

INVOLVEMENT OF NURSES IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS – FOREIGN STUDY

Andrea Scholzová Festová, Sylva Bártlová

University of South Bohemia, Faculty of Health and Social Studies, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, České Budějovice, Czech Republic

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Abstract

People in their merits tend to associate, communicate and solve reasons of their behaviour. The same situation is in nursing which is demonstrated by many organizations and groups seeking to develop nursing. Professional nursing organisations (further nursing organisations) present in public and at the same time represent nurses while co-operating with other professional or state institutions. They endeavour to develop the branch and significantly supervise provision of professional quality and education of their members in particular countries. The paper – pursuant to content analysis of the found foreign papers from the scientific databases – presents factors influencing the interest of nurses to get involved in nursing organizations. The papers were sought pursuant to key words and the predetermined limits.

Key words: *nursing – professional organisations – nurse – membership – PAMQ (Professional Association Membership Questionnaire)*

INTRODUCTION

Membership in professional organisations is legal requirement in some states and in some professions it can create formal background for admission to field experience. Membership in professional organisations allows nurses to participate in development of this profession. Frank (2005) mentions, that organizations support professionalism with arousing pride and strengthening values, confidence and identity of this profession. Although nurses are the largest group of health care workers, fewer and fewer nurses join nursing organisations that represent them. DeLeskey (2003) defines a professional nursing organisation as a non-profit organization which focuses on encouraging the interests of members of this profession, providing them benefits which are not possible to receive without membership in such organization. She

considers it a significant platform for promotion of mutual interests. Matthews (2012) mentions that professional nursing organisations are created by nurses and for nurses in order to represent values of nurses, their integrity, practice and social policy, demonstrate advocacy and selfregulation. Nurses make the largest group of health care professionals, however, fewer and fewer nurses engage in professional associations and represent them (DeLeskey 2003).

Why does interest of nurses to join a professional organisation still decrease?

As a conceptual framework for an explanation of access of nurses to membership in professional nursing organisations (see some below mentioned studies: Yeager and Kline 1983, Rapp and Collins 1999, DeLeskey 2003, Alotaibi 2007, Steel-Moses 2012) the authors

used the Theory of social shift (exchange) by Mancur Olson (2000) which explains the matter of fact that membership in professional associations is motivated by expectation of adequate benefits and rewards, in return for contribution i. e. participation and membership fees. The theory explaining attitude towards participation in professional organisations comes out of Olson's basic idea The Logic of Collective Action. Olson (2000) goes from the simple fact that each individual has his or her own, individual interests, while other interests, collective interests, are shared with the others. While a man tries to advocate self – interests in any cases, collective interests are considered in a more difficult way. The matter of fact is that collective interest can be achieved even without own participation in collective movement. In case of collective interests an individual considers carefully loss which could appear in case of his or her participation in a collective action and compares it with the probability that this movement will advocate collective interests even without his or her participation. It often results in decision which seems to be paradox at first sight – not to join collective movement which demonstrably advocates also his or her interests. Olson explains with his paradigm many facts concerning various forms of collective acting (Yeager, 1981, Olson 2000, Keller 2007).

White and Olson (2004) used in their paper as a theoretical framework of their study Herzberg's two – factor motivation theory of hygiene and motivation. Herzberg described some factors that cause job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. These are hygiene factors – of a person who is dissatisfied – concerning factors that cause job dissatisfaction (e.g. working conditions, interpersonal relationships, salary conditions, job security etc.). Further they are motivators among which belong these factors which help give motivation and satisfaction (e.g. success, recognition, professional growth, responsibility etc.).

Herzberg (1987) believes that employees are motivated if they are really engaged in their work and these internal values are important for professional involvement together with craving for excelling in one's own profession. Herzberg theory best describes that membership in a professional organisation is an indicative of craving

for success, improvement and recognition (Herzberg 1987, White and Olson 2004).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

By means of key words: professional organisations, nursing, PAMQ, benefits, membership, we have found out papers in scientific databases Medline, Scopus, EBSCO, Wiley-Interscience and further in an online journal Journal of Nursing whereby we have determined the minimal criterion of quality of the sought source namely filing into scientific database. On the whole 7 sources with the key words in abstracts were found. Further the list of used sources of papers were analysed, from these lists 3 next sources corresponding with their content with the original key words were obtained. On the whole 10 papers with similar objectives and used methods were found. It shall be stated for complexity that following limits were used for findings: chronologically data from 1980 to 14th December 2012, without geographical limitation. Language limitation was used only for Czech, English and German languages. These papers were then submitted content analysis in order to find out which aspects lead nurses to join nursing organizations and which on the contrary discourage them. All the studies cited in the paper have character of quantitative research.

Membership in a nursing organization

According to our findings (above mentioned procedures) the matter of fact of many foreign studies was to point out the reasons that lead nurses to membership in nursing organizations and at the same time draw the attention to the facts discouraging nurses from this membership.

In 1983 Yeager and Kline (Yeager and Kline, 1983) examined membership in professional association in nurses in USA. A questionnaire A Professional Association Membership Questionnaire (PAMQ) was created for their study. The questionnaire has been already used by more than fifty authors.

Their research answered 3 questions: How can nursing encourage active membership in its professional associations? How can these organizations gain such amount of members to be able to legitimately represent profession?

