ABSTRACT

IDENTIFYING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE THEMES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND MANAGEMENT IN A CCRC

by Serra Marshall

The purpose of this research was to identify positive and negative themes that exist in the relationship between the employees who provide direct care or services to the residents and the management in a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). Data were collected from 15 male and female employees of various departments in two CCRCs in the Midwest who participated in face-to-face, in-depth interviews. Findings identified seven total themes. The negative themes included Visibility of Management, Trust, Communication, and Time Spent with Residents Benefits, and the positive themes included Benefits, Positive Atmosphere, and Person Centered Care. Recommendations include continuation of practices that result in positive themes, increasing visibility of management, improving communication techniques, and providing opportunities for employees to spend more time with residents.
IDENTIFYING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE THEMES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND MANAGEMENT IN A CCRC

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Introduction

As of 2010, there were over 2,000 Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) in the U.S., occupied by around 640,000 residents (Shippee, 2012). A CCRC is a facility that offers a range of living options that form a continuum of care for older adults. Independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing are typically offered. This spectrum of care allows for residents to move in and live for the rest of their life, regardless of their condition, within the facility. With such a large number of facilities that host so many residents and employees, it is important to study the relationships between staff and supervisors within these facilities to ensure that all of the many individuals involved are experiencing ideal conditions. Ensuring that employees are satisfied and working in an optimal environment and forming positive relationships with supervisors is important for a number of reasons. It improves employee satisfaction, reduces employee turnover rates, and improves the quality of care delivered to residents. Employee satisfaction has a significant impact on turnover rates (Kars et al, 2005), and high turnover rates can affect customer satisfaction, operating costs, clinical performance, and overall organizational effectiveness (Park, 2013). Facilities with satisfied employees also tend to result in higher quality care for the residents (Koys, 2001).

Despite the large number of CCRCs in the U.S. and the significant quantity of employees providing services or care to residents in those CCRCs, there exists a deficiency in the research that pertains to the satisfaction of CCRC employees who work outside of the nursing field. Nurses and aides are frequently the subject of research regarding employee satisfaction in a CCRC because of their regular and significant interaction with the residents (Kutney-Lee, 2009). Employees in other departments, however, are rarely the subject of in-depth satisfaction inquiries. Departments such as maintenance, housekeeping, or dining are all departments that have a profound impact on the functioning of a nursing facility yet are sometimes overlooked. It is important to consider each department in detail so that a facility may function as efficiently as possible and provide the best quality of care.

The goal of this research is to examine the perceptions of employees toward management in a CCRC in the Midwest. Data from in-depth interviews with employees regarding interactions with their supervisors were collected and analyzed. From this data, perceptions of positive and negative aspects of the interactions with management were identified and organized as themes. These themes can be useful to the CCRC administrators and be used to aid a better understanding of how supervisors can form more positive and effective relationships with their staff. The results of this research will ideally help to further the understanding of the work environment in a CCRC. Work environment and employee satisfaction are important aspects of any CCRC, as they can dramatically affect the quality of care that residents receive. This research may encourage additional studies that may further expand the understanding of the employee and supervisor relationship and lead to vast improvements in the functioning of CCRCs and the quality of care for older adults.
The research question presented in this study is as follows: What are the positive and negative themes that exist in the relationship between employees and management in a CCRC? This unique research question was developed in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between employees and their managers in a CCRC and to understand which themes have a significant impact on employees and their satisfaction.

The following aims were addressed:

1) One aim of the research was to identify appropriate definitions of "employee", "management", and "supervisor" by analyzing the CCRC literature. It is imperative to have these terms accurately defined so that the research maintains consistency and the goals are clearly understood. These definitions were determined in the initial stages of the research so that the surveys and interview prompts could be designed appropriately to allow for proper understanding and to elicit responses with appropriate information. A glossary of terms can be found in the appendix of this paper.

2) Another aim was to describe the employee's relationship with their supervisors and the management of the CCRC. This was achieved by conducting the interviews, distributing surveys, and analyzing the responses collected.

3) A final aim of the research was to compile the data in a report that can be presented to CCRC managers in order to supplement their understanding of the employee and supervisor relationships that exist within the CCRC.

The importance of developing a better understanding of the subject is to generate a new perspective on employee satisfaction in a CCRC. The identification of the positive and negative themes in the interactions of employees and management in a CCRC can help to aid the formation of a superior relationship between employees and management and to improve the work environment. Identified themes can be reported back to management and this information can be utilized to support and encourage positive themes and eliminate or alter negative themes that exist. This in turn can result in greater employee satisfaction, a higher quality of care provided, and improved facility functioning and efficiency. This study also places a greater emphasis on the importance of employee satisfaction in all departments. The impact on the residents of certain departments, for example dining or maintenance, can be vastly underestimated. It is easy to brush off the significance of these departments, however the cleanliness of a facility or the quality of a meal can vastly impact the quality of life for the residents. In addition, satisfied employees in an ideal work environment can provide better quality services (Koys, 2001).
Literature Review

