Perceptions about work environment among the Staff Nurses working at Government General Hospital, Chennai-3

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Abstract

The work environment is the pattern of all internal and external conditions that affect the survival and development of an organization. The ability of nurses to practice in a professional manner is influenced by their work environment. It is every Nurses role to emphasize the importance of good working environment for the welfare of patient society. The study aimed to assess the perceptions about Work environment among Staff Nurses at Government General Hospital. Descriptive design was adopted, 20 staff nurses working in Wards, Critical Care Unit, Operation Theatre and Outpatient department were selected based on the sampling criteria. It is believed that Staff Nurses are playing key role in the treatment of patients and who are inevitable part of the health care industry. In order to provide the quality patient care the positive work environment is primacy for the staff Nurses.

Key Words

Work environment, organization, key role, inevitable, quality patient care, primacy

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Nurses are the heart of healthcare and caring is the essence of Nursing. Nursing is a healthcare profession focused on the care of individuals, families, and communities so they may attain, maintain, or recover optimal health and quality of life from conception to death.

Nurses work in a large variety of specialties where they work independently and as part of a team to assess, plan, implement and evaluate care. Nursing Science is a field of knowledge based on the contributions of nursing scientist through peer reviewed scholarly journals and evidenced-based practice.

Staff nurse work environments must be improved. To do so, their quality must be measured. Improvement in the practice environment of nurses in acute care hospitals has been the focus, challenge, and recommendation of many studies, commissions, and committees. Lack of a productive, healthy work environment has been related to nursing shortage, poor quality of nurses' work lives, nurse job dissatisfaction, low productivity, and poor-quality unsafe patient care.

Before implementing changes to the work environment, it is necessary to understand an organizational work milieu. Conducting a work environment assessment, analyzing and interpreting findings, and providing an opportunity for feedback are critical steps in achieving an optimal work setting **(Moos, 1994)**.

Research suggests that the values and attitudes of nurses new to the profession may be different than previous generations, resulting in more frequent job and career changes when confronted with obstacles in the work environment **(Mills & Blaesing, 2000)**.

Aiken (2003) stated that every blue ribbon commission report on nurses approaches to solving cyclical nursing shortages since 1980 have recommended changes in nurses' work environment.

Booker T. Washington (2007) said that, Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way. An excellent hospital nurse work environment is one in which nurse leadership provides the right structures, practices, and people. This enables clinical nurses to do the right things correctly, thus producing desired outcomes for patients, staff, and the organization.

Evidence-based work environment attributes--including staffing adequacy, positive physician-nurse relationships, and administrative support services for nursing care--have been associated with positive nurse outcomes as well as good patient outcomes **(Aiken, 2003).**

Morrow et al., 2005 explored that the Individual nurses are overloaded. They are overloaded by the number of patients they oversee. They are overloaded by the number of tasks they perform. They work under cognitive overload, engaging in multitasking and encountering frequent interruptions. They work under perceptual overload due to medical devices that do not meet perceptual requirements insufficient lighting, illegible handwriting, and poor labeling designs. They work under physical overload due to long work hours and patient handling demands which leads to a high incidence of MSDs.

Smith, Hood, Waldman, and Smith (2005), who found that noneconomic factors in the environment such as a service quality orientation were key factors associated with job satisfaction and a positive practice milieu.

Objectives

1. To identify the perceptions of Staff Nurses about Work environment.

2. To associate the perceptions of staff nurses with the selected demographic variables.

Review of Literature

Garmley (2011) conducted a comparative study to examine the perceptions of work environment and quality of care between nurse managers and staff nurses, and the relationship between nurses' perceptions of the work. A total of 336 nurses and managers participated from two Midwestern hospitals. Participants completed the Perceived Nurse Work Environment Scale (PNWE), Anticipated Turnover Scale (ATS), and a researcher developed perception of quality scale. Work environment was related to anticipate turnover. Managers and staff nurses are 'not on the same page' in perceptions. Researcher concluded that Strategies to improve the work environment are necessary to meet the needs of the staff nurse.

Emold et al (2010) performed an explorative study to examine the association between communication self-efficacy, working environment perceptions and burnout in an Israeli sample of oncology nurses. A non-randomized convenience sample of nurses (n=39) was recruited from six oncology units in a major tertiary medical center in Israel. Researchers concluded that communication self-efficacy and a positive perception of the working environment appear to buffer the occurrence of emotional exhaustion and promote self-actualization.

