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Predicting the impact of nurses' perception of job involvement and ethical climate on caring behaviors: the mediating and moderating effect of job involvement—a cross-sectional study

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Abstract

Background Nurses' perceptions of the ethical climate in their workplace and their level of job involvement are crucial factors that may influence their professional behaviors. This study aimed to explore how these factors—the nurses' perspectives on the ethical climate and their job involvement—affect their caring behaviors. Additionally, the mediating and moderating effects of job involvement on the relationship between ethical climate and caring behaviors were examined.

Methods This cross-sectional study enrolled 280 nurses through stratified random sampling. Job Involvement Scale, Hospital Ethical Climate Survey, and Caring Behaviors Inventory were used for data collection. SPSS and Macro PROCESS SPSS were used for hierarchical regression and moderation/mediation analysis.

Results This study found that nurses demonstrated high levels of caring behavior and a moderate perception of the hospital's ethical climate, with 80% reporting moderate job involvement. Nurses' views on the hospital and patient-related ethical climate predicted caring behaviors ($p < 0.05$). A relationship existed between job involvement and caring behaviors ($r = 0.17, p = 0.004$). Additionally, nurses with a more positive view of the hospital's ethical climate exhibited higher levels of job involvement ($r = 0.43, p < 0.001$). However, job involvement did not moderate or mediate the relationship between ethical climate and caring behaviors.

Conclusions Our findings indicate that a positive ethical climate enhances nurses' job involvement and caring behavior. Job involvement, in turn, improves caring behavior. It emphasizes the need for a supportive work environment to improve nursing practice. It is recommended that healthcare institutions should strengthen the ethical climate to enhance job involvement and caring behaviors.

Clinical trial number Not applicable.

Keywords Behavior, Ethics, Nurse, Work performance

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relationships between ethical climate, job involvement, and caring behaviors.

A limitation of this study is the use of measurement tools developed several years ago, including the Job Involvement Scale (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965), The Hospital Ethical Climate Survey (Olson, 1998), and The Caring Behaviors Inventory (Wolf et al., 1998). While these instruments are still widely utilized in recent research with established reliability and validity, incorporating more updated or alternative scales could enhance the relevance of the findings. Future studies should explore newer validated tools or compare outcomes using different measurement instruments.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that nurses exhibited high levels of caring behaviors and had a moderate perception of the hospital ethical climate. Additionally, 80% of the nurses reported moderate job involvement. The study indicated the nurses' perception of ethical climate as a predictor of caring behaviors, with those holding a more positive view of the ethical climate at both the patient and hospital levels demonstrating greater caring behaviors. Moreover, a relationship between job involvement and caring behaviors was observed, indicating that nurses who strongly identified with their job and valued job performance as part of their self-esteem exhibited improved caring behaviors. Furthermore, nurses with a more positive perception of the hospital ethical climate showed higher levels of job involvement. A key recommendation is for healthcare institutions to strengthen the ethical climate to enhance the nurses' job involvement and caring behaviors.

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Author contributions

MR, NP, SR participated in the conceptualization of this study. SR participated in the management of the data collection. MR, NP, SR conducted the management of the data analysis. All authors participated in writing and approving the original draft of the manuscript.

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Data availability

The data of this study will be available by email to Masoume Rambod.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This study was approved by Research Ethics Committees of the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery, Management and Medical Information Science

affiliated with Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. (IR.SUMS.NUMIMG.REC.1403.002, date 2024-02-26). Approval was granted by the hospital management and relevant departments. Nurses provided their written informed consent by signing the consent form. All procedures adhered to the applicable guidelines and regulations. Respecting the anonymity and confidentiality of the nurses' information was safeguarded throughout the entire study. The nurses had the right to withdraw from the study at any point and could discontinue their participation in completing the questionnaires. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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