Which factors influence active participation and membership?

The results point out the factors influencing membership. Nurses especially appreciate professional programs, development of profession and member benefits. Under negative aspects of interest in membership were mentioned membership fees, big distance to the place of a given activity and small activity of professional nursing organisations. It is obvious pursuant to this study that nurses with higher education more often join a professional nursing organisation, especially nurses with master degree. Membership is at the same time more important for nurses who work more hours and for nurses who were unemployed and looking for a job, nurses working in administrative or industrial branches. Nurses who are members of any of the professional nursing organisations described higher level of job satisfaction which can positively reflect on their work. Yeager and Kline (1983) recommended to promotion of membership promotion of professional nursing organisations and their benefits which are available for their members. More studies share this opinion and further stress the necessity to recruit nurses already during their studies.

Kathleen DeLeskey (2003) executed research describing the reasons why are the nurses from the American Society of PeriAnaesthesia Nurses members of professional nursing organisations, but also the reasons why any of them not. DeLeskey sees the importance in her research in the fact that large organised groups are the most effective tools to protect the interests of nurses and maintenance of quality of provided nursing care. DeLeskey also used for her study A Professional Association Membership Questionnaire (PAMQ). She found out that factors motivating nurses to membership in professional organisations are as follows: self-improvement, education, new ideas, programs, professionalism, improvement of profession, improvement of their work and orientation in professional standards. The main reasons for not joining a professional nursing organisation are lack of time and high membership fees. Not renewing membership appears when nurses feel higher fees than offered benefits.

In 1999 a study in New Hampshire was carried out by Rapp and Collins (1999). They used PAMQ and pursuant to their results they found out that nurses would appreciate quality educational programs, job opportunities, chance of professional improvement and benefits from professional organisations. Among reasons discouraging nurses from membership were mentioned high membership fee, lack of time and too little information on professional nursing organisations. Other their findings were that nurses with higher education are more involved. Within the study nurses could express their opinion to the way of higher promotion of nursing associations. Among the most mentioned factors are update information on time, sending current news via email. Within their study the authors pointed out the fact that groups of small professional nursing organisations stand in opposition to the largest organizations.

Motivation in nurses to membership in KNA (Kuwait Nursing Association) was found out by Alotaibi (2007). This nursing organization is the only one of its kind in Kuwait. PAMQ was used for his research. According to the author, the research results are strong influenced by philosophical and cultural aspects. The main reason for membership is support to own chief from work who holds an office in Kuwait Nursing Association. However, it seems to be collision of interests. An argument for not being a member is minimum contribution from membership, unsuitable seat of professional nursing organisation and timing its activities on evening time which is unacceptable for women from conservative Muslim families. Another argument is lack of time.

White and Olson (2004) found out as the main reason to join a professional nursing organisation higher level of knowledge, professional benefits, joining continual education. Reasons for not joining were family duties and lack of time.

Köstner and Scharrer (2009) present the results of their research carried out in Germany. A questionnaire of their own construction was used. The main impulse for becoming a member of a professional nursing organisation was nurses' access to information concerning professional policy which even outweighed the interest

in professional information. Nurses would welcome attractive programs and transparency, own initiative of a professional nursing organisation. The authors also found out results for not joining professional organisations by nurses: membership is too expensive, nursing organizations have no influence. Very important reasons seem to be the facts that professional associations are separated from the reality of nursing practise. Another matter of fact is existence of too many nursing organizations representing different interests. Further bad level of information on associations has been mentioned.

Steel Moses (2012) carried out her study using PAMQ in nurses in Louisiana. The most frequently mentioned reason for membership in professional nursing organisation was “development of my profession”. The respondents expressed themselves to recommendation for maintenance and consolidation of member base – reduction of membership fees, more flexible organisation of meetings and improvement of communication towards members. Contribution revenue from membership fees shall be given especially to political activities and lobbying.

CONCLUSION

The above mentioned studies pointed out the reasons why do nurses not join professional nursing organisations. The primary and most

frequent reason is the amount of membership fee compared to offered benefits (Yeager and Kline, DeLeskey, Köstner and Scharrer, Rapp and Collins), further lack of time to follow membership (DeLeskey, White and Olson), further lack of information on professional nursing organisation and their small activity appear in the published studies. Connection of involvement of nurses in professional nursing organisations with achieved education of nurses are mentioned in the papers carried out by Yeager and Kline, Rapp and Collins. Rapp and Collins, DeLeskey and Köstner and Scharrer mention the importance of unity of national professional nursing organisations for their bigger influence in political negotiation in the sphere of profession promotion, development of the branch, formation of standards and provision of quality nurse care.

The ascertained facts are worth because the Preparatory Committee of Czech Chamber of Health Workers has just been working at preparation of creation of a chamber of health occupations in the Czech Republic, which should be a legal, registered organization with mandate to represent and speak for professional organisations associated in it. In Czech Republic a problematic fact seems to be disunity of nursing organizations and further absence of a representative who would get mandate and who would represent them in principal negotiations. As for example the situation in the Czech Medical Chamber.

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 Contact:

Andrea Scholzová Festová, University of South Bohemia, Faculty of Health and Social Studies, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, U Výstaviště 26, 370 05 České Budějovice, Czech Republic
Email: festova@zsf.jcu.cz