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Investigating the Relationship between Employee Satisfaction and Employee Retention An Empirical Study of the United Arab Emirates – Abu Dhabi’s Healthcare Sectors

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Abstract: The objective of this empirical study was to investigate the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention among nurses in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), namely in Abu Dhabi’s hospitals. A self – administered questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection method. Data was then analysed using SPSS Statistics 20.0 software. The questionnaire was distributed and delivered to 255 nurses in five hospitals in Abu Dhabi. Descriptive statistics as well as correlation and multiple regression analysis techniques were employed to establish the relationship between the variables.

Variables such as employee rewards, role ambiguity, organizational support and organizational commitment were found to be significantly influential towards job satisfaction, while there was no significant association between employee rewards, organizational commitment and employee job satisfaction. The study revealed that independent variables correlation with dependent variable and the study indicated that the employee rewards and organizational commitment lead to employee satisfaction but however, they do not result in job satisfaction.

Based on the findings, a number of recommendations were introduced to enhance and improve the factors that influenced job satisfaction and employee retention in Abu Dhabi’s hospitals. Contributions to Human Resource Management (HRM) for future research were addressed and discussed.

Keywords: employee satisfaction, employee retention, United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, hospitals

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, healthcare sectors have faced many changes and challenges due to various reasons ranging from the changes in government policies to the rapid development in information technology which necessitated healthcare sectors to expand in all aspects. As a result, consumers’ awareness of healthcare services grew globally.

This is in addition to the fact that organizations in the U.A.E. – especially in healthcare sectors – were part of this expansion. Therefore, hospitals must apply the best strategies and take necessary actions by encouraging and motivating employees to work more productively and efficiently. Doing so will increase their levels of satisfaction which will then improve and increase employee loyalty, involvement and commitment levels to the organization.

Satisfaction can be classified as a “person’s feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations” (Kotler, 2003). Satisfied employees have been shown to be more dedicated in improving the service quality provided and increasing customers’ satisfaction. In order to rate employees’ work performances, organizations must take into account their job satisfaction as it is a significant factor in influencing the quality of their employees’ performances. (Qasim, & Syed, (2012). It is justifiable to say that improving job satisfaction and retention strategies tend to enhance employees’ work performances, leading the organization to achieve its own prescheduled mission and vision. While various other sectors such as banking, Food & Beverage (F&B) and manufacturing – to name a few have – been previously studied and tested, the healthcare sectors in the U.A.E. have very rarely been the subject of research thus far.

Hence, in order to fill the gap in literature, this current study was conducted. A conceptual framework was developed which consisted of independent variables (employee rewards, role ambiguity, perceived organizational support and organizational commitment) mediating variables (employee satisfaction) and dependent or outcome variable (employee retention). This current study will reveal and further investigate how components of job satisfaction affected employee retention in the U.A.E.’s healthcare sectors. Currently, there are a total of 104 licensed hospitals in the U.A.E. They comprise of approximately 13,568 beds, 904,816 inpatient admissions, 3.5 million outpatient attendances, 10,762 doctors, and 24,725 nurses. In Abu Dhabi alone there are 39 hospitals comprising of 25 private and 14 government hospitals. Due to the shortage of medical personnel – nurses in particular in the U.A.E. – employee retention has become a pressing matter. (U.A.E. Business Council, Healthcare Sector, 2015 and 2016)

2. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR IN THE U.A.E.

The healthcare sector in the U.A.E. has witnessed a dramatic expansion over the span of four decades. Indeed, at the time of the U.A.E.’s founding in 1971, the emirates had just seven hospitals and 12 health centres. Today, the 104 hospitals are divided into the public and private sectors throughout the seven emirates. In Abu Dhabi, there are 39 hospitals with 4,226 beds – or 2.7 beds for every 1500 of the population – providing services to approximately 2.5 million people. Population growth can be credited as a key driver of this expansion. As such, the United Nations (U.N.) in a 2015 report predicted that the U.A.E.’s indigenous and expatriate population will grow from 9.16 million to 10.98 million by 2030. Still, the U.A.E. is rapidly improving its healthcare sector in the hopes of providing quality of care locally, as opposed to having patients travel overseas for better–quality medical treatment. This focus is creating opportunities for healthcare organizations in the U.A.E. (U.S. – U.A.E. Business Council, Healthcare Sector, 2016).

3. RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The World Health Organization's (WHO) 2015 World Statistics report found that the U.A.E. had a mere %31 nursing and midwifery personnel for every 100,000 people. While this ratio is higher than many other countries, it is nonetheless lower than most of the Gulf States including Kuwait (45), Saudi Arabia (48), Oman (53) and Qatar (118). It is also lower than most Western countries, such as the United Kingdom (88), France (93) and Germany (115) (The U.S. – U.A.E. Business Council, Healthcare Sector, 2016). There is a shortage of skilled Emirati medical professionals, partly due to prevailing cultural norms. Shortages are particularly acute in the field of nursing, where just 3% of the 23,000 to 25,000 nurses in the country are Emirati and in Abu Dhabi that figure are even lower, with the national reporting in January 2016 that only 1.6% of the 7,000 nurses employed by the Abu Dhabi healthcare sectors were local.

It is also worth mentioning that none of the previous studies have so far addressed the relationships between each component of job satisfaction and employee retention among nurses in the U.A.E. In other words, this matter needs to be further researched and analysed.

Due to the fact that the number of nurses in the U.A.E.'s healthcare sectors remained low as a result of culture norms and other factors, this topic became of interest to researchers to investigate and understand the factors affecting the job satisfaction and retention among nurses with the hopes that hospitals will be able to identify the relevant aspects to improve on and effectively retain their nursing workforce. Additionally, it has been noted that most researches in the area of employee satisfaction were conducted in developed countries – namely the U.S.A. and certain European nations, compared to the other countries where the issue received less attention.

Very few studies were conducted in the U.A.E., hence, it is necessary to present the extended framework as a guideline to this current research. Staff nurses in Abu Dhabi's hospitals were chosen as the respondents of the study. When comparing the statistics of the United States of America (USA), Canada, England, Scotland and Germany, Mrayyan (2005) reported that Canada had the highest turnover rate among nurses followed by England. It is through employees that organizations can achieve a competitive advantage over competitors. Thus, nurses play a fundamental role and make important contributions to the organizations they are a part of. This will certainly enhance the productivity and efficiency levels in organizations which will in turn lead them to accomplish the organization's objectives, goals and visions. Furthermore, highly satisfied and committed employees are more likely to provide premium services, increase patient satisfaction and improve employee retention in organizations. Without a doubt, every company will attempt to retain and motivate its employees as best as it can, however, hospitals in the U.A.E. still inevitably face issues and problems relating to employee satisfaction and retention. To prevent nurses from resigning or leaving the organization, healthcare organizations have increased their recruitment efforts and improved their working conditions. Maintaining a high employee retention rate is a long-term, yet efficient strategy for healthcare organizations to ensure continuous satisfaction and a high quality of care for their patients.

In a nutshell, healthcare sectors in the U.A.E. can further improve and enhance its services, quality of care provided and improve efficiency by paying more attention to the needs of the nurses.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the factors that affect employee satisfaction?
2. What is the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention?

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The specific aim of this study was to establish the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention among nurses in the U.A.E.'s hospitals. The objectives of the study can be specifically defined as follows:

1. To identify the factors that affect job satisfaction such as rewards, role ambiguity, perceived organizational support and organizational commitment
2. To identify the relationship between job satisfaction and employee retention

6. LITERATURE REVIEW RELATED TO THE RESEARCH

Job satisfaction is a complex concept that has been extensively researched by numerous scholars. Studies reveal that there is a connection between job satisfaction and motivation – though what constitutes to motivation is not easy to define. There is a positive link between job satisfaction, performance and motivation; whereby motivation is said to prompt employees – based on their levels of job satisfaction – to behave in a certain way. (Hollyforde, 2002). At the same time, there is relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee retention, with organizational commitment being cited as a main contributor of high employee retention rates (Laschinger, Purdy, Cho, and Almost, (2006). These findings have caused hospital managers to realize that job satisfaction and organizational commitment contribute positively to the retention rate of nursing staff.

Eliyana, Yusuf, Prabowo carried out a study titled “The Influence of Employee’s Job Satisfaction Factors on Organizational Commitment” in 2012. The study aimed to examine how organizational commitment played a role were connected to factors affecting employee satisfaction such as ability utilization, compensations, relationships with co-workers, working conditions, recognition and achievements. Results from the study indicated that the factors – when jointly combined – have a positive impact on organizational commitment. Questionnaires were given directly to the respondents, with a non-probability sampling technique used.

