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Conceptual Framework

This study explores the relationships between interpersonal connections in the workplace and four dimensions of employee retention. It is expected that four dimensions of work life ultimately have an impact on employee decisions to leave or to stay employed at a long-term care facility:

- employment satisfaction
- commitment to the job
- job competence
- employment intentions

Social organization and human development ecological theories were used to inform the study (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997; Mancini, Bowen, & Martin, in press; Mancini, Martin, & Bowen, 2003; Moen, Elder, & Luscher, 1995).

- Human development ecological theory posits that important individual outcomes are influenced by factors that emanate from multiple contexts, including personality and cognitive characteristics of the individual, family relationships and structures, and the broader environment, including the work community.
- Social organization theory focuses on how people interrelate, cooperate, and provide mutual support; it includes social support norms, social controls that regulate behavior and interaction patterns, and the networks that operate in a community.

Methods: Data Collection

Study Site: 120-bed nursing home located in rural Southwestern Virginia

Participants: 156 direct care and support services staff members

- ~ 67% Less than 40 years old
- ~ 85% Females
- ~ 44% Married
- ~ 40% Children under age 18 living in home
- ~ 39% High School Education; 14% four-years college
- ~ 21% Nurses; 40% CNAs; 39% Support Staff
- ~ 53% Left Facility During the Study Period

Self-Report Structured Questions

- Individual: Age, Gender, Health, Marital Status, Psychological Well Being
- Family: Size, Responsibilities, Supportiveness, Financial Needs
- Community (workplace): Position, Job Demands, Closeness to residents, Feeling Appreciated, Rewarded, Conflict, Affinity for Coworkers, Coworker Cohesion, Sense of Belonging, Shared Responsibility, Collective Competence
- Retention-related Outcomes: Job Satisfaction, Job Competence, Job Commitment, Employment Intentions

Response Rate: 90%

Methods: Measures

Dependent Measure:

➢ Community Connections: Degree staff join together to solve problems, look out for each other, typically able to solve problems, make connections with each other, feel close to each other, and willing to help each other.

Independent Measures:

- Job Commitment: Degree respondent trusts facility, is enthusiastic about facility as great place to work, feels loyal to the facility, would do almost anything to keep working at the facility, is inspired by the workplace to do very best, and cares about success of the facility.
- Job Satisfaction: Degree of satisfaction with pay, chances for advancement, praise for performance, facility policies, working conditions, supervisor's competence, freedom to use own judgment, independence, co-worker cohesion, opportunity for steady employment, recognition.
- Employment Intentions: Degree to which thinks about quitting, intends to work at facility for at least another year, would quit now if possible, and likely to leave the facility in next year.
- Job Competence: Self perception of how prepared to fulfill current responsibilities.

Results

General Hypothesis:

Work community connections will be positively related to job satisfaction, commitment to the job, job competence, and employment intentions.

Descriptive Results:

- Two of three respondents are enthusiastic about working at the facility
- Four of ten are very loyal to the facility.
- One-half are satisfied with their pay.
- One-third are dissatisfied with chances for advancement.
- Two-thirds agree that staff solve problems together.
- Eight of ten feel it is easy to make connections with co-workers.
- One-fourth often think about quitting their job.
- Three-fourths not likely to leave job in following year.

Regression Analysis Results:

- Independent variables explain significant amount of variance in work community connections ($r^2 = .43$, $df = 4, 151$, $F = 28.23$, $p < .001$).
- Standardized regression coefficients for each independent variable are:

Job competence (.47)	Employment intentions (.19)
Job satisfaction (.27)	Job commitment (.18)

Summary and Conclusions

- Expectations about the relationships between community connections and the employment-related variables are supported by the data.
- Findings suggest that long-term care employees who have a stronger sense of community, who report that they and their co-workers solve problems through shared responsibility and collective competence, and who are more closely connected with their co-workers:
 - Are more competent in the positions they hold
 - Are more satisfied with their employment
 - Intend to remain in their current position at their current workplace
 - Are more committed to the institution
- Among the four predictors, perceptions of job competence are relatively more important for community connections.
- Among the four predictors, employment intentions and job commitment are relatively less important for community connections.
- These data show that retention-related outcomes are tied to how well employees are connected to their co-workers, and more specifically, how well co-workers interact around issues that may arise in the workplace (such as unanticipated challenges).

References

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