



The Relationship between Social Capital and Nurses' Performance in Hospitals of Mashhad City, Iran

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Abstract

Introduction: One of the most important issues that managers are facing is the improvement of their staffs' performance that could improve and increase the productivity of the organization. This study was performed with the purpose of determining the relation between social capital and the nurses' performance in the Hospitals of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences.

Methods: This is an applied and Cross-sectional study performed in 2012. The statistical population included 320 employed nurses of the hospitals of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences. Data were collected using social capital measuring questionnaires designed by the author. The questionnaires were scientifically confirmed and had the Reliability of 84% using Cronbach's Alpha Test. Data were analyzed using the Spearman test.

Results: A significant and direct relationship was found between social capital and 5 of its components (social participation, mutual trust and reciprocity, social networks and perception of the environment) and nurses performance in the mentioned hospitals ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: managers can improve their staff's performance and their motivations by recognizing and developing the social capital. Therefore it is suggested that efforts should be made in improving the components of social capital in hospitals, which are one of the most important organizations in providing services.

Keywords: Hospitals, Employee Performance Appraisal, Nurses, Iran

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1. Introduction

Social capital is a new concept in organizations which could affect the quality of services and outputs. The most important influxes are facilitation of science, improvement of teamwork, organizational commitment, and enhancement of the products quality and the services. Furthermore, when the staff feel under protection of the organizational patronage, levels of output would increase due to the enhancement of operations [1]. Managers and people working in Social capital organizations have a facilitated way to career and organizational success. Social capital gives meaning to a person's life and makes it more enjoyable [2].

In recent years, social capital has turned to a prevalent concept and is being used as a motto by politicians and academic experts. Social capital is a multi-dimensional concept in social sciences and has influence on many areas of the society and has found a special position in development related literature, such that it is known as the missing link of development [3]. Social capital points to characteristics of social organizations such as networks, norms and social trust which facilitate cooperation and coordination to reach the mutual benefits. The World Bank knows the social capital as a set of

norms which exist in social structures and makes people capable of cooperative actions to reach desired goals [4].

In today's competitive world, in which efficiency in all areas has raised, only organizations survive that use their sources most efficiently. One of these sources is manpower. Unsuccessful organizations lack the ability to develop the efficacy of Labor forces. Today more than anytime organizations need to distinguish themselves by their intangible assets. Managers may use weeks and months of their time for strategy formulation in order to maintain a competitive advantage. By maintaining the strategy they want to find out: firstly what measures should they carry out so that their organization would be excelled, and secondly how can they develop their staff performance.

Hoffer Gittel in a research with the title of "social capital model of high performance work systems", studied the relation between the development of organizational performance and creating a framework of development of social capital between workers with different tasks. He showed that hospitals with high levels of social capital between doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and managers are of high performance. Felix Requena, showed in his study called: "satisfaction and quality of life in the workplace" that a

higher level of social capital leads to a higher level of job satisfaction and quality of life. Sadeghghomi, in his study of "impact of social capital on organizational performance" reviewed the relationship between social capital and organizational performance in the agencies of education of the province of Lorestan. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between social capital and organizational performance [8].

Nurses are one of the most important pillars in healthcare organizations since their insufficiency may lead to irrecoverable results due to their important role in treating the patients [9]. In this article we examined a few assumptions about affectability and Effectiveness of the social capital issue in refer to Hospital systems. Accordingly, due to the Importance of social capital in today's management science, and also the role that it could play in the improvement of the hospitals performance, this survey could be of importance.

2. Methods

This is an applied and cross-sectional research. The statistical population was formed by the employed nurses of the hospitals of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences. 320 nurses were selected using stratified sampling. For this matter, the sample size was divided by nurses population in each hospital and then nurses were chosen from each hospital randomly. The tool for the data collection included questionnaires, containing demographic factors (gender, age, marital status and work experience) and social capital measures which were examining the five factors of social capital including social participation, social networks, mutual trust and reciprocity, social support and Perception of the environment in 25 questions. Questions were scored by Five-point Likert scale (very much=5, very little=1). The justifiability of the questionnaire was approved by professors and experts of the hospital management. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated 0.84 using the Cronbach's alpha method. For measuring the nurses' performance, we referred to the documents relating to scores of nurses annual assessment in administration and human resources offices (the maximum score for nurses annual assessment is 110).

For data analysis SPSS software, descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, standard deviation and variance and for inferential analysis Spearman correlation coefficients measuring methods were used.

3. Results

300 cases remained after gathering the questionnaires and exclusion of the confounded items (the response rate = 94%). 26% of the studied cases were women whereas 74% were men. 37.3% were in ages between 31-40 and 30% were less than 30 years old. 30% had less than 15 years of work experience and 18 percent had between 11-15 years of experience. 67% were married and the rest were Single. Mean and standard deviation of social capital are shown in table 1.

