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JOB SATISFACTION, PERFORMANCE AND BURNOUT IN TWO GROUPS OF EMPLOYEES

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This project was supervised by Professor W. A. Scott,

Australian National University, 1985.

Requirements of the degree of Master of Clinical Psychology in the Department of Psychology and is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Clinical Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Australian National University, 1985.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Scott for his excellent supervision, the clinical staff for their advice, and the clinical students for assistance, support and ideas. The psychology support staff were always of great assistance. Special thanks to my friends, Peter and Corinna, and to my family for cheering me along.

Sincere thanks are expressed to all the participants in the study, and to Mr. Ron Lunt, Mr. Rod Sutton, Mrs. Peterson, and Mrs. Salt for assistance with the organization of the study.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis reports my original work, and that no part of it has been previously accepted or presented for the award of any degree or diploma by any university. To the best of my knowledge, no material previously published or written by another person is included, except where due acknowledgement is given.

Mary Randall
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Abstract

A survey was conducted among 250 nurses and 108 Motor Registry staff to investigate correlates of job satisfaction, burnout and self-rated job performance. In addition, employees' job performance was rated by their supervisors. A strong relationship was found between burnout and dissatisfaction with the job, but the two measures had some different correlates, which suggested that these concepts were distinguishable. In both samples, employees in higher level positions showed more satisfaction, less burnout and gave themselves higher performance ratings. Perceived prestige of the job and social support from other workers and family were positive predictors of job satisfaction and negative predictors of burnout. Stressful job conditions, such as inability to take breaks and dealing with upset clients, were predictive of burnout and dissatisfaction. In both samples, workers with strong commitment to life—setting goals, taking all opportunities, and seeking fulfilment—and workers with a striver/achiever disposition were less prone to burnout and dissatisfaction. There was partial corroboration of Maslach and Jackson's results regarding demographic characteristics of employees who experience burnout. In both samples, young single workers were more prone to burnout and dissatisfaction. Among nurses, little time in the current position and lack of nursing experience were also predictive of burnout and dissatisfaction. Comparison of mean scores for the two samples indicated less satisfaction among nurses than among Motor Registry staff, but similar levels of burnout. This refutes the claim by some authors that burnout is experienced only by helping professionals. The limitations of cross-sectional research in understanding the process are indicated, and the need for longitudinal research reiterated.