



การเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจในงานกับความสำเร็จในอาชีพของพยาบาลใน โรงพยาบาลมหาวิทยาลัย มณฑลยูนนาน ประเทศสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน

Work Empowerment and Career Success among Nurses in University Hospitals, Yunnan Province, the People's Republic of China

เยียน หยิ่น	พย.บ.*	Yan Yin	M.N.S.*
เพชรสุรีย์ ทั้เจริญกุล	พย.ด.**	Petsunee Thungaroekul	Ph.D.**
เรมวอล นันท์ศุภวัฒน์	D.S.N***	Raymoul Nantasupawat	D.S.N.***

บทคัดย่อ

ความสำเร็จในอาชีพเป็นสิ่งสำคัญต่อพยาบาล จึงมีความจำเป็นต้องหาแนวทางในการเพิ่มการรับรู้ความสำเร็จในอาชีพของพยาบาล วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาเชิงพรรณนาแบบหาความสัมพันธ์นี้ เพื่อศึกษาระดับของการเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจในงานและความสำเร็จในอาชีพรวมทั้งศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจในการทำงานในแต่ละด้านกับความสำเร็จในอาชีพของพยาบาลในโรงพยาบาลมหาวิทยาลัย มณฑลยูนนาน ประเทศสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน กลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นพยาบาลจำนวน 382 คนที่ทำงานในโรงพยาบาลมหาวิทยาลัย 4 แห่ง วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา และสหสัมพันธ์ของเพียร์สัน

ผลการวิจัย พบว่า

การเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจในงานโดยรวมอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ($\bar{X} = 11.56$, S.D. = 2.59) ผลการศึกษา ยังแสดงให้เห็นว่าพยาบาลจัดให้การเข้าถึงการสนับสนุนมีคะแนนสูงสุด ตามมาด้วยการเข้าถึงทรัพยากร การเข้าถึงข้อมูล และการเข้าถึงโอกาสความก้าวหน้าในงาน ตามลำดับความสำเร็จในอาชีพโดยรวมอยู่ในระดับปานกลางในแต่ละด้านของความสำเร็จในอาชีพ ความสำเร็จในปฏิสัมพันธ์กับผู้อื่น ความสำเร็จในลำดับขั้นของตำแหน่ง และความสำเร็จในชีวิตอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ($\bar{X} = 3.02$, S.D. = 0.64) ในขณะที่ความสำเร็จด้านการเงินอยู่ในระดับต่ำการเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจในงานมีความสัมพันธ์ทางบวกในระดับสูงกับความสำเร็จในอาชีพ ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$) เมื่อพิจารณาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างแต่ละด้านของการเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจในงานกับความสำเร็จในอาชีพ ผลการศึกษาพบว่า การเข้าถึงข้อมูล การสนับสนุน ทรัพยากร อำนาจที่เป็นทางการ และอำนาจที่ไม่เป็นทางการมีความสัมพันธ์ทางบวกในระดับสูงกับความสำเร็จในอาชีพ ในขณะที่การเข้าถึงโอกาสก้าวหน้าในงานมีความสัมพันธ์ในระดับปานกลางกับความสำเร็จในอาชีพ ผลการศึกษานี้เป็นข้อมูลสำคัญสำหรับผู้บริหารทางการพยาบาลและผู้

* พยาบาลวิชาชีพ โรงพยาบาล The First Affiliated Hospital of Kunming Medical University, Yunnan, China

* Professional Nurse, the First Affiliated Hospital of Kunming Medical University, Yunnan, China

** ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ คณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

** Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University

*** รองศาสตราจารย์ คณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

*** Associate professor, Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University



บริหารโรงพยาบาลเพื่อให้เข้าใจถึงความสำคัญของการเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจในงาน มีข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับผู้บริหาร
การพยาบาลและผู้บริหารโรงพยาบาลว่าควรเพิ่มการให้ข้อมูล โอกาสในการฝึกอบรมและการศึกษาและการปรับ
เลื่อนตำแหน่งเพื่อเพิ่มการรับรู้ความสำเร็จในอาชีพ และส่งเสริมให้พยาบาลจีนทำงานได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

คำสำคัญ: การเสริมสร้างพลังอำนาจความสำเร็จในอาชีพพยาบาลจีน

Abstract

Career success is important for nurses and it is essential to find ways to improve nurses' perceptions of career success. The purpose of this descriptive correlation study was to explore the levels of work empowerment and career success, as well as to examine the relationships between each subscale of work empowerment and career success among nurses in university hospitals in Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China. The sample consisted of 382 nurses who worked in four university hospitals. Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and Pearson's Product-Moment correlation.

