The impact of psychological capital on mental health among Iranian nurses: considering the mediating role of job burnout

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Abstract

Background: The role of nurses in providing high quality healthcare to patients is so important that creating a desirable working environment to enhance their overall performance is unavoidable. This paper aimed to explore the impact of psychological capital on mental health by investigating the mediating effects of job burnout on this relationship.

Methods and material: The data used in this research was obtained via a survey conducted among selected Iranian nurses in public hospitals. In total, 450 questionnaires were distributed and 384 were completed and returned. Collected data was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

Results: Findings showed that there is a significant relationship between psychological capital, job burnout and mental health; also, there is a significant negative relationship between psychological capital and job burnout, and a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and mental health.

Conclusion: The results have several important practical implications for human resource management in Iranian public hospitals. According to the results of this study, reducing job burnout is an important factor in enhancing psychological capital and can positively enhance nurses’ mental health.

Keywords: Psychological capital, Job burnout, Mental health, Nursing administration

Background

Nursing is a distinctive profession and the largest component of the health care system, playing a major role in providing consistent and high quality care for patients (Nayeri et al. 2005). Iranian nurses, like the nurses of other countries, are the largest group of health care service providers (Laschinger and Fida 2014). The role of nurses in performing high quality healthcare services for patients is considered important and, accordingly, providing a satisfactory work environment will inevitably enhance their performance.

Nurses have been reported Top of Form as the groups who are at the highest risk of job burnout. The results of former studies suggest that burnout is a serious phenomenon amongst nurses. According to one study, 40% of examined nurses in four countries suffered from burnout (Aiken et al. 2001). Psychological and emotional needs (Laschinger and Fida 2014; Greenglass et al. 2001) as well as job characteristics such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments (Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998) expose nurses to high risk of burnout.

Burnout not only affects the health of nurses, but is also considered a threat to the health of patients (Halbesleben et al. 2008; Wang et al. 2012). Accordingly, noting the variables contributing to burnout is important, as it can help to make a positive work environment and enhance the psychological health of nurses as well as improve the health of patients. Previous studies have recognized factors like job dissatisfaction (Zangaro and Soeken 2007) and high workload (Laschinger et al. 2011) as leading to burnout. They have also mentioned factors like...