Al Battat & Mat Some (2013) listed down the reasons behind job dissatisfaction that caused employees to resign and look for other job opportunities. The study also discussed the topic of employee turnover – both on an international level and on a national level in the U.A.E. In addition, the study addressed the effects of a working environment, job stress, and demographic factors on employee satisfaction. The major findings indicated that an international perspective on resignations and a turnover intention crisis starts when an employee meets the state of dissatisfaction from a poor working environment and begins considering leaving his or her present job. Furthermore, a study by Hemdi, Omar, and Azmi (2012) and Pathak (2012) pointed out that poor working conditions, low wages, work stress and inequality between employees will influence their decision to stay on in the company. Pathak stated that the employee dissatisfaction will negatively affect their commitment levels and loyalty to the job, leading them to resign. Yücel, (2012) carried out a research titled “Examining the Relationships Among Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Turnover Intention”. Results revealed that job satisfaction was the most important component of organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Srivastava, (2013) carried out a research titled “Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment Relationship” which set out to examine the degree to which salary, promotions, supervision styles, fringe benefits, co-worker relationships and rewards impacted organizational commitment. Results suggested that job satisfaction was positively related to organizational commitment. Kyei- Poku and Miller (2013) examined the effects of employee post-merger satisfaction on employees’ organizational commitment and turnover intention. Results showed that effective and normative commitments were negatively related to resign intentions, though continuance commitment had no effects on resign intentions. Sowmya and Panchanatham (2011) carried out a research titled “Factors influencing job satisfaction of banking sector employees in Chennai, India”, with the aim of identifying the antecedents effecting job satisfaction such as salary and promotions, organization factors, supervisor behavior, job and working conditions and co-worker behavior. The findings suggested that salary and promotions were vital to employee satisfaction while on the same thread, dissatisfaction in regards to salary and promotions tended to increase turnover and decrease retention rates. The findings also suggested that supervisory behavior had minimal effects on absenteeism and turnover rates – though it shouldn’t be ignored altogether. Heriyati and Ramadhan conducted an analysis in 2012 on the impact of employee satisfaction towards work performance and retention rates. The findings indicated that employee satisfaction had a positive and significant impact on work performance and retention rates.

Kaur Mahal (2012) examined and evaluated the relationship between HRM practices and employee commitment to determine if they are positively or negatively correlated and if there was a relationship between HRM practices and employee retention. In this study, the variables included salary and working environments while the HRM practices consisted of participation levels, leadership styles, teamwork, training and development opportunities and staffing. Results revealed that if employees are put in suitable working environments, they tend to be more committed to their work and possess more desire and intent to stay on in the organization. Tang & Ghani (2012) identified a number of important components that play a role in job satisfaction and evaluated the relationship between the level of job satisfaction and salary among the nurse educators in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. A questionnaire was used to obtain data from respondents. Findings cite salary, benefit entitlements and working conditions as the most important components of employee satisfaction, proving that there is a significant link between wages and employee satisfaction among nurses. In contrast, motivation factors such as achievements and recognition were indicated to be the least significant factors in regards to job satisfaction.

Another study was conducted by Ahmad, Adi, Noor, Abdul Rahman & TanYushuang in 2013 titled “The Influence of Leadership Style on Job Satisfaction among Nurses in Malaysia”. This study aimed to investigate and examine the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employee satisfaction among nurses. Results showed that a transformational leadership approach played a more influential role in positively impacting employee satisfaction, as compared to a transactional leadership approach.

Latif, Khawaja, Imran, Sher and Mehvish. (2013) set out to establish and assess the effects of perceived organization support, salary satisfaction and supervisor satisfaction on employee satisfaction. Results indicated that perceived organizational support led to employee satisfaction.

James and Mathew, (2012) stated that corporations should be aware of their employees’ needs and should attempt to apply effective retention strategies to retain their talented staff. Functional worker-

turnover may be occasionally beneficial for the company, but dysfunctional employee-turnover will affect the smooth running of the organization, preventing it from achieving a competitive advantage over its competitors. On the same thread, it is a challenge for HRM to carry out and apply the appropriate strategies to retain their skilled employees. Another suggested method to increase employee retention is for the organization to be aware of what employees need and expect from it, and how to meet those needs.

A study by Van Dyk and Coetzee in 2012 aimed to examine the relationship between the factors affecting employee satisfaction and employee retention; namely compensations, job characteristics, opportunities for training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance and commitment to the organization using the Three Component Model of Commitment developed by John Meyer and Natalie Allen in 1991. A self-administered survey was conducted, with findings showing that that employee satisfaction and retention strategies played a fundamental role in organizational commitment.

6.1. The Relationship between Rewards and Employee Satisfaction

Munap, Mohd Badrillah and Abdul Rahman (2013) stated that job satisfaction remains a remarkable area of discussion in the field of management and psychology – particularly in organizational behavior and HRM. The results of the study indicated that all of the employee rewards that were investigated had contributed to employee satisfaction, though salary was noted as the most important factor. According to a study by Danish and Usman in 2010, employee rewards were a vital factor in boosting up employees' self esteem in the workplace.

