

## Special Article

# Motivation and Job Performance among Nurses in the Private Hospitals in Malaysia

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** In the wake of stiff competition and increasing expectation from the patients, nurses' job performance in the private hospitals is crucial to overcome the challenging situation. According to motivational theory, motivation is essential in enhancing job performance. It is a drive that induces a person to seek and accomplish satisfaction of needs. Hence, it is believed that striking a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation may lead to greater satisfaction of needs and in turn, to higher job performance.

**Aim:** The aim of this paper is to provide a conceptual analysis of motivation and job performance of nurses in the private hospitals in Malaysia. This paper is guided by Herzberg's Two Factor theory in establishing the proposed theoretical framework.

**Results:** Our conceptual analysis suggests that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will be positively related to nurses' job performance.

**Research Implications:** This study provides an avenue to researchers to examine nurses' job performance by using intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It also offers the healthcare managers to identify their nurses' needs so that relevant motivational programs can be designed to motivate and lead them towards achieving their desired job performance.

**Keywords:** job performance, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, nurses.

### Introduction

Today, healthcare sector is facing stiff competition and an increasing expectation from the patients. Patients are viewing healthcare services from different angles and perspectives. Standard of healthcare services has been emphasized tremendously owing to the rising consumer affluence and well-informed patients towards the quality and delivery of healthcare services. In Malaysia, healthcare services have made a great contribution to the country's economy especially in the health tourism industry. The government is confident that health tourism industry is able to contribute 10% increment per annum revenue growth for the nation in year 2011-2015 (Tenth Malaysia Plan, 2010). Referring to the Economic

Transformation Program (ETP) Malaysia, healthcare sector has been identified as one of the National Key Economic Areas that will promote incremental Gross National Income (GNI) growth of RM35.5 billion and 181,000 jobs by the year 2020 (ETP Annual Report, 2011). Hence, in line with the aim of ETP, healthcare providers should perform and play an important role in putting the country in a competitive position and creating a mark in the healthcare sector. Owing to the high expectation in the healthcare services, one of the measures to improve the current situation is to enhance the job performance of nurses in the healthcare sector.

In Malaysia, nurses represent the largest workforce in the healthcare industry. Nurses

constitute 2-3% of the female workforce in the country. Total number of nurses has been estimated to reach 174,400 by the year 2020 with a targeted 1:200 nurse to resident ratio (Barnett, Namasivayam & Narudin, 2010). Healthcare is a people-oriented industry. Generally, patients use healthcare services on their physical body and receive nursing care that is managed by nurses. Nurses are personnel who occupy a leading position in assisting to heal, protect, soothe and prevent patients from pain and diseases (Juliani, 2007). Nurses work in complex situations that embracing utmost professionalism and competency in exhibiting patient-oriented behaviour and providing nursing care. The challenging work environment in the hospital puts a lot of pressure on nurses. The advent of globalization has also injected a new phenomenon where stressful work environment may diminish the nurses' motivation level. This scenario if left unchecked may cause an adverse impact towards their job performance.

Job performance among nurses is seriously emphasized by private hospitals. Most of the hospitals were using performance evaluation as a means to achieve the goals and objectives of the organizations. According to Altindis (2011), Kolawole and Ali (2013) and Muogbo (2013), one of the factors that influence nurses' job performance is their motivation. Motivation is regarded as a strong predictor to job performance. Hence, the aim of this paper is to provide a conceptual analysis of the relationship between motivation and job performance among nurses in the private hospitals in Malaysia. This paper is guided by Herzberg's Two Factor theory in establishing the proposed theoretical framework.

### **Job Performance**

Job performance is imperative in any industry because it is one of the key indicators of productivity and profitability. Generally, job performance is prioritized by organizations to achieve organization goals. Job performance is viewed as a measure of success of an employee in his or her employment. According to Janssen and Van Yperen (2004), in-role job performance indicates the actions specified and required

by an employee's job description. It is also meant to be appraised and rewarded by the employing organization and thus contributes to the organization's excellent performance. In the organizational context, these sets of procedures make work behaviour predictable so that basic tasks can be accomplished to achieve the organization goals (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004).

However, job performance in this study relates to how effective nurses perform their duties and responsibilities associated with the direct care of their patients (Dieleman, Toonen & Toure, 2006). Added to the above, Fritzen (2007) stated that nurses is one of the important inputs to any healthcare system and has strong effect on the performance of the healthcare organization. A major challenge for private healthcare centres now is to seek ways to improve their employees' job performance and increase efficiency in their healthcare interventions. In relation to this, nurses represent the workforce owing to the fact that they are the persons who connected directly with the patients. Their job performance is essential in achieving organization objectives in a way that is consistent and effective (Mehmet, 2013). Johari and Ong (2013) in their study described that nurse-patient interface comprises elements of the nurse-patient interaction in the process of co-producing a service. The aspect of interaction has become an important element for nurses to meet the incremental patient's expectation. Usually, patients are not able to adequately evaluate the value of medical equipment and technology used in the hospitals but they tend to focus on social interactions as a measure of evaluation (Yoon, Choi & Park, 2007). Apparently, nurses' expressive and interactive performance was mostly evaluated because patients usually are more sensitive towards the nursing care they received.

