

Assertiveness and Absenteeism and their Relation to Career Development among Nursing Personnel at Benha University Hospital

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Abstract

Background: Assertiveness is an invaluable component for successful professional practice in order to curb absenteeism in the workplace and encouraging for career development and achieve organizational goals. **Aim:** The study aimed to assess assertiveness levels and absenteeism causes and their relation to career development factors among nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital. **Design:** descriptive correlational research design. **Setting:** The study was conducted at Benha University Hospital. **Subjects:** Simple random sample consisted of 450 staff nurses and convenient sample consisted of 150 nursing management staff. **Tools:** Data of this study were conducted by using three **modified tools:** (a) Assertiveness questionnaire (6) items (b) Absenteeism questionnaire (7) items (c) Career Development questionnaire (5) items. **The results:** of the present study revealed that majority of studied nursing personnel had high levels of assertiveness, the highest percent of them agreed about “self fulfillment” was the most important causes contributed to nursing absenteeism followed by relationships among staff nursing, the highest percent of them agreed about “work support” was major factor assisted career development. **Conclusion:** that there was significant positive relation between assertiveness levels and absenteeism causes, also there was significant positive relation between assertiveness levels and career development factors. **Recommendation:** mainly management & leadership training program for the supervisors to improve skills and reduce absenteeism with providing strategies necessary for career development.

Key words: Absenteeism, Assertiveness, Career Development, Nursing Personnel.

Introduction

Assertiveness is a core communication skill. Assertiveness is viewed as a dimension describing people's tendency to speak up for, defend, and act in the interest of themselves and their own values, preferences, and goals (Hopkins, 2012). Also it is the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest and direct way. Assertiveness involves taking an active role; having a positive caring, non-judgmental attitude, maintain one's rights without

denying the rights of others and successful relationships with client, the family, the nurses and colleague. Eventually, a form of peer pressure can emerge that reshapes others' and results in an assertive voice (Burgum & Martins, 2012) and (Riley, 2013).

Absenteeism in nursing is a growing management concern, it can contribute to understaffed units, staffing instability, and other factors that could have a negative impact on patient care. The impact of absenteeism of the quality of nursing care is

also important. Absenteeism in the nursing sector leads, in circular fashion, can also leads to the problems of burnout. Finding ways to prevent the phenomenon recognize its earliest signs and to offer help when it does occur and reduce its effects. This should then lead to a reduction in absenteeism. Absenteeism from work in hospitals, itself becomes an added source of stress (Ellis and Hartley, 2014).

In Organization career development is an attempt to influence the members of an organization to expand their individuals with each other about their views of the organization and their experience in it, and to take greater responsibility for their own actions as organization members. Allow their individuals to discover new ways of working together that they experience as more effective, provide activities helps them to understand why and to make meaningful choices about what to do in light of this understanding for achieving their own and their shared organizational goals (Chen, 2013).

Assertiveness is an important behavior for today's nursing profession and best style for nurse managers and the one they should foster in their personnel relationships, so it is very important for the nurse to behave in an assertive manner. Work absence is a management problem may be directly related to the work conditions, reflecting on quality and productivity and on the personal life of the nursing professional (Woods, 2013). Absenteeism has become a problem for organizations and managers and worries nursing as a whole, since it reflects on care quality and career development (Nielsen, 2014). Career development is a great importance for organization' productivity involves responsibilities through a continuous acquisition of managerial, professional skills and experience to achieve organizational goals (Harper et al., 2016).

Significance of the study

Assertiveness with high levels of confidence and self esteem result in decreasing factors leading to absenteeism in the work place and encouraging for career development. International studies revealed positive effect of assertiveness as (Yarbrough, 2014, Youder-Wise, 2014 and Holland et al, 2015).