Kwenin, Muathe, & Nzulwa (2013), conducted a study to investigate the effects of employee rewards, job satisfaction and human resource policies or practices on employee retention in an organization. Results indicated that when organizations had proper reward systems in place, it did not only lead to fairness in the workplace, but also increased and improved the retention of employees in the organization. Findings further suggested that job satisfaction and efficient human resource practices had a positive link with employee retention.

From the above literature review, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between employee rewards and job satisfaction among employees in hospitals

6.2. The Relationship between Role Ambiguity and Job Satisfaction

A study by Khattak, *et al.* (2013) set out to establish the impact of role ambiguity on job satisfaction with job stress as a mediator variable. Outcomes of the study indicated that role ambiguity had negative correlation with job satisfaction. The study pointed out that role ambiguity represented one of the role stressors of the job which often led to job dissatisfaction among employees. Findings also showed that to increase job satisfaction, the role stressors should be controlled and managed in a more efficient way. Fatima & Rehman (2012) conducted a study aimed at examining the degrees of influence role ambiguity and role conflict have on job satisfaction and turnover intention. Results showed that role ambiguity and role conflict affected employees' work performances by influencing their satisfaction levels at the workplace. It was then suggested that organizations should take more actions to decrease role stress and role ambiguity and

increase job satisfaction through various means such as empowerment, salary increments, trainings, organizational support, leadership styles and empathy at the workplace. In essence, findings from these studies suggested that there was a negative relationship between role ambiguity and role conflict, in that the higher the role ambiguity the lower the role conflict among employees.

From the above literature review, the following hypothesis was developed

Hypothesis 2: There is a negative relationship between role ambiguity and employee satisfaction among employees in hospitals

6.3. The Relationships between Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Satisfaction.

Hamad and Yekta (2010) examined the effects of leadership behaviour and styles and perceived organizational support on job satisfaction – both intrinsically and extrinsically. Findings point out that perceived organizational support was significantly associated with extrinsic job satisfaction. A study by Latif and Sher, (2010) discussed the effects of perceived organization support, pay satisfaction and supervisor satisfaction on employee satisfaction. Results of the study indicated that perceived organizational support both positively and significantly effected employee satisfaction, In other words, employees tend to feel motivated and satisfied at work when they feel that there are being encouraged or assisted by their employers.

Colakoglu *et al.* (2010) carried out a research titled “The Effects of Perceived Organisational Support on Employees’ Affective Outcomes: Evidence from the Hotel Industry”. Findings showed that perceived organizational support had a positive influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In return, job satisfaction had a positive effect on organizational commitment. It was also found that job satisfaction played a partially mediating role between perceived organizational support and the dimensions of organizational commitment. Suma and Lesha (2013) conducted a study to identify how job satisfaction was affected by components of job satisfaction and perceived organizational commitment. Findings revealed that satisfaction with the job itself, supervision styles and salary satisfaction (including compensation) had a significant and positive effect on organizational commitment.

From the above literature review, the following hypothesis was developed

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and employee satisfaction among employees in hospitals

6.4. The Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Employee Satisfaction

The relationship between organizational commitment and employee satisfaction has garnered attention from intrigued psychologists, social scientists and researchers over the years. Researches have been conducted to examine how high levels of organizational commitment impacted employee satisfaction. An analysis of the relationship between organizational commitment, employee satisfaction and employee turnover was also carried out to investigate the effects of organizational commitment on the overall effectiveness of an organization

Organizational commitment and employee satisfaction have been two recurring constructs in the scientific literature on work organization.

A study by Rasaq Oluwadare (2016) on the “Causal Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction of Library and Information Professionals: A Canonical Correlation Analysis” showed

that organizational commitment contributed to normative, continuance and affective commitment of work staff in any organization. The findings also indicated that job dissatisfaction had an indirect influence on turnover intention. Organizational commitment was found to be an important variable, indicating that employees were more committed to their jobs when there were adequate provision for workers' autonomy, remunerations, supervision, promotions, job significance, good service conditions, good relationships with co-workers and the ability to exhibit skill variety.

