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Study of Caregivers' Job Stress and Burnout of Long Term Care Institution in Taichung City

Hsiao-Ming Chang¹, Ching-Hui Lin^{2*}, Ying-Wan Chuang²

¹School of Physical Education, Putian University, China

²Office of Physical Education, Yuan Ze University, Taiwan Province, China

**Corresponding author:* Ching-Hui Lin, lin-ching-hui@saturn.yzu.edu.tw

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to analyze the job stress and burnout of long-term caregiver (LTC), and the relationship between them. A total of 250 valid questionnaires were collected from caregivers of LTC in Taichung, Taiwan. After statistical analysis, the results show that: 1. LTC feel the highest job stress is “having to make a decision immediately in case of emergency.” 2. LTC feel highest job burnout is the “when they felt tired after work every day”. 3. The LTC with junior college education level felt more pressure on “work and family balance” than those with other education levels. 4. In terms of emotional exhaustion, unmarried caregivers are higher than others. 5. LTC feel highest job stress is related to burnout. Based on the above results, this study not only proposes management implications, and but also suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Long term care (LTC); Caregiver; Job stress; Job burnout

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1. Introduction

How to maintain dignity and autonomy of the elderly in the aging society is a big challenge, and it also includes the responsibilities of the whole society, including the elderly themselves, families, civil sectors and the government. Although the vast majority of the elderly want to live with their families, it is undeniable that some of them need to be cared for by social welfare institutions for various reasons. Long term care is to create a friendly life field for the elderly, provide diversified and continuous health and social services for individuals in need of assistance, and maintain the dignity and quality of life of the caregivers. Its service content can be divided into prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, support and maintenance of social services. It includes informal services provided by family members and friends and formal services provided by professionals or institutions. The clients include not only the caregivers themselves, but also their individual needs ^[1]. Due to the important role of caregivers in the LTC system, relative research literatures ^[2-4] point out that it is common for nurses to work overtime. Heavy working environment will cause load and burnout to nursing staff. The pressure brought by work is easy to make nursing staff feel job burnout. Research shows that both work pressure and job burnout are factors leading to turnover. Therefore, based on the above research motivation concept, this study takes care workers as the research object, and mainly analyzes the situation of job stress and job burnout of caregivers in LTC institutions. According to the above research motivation, there are three problems in this study:

- (1) What is the difference of the job stress of the caregivers with different population background variables?
- (2) To explore the difference of job burnout among the caregivers with different demographic background variables?
- (3) To explore whether there is a correlation between the job stress and the level of job burnout of LTC?

2. Literature review

Stress is a subjective and individual feeling. It is the result of the interaction between the individual and the environment. It is a state of tension when one feels the threat physically and psychologically. When one feels an unpleasant and painful feeling in one's emotion, one cannot eliminate the threat and the oppressed feeling of getting out of one's predicament. When one's resources and abilities are beyond one's own use, stress is produced in the process^[5]. Chu, put forward that job stress refers to the negative emotional reactions, such as unhappiness, anxiety, hesitation and frustration, caused by the change of body's external environment or internal perception when an individual interacts with the environment in the workplace^[6-7]. Job burnout is more likely to have complaints, tantrums, emotional instability, shirking responsibility, absenteeism due to not wanting to work, and lower work performance, which will eventually lead to resignation^[8]. Huang, explored the relationship among job stress, job burnout and turnover intention of nursing staff. The results showed that job stress of nurses had a positive effect on job burnout, and job burnout also had a positive effect on turnover intention. In addition, job burnout has some mediating effect between job stress and turnover tendency^[3]. In the related research, it was found that there was a significant positive correlation between the work stress, burnout and physical and mental discomfort of LTC service staff^[4]. In the study of Tsai et al, it was found that nurses felt moderate work stress and more than half of them felt tired. However, these problems had little effect on their life. On the whole, the nurses working in the Department of internal medicine and surgery, emergency and critical care units and three irregular shifts felt more work pressure and burnout, and they also had higher turnover thoughts. The reasons for leaving were too much work load, physical inability to take care of their families^[9]. Wu, analyzed the correlation among job stress, job burnout and workplace well-being of public health workers in Tainan City. The results showed that:

- (1) There were no significant differences in the dimensions of job burnout, job stress and workplace well-being among public health workers with different gender, age, education level and marital status.
- (2) There are significant differences in the dimensions of job burnout and workplace well-being among different service years of public health workers^[10].

3. Method

3.1. Subject and sampling

In this study, the LTC institutions in Taichung, Taiwan, with a certificate of LTC as the research object, using convenient sampling method for questionnaire survey. A total of 280 questionnaires were given to caregivers and 272 questionnaires were returned. A total of 250 valid questionnaires were obtained, with an effective questionnaire rate of 89.29%.

