Determining the Level of Work Place Stress among Nurses and Correctional Officers of Ambo Town, Ethiopia

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Abstract: This study is aimed at determining the level of work place stress among nurses and correctional officers of Ambo town, Ethiopia. Descriptive survey design was employed. The target population of the present study was 167 employees (among 115 correctional officers and 52 nurses). Questionnaire, structured interview and focus group discussion were employed for data collection. Descriptive And Inferential statistics (percentage, frequency and standard deviation) and T-test were used to analysis data. The findings of the present study showed that there was no statistically significant difference between nurses and correctional officers in their level of workplace stress. This implies that both groups are potentially vulnerable to workplace stress and they equally need preventive and intervention. In addition, the qualitative data reported as poor supervision in correctional and health care providers’ organizations. It means, their supervisors were unsupportive and bullying. The findings were discussed with previous research. Based on the findings it was concluded that Ambo town employees’ had Correctional center and health care institutions provided outcomes such as promotion and salary increase based on favoritism rather than their excellence performance. Therefore, it was suggested that the management of Ambo town correctional center and health institutions to arrange training how their employees’ cope with stressful situations in all times and psychiatrists and counselors in Ambo town correctional center and health institution should be provide psycho- social services for stressed employees by applying psychological methods and practices.

Introduction

Nursing and correctional officer’s occupation has been identified as the most stressful occupational in the world (Sharma, et al., 2014; Lamberet el al., 2007). In both occupations the employees working overtime and long hours and have shift works (Bejins, 2012 and Kane, 2009). Nurses have duty to care for patients in hospitals, health centers and health posts and caring for individuals, family and community well-being at large and they are a backbone for health care unit (Kohl, 2015 & Kane, 2009).

On the other hand, correctional officers have responsibility to maintain safety and security of the detainees, supporting the rehabilitation and correction of offenders and reducing recidivism (Funnel et al., 2015). According to Moustaka and Constantidis (2014), correctional officers and nurses have been accomplishing their duties under multiple stressors and working for a long period of time, they encounter workplace stress and burn out. Work stress have significant impact on individual nurse and correctional officers by leading them to poor decision making, lack of concentration, errors, injury, and reduced motivation (Bond, 2014; Moustaka & Constantidis, 2015). Besides, work related stress results in emotional and physical fatigue, taking longer time to accomplish his/her tasks, complaining co-workers, customers and organization (Bond, 2014; and Moustaka and Constantindis, 2015). Subsequently, it may lead to absenteeism, decreased work performance and erosion of employees’ efficiency, commitment and loyalty (Borhan et al., 2014). These increases complain from customers and damaging organizations image both among employees and externally (Leka et al., 2013).

Work place stress also generates low job satisfaction and high turnover among nurses and correctional officers (Bejins, 2015; Browser, 2013 and Moustaka and Constantidis, 2015). Thus, it increases cost for organizations due to employees errors, poor decision making, injury, loss of experienced employees and recruitment expenses for replacement and training them (Kane, 2012 & Moustaka & Constantidis, 2015). Though work place stress has deep and complex impact on employees and organizations wellness, it did not get proper attention from researchers in developing countries like Ethiopia. In the case of Ambo town, no research is undertaken with regard to work place stress.
stress of nurses and correctional officers. Hence, the current study tries to determine the level of work place stress among nurses and correctional officers Ambo town.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Design of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to examine relationship between organizational justice perceptions and employees’ work place stress in Ambo town. To attain this objective descriptive survey design was employed.

2.2. Population and Samples

The target population of the present study was 167 employees (115 correctional officers and 52 nurses). Among 115 correctional officers working in Ambo correctional center, 23 of them were female and 92 were male. Out of 52 nurses working in Ambo hospital, Awaro and Ambo health centers, 37 of them were female and 15 were male. All employees in the selected institutions were studied. Data was collected with regard to prevalence of work place stress and its relation with organizational justice and association with socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status and educational level).