Malik, Nowab, Naeem, and Danish, (2010) investigated the effects of employee satisfaction factors on perceived organizational commitment and analyzed to which extent employees were satisfied and committed to their jobs and its dimensions. Findings showed that satisfaction with job-itself, supervision styles and salary (including compensation) had a positive effect on organizational commitment. A study by Lumley *et al.* in 2011 examined the relationship between employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Salleh *et al.* (2012) conducted a study to establish the levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover rates in a retail company in Malaysia. Findings indicated that employees were moderately satisfied with the components related to job satisfaction such as promotions, relationships with co-workers, and supervision styles but were unsatisfied with their salaries. It also found that they had moderate commitment levels and high rates of turnover intention. In addition, all the components of job satisfaction (except for relationships with co-workers and organizational commitment) were significantly and negatively related to turnover intention. Another study by Suma and Lesha (2013) set out to establish if there was a relationship between job satisfaction and perceived organizational commitment. Findings of this study revealed that satisfaction with work or job itself, supervision styles and salary satisfaction (including compensation) had a positive effect on organizational commitment.

From the above literature review, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee job satisfaction among employees in hospitals

6.5. The Relationship between Employee Satisfaction and Employee Retention

Overall, the findings of the study by Salleh pointed out the importance of salary satisfaction, promotions, satisfaction of the job itself, supervision styles, and organizational commitment when it comes to intention turnover. Findings also revealed the need for organizations to develop suitable strategies in HRM practices in an effort to decrease turnover rates and turnover intention. (Van Dyk, *et al.*, 2012).

The objectives of these studies were to investigate empirically: (1) the relationship between employee satisfaction, employee retention (measured by the Retention Factors Scale) and organizational commitment (measured by the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire) and (2) whether gender, age, race and tenure groups differed significantly in terms of these variables. Results showed that the participants' satisfaction with retention factors significantly impacted their organizational commitment.

From the above literature review, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 5: There is a negative relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention

Based on these studies, the following conceptual framework was developed, as shown in Figure 1

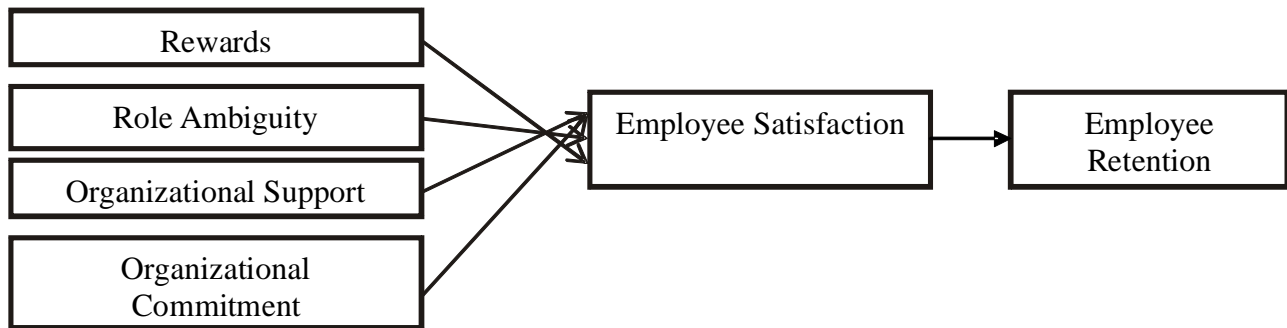


Figure 1: Framework model

Research framework

The proposed research framework of the current study shown in Figure 1 describes the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention among the staff nurses in Abu Dhabi's hospitals.

The framework was developed and adopted from research conducted by Salleh, Sivadahasana Nair, and Harun in 2012 on employee satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention. A study by Yücel (2012) titled "A Case Study on Employees of a Retail Company in Malaysia" set out to establish the relationship between employee satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention. Khattak, Quarat-ul-ai, and Iqbal, (2013) and Colakoglu, Culha and Atay (2010) also conducted similar studies titled "Impact of Role Ambiguity on Job Satisfaction" and "The Effects of Perceived Organisational Support on Employees' Affective Outcome" respectively. Subsequently, a research framework consisting of independent variables (job rewards, role ambiguity and perceived organizational support), mediating variables (employee satisfaction) and dependent or outcome variables (employee retention) was developed.

7. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, the quantitative approach was used or correlation and multiple regression research design also was used as it appeared to be more appropriate investigating the relationships and impact of employee rewards, role ambiguity, organizational support and organizational commitment on job satisfaction and employee retention.

7.1. Population and Sample

The population and sample for this study were nurses of various rankings from five hospitals in Abu Dhabi. The hospitals were selected based on their bed-capacity, number of nurses and geographical distributions. The types of samplings used were that of convenience and representative samplings. A representative sample is essentially a small sample of people that accurately reflect the larger entity. In this case, the participants of the study were nurses from five hospitals who consented to the research. The willingness of the participants and the approval of the hospital management to conduct the study made the data collection process smoother. Of the 350 questionnaires distributed; 278 were answered and returned and out of that 255 were eventually selected for the final analysis. The response rate of the participants was approximately 72%.