The Results of study

Total work empowerment was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 11.56$, S.D. = 2.59). Results also revealed that access to support was rated highest by nurses subscale score, followed by access to resources, access to information, and access to opportunity, respectively. Overall career success was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.02$, S.D. = 0.64). The subscales of job success, inter-personal success, hierarchical success and life success were at a moderate level, while financial success was at a low level. Work empowerment was highly associated with career success ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$). In terms of the relationships between each subscale of work empowerment and career success, the results showed that access to information, support, resources, formal power and informal power, were highly related to career success; while the relationship between access to opportunity and career success was moderate.

The results could be seen as valuable information for nurse managers and hospital administrators in understanding the importance of work empowerment. It was recommended for nurse managers and hospital administrators that they should provide more information, opportunities for training, education and promotion to increase perceived career success, and ultimately to promote Chinese nurses to perform their work effectively.

Key words: Work Empowerment, Career Success, Chinese Nurses



Background and significance of the research problem

Organizations are social systems where human resources are the most important factors for effectiveness and efficiency. In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on the importance of performance and career success of nursing personnel (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). Evidence is accumulating revealing that work environments with high levels of stress, strenuous workloads, as well as relatively low satisfaction with payment and career opportunities have a great impact on career success of nursing personnel (Wang, Tao, Ellenbecker & Liu, 2011).

Career success refers to the individual's evaluation of achievements in his/her work experiences (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). Many studies usually categorized career success into objective career success and subjective career success (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986; Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz, 1995; Peluchette, 1993). However, there is an argument that measuring objective criteria is insufficient, because objective career success is not the main outcome that people seek from their careers (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005; Heslin, 2005). Moreover, even people who have achieved objective career success are not necessarily satisfied with their careers or feel proud and successful (Hall, 2002, as cited in Heslin, 2003). In contrast, many people value subjective outcomes, such as challenges or development of new skills, work-life balance, and purpose, transcendence, contribution as a sense of meaning from their work (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988; Heslin, 2005). Therefore, many researchers had a considerable emphasis on subjective career success criteria that go beyond

the objective career success (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000).

According to Gattiker and Larwood (1986), subjective career success includes five dimensions. Job success refers to all positive results obtained from a job. Inter-personal success refers to having good relationships with colleagues, and having peers' respect, acceptance or good evaluation. Financial success means individuals feel a sense of material acquisition or that the benefits from their careers are fair and equitable. Hierarchical success refers to position or status advancement within an organization. Life success refers to balance of work and private life, feeling a sense of happiness or personal well-being. Employees who meet this criteria of subjective career success will have greater satisfaction, higher levels of commitment, job involvement, reaching levels of productivity which will match or exceed organizational expectations, have greater happiness, motivation, superior work performance, and personal success, thus contributing to organizational success.

In China, there seem to be some barriers to attain the criteria of career success. Nurses felt less support from superiors or received little positive feedback about their performance (Long, 2010). Nursing have previously not been recognized as an independent profession, and historically have been identified with low education attainment (Zhuang & Shi, 2010). The relationship between doctors and nurses was compliant (Zhao, Zhang & He, 2007), and 97.7% of nurses believes that they have lower status, respect, acceptance from other health care professionals (Guo, 2002). With a medical-oriented health environment and financial



restrained, hospitals have invested less in nursing which results in low income for nurses who feel it is not commensurate with their contribution (Wang, 2008).

In general, career success has been measured in several studies using employees in corporations as subjects, where only one study, in Thailand, observed for nurses which found that career success in governmental university hospitals was at a moderate level (Jeenkool, 2004). Previous studies showed the relationships between career success and occupation self-concept, job feature, human capital, work values, organizational climate, achievement motivation, personality traits, and organizational support (Aryee, Chay & Tan, 1994; Bozionelos, 2004; Gattiker & Larwood, 1986; Jeenkool, 2004; Prasertsuk, 1999). Despite the amount of research on career success, most of them are focused on those in Western countries. Little is known about career experience of nurses in China where nursing has not been recognized as an independent profession, and historically has been identified with low education attainment (Zhuang & Shi., 2010). Chinese nurses feel less support from their superiors or receive little positive feedback about their performance (Long, 2010).

