

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project focuses on how the ‘bonded’ nurse training programme at DNS Hospital could be made more effective to reduce their turnover. Given the importance of nursing, in the overall patient experience, this project is seen as being of critical importance. Both primary and secondary data was sourced for the purposes of this study. The primary data collected included, depth interviews and some focus group studies carried out with some key individuals at the Nurse Training School (NTS) as well as at the DNS Hospital to establish the status quo and the extent of the issues faced. In collaboration with the customer service department, a questionnaire was used, to establish patient sentiments and nursing care, in particular. Secondary data was collected relating to overall health care within Sri Lanka, as well as DNS Hospital and its NTS. A key limitation of this study is that it only helps one to understand the context surrounding nursing care in private hospitals, and not the larger segment of nurses, in government hospitals and their particular circumstances.

To have contextual information of the organisation, a SWOT analysis was carried out. A key issue that was identified, was certain concerns over nursing care and an increase in in-patient complaints. A lack of management directive and certain inconsistencies in the overall wellbeing of nurses was identified. The multiple issues surrounding the nurses, were seen to have a direct impact on the turnover of trainee (bonded) nurses. They were seen as overworked and underpaid and with the absence of a well thought out performance measurement system in place the situation was seen to worsen. In identifying the root causes for the problem identified (bonded nurse turnover) a ‘fishbone analysis’ was carried out, and four major issues were identified in areas of patient care management, nurse training management, the impacts of the pandemic and certain broad issues in human resource management (HRM).

In order to place this study in context, a detailed literature review was carried into similar studies. Several international as well as local studies on bonded nurses, revealed interesting information that provided greater insights into this area. Based on the revelations of the fish bone analysis, as well as the extensive literature review that was carried out, a study framework was developed and three critical points were identified. These related to the need to have proper patient care, improving certain aspects of the nurse training management programme while having more systematic and well thought out human resource management practices within the

hospital. These were identified as being directly contributing towards the overall success of the bonded nurse training programme and thus the reduction in level of turnover among the bonded nurses at NTS.

The main objective identified for this project was to reduce the bonded nurse turnover level from the present 5% to 2% within 12 months of implementing the recommendations of this project. Besides the main purpose, three other sub objectives were developed for the bonded nurses in relation to three such areas - patient related procedural violation reduction, general nursing procedural violation reduction and their level of KPI accomplishment. After having identified the different project components, their associated projects objectives and the techniques to be deployed to achieve those objectives, a resource allocation was done where the suggested solution was clearly stated, along with the responsibility being identified to key individuals, and finally with their specific responsibilities in this regard being detailed. These were then 'costed' to establish the overall cost of the intervention.

Based on estimated costs / benefits of this project, a systematic Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) was carried out, to establish the relative costs and benefits of this project quantified in financial terms. This clearly revealed that if this project is properly executed, with the necessary checks and balances in its implementation that it would result in a net saving of approximately LKR 1,670,000. This worked out to a cost to benefit ratio of 5.6 times. Some of the significant gains were expected in the savings resulting from 'rectification costs' (resulting from having poorly trained nurses), reduction in hiring costs, the gains from productivity increases of having trained nurses and the increases in financial returns to the hospital and its shareholders as a result of a better reputation for the hospital, specifically for its nursing care. Based on the BCA the specific output and outcomes of this project were identified and detailed.

Finally, based on the specific findings of the report some well thought out recommendations were developed to ensure that that the project once implemented is a success. These recommendations were developed under the three broad areas of patient care management, nurse training management and general HRM. These recommendations would significantly improve the effectiveness of its bonded nurse training programme and reduce the turnover of such nurses as per the stated objectives of this project.