A successful healthcare organization should customize the experience of healthcare around the patient needs and job performance of its staffs (Kerfoot, 2000). Excellent job performance will decrease personnel costs, increase organizational profitability and build patient loyalty (Earls, 2004). In contrast, if the nurses' job

performance declines, it will lead to unwanted consequences such as compromising standard of patient care, delay and negligence in work, tardiness and growing number of patient complaints. In view of private hospitals belong to the service-based industry, patient complaints should be handled with extra efforts as it can affect the reputation of the healthcare institution. For this reason, it is necessary for private hospitals to understand the influence of motivation on nurses' job performance. Highly motivated nurses will perform quality services, gain patient satisfaction and enhance profitability of the organization.

### **Motivation**

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), motivation is a process that begins with an inspiration to act and energized toward an end. It initiates behaviours to achieve the aimed goals. It is a drive that induces a person to seek or accomplish satisfaction of a need. Gagne and Deci (2005) proposed a model that consists of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation relates people to carrying out an activity because they find it interesting. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation involves people in doing an activity because of the tangible rewards that the activity leads to. Intrinsic motivation derives spontaneous satisfaction from the activity whilst extrinsic motivation creates satisfaction from extrinsic rewards and benefits (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

### ***Intrinsic Motivation***

Intrinsic motivation is an internal force that leads employees to meet personal and organizational goals. It is inherently interesting and enjoyable that creates behaviour and encouragement to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In a study of Sansone and Smith (2000), they explained that intrinsic motivation is related to the activities that meet basic human needs for control and efficiency. Additionally, it makes the activity interesting, challenging and fun. In other words, intrinsic motivation is more likely to be established for its own sake rather than as a means to some end results. Intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual's own without coercion or encouragement of others. Individuals

perform an activity on the basis of their own accord (Sutikno, 2007). Noticeably, individuals who are intrinsically motivated were driven by self-interest or pleasure in the task itself and not rely on any external influences.

In the healthcare context, intrinsic motivation is operationally defined as self-gratification, pleasure in performing activities at the workplace instead of working towards external rewards. For example, nurses who enjoy performing their job no longer need to be encouraged or instructed to carry out their duties. It is believed that with intrinsic motivation, nurses are expected to progress and develop in their career. Their performance will be generated by self-interest and self-determination. These attributes are created spontaneously by internal stimuli. They usually consist of enthusiasm that leads them to engage in their job without expecting for additional rewards. According Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsically motivated personnel tend to show gains in appearance, resilience, creativity, self-esteem and superiority when compared with extrinsically motivated individuals. Individuals who are extrinsically motivated only act when there is an external reward.

According to Altindis (2011), job performance is a function of motivation. To achieve high job performance, managers ought to implement methods that motivate workers to perform their duties excellently (Moonhead & Griffin, 2002). Research by Gagne and Deci (2005) has shown that intrinsic motivation helps to improve job performance. Effective intrinsic motivation improves the performance of nurses and encourages them to work with diligence and dedication. It creates a sense of achievement, responsibility, satisfaction, participation and ownership that bonds among them and subsequently improves their team work. Apart from that, nurses who are intrinsically motivated feel that they are valuable to the organization and wish to remain in the organization. Obviously, intrinsic motivation not only brings positive outcome to individual performance but overall organization achievement. Therefore, in light of the above discussion, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 1:** Intrinsic motivation will be positively related to nurses' job performance.

### **Extrinsic Motivation**

Extrinsic motivation is an external force that leads employees to meet personal and organizational goals. According to Sutikno (2007), extrinsic motivation arises from the influence of external activities such as solicitation, instruction or coercion to direct individuals to perform tasks in order to get rewards in return. Types of extrinsic rewards are ranging from benefits, awards, pay, compensation and honours which are given for a good performance (Muogbo, 2013). According to Mankoe (2006), extrinsic motivation can be in the forms of good work environment, travelling benefits, additional facilities, attractive salary and various supervisions at the workplace.

In the healthcare context, extrinsic motivation is perceived as a force to move the nurses to perform a behaviour that will bring benefits to them and the organization. Extrinsic motivation is created from external stimuli and can be stimulated through praise, incentives, prizes, awards, grades and other fringe benefits. An extrinsically motivated nurse will deliver exceptional healthcare services in the organization due to extrinsic rewards. In a study of Ong and Johari (2014), it was found that hospital management is responsible for the effectiveness and performance of their staffs coupled with the best service behavior to the patients. If the hospital management would to put the nurses into action and improve their job performance, extrinsic motivation is one of the factors that can get the best out of them.

