

ROLE OF PREFERENCES IN PREDICTING HEALTHCARE WORKER STRESS AND SAFETY

Autumn D. Krauss, Ph.D., Kronos and Lori Anderson Snyder, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma

As the healthcare industry grows and staffing shortages continue for key healthcare positions, it is likely that individuals with limited prior experience in healthcare will be seeking employment in this industry. Given the occupational health concerns within the healthcare industry, most notably safety and stress demands, it will be critical to assess whether an individual's preferences for a job/work environment are consistent with what positions in healthcare offer, so as to maximize the likelihood of the individual being successful and healthy as a healthcare worker.

This study explores the relationship between healthcare workers' job/work environment preferences and their safety and stress management behaviors. It is hypothesized that healthcare workers with job/work environment preferences consistent with the characteristics of healthcare jobs/work environments, which indicates a fit between a person's preferences and the job/work environment, will engage in more safety and stress management behaviors.

This study includes two different healthcare worker samples, one of approximately 300 frontline healthcare workers (e.g., certified nursing assistants) and one of approximately 100 healthcare managers (e.g., administrators). Job analysis activities and competency modeling workshops identified maintaining a safe work environment as a critical performance dimension for frontline healthcare workers and managing stress as critical for effective healthcare manager performance. The data collection strategy included having (1) current frontline healthcare workers and healthcare managers complete the job and work environment preference measures during working hours and then (2) the supervisors of the participants provide ratings on the participants' performance on the dimensions of maintaining a safe work environment and managing stress for frontline workers and managers, respectively.

Using the data described above, analyses will be conducted to answer several research questions. First, the frequencies of frontline healthcare workers and healthcare managers preferring those job and work environment components that are characteristic of the respective healthcare positions will be explored. Second, inferential statistics will be used to explore the relationships between the job and work environment preferences endorsed by the healthcare frontline and managers and their effectiveness at maintaining a safe work environment and managing stress. Preliminary results indicate that those frontline healthcare workers who preferred job activities and work environment characteristics reflective of a frontline healthcare position were more effective at maintaining a safe work environment. Likewise, healthcare managers who preferred job components such as focusing on quality and work environment characteristics such as variety were more effective at managing stress.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: Autumn D. Krauss, Ph.D., Kronos Incorporated, 9525 SW Gemini Drive, Beaverton, OR 97008, USA