Importance of Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction and employee-manager relationships in nursing homes are important concepts to consider. Employee satisfaction in any work environment has long been considered a vital part of maintaining a successful business. Employee satisfaction drives productivity and customer satisfaction (Matzler et al, 2004). It should also be noted that outcomes such as employee attitudes and behaviors have been shown to influence organizational effectiveness (Koys, 2001). In the 2001 Koys study, data was gathered from regional chain restaurant units with the use of surveys and organizational records, and cross-lagged regression analyses were utilized to add evidence that human resources outcomes (employee satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee turnover) influence business outcomes. Additionally, satisfied employees are highly motivated, have good work morale, and work more efficiently and effectively (Eskildsen et al, 2000). Many businesses, including nursing homes, have a particular interest in maintaining employee satisfaction in order to reduce turnover rates and improve the quality of services delivered.

Turnover/Retention

Employee satisfaction has been shown to have a significant influence on employee turnover rate (Koys, 2001). In a 2011 study by Rosen and colleagues, satisfaction was also shown to be a predicting factor in actual turnover rates, whereas other factors such as pay rate had no influence. This study analyzed data from a sample of 157 government employees and their supervisors to indicate that leaders play a significant role in determining how employees perceive organizational context and justice. Employee turnover is highest among employees who are not satisfied with their jobs (Rust et al, 1996). Among certified nursing assistants (CNAs), turnover intentions were predicted by low job satisfaction. Actual CNA turnover was predicted by turnover intentions and a lack of health insurance.

High employee turnover is typically seen by businesses as an undesirable occurrence for a number of reasons. Strong negative relationships have been found between employee turnover and operational performance (Mohr et al, 2012). The 2006 National Survey of Nursing Home Workforce Satisfaction showed that in nursing homes, turnover had been observed to affect customer satisfaction, operating costs, clinical performance, occupancy and regulatory compliance. High turnover results in the utilization of extra time, money, and resources to train and recruit new employees. High turnover can also result in decreased productivity caused by a lack of experienced workers to perform duties and low morale in the remaining employees. Additionally, negative outcomes such as stress and low morale can be caused by an increased workload on the remaining employees. Overall, high turnover rates damage organizational effectiveness (Park, 2013). In the 2013 Park study, a meta-analysis of the relationship between
turnover rates and organizational performance was conducted and a significant negative relationship was found between the two.

**Quality of Care**

Employee satisfaction also plays a role in the quality of care and services provided by nursing facilities. Nursing homes with satisfied employees tend to have better clinical outcomes, lower turnover, and residents who feel better cared for (Koys, 2001). With fewer turnovers, residents and staff are allowed more time to develop relationships, and with these developing relationships the culture of the nursing home improves according to the 2006 National Survey of Nursing Home Workforce Satisfaction. This claim holds relevance not only with the hands-on, skilled caregiving employees, but with other employees such as the janitorial staff. Many different types of employees interact with the residents on a daily basis and are connected through the care they provide or the services they deliver. Additionally, as stated in the 2006 National Survey of Nursing Home Workforce Satisfaction, employee satisfaction is a strong predictor of resident and family satisfaction, and that it is significantly correlated to staff stability and turnover. As discussed in the methods section, face-to-face interviews may present a better opportunity to gain employee insights to satisfaction than traditional paper surveys.

**Measuring Satisfaction**

Employee satisfaction can be measured in a number of different ways and on a diverse array of domains. The 2012 Executive Summary for Employee Satisfaction survey was conducted by the National Research Corporation in order to further the understanding of the experiences and satisfaction levels of employees and customers in the long term care field. Data for the summary was collected from over 500,000 stakeholders in the long term care field. In the summary, the areas of investigation for employee satisfaction include work environment, training, supervision, and management. Work environment examined satisfaction with a broad range of questions relating to safety, communication, respect, fairness of evaluations, adequacy of equipment, teamwork, assistance, and pay. Training evaluated the quality or orientation, family and resident–related training, and in-service education. Supervision and management dealt with the levels of care, communication, appreciation and attentiveness of the supervisor and management. A significant number of these factors has to deal with the employee relationship with their supervisors and management. The demographics of the employees are also taken into consideration, including age, gender, job category and position, hours worked, time employed, and so on. Satisfaction surveys are appealing options due to their convenience and relatively low cost. However, a number of shortcomings are present in the survey process including poor response rates, misunderstanding or misinterpretation of survey terminology or questions, non-completion, non-participation due to difficulty with reading, writing, or understanding prompts, and so on. These possibilities can all potentially limit the accuracy of the results and lessen the quality of a study (Hallberg, 2008).
Themes In Satisfaction

