

The Influence of Role Ambiguity, Emotional Labor, and Positive Psychological Capital on Job Stress of Nursing Assistants

Ji-Hye Jang¹ and Young-soon Choi²

¹Department of Nursing, Gangneung YeongDong University, Korea

²Department of Nursing, Kangwon National University, Korea

¹gogh0049@gmail.com, ²ysc615@kangwon.ac.kr

Abstract

This study is a descriptive correlation study to identify role ambiguity, emotional labor, positive psychological capital, and job stress, as well as the factors affecting each variable's correlation and job stress. As a result, job stress had a positive correlation with the number of employees and emotional labor and a negative correlation with positive psychological capital. Role ambiguity was negatively correlated with work experience and duration of employment, and there was a positive correlation with emotional labor. Positive psychological capital was positively correlated with work experience and role ambiguity and negative correlation with emotional labor. Based on the above results, we examined role ambiguity, emotional labor, and positive psychological capital that affect the job stress of nursing assistants. The results of this study suggest that it is necessary to establish a systematic education and management plan for job stress, which can improve positive psychological capital and reduce role ambiguity and emotional labor.

Keywords: Role ambiguity, Emotional labor, Positive psychological capital, Job stress, Nursing assistants

1. Introduction

As a lot of hospitals have introduced business management strategies to survive in limitless competition and fast-changing environments, they get to pay attention to customers (patients), who have relatively been neglected. They try to boost their competitiveness and profit by employing strategies to satisfy and impress customers by responding to the needs of patients who are “customers.” Specifically, they attempt to achieve commercialization of human feeling to make it happen [1]. Under the limitless competition, the importance of the first-line nursing staff who keeps in touch with patients is increasingly stressed.

After nursing assistants were established as one of the new occupations, there were 590,975 certified nursing assistants as of the end of 2013 [2], and people who number 30 thousand or more acquire the certification every year. Under medical laws, nursing assistants are in charge of assisting with nursing and treatment. At present, they are responsible for duties related to assisting nursing and therapy for patients in medical institutions.

Article history:

Received (January 17, 2018), Review Result (February 26, 2018), Accepted (March 31, 2018)

Role ambiguity is defined as a process that individuals undergo when they aren't accurately aware of their work and when they feel insufficient information is necessary for job performance [3]. Also, that is defined as a degree of psychological burden caused by unclarified organizational objectives, unclear evaluation standards, a lack of information required for job performance, or poor awareness [4]. Arthur [5] argued that role ambiguity negatively affects organizational members' performance. Many studies have examined role ambiguity in various fields, such as employees, secretaries, airline workers, or teachers [6][7]. Still, only a few studies have investigated the role ambiguity of nursing assistants.

Emotional labor refers to the endeavor, plan, and control that are necessary for organizational members to express the kind of emotion that the organizations to which they belong demand while keeping in touch with others, and that also means regulating one's own emotion to give satisfaction to customers while providing them with services [8].

Positive psychological capital refers to a degree of the positive cognitive state toward achievement and success. That consists of four concepts: self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience [9].

Stress is an emotional state that is detrimental to an organism. A recent concept could be a universal response to a specific requirement [10]. Job stress makes it difficult for individuals to perform their jobs due to something related to them or as interactions between the job performer and job-related factors that lead to changes in psychological or physical conditions [11].

In terms of health care services, the stress of hospital employees affects the service providers themselves in various ways, ultimately influencing the quality of the health care services they offer. That is, chronic stress might result in detracting from healthcare professionals' ability to provide quality healthcare services and their attention and problem-solving skills [12].

Nursing assistants should adequately respond to various situations or difficulties during job performance, and the positive role of positive psychological capital is of great importance for that. Positive psychological capital contributes to lowering job stress because it makes it possible to overcome diverse possible hardships and perform one's job confidently [13].

As for earlier domestic studies on role ambiguity, emotional labor, positive psychological capital, and job stress, many studies have mainly examined workers in the service industry, hotel employees, and call center workers. Most studies on medical institutions and healthcare workers have investigated university hospitals and nurses, and only a few studies have attempted to examine nursing assistants.

This study aimed to examine the levels of role ambiguity, emotional labor, positive psychological capital, and job stress among nursing assistants, the correlations of the variables, and influential factors for job stress to provide some information on how to improve their work.

2. Research method

2.1. Research design

This study is a descriptive correlation study to identify role ambiguity, emotional labor, positive psychological capital, and job stress, as well as the factors affecting each variable's correlation and job stress.