Warren (2009) conducted a descriptive study to assess the staff nurses perception about work environment. Samples were taken from different areas of patient care by convenient sampling. Results revealed that 65% of the staff nurses perceived it as highly positive, 20% had positive perception and 15% of them had negative perception. Nurses' area of working, years of experience and age were significantly associated with the perception.

Deidra E. Staten et al (2006) conducted a descriptive co relational study examined the relationship among ethnicity and perceptions of the work environment among staff nurses in a large urban hospital in Northern California. Findings of this study suggest statistically significant differences in the way Caucasian and non-Caucasian nurses viewed the extent to which management used rules and pressures. The perception of control in the work environment is an important factor in retention and in maintaining a quality workplace.

Methodology

A descriptive research approach was considered to be the most appropriate to achieve the objectives of the study. The study was conducted in the Wards, Critical Care Unit, Operation Theatre and Outpatient department of Govt.General Hospital Chennai. The study participants were chose by simple random technique by using the lottery method .As the study was proposed to be conducted within a span of two consecutive days and considering the time taken to interview each staff Nurse, it was decided to select 10 staff Nurses per day. A Self constructed Staff Nurses Work Environment perception scale was developed for data collection.

The pilot study was conducted before the main study and it elicited that the study was feasible. The tool was found to be highly reliable and valid. During the data collection, the researcher introduced herself to each subject and they were informed about the purpose of the study and an informed consent was taken. Ethical clearance for the study was taken from the institutional ethical committee.

Results

Table:1 Description of demographic variables

S.No	Demographic variables	Categories	Samples N=20	Percentage
1.	Age	a.)21 to 30yrs	4	20%
		b.)31 to 40yrs	12	60%
		c.)41 to 50yrs	4	20%
		d.)51 to 60yrs	-	0%
2.	Gender	a.)Male	-	0%
		b.)Female	20	100%
3.	Educational Status	a.) Diploma in Nursing	15	75%
		b.) B.Sc (Nursing)	5	25%
4.	Income	a.) < Rs.5000	-	0%
		b.) Rs.5000 - Rs.10,000	4	20%
		c.) Rs.10, 000-Rs.15, 000	12	60%

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		d.) > Rs.15, 000	4	20%
5.	Area of Working	a.) Wards	8	40%
		b.) Critical care units	2	10%
		c.) Operation Theatre	3	15%
		d.) Out Patient department	7	35%
6.	Years of Experience	a.) < 1 Year	5	25%
		b.) 1-5 Years	5	25%
		c.) 5-10 Years	5	25%
		d.) > 10 Years	5	25%
7	Grades obtained	a.) 1	5	25%
		b.) 2	5	25%
		c.) No grades	10	50%
8	Religion	a.)Hindu	11	55%
		b.)Christian	7	35%
		c.)Muslim	2	10%
		d.)Others	-	0%
9	Locality	a.)Urban	15	75%
		b.)Rural	5	25%