7.2. Measures instrument

The variables of the study (employee rewards, role ambiguity and organizational support) were adapted from various researches, namely that of Nicholas J. Ashill, Janet Carruthers and Jayne Krisjanous (2005), Allen and Meyer (1990) and Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). Employee satisfaction and employee retention factors were adapted from studies by Nicholas J. Ashill, Janet Carruthers and Jayne Krisjanous (2005) and Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The last variable was adapted from Eva Kyndt *et al.* (2009). A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the responses.

7.3. Cronbach's alpha of the Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in two hospitals. For this purpose, 40 respondents were selected. Based on the output analysis, the Cronbach's alpha acquired indicated that all the items were consistently and positively correlated. Table 1 depicts a summary of the reliability results based on the pilot test carried out prior to the actual data collection. Overall, the reliability measurements ranged from .86 to .889 on Cronbach's alpha.

Table 1

No	Variable	Items	Cronbach's alpha
1.	Employee rewards	7	.889
2.	Role ambiguity	4	0.88
3.	Perceived organizational support	8	0.88
4.	Employee satisfaction	6	0.84
5.	Organizational commitment	4	0.89
6.	Employee retention	5	0.86

Table 2
Demographic Variables

Gender (n=255)	Percentage
Male	58.0
Female	42.0
Total	100
Mutual status (n=255)	
Single	38.0
Married	59.0
Others (please state)	3.0
Total	100
Age (n=255)	
20-30	38.4
31-40	48.6
41-50	12.2
<50	.8
Total	100

contd. table 2

<i>Gender (n=255)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Level of Education (n=255)	
Diploma	27.8
Bachelor	52.5
Master	13.7
Doctorate	2.4
Others (Please state)	3.5
Total	100
Occupation n=(255)	
junior Nurse	23.9
Middle Nurse	42.4
Senior Nurse	26.7
Others (Please state)	7.1
Total	100
Salary (n=255)	
Less than 2000	1.2
2000-5000	43.1
<10000 DHM	56.6
Total	100

7.3. Results and Discussions

7.3.1. Demographic Characteristics

In regards to gender, majority of the respondents were in the male group (58%) while 42% belonged to the female group. Results showed that male nurses currently dominate the nursing profession among Abu Dhabi hospitals – indicating that the nursing profession is more desired career choice for males. In regards the respondents' marital status, results show that majority of respondents were married (59.4%), followed by unmarried respondents at 38.3% while others stood at 3%.

12.2% of the respondents were aged between 41 to 50 years and .8% were above 50 years of age. The largest age groups of the respondents were the two youngest groups (20 to 30 years old and 31 to 40 years old) which added up to more than 58% of the hospitals' total employees. This suggested that young male and girls were keen on nursing as a career choice.

In regards to education levels, majority of the respondents had obtained a degree (52.5%), followed by 27.8% who had a diploma, 14% with masters qualifications, 2.4% with doctorate degrees, and others which stood at 3.5%. The result indicated that nurses in hospitals were content with the minimum standards required to enter the nursing line of work in UAE.

In regards to occupation rankings, majority of the respondents were middle nurses (42.4%) followed senior nurses (26.7%) junior nurse group at 24% and others at 7.1%. Results also showed that hospitals frequently hold training sessions for nurses and this had increased their productivity at the workplace.

Lastly, in regards to salary, results indicated that 1.2% of the respondents earned between 2,000 to AED 5,000 a month, followed by the salary earners with a monthly income of 5,000 to 10000 at 43.1% whereas 53.7% of the respondents earned monthly incomes of more than 10000. Results also suggested that the general monthly salary of nurses in hospitals ranged between AED 2,000 to 10,000.

8. CRONBACH'S COEFFICIENT ALPHA RELIABILITY TEST

Results of the study indicated that the value of Cronbach's coefficient alpha differed depending on data analysis. In this study, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha measurements were computed both before and after data screening.

In the Cronbach's coefficient alpha measurements for variables equivalent to indicated that it is a reliable variables. The rest of the variables measured as follows: Employee Rewards (ER) at .889, role Ambiguity (R-A) at 0.88, Perceived-Organizational Support (POS) at 0.88, Employee Job Satisfaction at 0.84, Organizational Commitment at 0.89 and Employees Retention at 0.86.

All of the results fell within the accepted range. **Table 1** shows a summary of the reliability results based on the pilot test carried out prior to the actual data collection.