To create successful work environments in organizations, Laschinger (1996) pointed out that work empowerment has been shown as a management strategy. Work empowerment is a term originally coined by Kanter (1977) and refers to work environments that provide access to opportunity, information, support and resources are empowering and enable employees to accomplish their work successfully

through formal or informal power (Kanter, 1977, 1993 as cited in Laschinger, 1996). It is viewed as the availability of these structures: access to opportunities (possibility for learning and advancement in the organization), access to information (expertise and technical knowledge required to work effectively), access to support (feedback and helpfulness received from co-workers), access to resources (necessary time and materials to get the job done effectively and efficiently), formal power (level of discretion or flexibility in how the work is to be accomplished that receives recognition and is highly visible in the organization), and informal power (strong relationships among supervisors, peers, and subordinates) (Faulkner & Laschinger, 2008). To date, it has been extensively studied on the linkage between perceived work empowerment and organizational outcome such as work effectiveness, job satisfaction, intent to stay (Laschinger & Havens, 1996, Laschinger *et al.*, 2003; Nedd, 2006) no previous studies has examined the relationship between work empowerment and subjective career success. Only one study by Seibert *et al.*, (2001) identified three work conditions that directly related to subjective career success: access to information, access to resources and career sponsorship. These conditions are similar to power structure in Kanter's model (1979). Although this work has provided evidence to support for the influence of power structure on subjective career success, the effects of opportunity structure, and formal and informal powers have not been empirically examined. Thus, further study on the linkage between all work empowering conditions in Kanter's model and subjective career success is



needed to provide scholars' knowledge of the role of empowerment in career success.

Kanter argues that employee's behavior is a reaction to the situation and when situations are structured in such a way that employees' feel empowered, the organization is likely to benefit both in terms of the attitudes of employees and the organization's effectiveness (Kanter, 1977, 1993 as cited in Lashinger, Finegan & Shamian, 2001). Having access to these structures results in increased feelings of autonomy, higher levels of self-efficacy, and ultimately greater commitment to the organization (Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, 2001).

University hospitals in China are the research site due to reasons that during the economic reform in 1978, China has been transforming from a state-guaranteed to a market-oriented employment system. This leads Chinese workers to enjoy greater autonomy in seeking the job, and to develop career based on their own interest and values (Wong & Slater., 2002). Chinese nurses in university hospitals are similar to other workers as desire to achieve their career. Although Chinese nurses have the rights in line with international expectations, such as the right to equal work and equal pay, the right to continued education and promotion competition, and the right to challenge medical prescriptions when in doubt (Nurse Act in China., 2010); the work of nurse in university is mainly involve carrying out medical orders (Cai, 2009). Chinese nurses in some university hospitals have been promoted to the assistant hospital superintendent position. However, ultimate control of human and financial resource allocation remains in the hands of the medical superintendent

(Wong, 2010). The purposes of this study were to explore the levels of work empowerment and career success, as well as to examine the relationships between each subscale of work empowerment and career success among nurses in university hospitals in Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China. Our results will help nurse managers to better understand Chinese nurses' career progress needs and to increase knowledge in the scientific community regarding empowerment and career success.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study was based on Kanter's structural power theory (1977, 1993) and Gattiker and Larwood's career success (1986) which is categorized into five groups, including job success, inter-personal success, financial success, hierarchical success and life success.. The relationship between subjective career success and empowerment is supported by the Kanter's theory. Kanter asserts that individuals who accesses to opportunity, information, resources, support, formal and informal power will perceive themselves to have power and capable mobilize resources to achievement and success in their work.

Methodology

Population and sample

A descriptive correlational research was designed to study a population of 5,761 nurses who were working in 8 university hospitals in Yunnan Province, the People's Republic of China. The sample size needed in the study was 374 according to the formula of Yamane (1973). Considering the loss of the subjects,



449 questionnaires were distributed to collect data and finally 382 responses were used for data analysis, with a valid response rate of 85%. Proportional random sampling method was used to determine the number of nurses in each hospital, while hospitals and nurses were selected by simple random sampling. Inclusion criteria were staff nurses who were willing to participate in this study, and had worked at least two years, as well as not nurse managers.