Being able to identify themes in employee satisfaction is a particularly important part of measuring satisfaction. It enables organizations to identify and encourage positive themes, as well as to identify and find solutions for negative themes. In 2009, the National Survey of Consumer and Workforce Satisfaction in Nursing Homes was published by the American Health Care Association and it identified and ranked seven major themes for employee satisfaction. Between the years of 2005 and 2009, feedback was solicited by an applied research company called My Innerview from over 3.5 million families, residents, and employees and over one million responses (a 44% response rate) from more than 6,540 nursing facilities were achieved. Surveys were distributed to the nursing facilities and satisfaction was measured on a four point scale of “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor”. Those seven themes, in order of importance from greatest to least, are as follows: management cares about employees, management listens to employees, management helps to reduce job stress, fair evaluations, staff respect for residents, safe workplace, and supervisor cares about you as a person. Four out of the seven major themes are concerned with management and supervisors. That speaks to the idea that the relationship as a whole between staff and the management and their supervisors is a significant factor in employee satisfaction. Relating to themes of listening and respect, it has been suggested that job turnover would decrease if management allowed aides more involvement in decision-making processes (Waxman, 1984).

Employee satisfaction is an extremely pivotal part of an organization’s success in a number of ways. It can potentially affect turnover rates, organizational finances, quality of care, quality of services, and even the reputation of the organization. In measuring satisfaction, it is important to identify key areas of interest that offer the best potential for accurately measuring satisfaction across a broad range of employees. It is also important to identify the themes found during the measurement of employee satisfaction. These themes give purpose to the examination of satisfaction and enable the organization to find solutions and improve business.

Methods

The study was conducted with the employees of two CCRCs owned and operated by a faith-based community, herein referred to as Corporation X, in the Midwest. Employees eligible for recruitment and participation included any employee of Corporation X who provided direct services or care for the residents and who was not a supervisor or a member of the managerial staff. Managerial staff is defined as any salaried employee that provides indirect services to residents. Departments that consisted of employees who were eligible candidates included maintenance, dining, housekeeping, security, and nursing staff.

The main data gathering method was face-to-face, in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were selected for several reasons. The interview process easily eliminates many of the limitations of survey research. Interviews receive better response rates than surveys, perhaps
because it is easier for an individual to reject a survey paper than to reject a researcher in-person (Babbie, 1990). Another possible reason is due to the fact that researchers have a greater opportunity to explain and promote their study when conducting interviews (Kelley, 2003). Additionally, the physical presence of the researcher during the interviews allows for much more clarification and supervision. If a participant does not understand a term or question, the researcher can easily clarify, thus avoiding the problem of the question being left blank or being answered with incorrect information.

It is important to note that this study was approached from an inductive perspective. The reasoning for this approach is that the research was not intended to verify an existing theory, rather it was conducted to generate new ideas and themes from the collected data. The research is exploratory and descriptive by nature, intending to engender new perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect the data. This means that a structured interview guide was created beforehand, but as interviews took place, new ideas and topics were encouraged to emerge and subjects not contained in the interview guide were explored based off of the course of the freely flowing conversation.

Criterion sampling was used in the recruiting process in order to obtain an ideal sample for the study. Samples were chosen and then recruited based on potential participants’ meeting of the pre-defined criteria. The criteria stated that participants must be non-managerial employees who provide direct care or services to residents and who have been employed in their same position for at least three consecutive months. These criteria were set in order to obtain the most pertinent and accurate data for the study in order to answer the research question. It was also important to attempt, through sampling, to obtain a varied mix of employees from each of the different departments. In order to gather well-rounded and rich data, it was important for the researcher to attempt to sample at least one person from each department at the CCRC. This variation sampling allowed for a healthy mix of perspectives on management from different viewpoints and backgrounds.

**The Researcher's Role**

Prior to the commencement of this study, a relationship existed between the researcher and Corporation X. The researcher was employed by Corporation X one year prior for a 3 month long internship. During this time the researcher experienced interactions with both management and employees and spent time working in every department at both of Corporation X's CCRC facilities. Corporation X's CCRCs were chosen as a suitable site to conduct the study based on this preexisting relationship. Because many employees possessed a familiarity with the researcher, it was assumed that they would be more comfortable as research participants and more willing to provide information to a trusted and familiar researcher during the interviews. The potential for this preexisting relationship to bias the study was kept in mind during the research process and efforts were made to be conscious and eliminate any resulting bias.
It was necessary to obtain approval for this study from the Institutional Review Board. However, as the study presented minimal risk to a non-vulnerable population, it was eligible for expedited review. A thesis proposal, along with copies of the consent form, question guide, and recruitment flier were sent to the IRB for review and approval to commence collecting data was granted within 48 hours. The IRB exempt research certificate number was 01196e.

