

Exploring the Determinants of Turnover Intention Among Elderly-Care Workers[†]

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Abstract

In the context of China's rapid aging society, this study aims to provide practical countermeasures and suggestions to nursing institutions for reducing turnover intention among these workers. Convenient sampling was employed, encompassing all elderly-care workers from 4 nursing institutions in Zhejiang Province as participants. Questionnaires were designed using scales to measure needs satisfaction and turnover intention. A total of 222 valid questionnaires were collected, yielding an effective recovery rate of 97.37 %. Among the participants, 88 individuals (39.64 %) exhibited high turnover intention. Results indicated that social needs satisfaction was the highest, with 94.6 % of participants reporting satisfaction, while physiological needs satisfaction was the lowest, with only 70.7 % expressing higher satisfaction. Univariate analysis demonstrated that younger age, higher education background, fewer children, and increased days of rest per month were associated with higher turnover intention. Furthermore, lower needs satisfaction across all levels correlated with higher turnover intention. Logistic regression analysis revealed that individuals with lower satisfaction in respect needs had a higher turnover intention (OR = 11.265, $p < 0.01$). Compared to the youngest age group (40 years), older age was associated with lower turnover intention, with an odds ratio of 0.458 ($P = 0.171$) for the 41 - 50 age group and 0.202 ($P = 0.002$) for those above 51 years old. Based on these findings, pension agency managers should prioritize addressing physiological needs, respect needs, and self-realization needs, while considering specific items associated with low satisfaction levels. This can be achieved through the implementation of management systems, assessments, and work mechanisms to better meet the needs of elderly-care workers and reduce their turnover intention.

Keywords: Elderly care workers, Turnover intention, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

Introduction

The aging of the population in China represents a significant social issue of great concern. According to the Bulletin of the Seventh National Population Census (No.5) released by the Chinese government, as of November 1, 2020, the population aged 60 and above in the Chinese mainland area stood at 264,018,766 individuals, accounting for 18.7 % of the total population. Furthermore, within this age group, the population aged 65 and above amounted to 190,635,280 representing 13.5 % of the overall population. Projections indicate that the Chinese mainland region will transition into a deeply aging society by 2027. Wu and Dang 2013 contend that in China, the rising demand for elderly care services underscores the pressing need to establish a comprehensive elderly care service system capable of addressing the ongoing social development and population aging processes.

Feng (2018) research shows that in China, with the renewal of people's concept of pension for the elderly, more and more elderly people actively or passively choose to enter the pension institutions, the demand for elderly care services surges, and the demand for elderly care workers also increases. According to the statistics of the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, there are more than 6 million elderly care workers in China in 2020, but there are only more than 500,000 elderly care service practitioners, which is far from meeting the demand. Luan (2018) thought that the existing pension nurse number, China's current care management system standard degree is not enough, and is composed of non-

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professional rural women or laid-off workers, make China's domestic pension institutions pension service supply capacity is low, at the same time the post personnel turnover rate is extremely high, and work instability problem is serious. Jiao et al. (2021) believes that China's pension service industry is still in the initial stage. On the 1 hand, the pension industry has become the "sunrise industry" in China, and the overall industrial development has a large demand gap for professionals; on the other hand, the professional employees in the pension industry, especially the nursing staff, show great instability and high turnover tendency, and the gap of professional talents has exceeded ten million levels.

Research objectives

At present, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, analyze the influencing factors of the elderly care workers' turnover intention, and provide operational countermeasures and suggestions for pension institutions, in order to reduce the turnover intention of the elderly care workers and further stabilize the whole talent team. Based on the above analysis, this study aims to;

- 1) To explore the influencing factors of elderly care workers' turnover intention based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory.
- 2) To analyze the correlation between satisfaction of different demand levels and turnover intention.

Literature review

Definition of turnover intention

Turnover intention is the most important cognitive precursor before the real occurrence of turnover behavior, and is the leading variable of resignation, which can well predict the actual turnover behavior. Therefore, researchers often use the turnover intention as the alternative variable of the real turnover behavior, and the "psychological advance matter" of the turnover behavior is the turnover intention. Karantzas et al. (2012) found in the empirical study of 209 elderly care workers that elderly care workers had low job commitment and job satisfaction, high job pressure and high turnover intention. Yuan (2016) found that after working for a certain period of time, the psychological willingness to quit the job and start looking for other job opportunities due to various considerations.