Taunton et al, 2014) investigating absenteeism in relation to nurse's motivation and assertiveness. Also recommended that, there is a need to determine the rate of absenteeism among nurses in an attempt to find if there are a link between nurse's assertiveness and absenteeism

In Egypt, Many studies had been done in investigating assertiveness, absenteeism separately. From the experience in Benha University Hospital, absenteeism was evident phenomena among nursing staff which mandate deep exploration of its causes and contributing factors. So this study will concern with identifying the relationship between assertiveness, absenteeism, and career development among nursing personnel working at Benha University Hospital.

Aim of the study

This study aimed at assessing assertiveness levels and absenteeism causes and their relation to career development factors among nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital through

1) Finding out relationship among assertiveness levels and absenteeism causes and their relation to career development factors of the nursing personnel.

Research Question

1) What is the relationship among assertiveness and absenteeism and their

relation to career development of nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital?

Subjects and Methods

I - Technical Design

Research design

A descriptive correlational research design was utilized to conduct study.

Setting:

The study was conducted at Benha University Hospital in Medical, Surgical, Ophthalmology and Emergency reception departments

Subjects:

Two groups of subjects were included in this study:

A- The Nursing Management Staff Group:

Convenient sample for nursing management staff (NMS) of 150 out of 275 general detectors, supervisors, and head nurses who are working at Benha University Hospital having at least one year of job experience.

B- The Staff Nurses Group:

Simple random sample of staff nurses (SN) of 450 represents 30% of the total nursing staff 1500 who were responsible for providing direct nursing care to patient in the previously mentioned setting having at least three years of job experience.

Tools of data collection:-

Three tools were used for data collection.

Tool I: Assertiveness Questionnaire Sheet:

A structured questionnaire were modified based on related review of literature and similar studies as (Abddel-Fattah, 2012 & Yarbrough, 2014) in order to assess level of assertiveness among nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital.

Tool II: Absenteeism Questionnaire Sheet:

A structured questionnaire were modified based on related review of literature and similar studies as (El-Sayed & Saber, 2012 & Youder-Wise, 2014) in order to determine causes of absenteeism among nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital.

Tool III: Career Development Questionnaire Sheet:

A structured questionnaire was modified based on related review of literature and similar studies as (Wellington, 2015) in order to determine factors assist career development among nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital.

II -Operational design

The operational design included the preparatory phase, ethical consideration, pilot study and field work.

Preparation phase:

- This phase started from May to November 2016 covering seven months and included the following:
- Reviewing the available literature concerning the topic of the study.
- Developing questionnaires to assess levels of assertiveness, determine causes

contributing to absenteeism, and determine factors assisted career development among nursing personnel.

- This developed tools translated into Arabic format and tested for validity (face, content) by distributed the format to a group of jury consisted of five from various departments at the Faculty of Nursing (Two Professor and one Assistant Professor from Cairo University, one Professor and one Assistant Professor from Manoufia University).

- Modification were done based on their comments such as (canceled the phrase that given the same meaning, modify some words to give the right meaning for the phrase which did not understood clearly. Reliability of tools, it was measured and declared that; assertiveness, absenteeism and career development questionnaires were (0.93, 0.911, 0.94) respectively, while reliability test for all three tool were (0.91).

- Translating the questionnaires that assess levels of assertiveness, determine causes contributing to absenteeism, and determine factors assisted career development among nursing personnel to Arabic format.

Ethical consideration:

The researcher informed that:

- All subjects had their rights secured.
- Each subject was informed about the nature process on expected outcomes.

- All data would be confidential and used only for the research purpose.
- Each study subject was informed about time throughout the study.

Pilot Study:

Pilot study was done on 10% of total subjects, (45) nurses and (15) nursing management staff to assess tools clarity and applicability no modifications required. It has also served in estimating the time needed for filling the questionnaire, the time needed for filling levels of assertiveness questionnaire was 5-10 minutes and the time needed for filling causes contributing to absenteeism questionnaire ranged from 10-20 minutes and the time needed for filling factors assisted career development questionnaire ranged from 5-10 minutes.