2.2. Research subjects

The subjects of this study were the nursing assistants who visited the training center of the 'Nursing Assistants Association'; the number of subjects was selected by referring to previous studies. The sample size was calculated using the G * power 3.1 programs. Based on the regression analysis, the effect size was 0.08, the significance level was .05, the power was .95, and a minimum of 315 subjects were needed. Considering the dropout rate (15%), the number of subjects was 360, and the final 332 subjects were excluded, except for 28 subjects whose answers were insufficient.

2.3. Research tools

2.3.1. Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity occurs when information about one's job and responsibilities is uncertain. In this study, we used a tool developed by Schuler, Aldag, and Brief [14]. The Cronbach's α value of this study was .881.

2.3.2. Emotional labor

Emotional labor was first presented by Hochschild [16] as part of the job role; emotional management creates expressions and behaviors that should be publicly observed. In this study, we used to revise the tools separated by Hochschild's surface behavior and inner behavior. The Cronbach's α value of this study was .686.

2.3.3. Positive psychological capital

Positive psychological capital is the degree of positive perception of an individual towards achievement and success [9]. In this study, a tool developed by Lauer and Kristof-Brown was used. The Cronbach's α value of this study was .906.

2.3.4. Job stress

Chang assessed job stress, Se-jin [16] and modified for the Korean job stress essential type measurement tool. The Likert scale consists of 6 items. Cronbach's α value was .802 in this study.

2.4. Data collection methods

The data collection period of this study was from April 1, 2017, to June 30, 2017. Before the data collection, the purpose of the study, data collection, and disposal method of data were explained. After that, the subjects who agreed to the data collection received written consent and then conducted the questionnaire. In the case of withdrawing the questionnaire during the questionnaire, it was shown that there was no disadvantage, and the average time for the questionnaire was about 15 minutes.

2.5. Data analysis methods

The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS 21.0 program, and the details are as follows. Stepwise multiple regression was performed to identify factors affecting the subject's job stress. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS 19.0 program according to the purpose of the study. The actual number, percentages, mean, and

standard deviation were obtained to determine the subjects' demographic characteristics and health-related characteristics. The chi-square test, Fisher's exact test, and independent t-test were used for the experimental and control groups' homogeneity tests. Kolmogorov-Smirnovtest confirmed the normality test of the research variables. To minimize the error between the groups that may exist before the experiment, the average distribution values are analyzed by the independent t-test.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Correlation between positive psychological capital and job stress of subjects

Stepwise regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of factors on the job stress of the subjects. Univariate analysis showed that emotional labor and positive psychological capital, including age, region, and number of employees, which were statistically significant, were selected as the final variables, and the regions were treated as dummy variables. The tolerance limit between independent variables was 0.961 - 0.986, more than 0.1, and the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) were 1.014 - 1.040, below the reference value of 10, thus eliminating the multi-collinearity problem. In addition, the Durbin-Watson value was verified to verify the independence of the residuals. As a result, it was 2.016, which was close to the reference value 2, so there was no autocorrelation. The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that factors affecting the job stress of the subjects were age, Seoul area, Incheon area, emotional labor, number of employees, and the explanatory power of the model was 9.8% ($F = 8.12, p < .001$) [Table 1].

Table 1. Correlation between the job stress, role ambiguity, emotional labor, positive psychological capita of subjects

	Work Experience R (p)	Employment Period R (p)	Number of employees R (p)	Role Ambiguity R (p)	Emotional Labor R (p)	Positive Psychological Capital R (p)	Job stress R (p)
Work experience	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employment Period	.591** ($<.001$)	1	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Employees	.077 (.166)	.054 (.326)	1	-	-	-	-
Role Ambiguity	-.274** ($<.001$)	-.169** (.002)	-.093 (.092)	1	-	-	-
Emotional Labor	-.057 (.304)	-.034 (.540)	.050 (.364)	.456** ($<.001$)	1	-	-
Positive Psychological Capital	.198** ($<.001$)	.062 (.262)	-.013 (.815)	-.618** ($<.001$)	-.454** ($<.001$)	1	-
Job stress	-.065 (.242)	-.078 (.157)	.142** (.010)	.048 (.387)	.160** (.004)	-.170** (.002)	1

3.2. Factors affecting the subject's job stress

Job stress of the subjects showed a statistically significant positive correlation between the number of employees in the ($r = .142, p = .010$), emotional labor ($r = .160, p = .004$), positive psychological capital ($r = -.170, p = .002$) was inversely correlated [Table 2]. Role ambiguity had a statistically significant negative correlation with work experience ($r = -.274, p < .001$) and duration of employment ($r = -.169, p = .002$), and there was a statistically significant positive correlation with emotional labor ($r = .456, p < .001$). Positive psychological capital had a positive correlation with work experience ($r = .198, p < .001$), and there was a statistically significant negative correlation with role ambiguity ($r = -.618, p < .001$) and emotional labor ($r = -.454, p < .001$).