Instruments

The questionnaire included three parts. The first was a Demographic Data Form which consisted of ten items related to the variables including gender, age, marital status, educational level, professional title, working department, year of work experience, continuing education satisfaction, and training and conference attendances in the last year.

Next a Conditions Work Effectiveness Questionnaire (CWEQ) was developed by Laschinger, Wong, McMahon, and Kaufmann (1999) and translated using the back-translation technique. This instrument contained 60 items with 31 items used to measure the staff nurses' perceptions of accessing the four subscales of structural work empowerment, 9 items used to measure formal power, 18 items used to measure informal power and the last 2 items used to measure global empowerment for validity purposes. Each item required responses on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5. An overall empowerment score was obtained by summing the four subscales, with a possible range from 4 to 20. Higher scores represented stronger perceptions of working in an empowered work

environment. Score ranging from 4 to 9 was described as a low level of empowerment, 10 to 15 as a moderate level of empowerment, and 16 to 20 as a high level of work empowerment. A subscale mean score was calculated by summing and averaging the items. Score range was between 1 and 5. Higher scores represented stronger access to opportunity, information, support, resources, and higher formal power, informal power. The reliability of the CWEQ in this study was 0.88, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the subscales of access to opportunity, access to information, access to support, access to resources, formal power and informal power were 0.77, 0.88, 0.92, 0.86, 0.84, 0.91, respectively.

In accordance with the Chinese context, the researcher modified the subjective career success scale of Gattiker and Larwood (1986) and translated it into Chinese using the back-translation method. The Modified Subjective Career Success Subscale (MSCSS) had 21 items with 5 subscales including job success (eight items), interpersonal success (four items), financial success (two items), hierarchical success (four items), and life success (three items). Responses were rated using a 5-point Likert scaling from 1= "strongly disagree" to 5= "strongly agree". The mean score was a summing and averaging of the items, with the score ranging was between 1 and 5. Higher scores indicated higher subjective career success. CVI was calculated by five experts and found to be 0.92 in this study. The reliability of the MSCSS was 0.80, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the subscales of job success, inter-personal success, financial success, hierarchical success, and life



success were 0.84, 0.90, 0.83, 0.88, and 0.91, respectively.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, Thailand and directors of Nursing Department in China where the data were collected. All subjects were informed about the purpose and methods of data collection in this study. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and they had right to refuse, stop or withdraw from the study at any time. A research consent form was sent to subjects to assure the protection of their human rights. A statement was included in a cover letter to guarantee anonymity of individual responses and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. Information or the results were only to be used for this study.

Data collection

After receiving institutional and ethical approval from each institution or individual, permissions were obtained from unit head nurses to approach the nurses in each unit either through a staff meeting or individually in the unit. Nurses were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them within two weeks in sealed envelopes. Data were collected from January to March in 2012.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed by the computer program SPSS13.0. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the subjects and the levels of work empow-

erment and career success. The data showed a normal distribution and Pearson' Product-Moment correlation was used to determine the relationships. According to Burns and Grove (2007), a correlation coefficient (r) between 0.10 and 0.30 is considered a weak relationship, 0.30 to 0.50 is considered a moderate relationship and more than 0.50 is considered a strong relationship.

Results

Demographic data

The subjects consisted of 382 staff nurses from eight units in four university hospitals. The majority of the subjects were female (97.6%) and their age ranged from 20 to 53 with \bar{X} =30.95 and S.D.=7.89. About 63.6% nurses were between 20-30 years old, and the majority of the subjects were married (62%). Nearly half of the nurses (48.4%) held a diploma degree. The largest group of subjects (46.9%) were junior nurses, 39.8% nurses had between 2-5 years work experience with a range from 2 to 35, and a mean tenure of 10.07 years (S.D.= 8.49). Most nurses (81.9%) showed satisfaction with continuing education, 86.9% nurses reporting that they had attended at least one nursing training or conference in last year. Moreover, 66.5% of them indicated that they had received sufficient training and were able to attend conferences.

Work empowerment

Nurses perceived the total work empowerment at a moderate level (\bar{X} =11.56, S.D.= 2.59) (Table 1). With respect to each subscale of work empowerment, results illustrated that nurses in this study rated access



to support as the highest subscale score (\bar{X} = 3.00, S.D.=0.76), while access to opportunity (\bar{X} = 2.76, S.D.=0.74) was rated as the lowest subscale scores.

