

The Impacts of Medical Tourism Coordinators' Job Characteristics and Job Burnout on Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study was conducted to identify differences in job characteristics, and levels of job burnout and job satisfaction of medical tourism coordinators. It also aimed to discover a relationship among variables, and to identify impacting factors on job satisfaction. 102 subjects participated in this study. They were employees at domestic medical organizations which are officially certified to treat overseas patients in South Korea. The findings of this study were as follows. The mean scores were 3.84 out of 5 for job characteristics, 2.98 out of 7 for job burnout, and 3.46 out of 5 for job satisfaction. The levels of medical tourism coordinators' job burnout ($p=.042$) and satisfaction ($p=.039$) were discovered to be different according to their work locations. However, job characteristics did not differ according to general characteristics. In this study, a positive correlation between job characteristics and job satisfaction ($p=.008$) along with a negative correlation between job burnout and job satisfaction ($p<.001$) was discovered. Moreover, it was found that job characteristics and burnout were impacting factors on job satisfaction accounting for 38.4% of job satisfaction. Thus, it is important not only to define job characteristics more clearly through job analysis, but also to analyze the factors likely to result in job burnout in order to increase job satisfaction.

Keywords: Medical Tourism, Coordinator, Job Characteristics, Job Burnout, Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Medical tourism refers to a trip to other countries for medical purposes [1]. It has developed rapidly along with the globalization of the health and tourism industry, and triggered many countries to participate in the field [2]. Following the trend, South Korea has permitted medical organizations and agencies to attract overseas patients by amending related medical laws since 2009. Therefore, the promotion of medical tourism has actively proceeded in accordance with guidelines: the establishment of an organization registration system, and the obligatory reporting on overseas patients [3]. With the rise of medical tourism, the need for human resources who can facilitate the relevant roles has also increased. For this reason, in South Korea, those who can facilitate medical tourism were trained by diverse organizations to match the demand [4], and various titles were used including marketer, medical tourism promoting expert, and translator, *etc.*, for them [5]. Accordingly, in 2013 the Korean government introduced the International Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate [6] and has tried to limit certification requirements and qualifications for examination [6, 7]. Until the introduction of this certificate, 'Medical tourism coordinator' was a commonly used title. Moreover, due to its short introduction period, 'medical tourism coordinator' is defined as a professional who

conducts overall services regarding medical tourism with or without the International Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate in this study.

A medical tourism coordinator is a specialist who assists overseas patients and their family members with receiving medical treatment and tourism [8, 9]. The tasks of medical tourism coordinators are not only to assist with medical services, control risk factors, promote medical tourism, and undertake relevant administration work [10], but they are also required to schedule consultations with medical professionals, translate languages, assist with hospitalization and discharge, deal with complaints, pick up patients from an airport or send them to an airport, follow up after discharge, and refer patients to medical professionals back in patients' home countries after treatment. Since their jobs consist of various roles and medical tourism is an industry which appeared in 2009 in South Korea, it is important to recognize medical tourism coordinators' job characteristics. And it is also important to understand the levels of their job burnout and satisfaction. Not only because they may experience burnout as they undertake new roles, but also their levels of satisfaction are important as they affect overseas patients' levels of satisfaction [9,11]. Thus, this study is conducted to identify job characteristics, and levels of job burnout and job satisfaction of medical tourism coordinators, and also to investigate factors impacting the job satisfaction of medical tourism coordinators.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This is a descriptive study conducted to investigate factors impacting the job satisfaction of medical tourism coordinators. In this study, medical tourism coordinators' job characteristics and levels of job burnout as factors impacting job satisfaction are examined.

2.2. Research Subjects

The research subjects were 102 medical tourism coordinators. They were employees at domestic medical organizations which are officially certified to treat overseas patients in South Korea. The subjects understood the purpose of the study and agreed to participate in the study. The number of subjects was determined using the program G*Power version 3.1.9.2, which was 88 [12]. Nevertheless, data from 113 subjects were collected via phone calls, emails and personal meetings. However, amongst them, 11 subjects were rejected due to inappropriate answers or disqualification because of subjects' standards.

2.3. Measurements

The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions concerning general characteristics, 16 questions concern job characteristics applied and modified by Na [13] utilizing the model from Hackman and Oldham [14] using a five-step Likert scale. The Cronbach's α of this study was .84. The high score means the higher recognition of job characteristics by medical tourism coordinators. 22 questions were about job burnout translated by Choi [15] from the MBI (Maslach Burnout Inventory) by Maslach and Jackson [16] using a seven-step Likert scale. The Cronbach's α of this study was .89. The high score means the higher level of burnout of medical tourism coordinators. Additionally, 27 questions concern job satisfaction partially modified by the researcher for the purposes of this study using Oh [17] and Lee's [18] studies from Smith, Kendall and Hulin's [19] studies using a five-step Likert scale. The Cronbach's α of this study was .89. The high score means the higher level of job satisfaction of medical tourism coordinators. The questionnaire was administered to

identify the impacts of medical tourism coordinators' job characteristics and job burnout on job satisfaction.