Table 2. Job stress of influencing factor

	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	14.500	1.973		7.350	<.001
Age	-0.852	0.230	-.197	-3.709	<.001
District_Seoul	-2.063	0.787	-.140	-2.622	.009
District_Inchon	1.661	0.051	.145	2.754	.006
Emotional labor	0.139	0.740	.119	2.245	.025
Number of employees	0.006	0.003	.108	2.053	.041

Adj. R2=.098, F=8.12, p<.001

4. Conclusions

This study is a descriptive correlation study to identify role ambiguity, emotional labor, positive psychological capital, and job stress, as well as the factors affecting each variable's correlation and job stress.

As a result, the relationship between job ambiguity, positive psychological capital, emotional labor, and job stress showed that job stress had a positive correlation with the number of employees and emotional labor and a negative correlation with positive psychological capital. Role ambiguity was negatively correlated with work experience and duration of employment, and there was a positive correlation with emotional labor. Positive psychological capital was positively correlated with work experience and role ambiguity, and negative correlation with emotional labor. Based on the above results, we examined role ambiguity, emotional labor, and positive psychological capital that affect the job stress of nursing assistants.

References

- [1] H. A. Kang, "Change of nursing profession labor," *Economy and Society*, vol.55, no.3, 142-168, (2002)
- [2] Health Insurance Review and Assessment Service, *Statistical Yearbook of Health Insurance*, pp.179-182, (2013)
- [3] Churchill Jr G. A. Ford, N. M. Hartley, and S. W. Walker, "The determinants of salesperson performance: A meta-analysis," *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol.22, no.2, pp.103-118
- [4] Rizzo J. R., House R. J., and Lirtzman S. I. "Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol.15, no.2, pp.150-163

- [5] Arthur, J. B., "Effects of human resources systems on manufacturing performance and turnover," *Academy of Management Journal*, vol.37, no.3, pp.670-687
- [6] Papastyliaou A., Kaila M., and Polychronopoulos M. "Teachers' burnout, depression, role ambiguity and conflict," *Social Psychology of Education*, vol.12, no.3, pp.295-314, **(2009)**
- [7] H. J. Choi and H. G. Kown, "The stress influences on the job attitudes toward the employees of construction industries," *Korea J of Business Administration*, vol.21, no.4, pp.1723-1749, **(2008)**
- [8] B. Y. Park, "The relationship of emotional labor with the professional quality of life in general hospital personnel," Ph. D. dissertation, Chosun University, **(2012)**.
- [9] Luthans F., Youssef C. M., and Avolio B. J. "Psychological capital developing the human competitive edge," Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, **(2007)**.
- [10] Seyle H. A., "The stress of life, in T.A. Beehr and T.M. Franz(Eds.), the current debate about the meaning of job stress," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*
- [11] Beehr. T. A. and J. E. Newman. "Job stress and employee health and organizational effectiveness: A fact analysis," *Model and Literature Review. Personal Psychology*, vol.31, pp.665-669
- [12] W. C. Lee and W. G. Yoo, "A study on occupational stress of hospital workers," *Journal of Gyeongsan University*
- [13] K.O. Go, S. K. Park, and M. H. Lee, "The effect of positive psychological competence of clinical nurse on burnout," *J Korean Acad Nurs Adm.*, vol.19, no.2, pp.304-314, **(2013)**
- [14] Schuler, R. S., Aldag, R. J., and Brief, A. P. "Role conflict and ambiguity: A scale analysis," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, vol..20, no.1, pp.111-128
- [15] Hochschild A. R. "The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling," University of California Press, Berkeley, CA
- [16] S. J. Chang, "Current stress and situation of job stresses in Korea," *Korean Society for Preventive Medicine*, vol.2, no.1, pp.9-36, **(2002)**