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LIVING WITH DISABILITY
RESEARCH CENTRE

Organisational Predictors of Staff Satisfaction in Supported Accommodation Services

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Background

- Long history of research examining job satisfaction of frontline staff working in services for people with intellectual disabilities.

- Increasing job satisfaction may enhance staff performance and reduce turnover.

- Many factors potentially associated with job satisfaction have been examined:

  - **Characteristics of staff** e.g., age, education, experience, position of employment

  - **Characteristics of people supported** e.g., challenging behaviour

  - **Organisational characteristics** e.g., role clarity, role conflict, support from supervisor or colleagues, team climate, Practice Leadership, training

- Reliance on correlation to examine associations between variables or multiple regression limited to one level of analysis - individual worker or service level – Type I or II error.

- The evidence indicates organisational factors are important for job satisfaction.

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Organisational Culture and Job Satisfaction

- An under-researched factor is organisational culture.

- In the only study in disability services, Hatton et al. (1999) found job satisfaction correlated with 9 dimensions of culture.

- "…paying attention to organizational culture may result in wide-ranging improvements to staff morale" (p. 215).

- Used the Organizational Culture Profile (O'Reilly et al., 1991). E.g., dimensions: achievement oriented, rewarding staff, innovative.

- "*the organizational culture measure used in this study was not designed specifically for services…it is possible important aspects of culture in these services were not addressed*" (Hatton et al., 1999, p. 215-216)

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Group Home Culture Scale (GHCS)

- GHCS was developed to measure staff perceptions of culture in accommodation services for people with intellectual disabilities (Humphreys et al., 2020).

- Completed by support workers and frontline supervisors

- 7 dimensions of culture

Alignment of Staff with Organisational Values: staff members' values align with the organisation's core values	*Collaboration within the Organisation:* support from senior managers
Effective Team Leadership: the frontline supervisor transmits and embeds a positive culture	*Supporting Well-Being:* shared ways of working that enhance well-being
Valuing Residents and Relationships: staff value the residents and the relationships they have with them	*Social Distance from Residents:* staff regard the residents as fundamentally different from themselves
Factional: divisions within the staff team	

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Research Questions

- **Primary**: What are the organisational predictors of job satisfaction for frontline staff working in supported accommodation services?

    - Test dimensions of the Group Home Culture Scale (GHCS)

- **Secondary**: What are the dimensions of the Job Satisfaction Scale (Allen et al., 1990)?

    - Frequently used in the UK

    - Often analysed as one dimension

    - Modified version comprising 25 items (original had 17 items)

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Methods

- Data collected for a longitudinal study into Active Support in Australian supported accommodation services (Bigby et al. 2019)

- Subset of data collected 2022 – 2024 in 15 organisations

- Mostly group homes, average number of residents 4, range 1 - 8

- **Staff self-report survey**: job satisfaction, GHCS, Role Clarity (Rizzo et al., 1970), Role Conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970), staff characteristics, training in Active Support & positive behaviour support (Yes/No)

- **Characteristics of people supported survey**: Adaptive Behaviour Scale (Hatton et al., 2001), Aberrant Behaviour Checklist (challenging behaviour; Aman et al., 1985)

- **Researcher observation**: Levels of engagement of people supported (EMACR; Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2005)

- **Researcher interview with frontline supervisor**: Observed Measure of Practice Leadership (Beadle-Brown et al., 2015)

Analysis

1. **Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Job Satisfaction Scale**

    - *N* = 788 frontline staff (635 DSW, 135 supervisors)

2. **Multilevel Modelling to predict Job Satisfaction**

    - *n* = 330 frontline staff from 74 accommodation services

    - Multilevel modelling enables variables at both individual and service levels to be examined simultaneously

    - *Individual worker/level 1 predictors*: role clarity, role conflict, experience, hours per week, education, training in Active Support and PBS, position (DSW/supervisor), gender

    - *Service/level 2 predictors*: GHCS, Practice Leadership overall score and 5 domains, average level across residents: adaptive behaviour, challenging behaviour, engagement

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Characteristics of the Sample

Most staff participants:

- Were female 60%

- Aged 36 to 40 (15%) or 51 to 55 years (16%); age range < 21 years to over 65 years

- Had Certificate 3 (14%), 4 (28%), Diploma (17%) or Bachelor Degree (13%)

- Worked in disability services for 3-5 years (27%), 6-10 years (25%), 15 years of more (23%)

- Worked in their current service for 1-2 years (24%), 3-5 years (28%), 6-10 years (20%)

- Worked 26 hours per week or more (72%)

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Results: Dimensions of the Job Satisfaction Scale

- 3 dimensions

- Staff most satisfied with Tasks and Development (*M* = 3.93)

- Least with Management (*M* = 3.71)

1. Work Conditions α = .85	2. Tasks and Development α = .93	3. Management α = .92
Holiday/sick pay entitlements .725	The variety of tasks you do .872	Relationship with senior managers .863
Job security .711	The actual tasks you do .865	Contact with senior managers .855
Flexibility of hours .696	The level of challenge posed by tasks .810	Management by your supervisor and other senior staff .800
Number of hours worked .683	Developing your skills .736	Supervision by management/ team leaders .785
Income .607	The level of responsibility you have .769	Philosophies/values of your organisation .721
Ease of travel to work .536	Opportunities to use your own initiative .760	Overall satisfaction .702
Public respect .578	The physical work conditions .681	Opportunities for advancement .700
	Your own accomplishments .672	Personal development at work/ training provided .697
	Relationships with service users .617	

Predictors of the Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

1.   **Work Conditions =** – experience in disability sector + experience in their current service + role clarity – role conflict + Collaboration in the organisation

2.   **Tasks and Development =** role clarity + average level of engagement of people supported

3.   **Management =**

   a.   role clarity + hours per week + Collaboration in the organisation

   b.   role clarity + frontline supervisors (vs support worker) + Collaboration in the organisation

Variables not found to be significant predictors:
Gender, education, other 6 dimensions of culture, Practice Leadership, average levels of adaptive behaviour and challenging behaviour

Could be explained by the aspects of job satisfaction measured rather than not important

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Conclusions

- Organisational factors were significant predictors of job satisfaction, particularly role clarity and Collaboration within the Organisation (dimension of culture)

- These can be influenced by senior management

- Role clarity: setting clear expectations, providing clear information to staff about their role

- Good collaboration between frontline staff and senior managers: having regular contact, senior managers understanding what it is like to work in the service and knowing what is happening, helping staff find solutions to problems, involving staff in decision making

- Opportunities to improve Collaboration – of the 7 dimensions of culture it is often rated low by staff

- Poor collaboration: staff feel isolated and on their own, them vs us, not involved in decision making

- Consistent themes across studies into staff outcomes (e.g., stress, burnout, intention to quit), staff report:

  - lack of control or influence in their work

  - lack of participation in decision making

  - lack of support from management

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Conclusions

- Senior manager's practices: approachable, listen to staff, seek staff input on decisions that affect them and the people they support, respect staff knowledge, value staff and their well-being.

- These ideas are from theory or staff responses → need for experimental research that tests what works.

- Limitations of the current study – common source bias, data on potentially important variables not collected e.g., core self-evaluations (Judge et al., 2003).

- Enhancing organisational factors may increase staff members' job satisfaction, which may contribute to better staff performance and reduce turnover.

References

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