

Organizational Commitment in Nursing ManagementÖğr. Gör. Hilal Karatepe¹, Öğr. Gör. F. Nuray Kuşcu², Öğr. Gör. Ulviye Özcan Yüce¹, Doç. Dr. Derya Atik^{1*}¹Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Osmaniye, Turkey²Mustafa Kemal University, Hatay, Turkey**Review Article*****Corresponding author**

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Article History

Received: 31.03.2018

Accepted: 10.04.2018

Published: 30.04.2018

DOI:

10.21276/sasjm.2018.4.4.2



Abstract: Creating loyalty is the basis of human resources management, which is the most valuable part of the management process. In the globalizing world, investment in human beings is shown as the most valuable capital. Nursing management is a form of management that is integrated with human resources management because it serves people through people. In nursing management; policies should be developed to support employees' commitment to their organizations, their quality of work life and their integration with the organization. This study, which may be a source for creating policies, organizational commitment was first examined in the context of literature and then in the second part a summary of the literature is given in order to evaluate the roles and responsibilities of the nurses in the health care institutions and nursing.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Health, Nursing, Executive Nurses, Health Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment refers to employees' loyalty attitudes towards their organizations and also to their interests devoted for developing the organization. It is stated that the sense of organizational commitment improves organizational performance and thus reduces undesirable consequences such as coming late to work, absenteeism, leaving the job, and high labor turnover, and improves product or service quality. Organizational commitment is known to be low in health and nursing fields in Turkey.

While investigating the underlying reasons for this phenomenon, it was not possible to reach a study specific to nursing, which was conducted to increase organizational commitment and identify what the responsibilities of nurse managers in this respect. Organizational commitment is important for providing guidance to nurse managers.

This study firstly examined organizational commitment in the light of literature, and secondly presented a summary of the literature review to assess the organizational commitment in health institutions and nursing, and to identify the roles and responsibilities of nurse managers in this respect.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational Commitment and Principal Components

Organizational commitment is defined as the strength of the bond between an individual's self-identity and a particular organization. It is the expression of an individual's sense of identification and integration with a particular organization [1]. Organizational commitment refers to the strong

acceptance and belief in the purpose and values of a particular organization, and also to the willingness for making meaningful efforts on behalf of that organization. Organizational commitment is characterized by a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization, an employee's loyalty to the organization, and a sense of being volunteer for corporate success [2]. Organizational commitment is a dynamic process between employees and the organization (or institution) and environment where they work. The more the employees perceive themselves as a part of the organization, the greater the level and depth of their commitment to that organization [3].

Organizational commitment is under the interest of management researchers for a long time [4]. Organizational commitment was first dealt with by Whyte in 1956 and later by many researchers, including Porter, Mowday, Steers, Allen, Meyer, and Becker [5]. The importance of organizational commitment appeared in the 1950s, but it has become a part of the literature in the 1970s. Measurement and conceptualization of organizational commitment has been carried out since the 1980s [6].

As can be understood from other definitions of organizational commitment stated in the literature, the concept has different contents. The disagreements of authors on the nature of the relationship between employees and organization and how this relationship has developed create the underlying reasons for this disparity. The most widely accepted and used content is Meyer and Allen's model of organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer first prepared a two-dimensional scale including concepts of emotional attachment and continuance commitment, then added the concept of normative commitment to this scale and created a three-dimensional scale [7,8].

Emotional attachment usually refers to the strength of individuals' involvement and integration with their organizations. It has three components; identification with organizational purposes and values, high participation in work-related activities, and organizational commitment with loyalty. Emotional commitment is based on the relationships of employees with their organization. This type of attachment requires a harmony between employees' and organizational values and goals [7]. Continuance commitment (mandatory commitment or rational commitment) represents the awareness of the costs of leaving the organization [9]. In other words, it is the material losses keeping employees in the organization. As employees increase their investments in the organization and their opportunities for alternative jobs decrease, their continuance commitment to the organization increases.