Data Sources

Data was collected during the months of May and June 2014 from the employees at two CCRC campuses. Both campuses are owned and operated by Corporation X, therefore the operating practices and philosophies of each campus are very similar. Corporation X utilizes a Person Centered Care philosophy in each of their campuses, and accordingly hires and trains individuals who exemplify this philosophy through friendliness, concern for residents, and the delivery of high quality care. Each of these CCRCs are located within 3 miles of each other in affluent neighborhoods in the Midwest and closely monitored by the corporate office, which is located within 5 miles of each campus. Both offer independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing. Campus A consists of 90 independent living apartments, 46 assisted living apartments, 60 nursing beds, and 202 employees. Campus B consists of 85 independent living apartments, 60 assisted living apartments, 24 nursing beds, and 88 employees. Each campus possesses a full-time administrator, and the corporate office is headed by the CEO of Corporation X. Full and part time employees from various departments in each of these CCRCs were recruited and interviewed. The departments that were recruited and sampled include dining/kitchen staff, maintenance, housekeeping, security, and nursing.

Data Collection

In-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method. Recruitment was necessary to obtain participants for the interviews. The recruitment process consisted of the researcher first contacting the department heads and requesting a short departmental meeting to be set. A meeting was set for each individual department and all available employees present from that department were gathered to listen to a short presentation. The researcher then provided an explanation of the study, including its purpose, duration, qualifications for participation and a guarantee of confidentiality. Fliers with a summary of the study and contact information for the researcher were then distributed and employees were urged to contact the researcher with questions or to set up an appointment if they were interested. Interested individuals could contact the researcher via phone or email, but most interviews were scheduled in-person, directly following the recruitment presentation. Any employees who were not available during the departmental meetings were met with on an individual basis and provided with a flier and an explanation of the study. All employees who received a flier or recruitment presentation were encouraged to notify any absent coworkers about the study and encourage them to seek information. Stacks of additional fliers and the researcher's business
cards were left in common areas of each department, such as break rooms, lunch areas, shared
desks and office spaces.

Fifteen one-on-one interviews were conducted with employees from each department of
the two CCRCs over a two-month period. The sample size for this study was set at 15
participants based on review of the literature and consultation with other qualitative researchers.
Data saturation was identifiably reached with this sample size. This means that no new
information was being introduced and existing data had begun to repeat itself consistently.
During the interviews participants were asked a pre-set series of open ended questions and asked
to expand upon their answers.

Interviews were scheduled at a time and place of the participant's choosing and were
allotted a flexible one hour time block. The amount of time chosen was based off of practice
trails of running through the interview guide, and to ensure that participants had an ample
amount of time to respond to the entire interview guide at a reasonable pace and had extra time at
the end for clarifications or additional information. Interviews were conducted one-on-one in a
private and quiet location. During each interview a pre-constructed interview guide served as the
basis for the interview. Topics not included on the interview guide frequently arose and the
researcher encouraged their discussion and elaboration. Interviews ranged anywhere from 40
minutes to 2 hours, but most fell just within the hour time mark. Participants were notified that
they could discontinue participation at any time and were not obligated to answer any of the
questions that they did not wish to. Following the conclusion of the interview, participants were
provided with the contact information of the researcher and instructed to contact the researcher
with any post-interview questions or comments.

Each interview was audio recorded with the permission of the participant, which was
given at the beginning of the interview during the signing of the consent form. Along with the
audio recordings, the researcher compiled detailed and consistent notes. These notes marked
notable quotes, the emergence of possible themes, the repetition of words or ideas, the behavior
or emotion of the participant, and so on. The recordings were transferred to a password protected
computer for later analysis.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was based on an inductive approach with the intent of identifying
patterns through the use of qualitative content analysis. Inductive analysis is marked by the
emergence of themes and patterns from the data rather than the creation of themes prior to the
collection of data (Patton, 1980). The content analysis method for analyzing the interview data
was chosen in order to avoid common problems with other methods such as open coding, which
can lead to an overload of texts or codes. Content analysis is marked by the extraction of
information from the original texts, such as interview transcripts, and the separate processing and analysis of that extracted data (Gläser, 2013).

In the initial phase of the data analysis, the audio recordings of each of the 15 interviews were carefully reviewed. Each of the recordings was listened to fully, and from the recordings any information pertinent to the study was extracted and transcribed. Extraction consists of identifying any relevant material and assigning it to a proper category (Gläser, 2013). The transcribed material was then carefully read through, and notes were made in the margins to describe and organize the content. These notes were then collected in a coding document and categories were generated from them. The categories were then grouped under 15 larger order headings. This grouping minimizes the number of categories by combining those which belong together according to the researcher's evaluation under the larger headings. These headings were later combined to create 7 major themes. This process is known as abstraction, where a general description of the research topic is created by forming categories from the data and then continually summarizing those categories in to higher order headings (Dey, 1993). The researcher was careful to keep constant and detailed documentation detailing the reasoning behind each step of the abstraction process so as to preserve the original content of the data and avoid unnecessary inclusion or detrimental exclusion of data.

**Verification**

Various methods of verification were employed during this study. Thick description, which can be described as taking a detailed account of events and behaviors as well as noting the social, experiential and contextual relationships in an event (Holloway, 1997), can be used to achieve a type of external validity in qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). With the implementation of thick description, the researcher hopes to convey greater context and associate meaning to the things being observed or recorded. Throughout the entire interview process, the researcher made an effort to take rigorously detailed notes and make additional audio notes at the end of each interview regarding the context, social structures, and participant behavior.