Significant of turnover intention research

The aging of the population in China is a very serious social problem. In recent years, the aging level of the population is increasing, and the development of the elderly care service industry is still in the initial stage, which is far from being able to cope with the aging pattern of "getting old before getting rich" in China. As an important force in the elderly care service work, the elderly care workers directly provide life care and care for the elderly. Therefore, the training of elderly care workers should not be ignored. However, due to the high work intensity, low salary, poor working environment and other reasons, few people pay attention to the various needs and expectations of elderly care workers, leading to their particularly strong willingness to leave. Separation intention is an effective variable to predict turnover. Understanding the turnover intention and intention of nursing staff and its influencing factors can help managers actively take measures to reduce their turnover rate and stabilize the team of nursing staff.

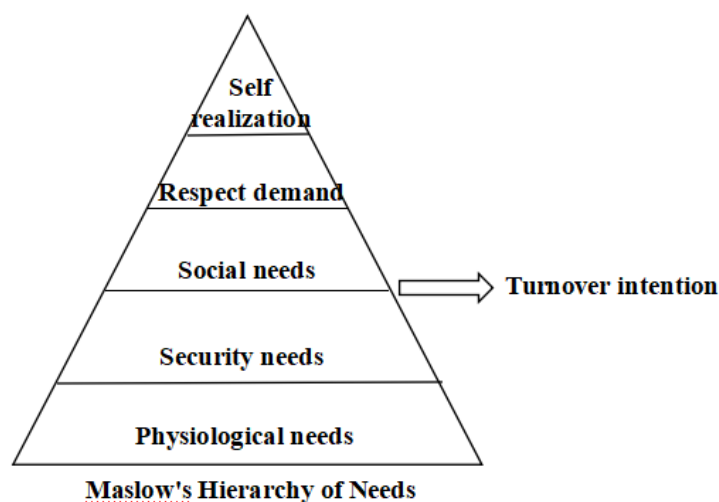
The Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

In order to analyze the needs of the research objects, Maslow put forward the "hierarchy of needs", which summarized human needs into 5 categories, namely, physiology, safety, social, respect and self-realization. Maslow's hierarchy of needs states that human needs refer to the certain physical or psychological dissatisfaction of the human body, which can motivate people to act. The human needs are diverse and complex. At some point, among the many human needs, there is a need that is relatively the strongest, and we call it a strong need. Strength needs to produce the dominant motivation, which directly leads to human actions. After people meet the strong needs through actions, there will be new needs to become strong needs, so on. This study is based on the theory of demand hierarchy of pension nursing turnover intention problem, starting from the actual needs of nursing nurses explore the specific incentive measures and nursing turnover behavior, can reveal the complex needs of individual nurses and contact

between turnover intention, has the characteristics of intuitive, easy to understand. For the managers of pension institutions, the corresponding management measures can be improved according to meet the needs of different levels of nursing staff, and it may observe the changes in the hierarchical structure of employee needs before and after the implementation of management measures, and timely adjust the management methods to meet the needs of employees.

Theoretical framework and hypothesis development

Du (2006) and Zhong (2018) believe that, the satisfaction degree of employees' needs has an impact on their resignation intention. By analyzing the satisfaction degree of different levels and meeting the needs of various needs of employees in human resource management, the turnover intention can be reduced. This study is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which is divided needs into 5 levels to analyze the impact of the satisfaction of different levels on the turnover intention of the elderly care workers, and provides a scientific basis for exploring the influencing factors of the turnover intention of elderly care workers and reducing their turnover intention, and proposes the following theoretical framework.



In this study, we plan to based on the theory of the demand level of elderly care workers' turnover intention influence factors, if some levels of needs is not well satisfied is the influence factors of elderly care workers' turnover intention, pension agency managers can clear intuitive grasp the relevant situation, and relatively directly to improve the requirements, and reduce the elderly care workers' turnover intention influence. It is a more realistic perspective to study the turnover intention of elderly care workers from the perspective of the convenience of institutional management in the background of the shortage of elderly care workers. Therefore, we established the research hypothesis based on the satisfaction and turnover intention of elderly care workers in 5 dimensions: Physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, respect demand and self-realization needs. The hypothesis is as follows;

H1: Is the satisfaction of physiological needs related to their turnover intention?