Career success

The total career success score perceived by nurses was at a moderate level (\bar{X} = 3.02, S.D. =0.64) (Table 2). Most subscales of career success perceived by nurses were also at moderate levels, while financial success perceived by nurses was at a low level.

Relationships between work empowerment and career success

Table 3 illustrates that there was a strong positive relationship between work empowerment and career success ($r=.63, p<0.01$). In terms of the relationships between each subscale of work empowerment and career success, access to information, support, resources, formal power and informal power were strongly related to career success ($r=0.53, p<0.01$; $r=0.57, p<0.01$; $r=.54, p<0.01$; $r=0.51, p<0.01$; $r=0.60, p<0.01$), while access to opportunity showed a moderate correlation with career success ($r=0.41, p<0.01$).

Table 1 Mean, standard deviation and level of work empowerment as perceived by subjects (n=382)

Work Empowerment	Mean	S.D.	Level
Total work empowerment	11.56	2.59	Moderate
Opportunity	2.76	0.74	
Information	2.89	0.78	
Support	3.00	0.76	
Resource	2.90	0.76	
Formal power	2.83	0.65	
Informal power	2.87	0.68	

Table 2 Mean, standard deviation and levels of career success as perceived by nurses (n=382)

Career Success	Mean	S.D.	Level
Job success	3.20	0.76	Moderate
Inter-personal success	3.47	0.80	Moderate
Financial success	2.17	1.02	Low
Hierarchical success	2.62	0.85	Moderate
Life success	3.63	1.01	Moderate
Total career success	3.02	0.64	Moderate



Table 3 Relationships between each subscale of work empowerment and career success among nurses (n=382)

	Career Success
	r
Work Empowerment	0.63**
Opportunity	0.41**
Information	0.53**
Support	0.57**
Resource	0.54**
Formal power	0.51**
Informal power	0.60**

** $p < 0.01$

Discussion

The nurses in this study had total work empowerment score at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 11.56$, S.D. = 2.59). Present study findings suggest that Chinese nurses require more access to opportunity, information, support, and resources. The possible reason is that collaborative work environments could contribute to foster a sense of empowerment (Almost & Laschinger, 2002). Recently team building has been used to promote communication and open cooperation among health care professionals in Chinese hospitals (University Hospital Documents, 2007) which leading the information and resources sharing. Long-term stable relationships make nurses feel more support from colleagues and management. Hence, these management strategies improve the work empowerment. However, Chinese health care settings are medical service oriented and power is still centralized in the hands of physicians. This unequal power relationship with medical staff enhances physicians' power and restricts

the nurses' freedom, and consequently hinders their empowerment (Skelton, 1994; Fulton, 1997; McParland, Scott, Arndt, Dassen, Gasull, & Lemonidou, 2000). Thus, work empowerment perceived by nurses in university hospitals was at a moderate level.

The overall career success as perceived by nurses in this study was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.02$, SD=0.64). In recent years, with the implementation of China outline for nursing career development (2005-2010) (Ministry of Health of China, 2005), the nursing career has been gradually taken seriously and nurses' competency, educational attainment and professional status have much improved (Wang, 2008). Undoubtedly, this increases nurses' sense of achievement, motivation, and enthusiasm for their work and thereby gives a hand to nursing career success. However, many studies conducted in China still indicated that nurses felt low satisfaction with payment, career opportunities for personal development, nursing and hospital administrators' support, workload, relations with



co-workers, career stages, promotion, amount of work responsibility, and organizational policies (Tao, Zhang, Hu & Zhang, 2011; Wang, Tao, Ellenbecker & Liu, 2011). All of the above factors make nurses perceive career success at a moderate level.

The result showed that there was a moderate positive relationship between access to opportunities and career success ($r=0.53$, $p<0.1$) (Table 3). Access to opportunity provides individuals with chances to advance within the organization and to develop their knowledge and skills (Laschinger, 1996). Wang, Horng, Cheng, and Killman (2011) found professional and personal growth resulted in increased self-efficacy and job satisfaction which helped employees to be successful in their future careers. Individuals in high opportunity jobs are highly committed to the organization and are highly motivated to do well and advance their career (Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian, 2001). They take a proactive approach to solving problems that arise on the job and actively participate in change and innovation (Hassan, 2002). Hence, access to opportunity enhances career success. In contrast, individuals in low-opportunity jobs tend to limit their work aspirations and be resistant to change or mobility in the hospitals (Laschinger, Finegan & Shamian, 2001). Thus, it is evident that one who has opportunity for advancement has higher career success.

