

The Relationship of Mental Health Agency Productivity Standards With Marriage and Family Therapist Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intent

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Abstract

A quantitative study investigated how productivity standards were related to self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and marriage and family therapist (MFT) turnover intent. The results show that productivity standards predict turnover intent, mediated by job self-efficacy and job satisfaction. It was found that productivity predicts job satisfaction, mediated by job self-efficacy.

Problem

Low job satisfaction and **increased turnover** can adversely impact social work agencies by decreasing their effectiveness, efficiency and overall image (Lambert et al., 2012).

Turnover among mental health professionals (e.g. MFTs) is a problem (Delk & Golden, 1975; Selden, 2010) and can impact the client quality of care (Aarons, Sommerfeld, & Willging, 2011; McVanel-Viney, 2008).

There is a little research on the relationship between productivity standards set by community mental health agencies and an MFT's job satisfaction and turnover intent.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to promote social change by enabling program managers and policy makers to make informed decisions in designing jobs for MFTs in California. The results of the study can be used to promote positive social change by assisting MFT employers in community mental health agencies to design jobs for MFT providers that will promote job satisfaction and reduce turnover intent.

Relevant Literature

Productivity standards are the percentage of their total workday that an MFT spends in providing face-to-face services to their clients (Technical Assistance Collaborative & Human Services Research Institute [TACHSRI], 2013).

Turnover among mental health professionals (e.g. MFTs) is a problem (Delk & Golden, 1975; Selden, 2010) and can impact the quality of care that a client receives in treatment (Aarons, Sommerfeld, & Willging, 2011; McVanel-Viney, 2008).

Mental health professionals experience **stress and job dissatisfaction** at work (e.g. Farber & Heifetz, 1981; Reid et al., 1999).

Federici and Skaalvik (2012) argue that **self-efficacy** serves as a buffer for turnover intent. They found that self-efficacy was indirectly negatively related with turnover intent and that this relationship was mediated by job satisfaction (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012).

Research Questions

RQ 1 – Do community mental health agency productivity standards predict an MFT's turnover intent? Is it partially mediated by MFT job self-efficacy?

RQ 2 – Do community mental health agency productivity standards predict MFT job satisfaction? Is this partially mediated by MFT job self-efficacy?

RQ 3 - Do community mental health agency productivity standards predict MFT turnover intent? Is this partially mediated by MFT job satisfaction?

RQ 4 - Is there a relationship between productivity standards and MFT job satisfaction?

RQ 5 - Is there a relationship between productivity standards and MFT turnover intent?

RQ 6 - Do MFT demographic variables predict MFT job satisfaction?

RQ 7 - Do MFT demographic variables predict MFT turnover intent?

Procedures

300 mailed surveys were sent to MFT participants.

50 electronic surveys were sent to community mental health agencies.

141 surveys were completed and returned.

Convenience sampling was used to collect the data.

Data Analysis

Different tactics were used for each RQ

- The first three RQs were analyzed using Baron and Kenny's (1986) steps for mediation analysis.
- RQs 4 and 5 were analyzed using correlational analysis.
- RQs 6 and 7 were analyzed using linear regression.
- Demographic variables of age, gender, number of work hours, place of work, licensure status, work experience and whether surveys were completed by mail or online were included in the regression analyses to control for their effects.

Findings

Productivity standards positively impact (i.e. increase) turnover intent and are partially mediated by job self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Productivity standards negatively impact job satisfaction, as partially mediated by job self-efficacy.

Hours worked per week and gender were also found to impact turnover intent.

Licensure status was found to impact job satisfaction.

Limitations

Convenience sampling was used to collect the data which may affect the generalizability of the data.

The sample was drawn from Californian MFTs, which may affect the generalizability of the data.

There was a statistically significant difference between mailed and electronic responses and had to be controlled for in the regression analyses.

Conclusions

The impact of productivity standards on MFTs is significant. Agencies using productivity standards as a performance measurement tool may not be the optimal method of measuring MFT performance. Performing a job analysis and identifying relevant performance indicators for MFTs is offered as a solution to this problem.

Social Change Implications

The results of the study can be used to promote positive social change by assisting MFT employers in community mental health agencies in designing jobs for MFT providers that will promote job satisfaction and reduce turnover intent.

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