H2: Is the satisfaction of security needs related to their turnover intention?

H3: Is the satisfaction of social needs related to their turnover intention?

H4: Is the satisfaction of respect demand related to their turnover intention?

H5: Is the self-realization needs satisfaction related to their turnover intention?

Methodology

Population & sample

Zhejiang Civil Affairs Bureau (2022) showed that, by the end of 2021, there were 22,800 certified elderly care workers engaged in elderly care services in Zhejiang province. In this study, taking the elderly care workers in Zhejiang Province as the research object, 2 nursing institutions in Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang Province, one in the non-provincial cities of Zhoushan and Lishui, and all of the 4 nursing

institutions were selected as the research objects. Inclusion criteria for study subjects: the elderly care workers who are willing to cooperate to participate in the study; exclusion criteria for study subjects: sick leave and maternity leave. On the sample size estimation, this study to explore the influence factors of turnover intention as the main purpose, the analysis using multivariate regression analysis. According to Wang (2003), used the Kendall principle, the sample size in multivariate analysis can be 5 ~ 10 times of the number of independent variables, a study of 20 influencing factors, so no less than 200 questionnaires, considering that the quality, the sample size by 10 %, 220 questionnaires.

Data collection procedure

The questionnaire survey method was adopted. Due to the epidemic, the nursing home had strict management for outsiders, so the questionnaire was issued and filled out online. The questionnaire link was distributed to the contact person of the sample institution, and the contact person sent the questionnaire link to the elderly care workers, who used their own mobile phones to fill in the questionnaire and submit it. In order to ensure the authenticity of the questionnaire filling, the questionnaire survey was completed anonymously.

In this study, the questionnaire was compiled with reference to the existing scale, which is divided into 3 parts: The basic situation of the elderly care workers, the demand satisfaction of the elderly care workers at all levels, and the turnover intention of the elderly care workers. For the measurement of satisfaction at the level of demand, refer to the demand measurement scale used by (Dong, 2019) and adjusted according to the characteristics of the elderly care workers and the purpose of this study, there were 34 items in 5 dimensions, and the Cronbach coefficient was 0.974. The measurement of turnover intention refers to the scale of (Zhu, 2016; Wang, 2019), with Cronbach α of 0.892 and KMO value of 0.726. The reverse scoring method is used for the turnover intention scale, with “often (3)”, “occasionally (2)” and “never (1)”, and the total score is the sum of the scores of each item. Higher scores indicate a higher turnover intention.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed by SPSS, in which the basic situation of elderly care workers.

Section 1: Report respondents profiles.

Section 2: Descriptive statistics were used for the satisfaction status of each level of demand, describing the distribution of basic information such as age, gender and working years. Among the influencing factors of turnover intention, this study turnover intention scores between 3 ~ 9 points, does not obey the normal distribution, turnover intention is not suitable for linear regression analysis, influence factors considering the relevant subject research, some researchers divided the turnover intention into high and low categories, combined with the actual situation of the study, we divided the turnover intention into 2 categories according to the scores, multivariate analysis of factors influencing turnover intention was performed using logistic regression. The turnover intention was divided into high and low levels, and the total score of the scale was < 5 points for low turnover intention; 5 points for high turnover intention. Each level of demand satisfaction is also divided into high and low 2 levels. The average score of all levels is 4 for low demand satisfaction; the average score is > 4 for high demand satisfaction.

Section 3: Adopts the univariate analysis of the factors affecting turnover intention, basic information and demand satisfaction were used as group variables, and the comparison of turnover intention between different groups was χ^2 inspection, test level $\alpha = 0.05$.

Section 4: Adopts the multivariate analysis of the factors influencing turnover intention used dichotomized logistic regression model ($\text{logit}(P) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_i x_i$), including the grouping variables influencing resignation intention in univariate analysis as the independent variable x of Logistic regression model. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were set as $\alpha = 0.05$ and $\alpha = 0.10$ respectively. The variables of the final selected model can be considered as the factors influencing the turnover intention.