A strong positive relationship between access to information and career success ($r=0.53$, $p<0.1$) (Table 3) was found in this study. Access to information is necessary to carry out the job. If nurses lack information, they can not receive the necessary support (Greenhaus *et al.*,

1990). Dunn, Wilson, & Esteman (2005) found communication with colleagues promoted information sharing, which then reinforced the positive evaluation of their careers in the organization. Information could help nurses realize their aspirations and achieve higher level of career success (Chandler, 1986). As a result, access to information has a strong and positive correlation with career success.

The result showed that there was a strong positive relationship between access to support and career success ($r=.57$, $p<0.1$) (Table 3). Support has been given to nurses in the form of special training and many young nurses learn from their mentors, supervisors or coworkers, who would affect their views of career success (Ballout, 2007). Support from managers and colleagues has been found to influence job satisfaction and success (Seo, Ko, & Price, 2004) because good relationships with them were important for obtaining positive evaluations of work performance. A positive evaluation of performance can lead to a promotion in the workplace. In addition, support and recognition from the work place may bring a sense of success in a lifetime job. Chandler (1986) stated peers and sponsors provide inside information and important social connections that are essential to career mobility and career success. Loi and Ngo (2010) indicated that adequate support had significant impact on their evaluation of career success and would shape employees' perceptions and expectations toward their careers. Thus, maintaining a close and cooperative relationship with their colleagues would make them feel more secure and comfortable in the process of upward promotion and developing their careers.



There was a strong positive relationship between access to resources and career success ($r=.54$, $p<0.1$) (Table 3). Access to resources means nurses have financial support, necessary supplies and materials, adequate time to perform the job and nurses would feel fully supported by management in the work (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Moreover, adequate resources reduce interpersonal or interdepartmental conflicts (Tyson, Pongruengphant, & Aggarwal, 2002), ultimately, promoting career success.

A strong positive relationship between formal power and career success ($r=.51$, $p<0.1$) (Table 3) was shown in present study. Nurses consider that power or a powerful position will make them move up the career ladder and gain recognition (Chandler, 1986). When nurses have power, that is, have control over conditions that make their actions possible, then they will feel more accomplished (Hassan, 2002). Additionally, nurses in power positions know how organizational goals, salary and promotion decisions are made (Hassan, 2002) and that will provide helpful information to nurses developing their career. Conversely, powerlessness tends to block employees' career success.

The result showed that there was a strong positive relationship between informal power and career success ($r=.60$, $p<0.1$) (Table 3). Informal power is determined by the extent of employee's networks and alliances with sponsors, peers, and subordinates within the organization (Kanter, 1977, 1993 as cited in Laschiger *et al.*, 2001). O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilmoria (2008) suggested networks could gain social support and career benefits, such as professional advice, access to useful contacts,

and developmental feedback. Tharenou (2005) argued such kind of relationship-based support, such as mentoring, sponsorship, and coaching, that had been shown to benefit employees' career. Another possible explanation lies in cultural characteristics of Chinese people. Influenced by a collectivistic culture, Chinese employees are used to placing greater value on social affiliation with their organizations than making personal accomplishment (Loi & Ngo, 2010). Thus, informal power plays an important role in nurses' career success.

Conclusion

Nurses in university hospitals in Yunnan Province of China were firstly found to have perceptions of moderate levels in both total work empowerment and overall career success. Moreover, work empowerment was highly associated with career success. In terms of the relationships between each subscale of work empowerment and career success, the results found that access to information, support, resources, formal power and informal power, were highly related to career success; while the relationship between access to opportunity and career success was at a moderate level.

Implications

The results could provide valuable information to nurse managers and hospital administrators as well as nursing staff that work empowerment is an effective strategy to improve staff nurses' career success. They might be better placed on efforts with the importance of an empowering work environment and attempts at providing more information and opportunities



for training, education and promotion to develop future nursing career. Moreover, the results of present study can provide evidence for further research in this field.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, it is recommended that future studies should be conducted in other regions of China. Career success should be studied with related factors, such as demographic personal factors and environment or organizational factors.

