Health and motivation in nurses: A multi-national European study

[1]Schaufeli, W., [2]Torrente, P., [3]van der Heijden, B., & [4]Hasselhorn, H.M.

[1]*Utrecht University, the Netherlands;* [2]*Universitat Jaume I, Castellon, Spain;* [3]*Maastricht School of Management, the Netherlands;* [4]*University of Wuppertal, Germany*

Hospital nurses work in stressful and challenging jobs, and for that very reason they have been studied intensively. Although nurses are by far the largest single professional group in health care in each country, comparative studies on their health and motivation across various national settings are lacking. The current study includes 9,435 nurses from seven different European countries, including Belgium (N = 684), Denmark (N = 1,267), Finland (N = 1,711), France (N = 1,030), The Netherlands (N = 751), and Poland (N = 1,369). The theoretical framework is constituted by the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) Model that assumes that in all work settings two types of job characteristics can be distinguished: job demands and job resources. The former refer to particular aspects of the job that require sustained physical and psychological effort, and are therefore associated with physiological and psychological costs. According to the JD-R model, prolonged exposure to high job demands may therefore lead to health impairment, for instance, burnout (the health impairment process). Job resources refer to those aspects of the job that may reduce job demands that are functional for achieving work goals, or that stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. In other words, these demands have motivational potential. According to the JD-R model, prolonged exposure to job resources may, for instance, lead to organisational commitment (the motivational process).

The current study tested the JD-R model in all seven European countries simultaneously, using the Multi-Group Method in Structural Equation Modeling. The latent job demands' factor was constituted by qualitative demands (uncertainty about patient treatment), quantitative demands, and work-home interference. The latent job resources' factor included opportunities for learning and development and social support from colleagues and supervisors. The latent health impairment factor included burnout, disabling back pain, and general health, whereas the latent motivation factor was constituted by organisational commitment, turnover intention, and job satisfaction.

Results indicated that the model fits well to the data of all seven countries (χ^2 = 1727.40; NFI, TLI, and CFI > .90; RMSEA < .03). As predicted by the JD-R model a positive relationship exists between job demands and health impairment (ranging between countries from .57 to .80) and also between job resources and motivation (ranging from .45 to .73). In addition, an unexpected negative path was observed from job demands to motivation (ranging from -.37 to -.60). Obviously, job demands impair both nurses' health and motivation. Additional analyses showed that the paths of the model were not invariant across the seven counties.

In conclusion, the JD-R model was confirmed in a multi-national European sample, albeit that an additional unexpected negative relationship between job demands and motivation was found and that the strengths of the relationships differed between countries.

273