Results and discussion

Univariate analysis of the factors affecting turnover intention

The elderly care workers' turnover intention use 3 topic assessment, each option for never turnover intention 1 points, occasionally turnover intention 2 points, often turnover intention 3 points, 3 questions score between 3 - 9 points, score points 5 points for turnover intention is higher (2 questions answer occasionally leave idea, a answer never turnover intention, or a answer often turnover intention, 2 answer never turnover intention). The survey results showed that among the 222 valid questionnaires, 88 people had a high turnover intention, accounting for 39.64 %.

The results of the univariate analysis on the influence of the turnover intention of the elderly care workers showed that the age, educational background, number of children and monthly rest days of the elderly care workers were related to the turnover intention ($p < 0.05$). Specifically, the lower the age, the higher the turnover intention. In the group, 66.7 % of the high turnover intention was 66.7 %, while with the increase of age, in the group of 51, the proportion of the high turnover intention decreased to 55.4 % and 29.7 %. Those with higher education have higher turnover intention. Among 21 people with junior college degree or above, 13 have higher turnover intention, accounting for 61.9 %, while only 37.3 % are those with high school education or below. The number of children is also related to the turnover intention, specifically, the more the number of children, the lower the proportion of the higher turnover intention, which may be related to the number of children of the higher age. The number of days off per month was also related to the turnover intention. Specifically, 53.1 % of the group with > 4 days of rest per month to quit, which was higher than 35.8 % of the group with > 4 days of rest per month. In the univariate analysis, no other demographic data and work-related data were statistically significant, as detailed in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Univariate analysis of the influence of the basic situation of the elderly care workers on the turnover intention.

Index		Example number	Higher turnover intention		Lower turnover intention		chi-square	p-value
			count	N%	count	N%		
Gender	Male	30	14	46.70 %	16	53.30 %	0.716	0.398
	Female	192	74	38.50 %	118	61.50 %		
Age	≤ 40 years old	21	14	66.70 %	7	33.30 %	18.234	< 0.01
	40 more than	56	31	55.40 %	25	44.60 %		
	50 more than	145	43	29.70 %	102	70.30 %		
Aducational background	High school below	201	75	37.30 %	126	62.70 %	4.806	0.028
	Specialist above	21	13	61.90 %	8	38.10 %		
Marital status	Unmarried	42	22	52.40 %	20	47.60 %	3.515	0.061
	Married	180	66	36.70 %	114	63.30 %		
Number of children	0	11	8	72.70 %	3	27.30 %	9.317	< 0.01
	1	87	40	46.00 %	47	54.00 %		
	2 and above	124	40	32.30 %	84	67.70 %		
Job type	Full-time	218	86	39.40 %	132	60.60 %	-	0.069*
	Part-time	4	2	50.00 %	2	50.00 %		
Working years	0 ~ 3 years	140	56	40.00 %	84	60.00 %	0.021	0.886

Index		Example number	Higher turnover intention		Lower turnover intention		chi-square	p-value
			count	N%	count	N%		
Monthly salary	≥ 4 years	82	32	39.00 %	50	61.00 %	4.136	0.247
	$\leq 3,000$	12	6	50.00 %	6	50.00 %		
	3,001 - 4,500	72	30	41.70 %	42	58.30 %		
	4,501 - 6,000	121	49	40.50 %	72	59.50 %		
	6,001~	17	3	17.60 %	14	82.40 %		
Daily working hours	≤ 12 h	148	64	43.20 %	84	56.80 %	2.41	0.121
	> 12 h	74	24	32.40 %	50	67.60 %		
Days of rest per month	≤ 4 days	173	62	35.80 %	111	64.20 %	4.734	0.030
	4 days	49	26	53.10 %	23	46.90 %		
Often on a shift	Often	119	44	37.00 %	75	63.00 %	3.277	0.194
	Occasionally	54	27	50.00 %	27	50.00 %		
	Never	49	17	34.70 %	32	65.30 %		
Care for disabled elderly	No	84	33	39.30 %	51	60.70 %	0.007	0.933
	Yes	138	55	39.90 %	83	60.10 %		
Care for semi-disabled elderly	No	71	26	36.60 %	45	63.40 %	0.398	0.528
	Yes	151	62	41.10 %	89	58.90 %		
Number of elderly people who need care in the facility	≤ 3	58	20	34.50 %	38	65.50 %	4.144	0.126
	4 ~ 7	78	38	48.70 %	40	51.30 %		
	> 7	86	30	34.90 %	56	65.10 %		
Old man has too high and too much requirements	Often	83	30	36.10 %	53	63.90 %	0.991	0.609
	Occasionally	117	50	42.70 %	67	57.30 %		
	Never	22	8	36.40 %	14	63.60 %		