References

- Almost, J., & Laschinger, H. K. S. (2002). Workplace empowerment, collaborative work relationships, and job strain in nurse practitioners. *Journal of The American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, 14, 408-420.
- Arthur, M. B., Khapova, S. N., & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2005). Career success in a boundaryless career world. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26 (2), 177-202.
- Aryee, S., Chay, Y. W., & Tan, H. H. (1994). An examination of the antecedents of subjective career success among a managerial sample in Singapore. *Human Relations*, 47 (5), 487-509.
- Ballout, H. I. (2007). Career success: The effects of human capital, person-environment fit and organizational support. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22 (8), 741-765.
- Bozinonelos, N. (2004). The relationship between disposition and career success: A British study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77 (9), 403-420.
- Cai, C.F., & Zhou, Z.K. (2009). Structural empowerment, job satisfaction, and turnover intention of Chinese clinical nurses. *Nursing and Health Science* 11, 397-403.
- Chen, Y. C. (2010). *Work empowerment and organizational commitment among nurses in tertiary hospitals of Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China*. Unpublished master thesis. Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, Thailand.
- Chandler, G. E. (1986). The relationship of nursing work environment to empowerment and powerlessness. A Ph.D dissertation, College of Nursing, the University of Utah.
- Dunn S, Wilson B, & Esteman, A. (2005). Perceptions of working as a nurse in an acute care setting. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 13, 22-31.
- Faulkner, J., & Laschinger, H. K. S. (2008). The effects of structural and psychological empowerment on perceived respect in acute care nurses. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 16, 214-221.
- Friedman, S. D., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2000). *Allies or enemies? How choices about work and family affect the quality of men's and women's lives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fulton, Y. (1997). Nurses' View of Empowerment: a Critical Social Theory Perceptive. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26, 529-534.



- Gattiker, U., & Larwood, L.(1986). Subjective career success: a study of managers and support personnel, *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 1, 78-94.
- Gattiker, U. E., & Larwood, L. (1988). Predictors for managers' career mobility, success, and satisfaction. *Human Relations*, 41, 569-591.
- Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., & Wormley, W. M. (1990). Effects of race on organizational experience, job performance evaluations, and career outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33 (1), 64-86.
- Guo, X. D. (2002).Investigation and analysis about career attitude among nurses in Hangzhou. *Tian Jin Nursing*, 10 (6), 270-273.
- Hall, D. T. (2002). *Careers in and out of organizations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Hassan, F. H. (2002). *Work Empowerment as Perceived by Nurses and Physicians Working at National Heart Institute.Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University*. Retrieved April 20, 2012, from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/ARADO/UNPAN020758.pdf>
- Heslin, P. A. (2003). Self- and other-referent criteria of career success. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 11, 262-286.
- Heslin, P. A. (2005). Conceptualizing and evaluating career success. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, 113-136.
- Jeenkool, P. (2004). *Relationships between personal factors, achievement motivation, organizational support and career success of professional nurses, governmental university hospitals*. Unpublished master thesis, Faculty of Nursing, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.
- Judge, T. A., Cable, D. M., Boudreau, J. W., & Bretz, R. D. (1995).An empirical investigation of the predictors of executive career success. *Personnel Psychology*, 48 (3), 485-519.
- Laschinger, H. K. S. (1996). A theoretical approach to studying work empowerment in nursing: A review of studies testing Kanter's theory of structural power in organizations. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, 20, 25-41.
- Laschinger, H. K. S., Finegan, J., & Shamian, J. (2001).Promoting nurses' health: Effect of empowerment on job strain and work satisfaction. *Nursing Economics*, 19, 42-52.
- Laschinger, H. K. S., Wong, C., McMahon, L., & Kaufmann, C. (1999). Leader behavior impact on staff nurse empowerment, job tension and work effectiveness. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 29 (5), 28-39.
- Li, I. C., Chen, Y. C. & Kuo, H. T. (2008).The relationship between work empowerment and work stress perceived by nurses at long-term care facilities in Taipei city. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*,17, 3050-3058.
- Loi, R. & Ngo, H. Y. (2010). Mobility norms, risk aversion, and career satisfaction of Chinese employees. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 27 (2), 237-255.
- Long, J. (2010).Investigation on the source of stress analysis and countermeasures in nurses working in different clinical departments [in Chinese]. *Journal of Chinese Modern Nursing*, 9, 7.