Negative case analysis was another method employed by the researcher in order to strengthen the study. Negative case analysis involves investigating, recognizing, and analyzing elements in the data which differ from the researcher's initial expectations or assumptions (Patton, 1999). Such a concept is important because it can help to avoid bias, uncover unexpected themes or trends, or identify possible flaws in the existing study.

Another method used for verification was member checking. Member checking involves the researcher constantly checking the validity of an account and their own understanding of the matter by returning the collected data to the participant and receiving feedback on the validity and accuracy of the data (Morse, 1994). During the interviews member checking was implemented by the researcher, who verbally paraphrased and summarized the details of an
account and repeated them to the interviewee. The interviewee could then accept, reject, or alter the summary given by the research, thusly enhancing the quality and accuracy of the interview.

Ethical Considerations

One particularly important ethical consideration in this study was ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. The basis of the study involved employees verbally communicating some of their satisfactions and dissatisfactions in the workplace and speaking in depth about immediate supervisors and management. Because of the delicate nature of the subject matter being studied, it was important to make every effort to ensure that participation would be entirely confidential and any participants would remain anonymous. No identifying details, such as name, age, physical description, job title, or supervisor's name, were recorded by the researcher. Participants were identified only as Participant #1, #2, #3, and so on. Interviews were done in private areas where no outside parties could be privy to the contents of the interview. The details of any interviews were not discussed with other employees, management, or supervisors. Additionally, no identifying quotes were reported in the researcher's findings.

Findings

Analysis of the data resulted in the definition of seven major themes which are listed as follows: Visibility of Management, Trust, Communication, Benefits, Postive Atmosphere, Person Centered Care, and Time Spent with Residents. Each of these themes is a result of careful analysis and compilation of the data in order to most accurately portray the patterns and congruencies found in the data set.

Participant Characteristics

The study included participants from multiple departments at both CCRCs, including dining, security, housekeeping, nursing, and maintenance. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 62, with a mean age of 40. Of the fifteen interviews, seven participants were male and eight were female. Length of employment for Corporation X ranged from five months to 35 years.

Negative Themes

Negative themes included Visibility of Management, Trust, Communication, and Time Spent with Residents. Negative themes are defined in this study as occurrences, patterns, or opinions that employees considered to be unfavorable in their work environment.

Visibility of Management. Visibility of Management was a particularly strong theme that emerged. Visibility of Management is comprised of two key components: a physical lack of managerial presence in the departments and a general lack of understanding on management's behalf of the functioning tendencies of the departments. In each interview, participants were asked about their level of contact and interaction with management. The majority of participants
reported their levels of contact with management to be rare and fleeting. In regards to their level of interaction with management, one participant stated: "There's really not a lot of contact, which I find somewhat problematic". Other responses support this statement, revealing their only interactions with management are in passing or when called to a mandatory meeting. One participant even admitted: "I hardly ever even interact with them and I haven't built any kind of relationship with them. I would struggle knowing who to go to. I've never been introduced and I don’t know how to get ahold of them or anything and I wouldn’t even know who's who". This common response regarding management's lack of presence and familiarity was consistent across departments. "There's definitely a separation between us and them" one participant confirmed.

The second part of this time pertains to management's awareness of department functions. As well as noting the infrequency of their interactions with management, participants often discussed management's seemingly low level of awareness concerning the typical daily functions and capacities of each department. A significant number of participants spoke to management's high expectations and sometimes impossible standards. "I feel like the expectations are way too much" stated one participant. "If only they could do what we do and see what we see. They expect us to be perfect and want more from us than we can give". Many participants voiced opinions very similar to this, saying things such as "Management doesn’t realize all the work that's involved. There's no way to do all the work that management lists", and "They don’t come [to our department] unless they have to". Multiple suggestions were even made for management to spend time shadowing in each department so that they could develop a realistic perspective.

**Trust.** Trust was another negative theme that came up consistently throughout the interview process. This theme is marked by a lack of trust that the employees have in their supervisors and upper management. One of the most common instances of this was a reluctance on the part of the employees to approach management with any problems for fear of being terminated. Employees expressed their fear of approaching management and shared instances of other employees approaching management and ultimately being terminated. One participant claimed; "There's a distrust of management. People are afraid of punishment for coming forward for a mistake" and added, "They know management isn't going to stand up for them or go to bat for them". Some employees were also under the impression that management lacked genuineness. One participant described that feeling as follows: "There's a façade of them being caring and understanding, but it's not really the case. I just stay away really".