A self-administered questionnaire was adapted from areas of work life survey developed by Maslach and Leiter(1997) which contain 22 items was adapted for the purpose of this study. Moreover, Interview was conducted to generate qualitative information from employees of correctional center and health institutions. Accordingly, 12 nurses (4 nurses from Ambo hospital, 4 nurses from Ambo health center and 4 nurses from Awaro health center participated) and 10 correctional officers’ were interviewed for the first time.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the present study were analyzed and discussed in comparison with previous researches. This includes the following aspects; the nature of workplace stresses among Ambo town correctional officers and nurses, the difference between nurses and correctional officers in their level of workplace stress, the relationship between organizational justice and workplace stress were discussed.

3.1 Background information of the respondents

The socio-demographic information of the respondents was collected combined manner, from the total of 150 respondents the majority 107 (71.3%) were male. On other hand, out of 150 participants, the majority 86 (57.3%) were participants in marital relationship. In addition, among 150 respondents 117 (78%) were certificate up to diploma holders. Age of respondents ranges between 20-33 years, 34-48 years and 49-58 years which accounted 51 (34%), 51 (34%) and 48 (32%) respectively. Moreover, from total of 150, the majority were young employees.

3.2 The nature of workplace stress among Ambo town employees

To assess the nature of workplace stress, workplace stress scale was adapted for gathering data. The initial scale, which consisted of 18 items, was used for Ambo town correctional officers and nurses to explore work related stress perceptions. Therefore, the five point Likert scale was used to explore the respondents’ agreement level with the given statement and had the following five respondents: 1) Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3) Hard to decide 4) Agree and 5) strongly agree. Negatively worded items were reverse coded before data analysis. Then, the level of workplace stress was classified as low, moderate and high: 18*1 = 18, therefore, the lower limit was 18 and 18*2.99 = 53.82. Thus, the lower workplace stress fall between 18-53.82, accordingly the moderate is 54-71.82 and the higher workplace stress fall between 72-90 (18*4- 18*5). Accordingly, level of correctional officers and nurses workplace stress is presented in Table 1.

3.3. The Difference in the level of Workplace Stress among Nurses and Correctional Officers

Table 1 shows difference in the level of workplace stress among correctional officers and nurses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of organization</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>standard deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correctional center</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>54.29</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56.35</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table 1, t- test was performed to ascertain whether there is difference between level of workplace stress among correctional officers and nurses. Accordingly, the t = 0.371,p>0.05. This
indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between nurses and correctional officers in their level of workplace stress. This implies that both groups are potentially vulnerable to workplace stress and they equally need preventive and intervention. This result provides an answer to the second question of the study (Do nurses and correctional officers differ in their level of workplace stress?). Nurses and correctional officers’ reported during interview as their organizations provided outcomes such as promotion and salary increase based on favoritism rather than their excellence performance. In addition, the qualitative data reported as poor supervision in correctional and health care providers’ organizations. It means, their supervisors were unsupportive and bullying. Therefore, the qualitative data obtained through structured interview and focus group discussion revealed that nurses and correctional officers’ experience similar work atmosphere such as poor leadership and injustice outcomes.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made. There was no significant statistical difference between nurses and correctional officers’ in their level of workplace stress. Correctional center and health care institutions provided outcomes such as promotion and salary increase based on favoritism rather than their excellence performance. There was poor supervision in correctional and health care providers’ institutions. It means, their supervisors were unsupportive and bullying. Therefore, the qualitative data obtained through structured interview and focus group discussion revealed that nurses and correctional officers’ shared similar work atmospheres such as poor leadership and injustice outcomes.

4.2 Recommendations

Correctional centers play crucial role in correction and rehabilitation of criminals, which has large contribution in keeping peace and security of the region and country. On other hand, health care institutions (hospitals and health centers) are caring for the health of citizens. Thus, both institutions are undertaking the essential role in increasing productivity and helping the transformation of the country. However, the present study showed as the majority of nurses and correctional officers experienced moderate level of workplace stress which reduces employees’ motivation, performance, commitment and increases turn over. Moreover, workplace stress decreases organizational productivity. Therefore, the management of Ambo town correctional center and health institutions suggested to arrange training how their employees’ cope with stressfull situations in all times and psychiatrists and counselors in Ambo town correctional center and health institution should be provide psycho-social services for stressed employees by applying psychological methods and practices.

5. References


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