- McParland, J., Scott, P.A., Arndt, M., Dassen, T., Gasull, M. & Lemonidou, C. (2000). Autonomy and clinical practice: Identifying areas of concern. *British Journal of Nursing*, 9 (8), 507.
- Ministry of Health of China. (2005). *The outline of Chinese nursing career development from 2005 to 2010 institutions, the People's Republic of China*. [in Chinese]. Retrieved November 30, from http://www.noh.gov.cn/public/open.aspx?_nid=10213
- Nedd, N. (2006). Perceptions of empowerment and intent to stay. *Nursing Economy* 24, 13-18.
- Nurse Act in China. (2010). *Health care reform in China*. [in Chinese]. Retrieved December 18, from http://www.china.com.cn/2011/2011-03/06/content_22070321.htm
- O'Neil, D., Hopkins, M., & Bilmoria, D. (2008). Women's careers at the start of the 21st century. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 80, 727-743.
- Peluchette, J. (1993). Subjective career success: the influence of individual difference, family, and organizational variables, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 43, 198-208.
- Prasertsuk, N. (1999). Factors affecting woman managers' career success in Thai commercial banks. Unpublished Ph.D dissertation. Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand.
- Rad, A. M. M. & Yarmohammadian, M., H. (2006). A study of relationship between managers' leadership style and employees' job satisfaction. *Leadership in Health Services*, 19 (20), 11-28.
- Sarmiento, T. P., Laschinger, H. K. S & Iwasiw, C. (2004). Nurse educators' work place empowerment, burnout, and job satisfaction: Testing Kanter's theory. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 46 (2), 134-143.
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L. & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44 (2), 219-237.
- Seo Y, Ko J, & Price J. (2004). The determinants of job satisfaction among hospital nurses: A model estimation in Korea. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 41, 437-446.
- Skelton, R. (1994). Nursing and empowerment: concepts and strategies. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19, 415-423.
- Tao, H., Zhang, A. H., Hu, J. C. & Zhang, Y. Q. (2011). Regional differences in job satisfaction for mainland Chinese nurses. *Nursing Outlook*, 1-8.
- Tharenou, P. (2005). Does mentor support increase women's career advancement more than men's? The differential effects of career and psychosocial support. *Australian Journal of Management*, 30, 77-109.
- Tyson, P., Pongruengphant, R., & Aggarwal, B. (2002). Coping with organizational stress among hospital nurses in Southern Ontario. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 39, 453-459.
- University Hospital Documents. (2007). *Hospital Working Plan*. [in Chinese]. Retrieved August, 16, 2011, from <http://www.ydyy.cn/ArticleDetail-102.aspx>
- Wang, Y. F., Horng, J. S., Cheng, S. Y., & Killman, L. (2011). Factors influencing food and beverage employees' career success: a contextual perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, doi:10.1016/j.ijhm.2011.03.005.



- Wang, S. J. (2008). *The unbalance ration of physician to nurse [in Chinese]*. *People Daily*. Retrieved July, 10, 2011, from <http://health.people.com.cn/GB/14740/21471/7787832.html>.
- Wang, L., Tao, H., Ellenbecker, C. H. & Liu, X. H. (2011). Job satisfaction, occupational commitment and intent to stay among Chinese nurses: a cross-sectional questionnaire survey. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 68 (3), 539-549.
- Wong, A.L.Y., & Slater, J.R. (2002). Executive development in China: is there any in a Western sense? *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 13, 338-360.
- Wong, F.K.Y. (2010). Challenges for nurse managers in China. *Journal of Nursing Management* 18, 526-530.
- Yamane, T. (1973). *Statistic: An introductory analysis*. Tokyo: Harper international.
- Zhuang, J. E., & Shi, R. F. (2010). A study on intention to perform life-associated caring among nurses. *Chinese Journal of nursing*, 1(26), 13-16.
- Zhao, Y. Q., Zhang, S. X., & He, C. X. (2007). Talk about the relationship between doctor and nurse and the medical conflict [in Chinese]. *Journal of Practical Medical Techniques*, 6, 763-764.