9. PEARSON'S CORRELATION AND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Table 3
Correlations

		<i>Role Ambiguity</i>	<i>Perceived Organizational Support</i>	<i>Employee Rewards</i>	<i>Organizational Commitment</i>	<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	<i>Employee's Retention</i>
Role Ambiguity	Pearson Correlation	1	.791**	.643**	.604**	.649**	.537**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255	255
Perceived Organizational Support	Pearson Correlation	.791**	1	.754**	.664**	.625**	.502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255	255
Employee Rewards	Pearson Correlation	.643**	.754**	1	.623**	.507**	.467**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255	255
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.604**	.664**	.623**	1	.732**	.596**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255	255
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.649**	.625**	.507**	.732**	1	.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	255	255	255	255	255	255
Employee's Retention	Pearson Correlation	.537**	.502**	.467**	.596**	.761**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	255	255	255	255	255	255

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

In order to serve the purpose of this research, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was first carried out to verify if a relationship between the independent variables—employee rewards, role ambiguity, organizational support and organizational commitment—and the dependent variable—employee satisfaction existed and to establish the relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention. This analysis served to test hypothesis 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Additionally multiple regression analysis were employed to determine the predictive value of the model in explaining employee retention in the context of hypothesis 7.

9. HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between employee rewards and employee satisfaction

The results suggested that employee rewards were positively correlated to employee satisfaction ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the hypothesis was accepted. (See Table 3). Interestingly, employee satisfaction had a stronger correlation with organizational support, role ambiguity, and organizational commitment. The findings of this study depicted the measure of influence employee rewards have on employee satisfaction. ($\beta = -.106$, $t\text{-value} = -1.692$, $p = 0.01$) (See table 5). The findings prove the employee rewards, are not only important for job satisfaction especially in the nursing sector. This study inconsistent with findings of other previous studies such as Khalid, Salim & Loke, in 2011 which found that employee rewards positively affected employee satisfaction. This fact is also inconsistent with findings from studies done by Sarwar and Abugre (2013) and Pratheepkanth P. (2011). And this study is consistent with Pillay (2009), in his study with nurses reported that there is no positive significant relationship between rewards and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between role ambiguity and employee satisfaction

Results indicated that role ambiguity was strongly linked to employee satisfaction ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, it may be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted. (See table 3). It should also be noted that role ambiguity had a stronger correlation with perceived organizational support, employee rewards and organizational commitment. Regression analysis results in Table 5 indicated that the relationship between role ambiguity and employee satisfaction was significantly ($\beta = .310$, $t\text{-value} = 4.708$), meaning that role ambiguity increased when employees did not receive sufficient information to perform their tasks adequately or when they were unsure about what was expected of them at the workplace. (Walker et al., (1975). Thus, when role ambiguity was high, so was employee dissatisfaction and vice versa. These findings were consistent with findings from past studies conducted by Boshoff and Allen in 2000, Yavas et al in 2013 and Khattak *et al.* in 2013.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between perceived organizational support and employee satisfaction

The correlation analysis yielded results indicating that perceived organizational support was positively correlated to employee satisfaction ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.01$, respectively). As such, it may be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted. (See table 3). It is also interesting to note that perceived organizational support was strongly related to other independent variables as well.

Regression analysis results in table 5 indicated that the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee satisfaction was insignificantly. ($\beta = .96$, $t\text{-value} = 1.234$). Major results of the study indicated that perceived organizational support had a insignificantly effect on employee satisfaction, though this findings are contrary from other studies such as (Hamad and Yekta (2010) and Latif and Sher, (2010).

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between organizational commitment and employee satisfaction

Results show that organizational commitment is strongly correlated to employee satisfaction ($r=0.60$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, it may be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted. Results from the regression analysis (refer to Table 5) indicated that there was a significant relationship between organizational commitment and employee satisfaction. ($\beta = .547$, $t\text{-value} = 9.892$, in line with a prior study by Malik *et al.* (2011), Suma and Lesha (2013) and Lumley *et al.* (2011).

Hypothesis 5: There is a negative relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention

Results from the analysis indicated that employee satisfaction was correlated strongly to employee retention. ($r= 0.76$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted and that there was a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention. (See table 3). Results from the regression analysis in table 5 revealed that there was a relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention. ($\beta = .761$, $t\text{-value} = 18.650$, we found much stronger and significant relationship between employee’s job satisfaction and employee’s retention. It can be concluded that there is sufficient evidence that (EJS) has a positive relationship towards employee’s retention. These findings were consistent with that of a study by van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) who indicated that retention factors had a significant relationship with organizational commitment and employee satisfaction. This was further supported by Hussain and Asif in 2012 who suggested that the relationship between organizational support and employee satisfaction was highly influential on turnover intention.

