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Investigating Lived Experiences of Emergency Department Staff about Job Satisfaction and Influential Sociological Factors: A Study on 115 Emergency Medical Service Staff in Hormozgan Province

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Detailed Abstract

Objective and background

Health is among the essential aspects of life and is directly associated with the medical staff working at healthcare centers. Given that medical and emergency department staff are directly associated with health in society, their job dissatisfaction could affect service quality and patient recovery. Considering the studies conducted on job satisfaction, most of which have used a quantitative and survey method, it could be stated that identifying semantic perception and interpretation of emergency department staff about job satisfaction as well as finding influential factors and the way they give meaning to this phenomenon is among the primary points related to 115 EMS staff's job satisfaction in Iran. However, this point has not received significant attention in previous studies and requires further study and analysis. The present research considers 115 EMS staff in Hormozgan Province as the main actors and focuses on socioeconomic and cultural aspects as a reality. This research seeks to identify the socioeconomic and cultural factors affecting job satisfaction using an interpretive approach and analyzing employees' semantic system by delving into their inner experience and then providing a comprehensive analysis and interpretation. This study mainly aims to discover the semantic perception of 115 EMS staff regarding job satisfaction and influential factors in Hormozgan Province.

Methods

Given that the present research was conducted using a qualitative approach and grounded theory method, a purposive convenience sampling method was employed. The interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Attempts were made to discover the existing meanings in the data through systematic research. The identified meanings were placed into predetermined categories during the coding process. Finally, a paradigm model and then a theory limited to a specific reality were presented at higher levels.

The data collection process was thorough and meticulous. In-depth and semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 1-2 hours, were conducted in the research field. The interview guide was flexible, allowing for additional questions based on the interview conditions and process. The participants volunteered for the interviews, providing their consent. This rigorous data collection process ensured that a comprehensive understanding of the 115 EMS staff's job satisfaction was achieved.

All rights were explained to the participants at the beginning of the interview. Also, necessary explanations were provided regarding the research objectives, reason for recording the interview, and confidentiality of information and identity. The research progressed to reach theoretical saturation after interviewing the 18th participant. However, interviews continued until the 21st participant to ensure a new category remained the same. The participants included 21 individuals from 115 EMS staff in Hormozgan Province. The required data were collected using open and in-depth interview techniques, which were analyzed using fixed comparisons and theoretical coding (open, axial, and selective coding). Three methods of control or validation by members, analytical comparison, and audit technique were employed to evaluate research validity.

Results

Causal conditions usually refer to those events and incidents that affect the phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 2014: 152, quoted by Akbari and Safari, 2018: 117). The present study's causal conditions lead to job satisfaction among 115 Hormozgan EMS employees. The main category of work difficulty, characterized by sub-categories of working hours and the occurrence of unexpected problems in the workplace, is considered among the causal factors by the participants. Moreover, unbalanced employee benefits, characterized by sub-categories of low salary and lack of balance between work difficulty and received benefits, is another causal condition. Job alienation, with sub-categories of poor organizational support, some stressful situations, mental problems in the face of accidents, and inability to show creativity and initiative in the emergency department, is considered among the most critical factors leading to job satisfaction. Intervening conditions facilitate or limit interactions and could mitigate or change causal conditions

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(Heidari et al., 2019:1-35). Violence and insecurity, characterized by sub-categories of increased violence, conflict between people and medical staff, and threats to families' mental health, were among the most essential intervening conditions. Unrealistic expectations are other intervening factors, defined by sub-categories of social ignorance towards emergency team's duties, unrealistic expectations, and failure in producing educational media.

Strategies or actions- interactions are actions that deliberately take place to solve a problem and form a phenomenon. It is worth noting that strategies refer to what one does and says inside themselves (Heidari et al., 2019: 35-1). According to the participants, job support, characterized by sub-categories of salary equalization, reducing working hours, financial aid, and allocating low-interest loans, was among the most essential strategies or actions-interactions for raising job satisfaction. The other strategies introduced were providing a relaxing work environment and tools and facilities. Finally, the main categories of lack of motivation and apathy, working insufficiently, and failure to care for patients correctly were identified as consequences of job dissatisfaction.

Keywords: Emergency department; Job satisfaction; Crisis management; Healthcare.