Field work:

The data collection took about three months from November 2016 to January 2017 by using developed and modified questionnaire. Meeting with unit managers and head nurses to explain the aim of the study to acceptance participation as well as organizing and arranging the nurses' participation according to type of work and workload of each department. The data was gathered from subjects during their relieved work at the time ranged from 11-12 at noon; the filled forms were collected in time and revised to check their completeness to avoid any missing data.

Results

Table (1): Personal characteristics of nursing personnel (N=150 / N=450)

Personal characteristics	Nursing management staff (NMS No=150)		Staff nurses (SN No=450)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-Job position				
Director of nursing staff	3	2 %	0.0	0.0%
Assistant director of nursing	5	3.3 %	0.0	0.0%
Nursing supervisor	9	6 %	0.0	0.0%
Head of the department of nursing	133	88.7 %	0.0	0.0%
2-Age				
25-<30 years	33	22 %	100	22.3%
30-<35 years	51	34 %	152	33.8%
≥35 years and more	66	44 %	198	44%
$\bar{x} \pm SD$	36.38±8.07		12.050±7.08	
3-Gender				
Male	6	4 %	40	8.9%
Female	144	96 %	410	91.1%
4-Marital Status				
Single	5	3.3 %	328	8.4%
Married	127	84.7 %	38	72.9%
Widow	10	6.7 %	68	15.1%
Divorced	8	5.3 %	16	3.5%
5-The last nursing qualification				
Diploma in nursing	14	9.3 %	302	67.1%
Technical associate diploma	2	1.3 %	85	18.9%
Bachelor degree	124	82.7 %	39	8.7%
Higher diploma	2	1.3 %	24	5.3%
Master degree	4	2.7 %	0.0	0.0%
Doctorate degree	4	2.7 %	0.0	0.0%
6-Number of years of experience in working				
Less than 5 years	41	27.3%	90	20%
5 - <10 years	31	20.7%	122	27.1%
10 -< 15 years	51	34 %	141	31.3%
15 -< 20 years	10	6.7%	49	10.9%
≥20 years and more	17	11.3%	48	10.7%

Table (1): Show distribution of studied nursing management staff and staff nurses regarding their personal characteristics. The total studied NMS was 150, and total studied SN was 450 nurses. The results revealed that majority of NMS were head of nursing department. Regarding to age more than two quarter of them aged ≥35 years and more, while more than one quarter of them aged 25-<30 years. Concerning to gender, majority of studied sample were female. In relation to marital

status most of them were married. As for their educational qualification the highest percent of them was Bachelor degree and Diploma in nursing. With respect to their years of experience in working, one observes that more than one fifth of them had 10 - <15 years.

Figure (1): Percentage distribution of studied sample regarding total assertiveness levels

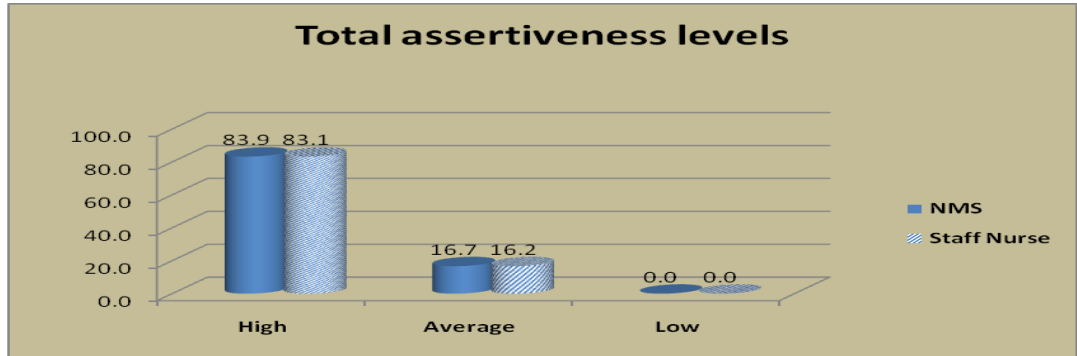


Figure (2): Percentage distribution of studied NMS regarding total absenteeism causes