Normative commitment (moral commitment) is a type of commitment in which employees feel responsible for the organization, believe that they have the necessary duties to do in the organization, and therefore feel obligated to continue to work in the organization. The most important difference of normative commitment from continuance commitment is that continuity requirement of staff is not related to a number of material benefits to be provided by the organization. As the factors including past experiences of employees, social values, long working experience of other employees in a single organization, and praise of such employees lead employees to perceive the commitment to the organization as a virtue, they gradually consider organizational commitment as a moral imperative. They would like to continue their institutional membership because they regard organizational loyalty as the most correct behavior and virtuous decision [7,10]. Whatever the type, three commitment components consist of a psychological condition that connects employees to the organization and affects their decision to leave or stay in the organization [11].

The Importance of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an important concept to ensure personnel continuity in an institution

in today's conditions, where the need for labor force increases but it is difficult to find the employees adequate in quality and quantity. Therefore, in today's fast-paced competition environment for attracting the workforce to institutions, it is an important factor in determining whether employees stay in the institution [12]. In addition, organizational commitment provides an important contribution to increase institutional service quality, ensure effective intra-organizational communication, adopt changes and innovations easier, decrease costs, and ensure competitive advantage.

Deployment of resources is an important problem for organizations today. Organizations have found the solution in increasing employee loyalty to reduce employee turnover costs and ensure employee continuity. Studies show that organizational commitment reduces the costs of high employee turnover. The fact that highly qualified employees with high performance remain in the organization and continue to contribute to the organization using their experiences also improves organizational productivity. In addition, the organization does not need to train new staff and allocate resources for malfunctions resulting from functional faults and errors during the orientation process [13].

Studies show that when employees' organizational commitment increases, their participation in organization, production and service increases, their job satisfaction and organizational productivity improves, they perform better, the rate of late arrivals to work, absenteeism, turnover rate of personnel and burnout syndrome among employees decreases, and employees' individual job and organizational satisfaction increases [14,15]. Organizations should solve the close relationship between the following concepts to ensure and improve organizational commitment:

- Leave of employment, absenteeism, withdrawal, and job search activities,
- Attitudinal, emotional and cognitive structures such as job satisfaction, job involvement, morale and performance,
- Employees' characteristics related their jobs and roles such as autonomy, responsibility, participation, and sense of duty,
- Personal characteristics such as age, gender, work experience and education,

Individuals' organizational commitment is closely related to knowing of its estimators [16].

Factors Affecting Organizational Commitment

Factors affecting organizational commitment through both personal characteristics and working conditions can generally be summarized as follows:

Nature and importance of the job: Importance of the job for individuals and society, individuals' knowledge and awareness of their jobs, duties and responsibilities, and increase in their authorities, responsibilities and working experience increase organizational commitment. The higher the value and importance of a job for the individual and society, the higher the level of organizational commitment.

Management and leadership: Participative and sharing management and leadership style taking care of its employees' decisions and supporting their skills increases organizational commitment.

Salary: It is one of the most important organizational commitment factors. Individuals' belief that they receive the salary they are entitled to is very important to ensure organizational commitment.

Role uncertainty and conflict: Role uncertainty and conflict leads employees to be unhappy, restless, stressful, reluctant and disinterested to their jobs, causing dissatisfaction at work.

Teamwork: The intimacy of labor relationships is possible with teamwork. Sense of belonging, task sharing and decrease in tension increase organizational commitment.

Organizational culture and climate: Organizational culture and mutual sharing improve the sense of unity and solidarity, reduce conflicts, and thus increase positive organizational climate and moral commitment.

Organizational justice and trust: Fair treatment in issues such as rewards, assignment of tasks, wages, leaving permits, social facilities, and authorization increases organizational commitment. Organizational trust and peace, easy solution of managerial problems, decrease in conflicts and intention to leave of employment also increase organizational commitment [17].

Consequences of Organizational Commitment

The consequences of organizational commitment can be positive or negative depending on the degree of commitment and the acceptability of organizational goals. The high level of commitment in organization members can accelerate disintegration of the organization when the organizational goals are not acceptable, whereas this high level of commitment has positive effects when the goals are acceptable [16].

Studies report that employees with higher organizational commitment work more for the benefit and interest of their organization, are more successful, have more job satisfaction, and contribute more to innovation and creativity. These studies also determined that these employees have lower turnover

rates, feel more of responsibility for fulfilling organizational goals, and contribute more in productive. On the other hand, organizational commitment has negative consequences. Because a high level of organizational commitment decreases creativity, inquiry and critical thinking in individuals; the false, unquestioned and permanent behaviors in passive individuals can lead to serious problems for both other individuals and organization.

