from public or private hospitals registered under Ministry of Health could be more significant. A larger sample in the same industry would improve the generalization of the findings.

8. Conclusion

As a conclusion, this study has provided empirical evidence on the association between HRM practices and job performance of nurses. Hence, it shows that in hospital setting, support from organization in terms of HRM practices could developed a climate that improves nurses' performance by aligning their behaviors with organizational goals.

9. References

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