*p-value calculated by Fisher's precision probability tes

From the perspective of demand satisfaction at all levels, those with low physiological needs, respect needs and self-realization needs satisfaction had higher turnover intention ($p < 0.05$). Among the 65 people with low physiological demand satisfaction, the higher turnover intention was 56.9 %, higher than 32.5 % in the high physiological demand satisfaction group with high turnover intention; 75 %, and the high self-realization group with 36.9 %; the difference between the groups with low respect demand satisfaction and high satisfaction, and the group with high turnover intention accounted for 84.2 and 30.4 %, respectively. The relationship between security needs and social needs and turnover intentions in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is not statistically significant, as detailed in **Table 2**.

Table 2 Univariate analysis of the impact of demand satisfaction at all levels on turnover intention.

Dimension		Example number	Higher turnover intention		Lower turnover intention		chi-square	p-value
			count	line N%	count	line N%		
Physiological needs	Low satisfaction	65	37	56.90 %	28	43.10 %	11.475	< 0.01
	High satisfaction	157	51	32.50 %	106	67.50 %		
Security needs	Low satisfaction	30	14	46.70 %	16	53.30 %	0.716	0.398
	High satisfaction	192	74	38.50 %	118	61.50 %		
Social needs	Low satisfaction	12	8	66.70 %	4	33.30 %	-	0.068*
	High satisfaction	210	80	38.10 %	130	61.90 %		
Respect demand	Low satisfaction	38	32	84.20 %	6	15.80 %	38.066	< 0.01
	High satisfaction	184	56	30.40 %	128	69.60 %		
Self-realization	Low satisfaction	16	12	75.00 %	4	25.00 %	9.011	< 0.01
	High satisfaction	206	76	36.90 %	130	63.10 %		

*p-value calculated by Fisher's precision probability test

Multivariate analysis of the influencing factors of turnover intention

In this study, the factors obtained in the univariate analysis of the factors influencing the turnover intention (age, educational background, number of children, monthly rest days, physiological needs, respect needs and self-realization) were included in the Logistic regression analysis, and the possible influencing factors were screened by the backward method. The variables entered into the final model were respect needs and age ($p < 0.05$). The results of Logistic regression analysis showed that, compared with those with higher respect demand satisfaction, those with lower needs satisfaction have higher turnover intention, OR = 11.265, $p < 0.01$. Compared with the lowest age group (40 years), the higher the age, the lower the turnover intention, OR = 0.458 ($P = 0.171$) for the group of 41 - 50 years old, and OR = 0.202 ($P = 0.002$) for the group of 51 years old above. Other univariate analysis results showed factors related to turnover intention, such as educational background, number of children, monthly rest days. The physiological needs satisfaction and self-realization satisfaction in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory were eliminated in the process of logistic regression analysis, and failed to enter the final model, See **Table 3**.

Table 3 Results of Logistic regression analysis on the influence of elderly care workers turnover intention.

Index	β	Wals	df	<i>p</i> -value	OR	OR value 95 % CI	
						lower limit	upper limit
Variables in the model							
Respect demand	2.422	25.115	1	< 0.01	11.265	4.369	29.043
Age		12.287	2	0.002			
Age (1)	−0.781	1.871	1	0.171	0.458	0.15	1.402
Age (2)	−1.602	9.395	1	0.002	0.202	0.072	0.561
Variables from the model were removed							
Educational background	-	1.521	1	0.217			
Children number		3.977	2	0.137			
Children number (1)	-	2.703	1	0.100			
Children number (2)	-	3.749	1	0.053			
Monthly rest days	-	1.014	1	0.314			
Physiological needs	-	2.077	1	0.150			
Self-realization	-	0.088	1	0.766			

Conclusions

In this study, the elderly care workers of 4 nursing institutions in Zhejiang Province were analyzed the relationship between the turnover intention of elderly care workers and the satisfaction of different levels based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The results show that the respondents turnover intention in a higher level is higher, 39.64 %, and (Gu et al., 2017), domestic researchers (Liu et al., 2021; Wang & Feng, 2021) using other turnover intention scale income results also show elderly care workers' turnover intention score or high proportion is higher, the elderly care workers talent team stability, is an important problem to be solved in the pension service industry.