In addition, the increase in unethical behaviors on behalf of the organization, the destruction of individual identity in the organization, and the individuals' constant involvement in work can cause them stay away from social life and become isolated. A high level of organizational commitment causes employees to get high levels of stress because of hypersensitivity to organizational hazards and problems [18].

Organizational commitment in health institutions

Health institutions and administrators has started to consider human resources as the most important capital for organizations. There is a rapid change in service and customer concepts in health sector. Quality of healthcare services, customer and patient satisfaction and removal of state monopoly in the health sector have made the working attitudes and behaviors of health personnel an important issue [19].

Healthcare institutions are the complex and crowded institutions with abundance in number and variety. Although the existence of professional members with different educational backgrounds and qualifications is desirable in terms of productivity, it can cause problems in job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Employees' organizational commitment status is different in hospitals as service enterprises than manufacturing enterprises, in terms of its size and importance. Low organizational commitment in hospitals and the resulting situations such as low job satisfaction and organizational trust can affect patient care quality and work performance negatively.

Organizational commitment leads to decrease in patient loyalty and hospital profitability. Low organizational commitment means that hospital workers are ignored, they do not participate sufficiently in decision making process, so they do not see themselves as part of the organizational team. As employees are not sufficiently encouraged and rewarded, this situation causes perceptions negatively affecting organizational performance and managerial process [20]. It is emphasized that organizational commitment of the personnel working in the health sector is somewhat lower than those working in other sectors. For instance, the organizational commitment score of the employees working in the health sector of Canada was determined as 6.71, while the

organizational commitment score of the employees working outside the health sector was found as 7.41 [21].

The low level of organizational commitment negatively affects occupational values of hospital employees and patient safety. In addition, the decrease in qualified human power as a cost decreasing factor leads to quality and cost problems. The increase in organizational commitment, one of the most important determinants of the decision to leave of employment, becomes even more important under these circumstances [22]. Hospitals must regularly collect and improve data and information on organizational commitment associated with multiple factors to maintain sectorial competition [23].

Organizational commitment in nursing and literature review

Nurses consisted of the professional group closest to patients in healthcare services requiring effective communication, collaboration and team work that are carried out by a variety of health professionals. Ensuring a high level of organizational commitment in nurses who are the most active members of a healthcare team is very important to provide health services more effectively and efficiently, to ensure patient and nurse satisfaction, and to increase nurses' success [24].

The Turkish studies show that nurses have moderate or low level of organizational commitment. Studies are conducted in Turkey and other countries to examine the level of organizational commitment in nurses and the related factors and to discuss strategies to increase their organizational commitment [25-28].

The fact that management styles of nurses are generally authoritarian shows that managers are not interested enough with employees' problems. Organizational commitment, business success, and institutional productivity reduce due to reasons such as rigid or inappropriate managerial attitudes towards employees, poor relations among colleagues, low wages, high workload, and difficulties brought by professionalization problems.

The declining organizational commitment and its consequences cause problems extending to leave the organization. When considered that the number of nurses will not increase in the short-run, the increase of current employees' organizational commitment becomes more important for ensuring them stay at work. The insufficient number of nurses, excessive workload, shift work system, lack of promotion and wage opportunities, uncertainties regarding the role and job description, and unfavorable health and corporate policies regarding nurses increase nurses' turnover rates in the last few years in Turkey [14,29].

Similar problems are also experienced abroad [21,30,31].

High turnover rates lead to increase in nurses' workload. The increase in nurses' workload results in many negative consequences such as disruption at work, decrease in motivation and job performance and deterioration in patient care quality. In addition, nurses' trust in their organizations and administrators also weaken. As a result, their organizational commitment decreases and gradually disappears. Sevinç and Şahin [32] examined the organizational commitment levels of nurses working in public hospitals, and found a low level of organizational commitment in nurses who work for long hours. One of the reasons for this can be the problems that nurses experience in reaching to the desired level of performance in effective and efficient service delivery.