Figure:1 Staff Nurses perceptions about work environment.
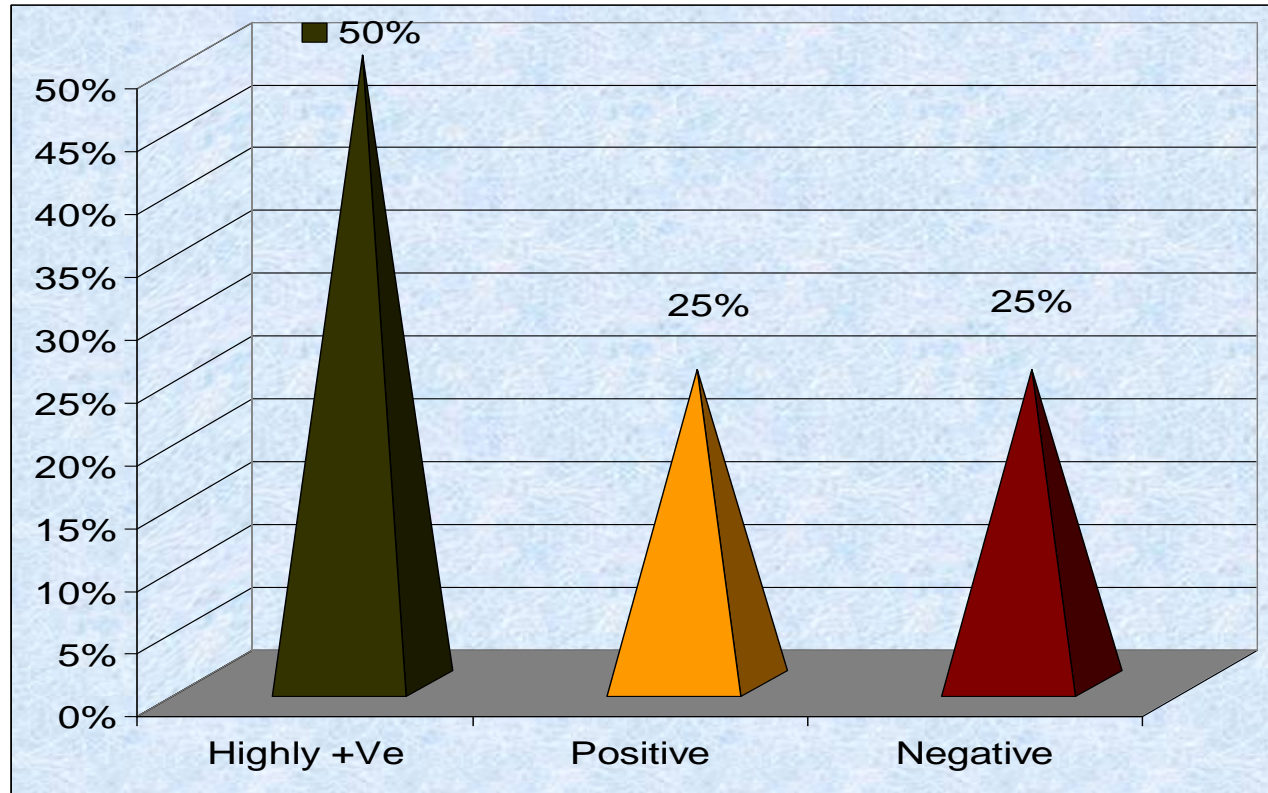
Table:2 Association between the perception with the selected demographic variables.

S.No	Variables	d.f	Chi square Table value	Chi square Calculated Value	Level of significance (p>0.05)
1	Age	6	12.592	18.333	Significant
2	Educational Status	2	5.991	6.667	Significant
3	Area of Working	6	12.592	7.700	Non Significant
4	Yrs of Experience	6	12.592	20.423	Significant
5	Grades obtained	2	5.991	10.000	Significant
6	Religion	6	12.592	4.531	Non Significant
7	Locality	2	5.991	15.932	Significant

Discussion

The present study findings are well supported by **Warren (2009)**, in his study revealed that 65% of the staff nurses perceived it as highly positive, 20% had positive perception and 15% of them had negative perception. Nurses' area of working, years of experience and age were significantly associated with the perception. The present study projects that 10 (50%) study subjects perceived the working environment as highly positive, 5 (25%) of them perceived as positively and 5(25%) of them perceived as negatively.

The present study reveals that age , educational status, years of experience and grades of nurses were significantly associated with the nurses perception about their work environment. These findings were well supported the study conducted by **Warren (2009)** in which Nurses area of working, years of experience and age were significantly associated with the perception.

Nursing Implications

Nursing Practice: Nurses should have awareness that they have the rights for the safe and sound work environment. Nurses with perceptions of work climate emphasizing 'workgroup friendliness and warmth' and 'adherence to job standard' had lower turnover intention.
Nursing Administration: Nurse managers are encouraged to create a work environment that supports professionalism and minimizes conflict.

Nursing Education: Ensuring that education

about the perception of control in the work environment is an important factor in retention and in maintaining a quality workplace.

Nursing Research: The evident of lack awareness among nurses on their rights for the good environment has to studied in depth to identify the strategies for the positive work environment for the Staff Nurses.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

1. The study can be replicated in larger samples in different settings.

2. A structured teaching programme on Organizational Milieu therapy can be given.

3. A co relational study between work environment and Job turn over can be done.

CONCLUSION

Environment of an organization is a process by which the corporate management assisted by specialist try to identify the opportunities and risk in the environment in which an organization operates. The identification always helps the management in planning alternatives for corporate planning. Staff nurses perceive the work environment as these perceptions may affect nurses' intention to leave the organization. Strategies to improve the work environment are necessary to meet the needs of the staff Nurses. Also healthy work environments are linked to patient safety and quality. Hence, nursing leaders has to play a vital role in ensuring a healthy work environment.

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