**Communication.** Communication was an additional negative theme identified by the researcher. This theme deals with the reportedly poor communication between departments, between supervisors and employees, and between management and employees. Stated one participant in reference to inter-departmental communication: "I feel that there's a sort of disconnect between departments here". This "disconnect" was discussed by a few other employees and its negative impact on departmental functioning was recognized. Many more complaints, however, were lodged against the quality of communication between employees and management or supervisors. A common dissatisfaction involved scheduling and the difficulties
caused due to an archaic communication system. Verbal or written requests, according to participants, were often overlooked or forgotten. This causes the employees additional frustration and stress when attempting to solidify their schedules. The largest communication related complaint involved the transmission of news from management down to employees. Many participants discussed missing out on events or announcements due to the manner in which they were communicated. According to one participant: "They have really poor communication about events. I didn't realize I missed certain things because I wasn’t present that day and there was only a verbal announcement made". Other employees were dissatisfied with the timeliness of the communication. "The communication is bad” another participant explained "Notices go up the day of or the day after an event. Or they go up after [our department] leaves and we won't see it until the next day”.

Time Spent with Residents. Time Spent with Residents is a negative theme that emerged. This theme is based on responses from employees who voiced a strong opinion regarding a deficiency of adequate time available to spend with residents. Specifically, time with residents outside of their typical work duties. Many of the employees interact closely with the residents throughout the day, but this interaction is usually during activities such as therapy, bathing, feeding, transporting, or assisting. Because the employees all work on tight schedules, there is little time for socializing with the residents. "I wish we could spend a little more time with them” stated one participant. Another participant proposed the idea of having employees spend one entire day of each year with a resident. In this proposal the employee would be only responsible for attending to the resident that day, and not any of their typical duties. The importance of this connection with the residents outside of the job was apparent in many of the participant interviews.

Positive Themes

The positive themes include Benefits, Positive Atmosphere, and Person Centered Care. Positive themes are defined in this study as occurrences, patterns, and opinions that employees favor in their work environment.

Benefits. Benefits was a positive theme that emerged from the data. This theme is defined as the literal benefits of employment that are associated with working for Corporation X, e.g. health insurance, bonuses, wages, retirement, and so on. Quite a few participants acknowledged their appreciation of the various benefits that Corporation X offers. When asked to list what they liked most about working in the facility, benefits and good pay were common items to be listed. One participant summarized by saying: "This is the place to work. They'll do anything for you". The participant continued by listing a number of employee-designated events that the company had funded such as a bowling party and employee appreciation dinners.

Positive Atmosphere. Positive Atmosphere is another positive theme that surfaced during the analysis of data. This theme describes the working environment as it is perceived by the
employees of Corporation X. Three heavily reoccurring words used to describe coworkers and residents throughout many of the interviews were "fun", "friendly", and "family". One participant was enthusiastic in their response: "I love working here because the residents are like family. I treat them like my own family". Many participants spoke to the friendliness of their coworkers and the residents in the facilities. They included examples of walking down the hallways and being greeted by everyone that they saw. Said one participant: "It's a great place to work, it really is. The residents are great, employees are great, and it's fun. It's a fun place to work. You feel just like family. It's a great feeling. We're like one big family". Other participants mentioned fun events or people within the facilities. When asked to describe what they liked most about their job, one participant claimed: "I have fun at work. I joke around with people and get paid for having a good time".

Person Centered Care. Person Centered Care is the final positive theme that resulted from the data. The title for this theme was chosen as it is the name of a philosophy endorsed and encouraged by Corporation X. Person Centered Care is a movement that involves placing a greater emphasis on catering to a resident's needs, values, culture, goals, and preferences during the caregiving process (Koren, 2010). Corporation X seeks emphasizes the hiring and training of employees that promote a PCC attitude through friendliness and concern for the residents. This theme represents the recognition of and appreciation for the existence and implementation of that philosophy in Corporation X's CCRCs. 100% of participants mentioned person centered care at least once in their interview. Participants were quick to explain that PCC is a pivotal part of their job and the training of Corporation X, and that resident needs take first priority. "We are here for the residents" a participant stated, "It's all about the residents. We take care of them. If I were to lose my job I wouldn't go to another nursing home for the simple fact that this is the best". Many participants were quite proud to inform that the residents come first and that PCC is an active priority in their facility.

Discussion

Conclusions

The object of this research was to examine the relationship between the employees and the management in a CCRC. With the identification of the themes that exist within that relationship, a number of possible applications exist. The findings can, first and foremost, be utilized by the facilities in which the study was conducted. The facilities may use these initial findings to conduct more in-depth research and ultimately improve employee satisfaction and facility performance. The findings can also act as an impetus for the conduction of future research on related topics. As previously stated, there exists a dearth of research that attempts to analyze nursing home and CCRC employees that work outside of the nursing department. However, this can be considered an important topic due to its possible implications for employee satisfaction, quality of care, and facility performance.
A number of options exist regarding Corporation X's potential utilization of the results. Concerning the positive themes, Corporation X would do well to simply ensure the continuation of these themes. As the Person Centered Care theme is the philosophy of care currently embraced by the CCRCs, this theme would be the easiest to ensure continuation of. Employees of the facilities recognize the impact of the PCC philosophy and take pride in the quality of care that is offered to the residents and the standards of the facility.