Kaya [33] found a significant relationship between nurses' demographic characteristics and organizational commitment levels, and determined a relationship between continuance commitment and demographic characteristics more significant than the relationship with other types of commitment. Organizational commitment is an important determinant in ensuring staff continuity in health care institutions [34]. Carried out a study with nurses and medical secretaries, and found that the level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction showed significant differences in terms of occupation, income status and hospital ownership type in both professional groups. They also determined a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment considerably affects job satisfaction. Özcan *et al.* [35] conducted a study to determine the effect of nurses' organizational commitment and job satisfaction on the expected employee turnover rates, and found that as the nurses' organizational commitment and job satisfaction decreased, their intention of leaving the job increased. The levels of organizational commitment in nurses do not change during the evolving process and years. For instance; İntepeler *et al.* [36] found a moderate level of organizational commitment in nurses according to the measurements made in 2007, 2009 and 2011.

Nurses' employment status is an important factor in determining their organizational commitment levels. Karahan [37] reports that nurses who think they have a temporary employment status in the organization do not feel connected to their organizations, while nurses with a permanent employment status in the organization feel more connected to their organizations, so staff nurses have higher organizational commitment. Durna and Eren [38] found that as the age of employees and the amount of time they spend in the profession increases, and also

as their marital status changes to marriage, then their organizational commitment increases.

The role of nurse managers in creating organizational commitment

Mistakes in the decisions made in healthcare management can cause vital and irreversible consequences. It is important for hospital managers to pay attention to the concept of organizational commitment in terms of taking measures against long-term adverse events in the organization and develop relevant behaviors, and to take into account of the factors affecting organizational commitment. Nurse managers are primarily responsible and role model for establishing organizational commitment in nurses. In this respect, similar to other health managers, nurse managers should also evaluate organizational commitment in employees and develop practices and policies that increase their organizational commitment levels. For doing this, they should be attentive to;

- Recruit nurses whose organizational and individual values are compatible, and who will work in the institution for a long time and meet institutional expectations and requirements,
- Organize work adjustment programs to reduce the reality shock of newly-hired nurses, to make them acquire necessary knowledge and skills to work in hospital comfortably and effectively, and answer their work-related questions,
- Assign and place nurses in appropriate units according to their educational backgrounds, abilities, roles and responsibilities,
- Organize regular meetings to ensure nurses adopt institutional mission, vision, goals and objectives and fulfill their roles, and be a role model in managerial problems,
- Make effective performance evaluation, organize development programs according to the evaluation results, and improve the promotion system,
- Carry out in-service training programs parallel to organizational changes and sectorial development,
- Encourage nurses to use professional autonomy, make autonomous decisions, and adapt to changes in the health care system,
- Provide counseling for nurses in solving their problems, and develop mentoring practice for newly-hired nurses,
- Create an organizational climate that promotes emotions such as organizational trust, justice, respect, and equality,
- Identify and solve problems (including personnel in appropriate number and qualification),
- Adopt an open, honest and democratic management approach and establish an effective communication and information system,
- Make nurses feel appreciated (verbal, written declarations, celebrations, and so on)
- Take individual needs into account [17].

CONCLUSION

Organizational commitment seems as a human resources issue, but thanks to its multifaceted impacts, it is one of the basic and ultimate goals for organizations to protect their assets and compete in the global world. Because individuals with organizational commitment are more harmonious, satisfied, and productive; work at a higher level of loyalty and responsibility; and cause less cost by prioritizing organizational benefit.

Nurse Managers, as an organizational manager, can take steps to create, maintain and develop organizational commitment. To achieve the desired organizational commitment, it will be the main methods for nurse managers to make nurses feel valuable for the institution, ensure them to participate in decision making process, create healthy communication environment within the organization, find out and solve organizational problems, and conduct improvement works. Similarly, working nurses will be able to help their administrators to create a working environment close to the ideal one by internalizing that the acquired organizational commitment will be beneficial for both themselves and other nurses, and being aware of that nursing management has a responsibility for having a management approach that supports organizational commitment and that nurses also have the rights arising from this responsibility.

Studies found a moderate organizational commitment in nurses. One of the reasons of this result is the existence of many factors affecting organizational commitment. Studies should primarily focus on identifying these factors. Organizational commitment is a determinant factor affecting many concepts such as personnel cost, quality and productivity, and ensuring continuity in health care institutions. It is recommended to create awareness in healthcare institutions' managers for ensuring continuity in their works on organizational commitment.

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