When there is an increase in extrinsic motivation such as salaries and allowances, there is also a corresponding increase in nurses' performance. This is proven in the study of Muogbo (2013) where it was discovered that extrinsic motivation is significantly related to employee's job performance. Therefore,

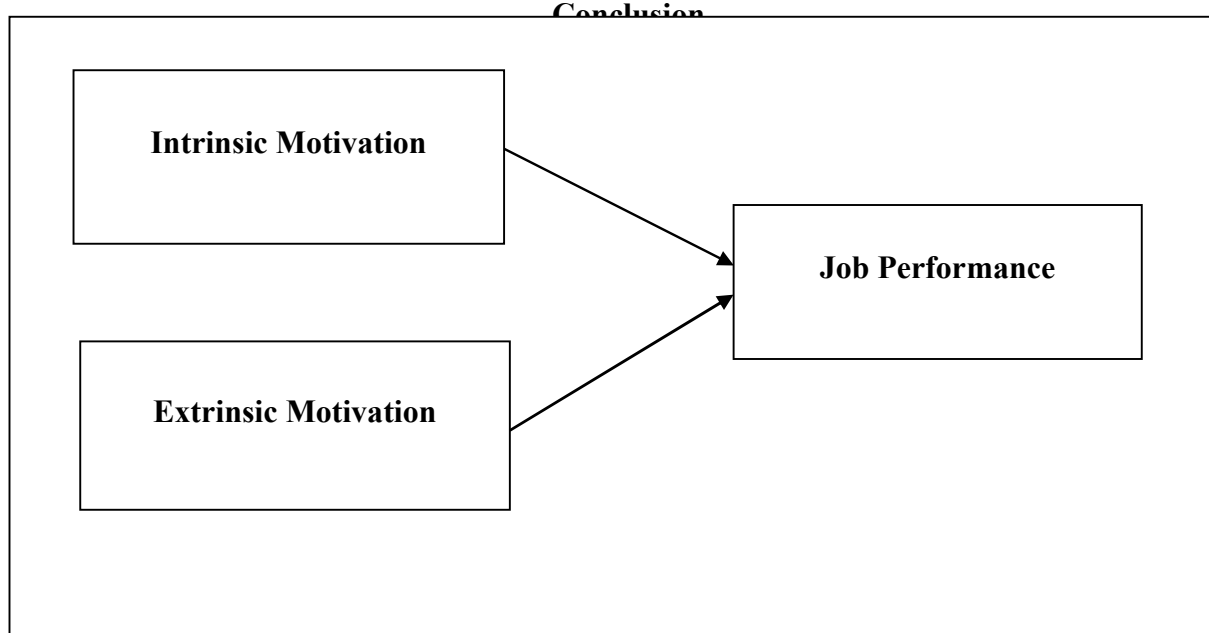
in view of the explanation above, it is proposed that:

**Proposition 2:** Extrinsic motivation will be positively related to nurses' job performance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The proposed theoretical framework in this study is guided by Herzberg's Two Factor theory. There are two factors that affect motivation of a person in an organization. They are hygiene factor and motivator. Hygiene factor relates to the job context or extrinsic aspects of the employees where it surrounds the execution of the work. Among the elements of hygiene factor are work conditions, co-worker relations, policies and rules, supervisor quality and base wage. It is also known to as extrinsic motivation. Comparatively, motivator is related to the job content or intrinsic aspects of the employees. Motivator motivates a person to strive for satisfaction and better performance with internal stimuli. Among the elements of motivator are achievement, recognition, responsibility, work itself, advancement and personal growth. Motivator is also labelled as intrinsic motivation. The Two Factor theory arises from the understanding that work has to be planned in such a way that hygiene factors (extrinsic motivation) and motivator (intrinsic motivation) of the employees is fulfilled. It is a fact that to maintain an organization in good health, more attention has to pay in meeting the needs of individuals in the organization. Hence, the intention of this paper is to provide a conceptual analysis and propose a theoretical framework that guides researchers in examining the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on nurses' job performance. The theoretical framework is established as depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Proposed Theoretical Framework** only beneficial to the individuals but to the organization as a whole.



specified way. Better performance can be attained if the employees are motivated both extrinsically and intrinsically.

### Research Implications

This study intends to show a better understanding of nurses' job performance and explain how to improve their performance by using motivation. Research by Koestner and Losier (2002) stated that intrinsic motivation yielded better performance on tasks that are interesting. However, extrinsic motivation yielded better performance on tasks that require discipline or determination. Therefore, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is essential in enhancing nurses' job performance. It is suggested that hospital management should determine the extent of influence of both elements on job performance by using the theoretical framework. The findings are expected to provide important information that enables the hospital management to understand the nurses' needs and offer solutions to increase their performance. Review of the existing system may be necessary to better fulfil nurses's needs which is not

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