Positive Atmosphere is another theme which Corporation X could simply continue to promote. By continuing to utilize hiring practices and standards that select for friendly and outgoing employees, training new employees with an emphasis of friendliness and PCC, instilling a sense of importance regarding friendliness in current employees, and encouraging management to lead by example, a friendly and familial atmosphere can be allowed to persist within the facilities.

The final positive theme, employee benefits, is a factor that can be a bit more difficult for an organization to maintain at a satisfactory level. Employees mentioned an appreciation for the compensation rates, the activities and events held by the facilities in order to show appreciation for the employees, and other employment benefits such as retirement. A recommendation for continuing employee satisfaction with this theme would be to maintain, as closely as possible, all benefits at their current levels. A loss of or depletion of any of the aforementioned benefits would most certainly have a negative impact on employees.

The negative themes listed in this study require more action and effort on the behalf of management than the positive themes. Communication was noted by many participants as being inadequate not only within departments, but between departments and from management to departments. Problems arose because information was not properly relayed from management to the employees, because departments failed to communicate clearly or in a timely manner with each other, or because employees within departments missed information that was spread via word of mouth or posted in an obscure way. It might be advisable for the facilities to look in to improving their current systems of communication. Participants provided a number of suggestions for improving communication, such as rather than notifying employees by tacking notices up on a common board or word of mouth, all employees could be provided with a company email address, or departments could be individually responsible for relaying the information via email or text message. Alternately, it was suggested that the current system could be improved. Employee notice boards could be more carefully monitored by management to ensure that all information is posted, and that it is done so in a timely manner. The facilities could also install electronic screens in employee break rooms that run through any pertinent announcements or information. A final suggestion is that a periodically dispersed newsletter containing information or email could be developed and distributed to employees. Altering the current system would ensure that all employees are receiving necessary information and would help to alleviate employee complaints about being uninformed. It would also help to foster
greater communication between departments and relieve tension and misunderstandings caused by current communication errors.

Another negative theme, Time Spent with Residents, is one which, if resolved, might greatly benefit the both the residents and employees. Many employees complained that they have a desire to spend more time with the residents, but busy work schedules do not often allow them to. Some even mentioned that spending time with residents during work hours led to strong reprimand. It is in the interest of the facilities to not only promote a positive relationship between their employees and residents, but to encourage satisfaction for both parties as well. Corporation X could seek a number of solutions to this problem, such as encouraging employee volunteering and involvement on personal time, or possibly instituting a program that involves employees spending time with residents during work. One employee mentioned that if they were capable of making any changes, they would institute a policy where each employee had to spend one of their work days with the residents or a resident of their choosing. This program could be instituted as a mandatory activity, where a specified amount of time is to be spent with residents during work hours. For example, employees dedicating one hour per month of their work schedule to resident interaction. Such a program could also be instituted as a reward, where employees who reach certain benchmarks in their work are allowed opportunities with residents, such as joining residents on outings or taking part or all of a work day to spend on resident interaction. Employees could also be encouraged to take breaks or eat meals with residents in common areas. The proper solution to this problem would require an extensive knowledge of the existing relationships between the residents and the employees, and insight on how best to promote those relationships.

Solutions to the negative Trust and Visibility themes could possibly be closely related. An "us" and "them" perspective, or a separation between the employees and management, can be common in large facilities such as those owned by Corporation X. The responsibilities of employees and management differ greatly, and as such visibility and understanding of the functioning of either party can be greatly impaired. This in turn creates misleading illusions and can have a negative impact on the levels of trust between the two. It is important for management to maintain a presence in the workplace. This can help to foster a greater understanding of how the facility functions. The most frequent complaint found in this study was that "management has no idea what goes on here". Employees were dissatisfied with managements lack of visibility and understanding, and noted that management only appeared when there was a problem. As a result a many employees found it difficult to establish a trusting relationship with management. Many employees emphatically supported the idea of management being required to work in each of the departments in order to develop a real understanding of how each department functions. Management would do well to ensure more frequent interactions with their employees in each of the departments. It can be noted that this does not always require a physical presence. The administrator could be responsible for writing a monthly announcement to the employees which
would explain any current projects being taken on by management, highlight any exciting news, or recognize employees for exemplary work.

Delimitations and Limitations

A limitation of this particular study is the lack of generalizability of the research. The results from this study cannot be generalized to the broader population as it is a qualitative study. This is because the research is not conducted with characteristics such as random sampling and controls, and typically consist of a small sample size. The goal of qualitative research is not to produce widely generalizable results, but to provide a rich understanding of human interactions and situations through the in-depth study of particular cases.

Another limitation involved ensuring the participants of their confidentiality during the study. Because of the delicate nature of the study (participants divulging job satisfactions and dissatisfactions as well as information about management and their direct supervisors), many employees were initially wary of participating. Following a thorough explanation and given multiple reassurances about confidentiality and anonymity, a number of employees were comfortable enough to participate in the study. However, it is suspected that a number of potential participants declined to take part in the study because of a fear of possible repercussions following exposure or identification.