According to table 1, mean results for social capital is 69.7 out of 125 points. Also between the listed components of social capital, social supports had the highest mean (17.71) out of 30 points and social networks had the lowest with the mean of 10.78 out of 25 points.

In this study, the Spearman correlation test was used to review the relation between social capital and the performance of the nurses. Results will be shown separately in table 2.

According to table 2, there is a significant and direct relationship between social capital and nurses' performance with a correlation coefficient of $r=0.703$ ($p<0.001$). Furthermore, a direct and significant relationship between all components of social capital and performance were seen ($p<0.001$). Between these items, the highest correlation coefficient belonged to social involvement ($r=0.648$) and the lowest belonged to social supports ($r=0.405$).

4. Discussion

Results of this study indicated that there is a direct relation between social capital and the performance of the nurses, which was consonant with Aspin's study. He believes that empowerment of the employees is gained by augmentation of social capital and using the staffs' potentials which is not being completely achieved in the present time [10]. Also referring to Lina and Van Buren, there is a direct relation between social capital and staff performance, flexibility of the organization, proper management and social tolerance. This means social capital can improve the performance of an organization [11]. According to the findings of this study, there is a significant relationship between social participation and nurses performance ($P<0/001$). Prusak and Cohen believe that it is the social capital that creates the feeling of working through trust and cooperation [12].

Musavi also approved this fact and showed that one of the social capital's components that is in relation with performance is participation in decision making. When a person has participation and satisfaction in choosing the goals, he

Table 1. Rating the dimensions of social capital

Variable	Total Score	Mean	SD
Social Participation	25	13.16	2.75
Trust and Reciprocity	25	16.56	1.98
Social Network	25	10.78	2.61
Social Support	30	17.71	3.22
Contextual Cognition	20	11.49	2.22
Social Capital	125	69.7	7.4

Table 2. Relation between social capital and nurses' performance by using Spearman correlation test

Variable	Correlation	P-value
Social Participation	0.648	0.001
Trust and Reciprocity	0.504	0.001
Social Network	0.451	0.001
Social support	0.405	0.001
Contextual Cognition	0.494	0.001
Social Capital	0.703	0.001

would have more commitments and put more efforts to them [13].

The recent study showed that trust and reciprocity has a significant relationship with the nurses' performance ($p < 0.001$). Trust, facilitates collaboration and ethical commitments. Collaboration also improves the trust. Referring to multiple studies, organizations with high levels of social capital are more successful than their rivals [14].

According to the study's findings, there is a significant relationship between contextual cognition and nurses' performance ($P < 0/001$). Bolino believes when employees have a positive image about the organization, their job satisfaction and organizational commitments will grow, therefore they are expected to be more sensitive about the costumers and their expectations and have better performance. This means improvement of social capital leads to improvement of the organizational performance [15].

This study indicates that there is a direct relationship between social supports and nurses' performance ($p < 0.001$). Barry Wellman believes that the type of a person's relationship is very important and affects the support that he gets. Profiting from different supports is more under influence of a person's relationship with others than his individual characteristics. Therefore the size of the network, combination and other specifications of the network in terms of structure and function and interaction affect the amount and type of the incoming support [16].

A statistically significant relationship was found between social networks and nurses' performance ($p < 0.001$). Lin showed in his article that social networks and open relationships increase the chance of accessing the bridges and using them to reach the sources that do not exist in social circles. They also increase the chance of reaching sources and instrumental benefits. On the other hand, a network with more intimate and mutual relationships, may lead to mobilizing the people with common resources and interests [17]. Safarza-deh's study results are consonant with the mentioned facts. He believes that paying attention to a single component of social capital cannot be very efficient, but also can lead to weakening the other components and therefore decreasing the social capital. The impact of social capital is multifactorial, and the improvement of the performance of the employees regardless of their social status, policy makings and economic conditions is not possible [18].

5. Conclusion

The findings of this article show that nurses' social capital generally has a direct relationship with their performance, hence to improve the factors related to social capital, broader contexts for collaboration and social trust must be set so that the next steps could be taken in organizational levels.

Suggestion

1. Hospitals investments in social capital by effective communication Training, improvement of communication process and interactions between staff and managers

inside and outside the organization, creating a cultural and collaborative atmosphere and improvement of mutual trust and team work. These can all lead to the development of social capital and the facilitation of a better service delivery.

2. One of the most important procedures to improve social capital is education. Participation of the staff in public education, especially communication classes, play's a great role in improving the social capital.
3. Establishment of recreational programs to create face to face relationships, since they can lead to better relationships and improve mutual trust. The norm of trust is a main part of social capital and is made in social relations and will lead to partnership and cooperation among members.

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Authors' Contributions

All the authors were involved in all the steps including designing, data gathering, analyzing the data and the manuscript preparation.

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