Hypothesis 6: Employee rewards, role ambiguity, organizational support and organizational commitment play a role in predicting employee satisfaction

To understand what affected employee satisfaction in the given sample, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) model and a multiple regression analysis were carried out to test the hypothesized model. The model consisted of four independent variables (employee rewards, role ambiguity, organizational support and organizational commitment) and one dependent variable (employee satisfaction). Results of these analyses were presented in Table 4 and5. Findings suggested that employee rewards, role ambiguity, organizational support and organizational commitment play a role in predicting employee satisfaction ($p=0.000$). Further evaluation of the strength of each independent variable was revealed in the β coefficients. (O-C) appeared to be the best predictor of employee satisfaction with a β coefficient of .547 (refer to table 4)

**Table 4
Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.780 ^a	.608	.602	.63085910	.608	97.054	4	250	.000

a) Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Commitment, Role Ambiguity, Employee Rewards, Perceived Organizational Support

b) Dependent Variable: Employee Satisfaction

Table 5
Predictors of Employee Satisfaction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.000E-013	.040		.000	1.000
	Role Ambiguity	.310	.066	.310	4.708	.000
	Perceived Organizational Support	.096	.078	.096	1.234	.218
	Employee Rewards	-.106	.062	-.106	-1.692	.092
	Organizational Commitment	.547	.055	.547	9.892	.000

a) Dependent Variable: Employee Satisfaction

The predictive model developed in this study had an R Square value of .608 with an adjusted R Square value of 60%. This meant that employee rewards, role ambiguity, organizational support and organizational commitment together played a part in predicting employee satisfaction. Of the selected variables in the study, organizational commitment emerged as the most influential factor in predicting employee satisfaction.

Given that 60% of the variables accounted for employee satisfaction, the other variables in the model accounted for the remaining 40%.

Hypothesis 7: Employee satisfaction can predict employee retention

To understand what affected employee satisfaction, an ANOVA model and a multiple regression analysis were carried out to test the hypothesized model. The model consisted of one independent variable (employee satisfaction) and one dependent variable (employee retention) Results of the analyses are presented in **Table 6** and **7**. Findings suggested that employee satisfaction could indeed predict employee retention. (p=0.000).

Furthermore, when evaluating the strength of the independent variable revealed in the $\hat{\alpha}$ coefficients, employee satisfaction appeared to be the most accurate predictor of employee retention with a $\hat{\alpha}$ coefficient of .76. (refer to table 7).

Table 6
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.761 ^a	.579	.577	.65020161	.579	347.811	1	253	.000	2.063

a) Predictors: (Constant), Employee Satisfaction

b) Dependent Variable: Employee Turnover

Table 7
Predictors of Employee Turnover

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.001E-013	.041		.000	1.000
	Job Satisfaction	.761	.041	.761	18.650	.000

a) Dependent Variable: Employee retention

The predictive model developed in this study had an R Square value of .579 with Adjusted R Square value of 58%. This meant that employee satisfaction can predict employee turnover. The study indicated that employee satisfaction is best predictor of employee turnover. Given that 58% of the variables accounted for employee retention, the other variables in the model accounted for the remaining 42%.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the components of job satisfaction that employee rewards and organisational support are insignificantly impact on job satisfaction, they do not result in job satisfaction among nurses in Abu Dhabi's hospitals. Thus, employee rewards and organisational support were not the only determinant of job satisfaction.

Since employees in the health sector are regarded to be well paid, employees are more motivated by non-physical factors such as working conditions, positive words of encouragements about their accomplishments in the workplace. It is also evident that employee satisfaction directly affects employee retention.

In conclusion, it can be said that components of job satisfaction have a positive and negative effect on employee satisfaction. In addition, employee rewards and organizational support— though do not necessarily result in job satisfaction – and the job satisfaction is an important dimension of employee retention.

Findings of this study also suggests that in order to improve and enhance employee satisfaction and employee retention among nurses, healthcare management must be more fruitful in their efforts by paying more attention to improve employee satisfaction and employee retention so that organization can a achieve competitive advantage.

Additionally, employee satisfaction and retention may be improved by increasing organizational support and provide nonfinancial incentives. Employee satisfaction was also cited as the best predictor of employee retention.

Results of this study could be potentially useful in improving and enhancing employee satisfaction and employee retention in organizations, as well as employee productivity in the healthcare sector.

The study was limited to nurses in the Abu Dhabi's Hospitals and as a result, any generalizations should be done cautiously due to the large number of hospitals in the U.A.E. Future research on this matter may delve into other variables that impact employee retention such as cultural norms between Emirati people which may have contributed to the current shortage of nurses in the country.

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