THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PREDICTIVE MODEL OF TURNOVER INTENTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL NURSES

by

EVERHARDUS JOHANNES JACOBS

THESIS

Submitted in the fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

DOCTOR IN COMMERCE

in

LEADERSHIP IN PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE

in the

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Supervisor: Professor Gert Roodt

June 2005
STATEMENT

I certify that the dissertation submitted by me for the degree Doctor in Commerce (Leadership in Performance and Change) at the University of Johannesburg, is my independent work and have not been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

EVERHARDUS JOHANNES JACOBS
JUNE 2005
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to convey my grateful appreciation to all those people who made this study possible:

To my study leader, Professor Gert Roodt, for his expertise, professional guidance and advice. His positive attitude towards the study has made a huge impact on my own goals, approach and motivation. It has been a great privilege for me to have him as my supervisor.

Ms Riëtte Eiselen, head of Statcon (University of Johannesburg) and Adam Martin, Technical Assistant, for their efficient service in conducting the statistical analysis.

My wife, Renette, children Sonette and Danelle, as well as my parents for their support.

A special word of remembrance for my friend and former colleague, the late prof Chris Welman, who was inspirational in enrolling for this study and my late son, Fanus, who’s life served as an example to me.

The Human Science Research Council for their financial assistance.

To my Creator, who alone is to be honoured for insight and strength to conduct the study.

Everhardus Johannes Jacobs
June 2005
ABSTRACT

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by

EVERHARDUS JOHANNES JACOBS

SUPERVISOR: Professor Gert Roodt
DEPARTMENT: Department of Human Resource Management
Faculty of Management
University of Johannesburg

DEGREE: D.Com.
DATE: June 2005

South African nursing profession is in a crisis as professional nurses leave the country in search of lucrative work overseas. This exodus will have a catastrophic effect on the delivery of health care over the next decade. It is also clear that the shortages of staff due to the turnover problems in hospitals are also creating various other problems such as enormous pressure on existing employees, job stress and job dissatisfaction.

Financial constraints to compete with international competitors, exchange rates, tax-free foreign money, the existence of many job opportunities overseas and the tendency that a person’s career is enriched with overseas experience, makes the retention of professional nurses almost uncontrollable for nursing employers in South Africa. The question was therefore asked whether employers should not rather focus their retention strategies on things they can control internally to retain their employees. An alternative
approach, to build strategies around the needs and work circumstances of professional nurses, was therefore proposed.

The focus of this study was to develop a predictive model with organisational culture and the selected mediating variables, namely knowledge sharing, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship and job satisfaction, as well as various demographic variables (sub-cultures, tenure, age, level of education, gender, race, home language, level of seniority, marital status, number of dependents) of turnover intentions.

A General Linear Model approach was adopted to answer the research question. The relationship between organisational culture and turnover intentions was determined, followed by the independent and/or interdependent role of the demographic variables in predicting firstly, organisational culture and secondly, turnover intentions on a bivariate and a multivariate level. Thereafter, the objective was to determine the independent and/or interactive role of the independent variable (organisational culture) and the selected mediating variables (knowledge sharing, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction) in explaining turnover intentions. The next objective was to determine whether knowledge sharing, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour and job satisfaction mediates the relationship between organisational culture and turnover intentions. The final objective was to determine a most parsimonious model by entering all demographic variables, the independent variable and the mediating variables simultaneously into an equation to determine which variables independently and/or interactively emerged to predict turnover intentions.

The most important finding was that 49% of the variance in turnover intentions was explained by the proposed model when all the variables were simultaneously entered into the equation. Organisational commitment emerged as the only independent predictor in the final most parsimonious model of turnover intentions. This result support theoretical evidence of the importance of organisational commitment as predictor of
turnover intentions. Organisational culture, in interaction with knowledge sharing and job satisfaction, emerged as predictors in the final model decreasing turnover intentions, while organisational culture in interaction with organisational citizenship behaviour increases turnover intentions of professional nurses. Organisational culture also emerged in interaction with white professional nurses, as demographic variable, decreasing turnover intentions. Organisational culture is therefore an important concept in determining turnover intentions, clearly emphasising the responsibility of nursing employers to seriously embark on internal strategies to prevent turnover amongst professional nurses. Various other demographic variables also emerged in interaction to determine turnover intentions in the final model. They are professional nurses in ICU/casualties and 50 years and older, 1-5 years in unit and an incumbent of a chief professional nurse position, 11 years and more in the current hospital and no dependents above 18, being married/co-habitating and no dependents above 18, 50 years and older and no dependents under 18 and working in ICU/Casualties and in possession of a degree. Finally, knowledge sharing, organisational commitment and job satisfaction mediated the relationship between organisational culture and turnover intentions, although only partially, while OCB’s did not mediated this relationship.

Various conclusions and recommendations, theoretically, methodologically and empirically, were made as a result of this study. Further theoretical development of the concepts, especially knowledge sharing, the value of General Linear Modelling and further development of turnover models amongst professional nurses and other health professional alike, were recommended.
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