Demand satisfaction of the elderly care workers

On the whole, the demand satisfaction of the survey objects is good. The demand satisfaction of the 5 levels is between 70.7 and 94.6 %, among which the satisfaction of the physiological demand dimension is the lowest, and the satisfaction of salary and welfare is the lowest among each item in this dimension, which is consistent with (Yang, 2008; Zhong, 2018) similar research results in other industries. Although with the rapid development of industry demand, the salary level of elderly care workers has been continuously improved, and the salary in this study is 4,500 - 6,000 yuan. In the industry with low overall knowledge level, the salary level is considerable, but there is still a gap with the expectations of practitioners.

Another need for lower satisfaction observed in this study is respect demand, the proportion of high satisfaction is 82.9 %, which is related to the traditional concept that the elderly care workers is a low-skill and service job, and may also be related to the general characteristics of the working group, such as older age and lower education level.

In this study, the higher level of social needs and the higher level, and the proportion of high satisfaction reached 94.6 and 92.8 %, respectively. On the 1 hand, this may be related to the communication of the elderly care workers and colleagues at work; on the other hand, it may also be related to the fact that this is not the main demand of this population, so the expectation is low.

The results of this study showed that the turnover intention with increasing age, which is similar to the study results of (Zhang, 2022).

Influencing factors of turnover intention

The results of univariate analysis of the influencing factors of turnover intention show that, age, educational background, number of children and the monthly rest days affect the turnover intention, and the physiological needs, respect demand and self-realization in the level of demand have an influence on the turnover intention. The results of the multivariate analysis of the influencing factors of turnover intention show that age and respect demand satisfaction are the influencing factors of turnover intention.

From the hierarchy of needs theory, the results of univariate analysis of the factors influencing factors of turnover intention show that those with higher physiological demand, respect demand and self-realization demand satisfaction have lower turnover intention. Although there are few studies on the turnover intention of elderly care workers based on the hierarchy of needs theory, (Ai, 2020; Liu, 2021) thought that low pay is the influence of the elderly care workers' turnover intention. Liu et al. (2021) found that social needs will affect the elderly care workers' turnover intention, these research results are to a certain extent, support the results of this study.

The results of further multifactorial analysis showed that respect demand satisfaction and age are related to turnover intention. Specifically, the older the age, the lower the turnover intention, and the people with high respect demand satisfaction are low. Regarding the influence of age on turnover intention, according to (Zhang, 2022) showed that similar with those obtained in this study. This study found that respect demand had a great impact on the turnover intention. Compared with the groups with high turnover intention satisfaction, the group with lower turnover intention had higher turnover intention, and the OR value reached 11.265 (95 % CI: 4.369 ~ 29.043). This result also shows that although the salary and welfare satisfaction scores are the lowest at the physiological needs level, the satisfaction of respect needs has a greater impact on the elderly care workers' turnover intention. In the daily management of pension institutions, while paying full attention to the dimension of low satisfaction of the elderly care workers, more attention should be paid to respect demand.

Suggestions for future study

This study discusses the influencing factors of turnover intention from the demand, and focuses on its practical significance to the management of pension institutions. From the perspective of pension agency managers, should focus on from physiological needs, respect demand and self realization the 3 aspects more consider the reality of the elderly care workers' needs, pay attention to the dimensions of low satisfaction, from the perspective of institutional management through management system, assessment and working mechanism, better meet its needs, in order to reduce the turnover intention. For example, focus on salary and welfare in physiological needs, understand the difference between expected salary and actual salary, and invite the elderly care workers to participate in decision-making when formulating working rules and regulations, so as to better meet their respect needs.

For the future suggestions, can be combined with the specific characteristics of pension nurse work and social life, add more intervention indicators, such as expected compensation, management system, shift system, etc., further adjustment and applicability better demand satisfaction scale, and expand the research sample, aiming at intervention for further research, for pension institutions human resource management to provide more practical countermeasures.

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