3.2. Questionnaire

The first part is the job stress scale, which has 12 items. The main purpose is to understand LTC's work load, responsibilities and the effect of work on family and life. This part of the scale is mainly based on the study of related job stress^[1-4]. The second part is "work burnout scale," which has 11 items. Mainly

want to know about LTC, they feel emotional exhaustion in their work, and feel the loss of feelings to the things around them. This part of the scale is mainly based on the study of related job burnout [5-8]. The above two scales are measured by the Likert five-point scale, from “very agree” (5 points), “agree” (4 points), “common” (3 points), “disagree” (2 points), to “very disagree” (1 point). The last part is personal background variables, which are: gender, age, marital status, education level, and length of service.

3.3. Data analysis

The effective questionnaire of this study, the use of statistical analysis steps are as follows:

- (1) Used describe statistic to analyze the personal background variables of LTC, as well as the current situation of job stress and burnout.
- (2) Used exploratory factor analysis to construct validity, and then Cronbach’s α measures the reliability of each scale in this study.
- (3) Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyze the correlation between job stress and work burnout in LTC.

3.4. Analysis scale of reliability and validity

After exploratory factor analysis, four factors were selected in the job stress scale. Each factor was named “work and family balance,” “personal responsibility,” “interpersonal relationship” and “work load” according to the characteristics of the options. The cumulative variance of the scale was 58.59, which could explain 58.59% of the job stress of LTC. Another example is Cronbach’s $\alpha=.76$, indicating that the reliability of the scale is good. In the aspect of job burnout scale, after exploratory factor analysis, two factors were selected in this scale. Each factor was named “emotional exhaustion” and “impersonality” according to the characteristics of the options and referring to relevant literature. The cumulative variance of the scale is 62.46, which can explain the work burnout of LTC, and the explanatory power is 62.46%. In terms of reliability analysis, Cronbach’s $\alpha=.88$, indicating that the reliability of the scale is good.

4. Result

4.1. Analysis of Sample Characteristics

Among 250 valid questionnaires, 3 (1.2%) were male and 247 (98.8%) were female. In terms of age, the number of people aged 40 to 49 is the highest, accounting for 111 (44.4%), and the least is over 60, accounting for 1 (0.4%). In terms of marital status, 53 (21.2%) were married and 46 (18.4%) were unmarried. In terms of educational level, the number of people with high school (or vocational school) level is the largest, accounting for 182 people (72.8%), and the least is the master’s degree, accounting for 2 people (0.8%). In terms of length of service, 95 (38%) of them have less than 2 years, and 31 (12.4%) have less than 4 years.

4.2. Analysis of LTC job stress and burnout

4.2.1. Job stress

The results showed that LTC felt job stress in the following order: 9. Having to make a decision immediately in case of emergency (M=3.54); 7. Having an effect on my daily life and social life (M=3.32); 8. Lack of personal promotion and development opportunities (M=3.30); 12. Lack of care human resources in the institution (M=3.26); 6. Consequences caused by my negligence (M=3.03); 4. Lack of proper feedback on work performance (M=2.98); 5. Sacrifice personal life to pursue work achievement (M=2.87); 1. Conflict between work task and supervisor’s requirements (M=2.78); 2. Lack of support and communication on work task (M= 2.78); 3. Work load will affect my relationship with my family (M=2.74); 11. My care cannot meet the requirements of residents (or family members) (M=2.63);

and 10. Unable to balance the roles given by work and family (M=2.62).

4.2.2. Job burnout

The results show that the job burnout of LTC is as follows: 1. Feeling tired after work every day (M=3.60); 2. Feeling tired when I wake up and face work every day (M=3.47); 3. Working makes me feel exhausted (M= 3.23); 5. Feeling that I have spent too much time and energy on work (M=3.09); 4. Working makes me feel frustrated (M=2.89) 10. I feel great pressure on the residents (or their families) (M=2.66), 11. I think my colleagues often blame me for some of their troubles (M =2.64), 8. Worrying about this work makes me gradually lose my feelings for everything (M=2.56), 6. Working with colleagues all day makes me nervous (M=3.49), 7. I feel colder to my colleagues after taking this work (M=2.36) 9. Don't care what happened to colleagues (M =2.21).

4.3. Difference analysis on job stress and burnout of LTC

The results of one-way ANOVA analysis showed that firstly, in terms of age, there were no significant differences in “work and family balance” (F=.44, $p>.05$), “personal responsibility” (F=2.14, $p>.05$), “interpersonal relationship” (F=1.75, $p>.05$) and “workload” (F=1.97, $p>.05$). In terms of job burnout, there was no significant difference between different ages in “emotional exhaustion” (F=.06, $p>.05$) and “impersonality” (F=.51, $p>.05$).

In terms of different marital status, there were no significant differences in work and family balance (F=1.64, $p>.05$), personal responsibility (F=.33, $p>.05$), interpersonal relationship (F=2.27, $p>.05$) and workload (F=1.67, $p>.05$) among different ages. In terms of job burnout, there were significant differences among different ages in “emotional exhaustion” (F=3.29, $p>.05$). The results showed that unmarried people were significantly higher than married people and those with children. However, there was no significant difference in “impersonality” (F=.62, $p>.05$).

