

MISSIMI, SALLY, Ph.D., December 2007

TEACHING, LEADERSHIP, AND  
CURRICULUM STUDIES

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MEDICAL SURGICAL REGISTERED NURSES'  
PERCEIVED WORK STRESS LEVELS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE  
IN TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING HOSPITALS (189 pp.)

Co-Directors of Dissertation: Fred Feitler, Ph.D.  
Mark Kretovics, Ph.D.

Despite record amounts of resources currently directed towards recruiting new and retaining current registered nurses, there continues to be a near crisis shortfall in the number of nurses required to fill the number of vacancies available (Sattery, 2004). The presence of organizational stress among registered nurses has been reported by numerous researchers (Cleland, 1965; Garbin, 1982; Hinshaw & Atwood, 1983; Janssen, 1998; Keenan, Cooke, & Hillis, 1998; Kramer, 1974; McGowan, 2001). Job stress and satisfaction, stress-related illness among registered nurses, and coping with job stress by the nursing profession have all been described in previous literature (Clegg, 2001; Kirkcaldy & Martin, 2000; Smit & Schabracq, 1998; Tyson, Pongruenphant, & Aggarwal, 2002). Research providing a better understanding of hospital culture and any relationships that exist between hospital culture and nursing work stress have the potential to assist in providing insight into improving hospital environments, especially in the area of understanding and reducing stressful working situations. Missing from the literature is research that investigates cultural characteristics and differences of teaching and non-teaching hospital environments. Also absent is the measurement of any relationships between organizational cultures of teaching and non-teaching hospitals to the level of perceived work place stress of registered nurses.

The research questions for this study were:

1. Are organizational cultures different in teaching and non-teaching hospitals?
2. Is registered nurse stress different in teaching and non-teaching hospitals?
3. Is there a relationship between organizational culture and perceived work place stress?

The independent variables were type of hospital, teaching (the presence of one more graduate medical education programs) or non-teaching (no graduate medical education programs). The dependent variables were organizational culture measured by the Organizational Culture Questionnaire (Feitler, 1994); and work place stress measured by the Nurse Stress Index (Harris, 1989). The study noted no differences in organizational culture in either teaching or non-teaching hospitals. Higher perceived levels of work place stress were noted in teaching hospitals and there were relationships between organizational culture and work place stress noted in teaching hospitals.