Discussion

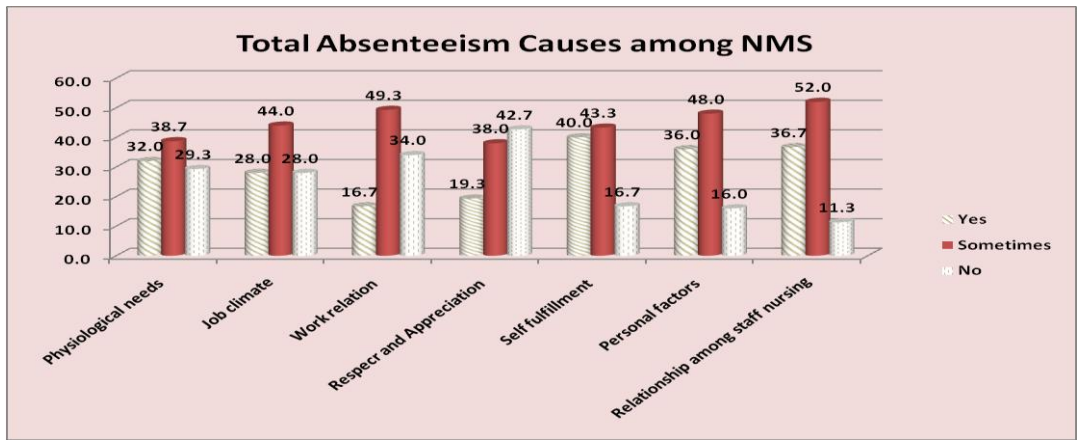


Figure (3): Percentage distribution of studied SN regarding total absenteeism causes

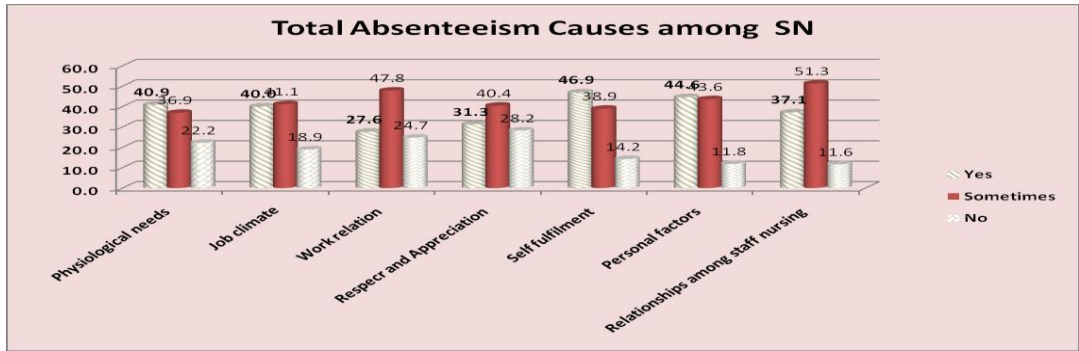


Figure (4): Percentage distribution of studied NMS regarding total career development factors.