One delimitation of the study is the exclusion of CCRCs outside of Corporation X. It would have been possible to include employees from departments of other CCRCs, however the decision was made to limit the research to the two CCRCs owned by Corporation X. This decision was made so that the unique environment and philosophy of Corporation X's facilities might be examined. This also cut down on the potential of developing an over abundance of themes due to different work environments and philosophies of practice.

Another delimitation of the study was employees who had worked for Corporation X for less than three months. This delimitation was put in place in order to eliminate any new employees who had not yet had a chance to develop a substantial understanding of their work environment and their interactions with management. It was decided that anyone employed for less than three months did not have sufficient experience to formulate relevant/consistent and accurate opinions regarding their work environment.
Glossary of Terms

Employee- A term used in this study to identify any employee in either of the CCRCs eligible for the study given the set prerequisites. Eligible employees are defined as any who provide direct care or services to the residents of the CCRC, are not a member of management, have been employed in their same position for at least three months, and are 18 years of age or older.

Management- A term used in this study to identify any salaried staff member acting as a supervisor or part of management. This definition includes direct supervisors, the administrator, CEO, HR staff, and other office or managerial staff that provide indirect services to the residents.

Supervisor- A term used in this study to identify any department leader that is distinguishable by title, rank, pay, or responsibilities and who, for the purpose of this study, will be identified as a member of management.

CCRC- An acronym for a Continuing Care Retirement Community. A CCRC is a facility that possesses multiple levels of care including independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing.

Themes- Common trends or patterns are observed and identified through the collection and analyzing of data and related concepts are brought together to create a theme.
APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

How long have you worked for this facility?

How long have you worked in this position?

Can you tell me about your supervisor now?

How often do you interact with your direct supervisor?

How often do you interact with the management?

How approachable is your supervisor? Can you tell me about a time he/she was very approachable/not approachable? What happened? What did you do?

How approachable are members of management? Can you think of a time when you or your co-workers needed to approach management? What happened?

Would you say your supervisor communicates clearly with you? Can you give me an example? Does your supervisor give clear instructions?

Would you say that management communicates clearly with employees? Are employees clearly informed about rules, the company mission, announcements, events at the facility, changes, and so on?

Would you say that upper management provides you with clear and consistent goals for you or the employees? Can you think of an example?

Would you say that your supervisor respectful towards you and other employees? What about other supervisors? Can you give me an example involving you or one of your co-workers? What happened?

In your opinion, would you say the expectations of your supervisor realistic and reasonable? In what way?

In your opinion, are the expectations of management realistic and reasonable? In what way?

Do you think your supervisor use company resources and time effectively? Why or why not?

Does management or your supervisor affect the quality of the work that you do? For example, do their actions/words encourage you to work harder or discourage you from attending to certain things?

If you needed to contact your supervisor, how easy or difficult would that be? What if you wanted to arrange a meeting? Is that easy to do? Can give me an example?
What about people in upper management (e.g., the CEO, Admin)? Are they accessible to employees?

How does your supervisor handle discipline? Are they fair? Could you describe them as easy going or too harsh?

How does your supervisor react when a mistake is made or an accident occurs? Are they understanding? Give an example of how they have reacted in the past to an employee accident or mistake.

How well does your supervisor handle emergencies or unexpected situations? Do they become stressed or stay calm? Are they quick to react? How did they interact with coworkers during this time? Give an example of how they handled an unexpected situation if you can.

Does your supervisor offer praise or recognition for their employees? If so how often do they offer it? Is the praise and recognition heartfelt or more casual? (explain)

Does management offer praise or employee recognition? If so, how often do they do this? Is this praise/ recognition appreciated by employees?

How effective do you think the training is in this facility? Do you feel that you received adequate training when you first started this position? Please explain. Do you think that new employees are properly trained?

Are you satisfied with how the scheduling is done in your department? Do you feel the scheduling of your hours and time off is fair? Explain.

How does your supervisor react if you or another employee approaches them with a problem? Do they take these problems seriously? Are they understanding and willing to help? Do they make an effort to solve the problem?

How well would you say that management at this facility handles employee problems? Can you tell me about a time when they handled something well? What happened? How about a time when you think they handled something poorly? What happened?

Do you feel your supervisor is willing to help employees with a difficult task or when extra hands are needed? Are they willing to fill in for an employee if need be?

Would you say that your supervisor has a noticeable effect on the work environment? For example, when they are around is the environment positive, negative, neutral, etc.?

What would you say are the most positive qualities in your supervisor? [probe]

Would you say are any negative qualities clearly apparent in your supervisor? [probe]

In your opinion, is your current supervisor a good leader? Why or why not?

Can you tell me about the best supervisor you’ve ever had? What were some of his/her qualities?

In your opinion, what do you think management in this facility do to improve their overall effectiveness? What about your supervisor? Is there anything he/she could do?
REFERENCES