In terms of length of service, there were no significant differences in work and family balance (F=1.94, $p>.05$), personal responsibility (F= 2.51, $p>.05$), interpersonal relationship (F=. 93, $p>.05$) and workload (F=.69, $p>.05$). In terms of job burnout, there was no significant difference between different years in “emotional exhaustion” (F= 1.15, $p>.05$) and “impersonality” (F=. 24, $p>.05$).

In terms of educational level, there were significant differences in work and family balance (F=3.58, $p<.05$). After comparison, it is found that the workers with junior college degree are significantly higher than those with college degree. Other factors, including “personal responsibility” (F=.26, $p>.05$), “interpersonal relationship” (F=.18, $p>.05$) and “workload” (F=. 58, $p>.05$), were not significantly different. In terms of job burnout, there was no significant difference in the two factors of “emotional exhaustion” (F=1.34, $p>.05$) and “impersonality” (F=.86, $p>.05$).

4.4. Correlation analysis between job stress and burnout of LTC

The results of correlation analysis in **Table 1.** show that caregivers feel the stress of “work and family balance” ($r= .33$, $p<.01$) and “personal responsibility” ($r=.31$, $p<.01$) and “workload” ($r=.50$, $p<.01$), and “emotional exhaustion” ($r=.53$, $P<.01$) and “impersonality” ($r=.48$, $p <.01$). In addition, the force factors of personal responsibility are also related to the interpersonal relationship ($r=.17$, $p< .01$) and “workload” ($r=.28$, $p<.01$), and “exhaustion of emotions” ($r=.35$, $p<.01$) and “impersonal” ($r=.42$, $P<.01$) there were two burnout factors. Then, interpersonal stress factors and workload ($r=.35$, $p<.01$), and “emotional exhaustion” ($r=.28$, $p<.01$) and “impersonal” ($r=.25$, $P<.01$). Then “workload” stress factor and “emotional exhaustion” ($r=.47$, $p<.01$) and “impersonal” ($r=.35$, $p<.01$). Finally, the two factors of job burnout are emotional exhaustion and impersonality ($r=.52$, $p< 0.01$).

5. Conclusion and suggestion

5.1. Conclusion

- (1) LTC feel the highest stress of job, that is, they have to make decisions immediately in case of emergency. The main reason is that some of the long-term residents in LTC institution are old or have mobility problems. In case of emergency, improper disposal and misfortune, it will usually cause the dissatisfaction of family members and legal disputes.
- (2) LTCs' job burnout was the highest in "feeling tired after work every day". The main reason is that most of the elderly people they are facing are old people or people with mobility problems. These people sometimes have emotions, self-mutilation, quarrelling with their peers, or life problems. Caregivers should pay more patience and love to these people every day, and control their own emotions. Because of the long-term effect, it causes daily after work, physical and mental fatigue situation.
- (3) In terms of "work and family balance", the LTC with junior college education feel more pressure than others. The reason for this is that in LTC institution, those with such education level should not only take care of the elderly, but also take part in administrative work. In addition, when most married people have children, the balance between work and family cannot be achieved.
- (4) In terms of emotional exhaustion, unmarried LTCs are more likely to suffer from burnout than others. The main reason is that most LTC are young and have no family influence. Therefore, senior people in LTC institution often put extra workload on them, resulting in a lot of workload when they are embarrassed to refuse. As a result, they have to pay more mental and physical strength to finish the work assigned by their superiors, resulting in the situation of daily emotional exhaustion.
- (5) LTCs' job stress is related to burnout. The main reasons are that they are under stress of "work and family balance", personal responsibility, interpersonal relationship and workload. Due to the influence of long-term stress, all of them feel exhausted after work every day. In addition, the work is mainly to take care of the elderly and people with mobility difficulties. After work, they either have no energy, or they are mainly at home. Over time, not only do you feel bored with your work, but also you have less interaction with your colleagues.

5.2. Suggestion

- (1) Since LTC generally believe that the time of caring for residents is too long and the number of residents to be cared for is too large, if the manpower of LTC institutions is sufficient, the above situation should be alleviated. Therefore, it is suggested that LTC managers should put forward welfare or incentive policies, such as increasing salary, reasonable leave system or overtime bonus, so as to reduce the turnover rate of care workers, increase organizational morale, and solve the problem of insufficient human resources.
- (2) Establish communication channels between caregivers and supervisors to understand the sources of pressure from their superiors, so as to timely reduce work pressure and provide better care services for residents. LTCs are encouraged to obtain the certificate of care attendant, and an evaluation system is established, which is combined with the salary certificate to stimulate caregivers' sense of achievement and care quality.
- (3) Suggestions for future research. This study mainly explored the relationship between job stress and job burnout of LTCs, but the coping style of stress and the adjustment of job burnout were not involved. In

the future research, it can be included in the scope of research, so as to further explore its source, current situation, adaptation and other related issues, and then put forward effective ways of adjustment

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Author contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author Hsiao-Ming, Chang designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author Ching-Hui Lin managed the analyses of the study. Author Ying-Wan Chuang managed the literature searches.

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