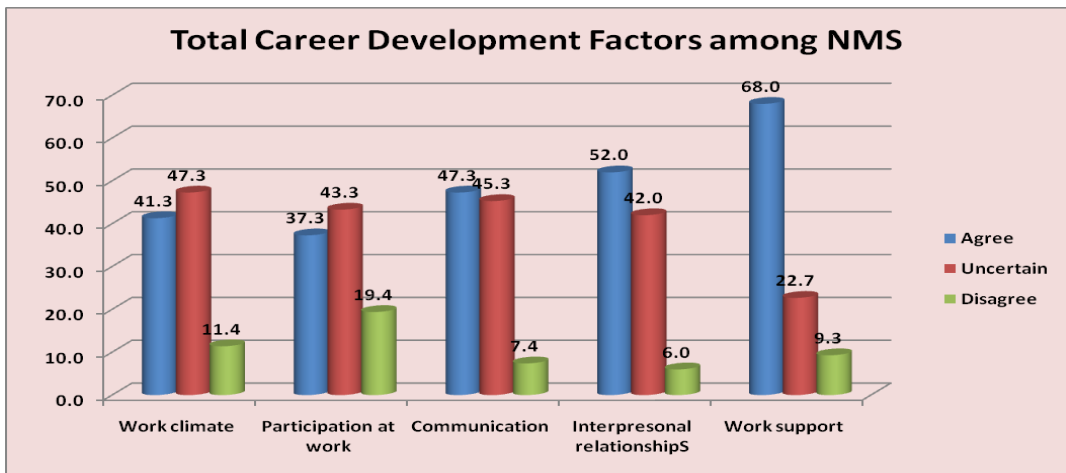


Figure (5): Percentage distribution of studied SN regarding total career development factors.

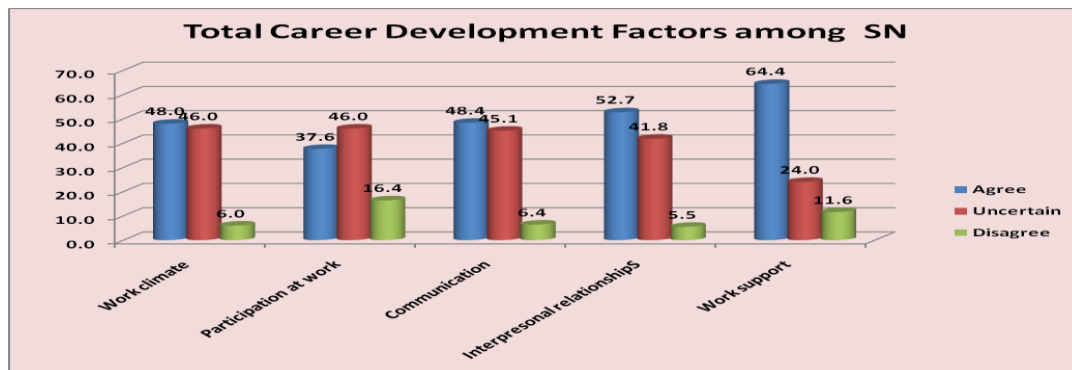


Table (2): Correlation between total assertiveness levels, total absenteeism causes and total career development factors

Items	Assertiveness levels			
	NMS		S N	
	r	P-value	r	P-value
I- Absenteeism causes	0.14	0.05*	0.02	0.56
II - Career development factors	0.237	0.001*	.172	.010*

Spearman correlation test

Table (2): Reveal there was statistically positive significant relation between total assertiveness levels and total absenteeism causes while there was a statistically significant relation between total assertiveness levels and total career development factors.

Discussion

The findings of the present study regarding total levels of assertiveness revealed that majority of studied nursing personnel working at Benha University Hospital had high levels of assertiveness.

The present study findings had the same result as **Abdel-Aleem, (2013)** who elaborated that majority of the studied sample were assertive. Also the present study was more consistent with this result as

Hollandworth Carr, (2013) who reported in his study done in Australian clinical medical practice that the highest percentage of head nurses was assertive. According to **Pastroes & Ross, (2013)** who revealed that majority of studied sample at general hospital in United States had assertive behavior.

On the other hand, this result was in disagreement with studies as **Khalil, (2012)**

who reported that near to half of nurses at Ain Shams University Hospitals had shortage in assertive behavior. According to **Adam et al., (2014)** who reported that moderate levels of nurses had assertive skills at Alexandria University Hospitals. Also these results disagreed with **Rasetsoke, (2013)** who found that some of professional studied sample in academic in the Pretoria region had shortage in levels of assertive

The findings of the present study revealed that **the most important causes of nursing absenteeism agreed upon was “self-fulfillment” followed by “relationships among staff nurses”** and the highest percent related to **self-fulfillment** was lack of activities concerned with improvement of the nursing staff, inadequate training periods in the specialized departments followed by “relationships among staff nursing” at Benha University Hospital .

