Reviewer’s report

Title: Relationships between Work Outcomes, Work Attitudes and Work Environments of Health Support Workers in Long Term Care and Home & Community Care Settings

Version: 0 Date: 20 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Neeru Gupta

Reviewer's report:

While the authors have made a number of improvements to the paper, I do not believe they have fully addressed one of the key concerns that was raised by both reviewers: the lack of clarity of research objectives or identification of a research question. To be frank, it is unclear who is the intended audience of the paper, what parts represent original work, and how the conclusions are supported by original research results. The authors should note that both reviewers indicated the article as currently written would only be interesting to a limited audience, one with closely related interests. Both reviewers also independently indicated challenges of "readability."

The literature review remains overly generic and unfocused. What is the problem we are trying to understand/solve? If the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 is truly "original", then the authors should say so upfront, and describe how they developed it. If the review helped inform the development of the survey instrument, and nothing has been previously published on this tool, then say so. The literature review needs to include a critical discussion on its comprehensiveness and identified information gaps. This will help engage the reader, and lend credibility to statements elsewhere regarding specific areas where there is a lack of evidence.

In the Abstract, the Results and Conclusions are so generic that they seemingly could have been written based on the literature review alone, without any original quantitative analysis. The Background statements do not provide any kind of problem identification.

In the Methods section, Table 1 is too generic to be useful from either a research or policy perspective. The authors have added some details on the "individual work performance" dimension, but the other constructs are overly broad. As such, for example, when the authors conclude "engaging staff in discussions of their aspirations and interests" and "balancing economic and family needs" as potential levers, it is unclear how these recommendations are actually supported by the original analysis. It is not immediately clear if any previous publications are available on the survey tool (either peer-reviewed or grey literature); if not, perhaps a supplementary file with the full questionnaire would be helpful.

In sum, the authors should think of what is their "take-away" from the paper, from both the researcher perspective and the policy perspective (keeping in mind that policy makers and
managers need to prioritize and are generally not helped by a generic statement of "all aspects"), and construct their narrative accordingly.

A few details:

* Given the international audience of the "Human Resources for Health" journal, I recommend the use of months rather than seasons in describing the timing of data collection.

* Given that the authors do not address whether LTC/HCC refers exclusively to the care of seniors (as opposed to, for example, patients recovering from surgery or younger adults with severe disabilities), then minimally they should re-consider the choice of "elder care" among the keywords.

* In Table 2, the category breakdowns for "work experience" are not the same as for "years with employer", which detracts from usefulness. It is unclear how/whether these demographic data are considered in the further analysis, since they are not discussed at all later on. Should policy options consider/prioritize different levers, for example, across Canadian-born versus foreign-born workers? Or, as previously questioned by one of the reviewers, are results similar among LTC versus HCC respondents?

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