These findings were similar to some Egyptian studies as **Abdel Fadil, (2014)** who showed that more than two thirds of **staff nurses** at Ain-Shams University Hospital agreed factors contributed to absenteeism regarding to assigning the whole responsibility to the nursing staff and lack of active participation at the department. According to **Mohamed, (2012)** who elaborated that self fulfillment and job

climate were the most common source of nursing absenteeism. These findings were more consistent with this result as **Warner et al., (2015)** who reported in his study done in Hospital Workers in Benin City that more than half of **absenteeism** rate among **staff nurses related to** lack of activities concerned with improvement of the nursing staff, **lack of appreciation to their performance, lack of a sense of the importance.** Also **Lund et al., (2015)** showed in the study done in Denmark that factors among nurse managers contributed to absenteeism were high rate.

On the other hand, this result was in disagreement with studies as **Bianchi, (2013)** who reported that moderate rate of nurses disagreed factors contributed to nursing absenteeism. These studies were dissimilar to **Gaber, (2013)** who reported that more than two quarter agreed factors leading to absenteeism among nursing staff in relation to workload, lack of team work spirit, frequent absence of others without accountability as major factors contributed to absenteeism. Also **Hamza, (2015)** reported that high score of staff nurses disagreed factors affecting absenteeism regarding to self fulfillment, respect and appreciation while agreed factors contributed to absenteeism in the workplace regarding to physiological needs and work relation. Other studies were inconsistent with this result **Ibrahim, (2013)** who revealed that majority

of factors had less effect on nurses' absenteeism.

The findings of the present study deduced that the highest percent of studied nursing personnel agreed about "work support" factors assisted career development followed by interpersonal relationships at Benha University Hospital .

These studies were more consistent with this result as **Niles & Joann, (2013)** who elaborated that more than half of Jordanian nurses agreed important factors regarding to communication in the work place, participation at work, work relation and work support in development work condition. On the other hand, this result was in disagreement with studies as **Wellington, (2015)** who reported that majority of nurses in India agreed that all factors consider major sources of career development in the workplace.

The present study found that there was a statistically significant positive relation between total assertive levels and total absenteeism causes, also there was a statistically significant relation between total assertiveness levels and total career development factors among studied nursing personnel. This result in agreed with **Abdel-Fattah, (2012)** who revealed that there was a statistically positive correlation between total

assertiveness levels and studied head nurses. Also **Abdel-Aleem, (2013)** confirmed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between total assertive levels among staff nursing.

Conclusion

Nursing personnel (Nursing management staff and Staff nurses) working at Benha University Hospital had high levels of assertiveness, the most causes of nursing absenteeism agreed upon "self-fulfillment" followed by "relationships among staff nurses" while the least causes of nursing absenteeism was "respect and appreciation". Important factors assisted career development from nursing personnel perceptions were "work support" followed by "interpersonal relationships". The study concluded that there was statistically positive significant correlation between total assertiveness levels and total absenteeism causes, while there was a statistically significant positive correlation between total assertiveness levels and total career development factors.

Recommendations:

1-Management and leadership training program for the supervisors to improve their skills and reduce absenteeism with providing strategies necessary for career development.

2- Decrease workload in the organization setting through flexibility in work hours and encourage activities concerned with improvement of the staff nursing.

3-Be committed to rest periods during work hours to encourage staff nurses to work in more power and activity.

4- Hospitals and health care agencies should work to improve job climate working

environment in order to reduce absence rate among staff nursing.

5- Emphasize communication teaching with modern techniques to facilitate clinical application of assertiveness.

6-Enhancing career growth and development through participation health team members on special task forces and committees to allow nurses form new relationships and learn new skills.

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