2.4. Data Collection and Ethical Consideration

The data were collected from May to July 2014 with the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Konyang University Hospital, Daejeon, South Korea. All subjects were given an explanation of the purpose and methods of the study prior to the survey. Those who agreed to participate in the study were also given an explanation of confidentiality and the right to veto or discontinue participation in the study at any time.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the program SPSS/PC WIN. 19.0. Actual numbers, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-tests, ANOVA, Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis were used for analyses.

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics of the Subjects

There were 102 subjects. 62 subjects (60.8%) were female and 40 subjects (39.2%) were male. As for their ages, there were 44 in the 31-40 year group (43.1%), 36 (35.3%) in the 21-30 year group, and 22 (21.6%) over 41. As for their marital status, 57 subjects (55.9%) were unmarried, while 45 (44.1%) were married. As for their level of education, 63 subjects (61.8%) graduated university, 21 (20.6%) have master's degrees or above, 11 (10.8%) were enrolled in a master's course, and 7 (6.8%) graduated college. As for their workplaces, 45 subjects (44.1%) work at general hospitals, 43 (42.2%) work at hospitals, and 14 (13.7%) work at local clinics. As for facility types, 48 subjects (47.1%) work at domestic corporations, 36 (35.3%) work at private organizations, and 18 (17.6%) work at national/public organizations. As for work location, 67 (65.7%) work in the Seoul metropolitan region, and 35 (34.3%) work in other locations. As for work experience, 25 (24.5%) subjects have worked for less than 1 year, 23 (22.6%) for 1-2 years, 22 (21.6%) for over 5 years, 14 (13.7%) for 3-4 years, 10 (9.8%) for 2-3 years, 8 (7.8%) for 4-5 years. As for work hours (per week), 46 subjects (45.1%) work over 40 hours, 42 (41.2%) work for 40 hours, and 14 (13.7%) work for less than 40 hours. As for type of employment, 78 subjects (76.5%) have a permanent position, and 24 (23.5%) have a temporary position. As for monthly salary, 33 subjects (32.4%) earn over 3 million won (Korean currency), 25 (24.5%) earn 2-2.5 million won, 23 (22.5%) earn 2 million won, 21 (20.6%) earn 2.5-3 million won. As for major, 61 (59.8%) have a non-health related degree, and 41 (40.2%) have health related degrees. As for the International Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate, which is domestically certified, 98 subjects (96.1%) have not acquired it, while 4 (3.9%) have <Table 1>.

Table 1. General Characteristics of Subjects (N=102)

Variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Male	40	39.2
	Female	62	60.8
Age	21-30	36	35.3
	31-40	44	43.1
	Over 41	22	21.6
Marital status	Married	45	44.1

	Unmarried	57	55.9
Level of education	College	7	6.8
	University	63	61.8
	Ongoing master's	11	10.8
	M.A degree or above	21	20.6
Workplace	Local clinic	14	13.7
	Hospital	43	42.2
	General hospital	45	44.1
Facility type	National/Public	18	17.6
	Domestic corporation	48	47.1
	Private	36	35.3
Work location	Seoul metropolitan region	67	65.7
	Others	35	34.3
Work experience (years)	Less than 1 year	25	24.5
	1-2 years	23	22.6
	2-3 years	10	9.8
	3-4 years	14	13.7
	4-5 years	8	7.8
	Over 5 years	22	21.6
Work hours (per week)	Less than 40 hours	14	13.7
	40 hours	42	41.2
	Over 40 hours	46	45.1
Type of employment	Permanent position	78	76.5
	Temporary position	24	23.5
Salary (monthly) Unit: Korean currency (Won)	2 million	23	22.5
	2-2.5 million	25	24.5
	2.5-3 million	21	20.6
	Over 3 million	33	32.4
Major	Health related	41	40.2
	Others	61	59.8
Int'l Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate; domestically certified	Acquired	4	3.9
	Not acquired	98	96.1

As for their main jobs, there are overlapping answers, marketing & promotion takes up 28.3%, which was the highest, followed by language translation, 15.0%; administration, 14.6%; counseling & appointment, 12.5%; medical service & patient care, 11.3%; patient service, 8.3%; accounting, 6.7%; support touring for pleasure, 3.3%. As for target countries, there are overlapping answers, Russia & nearby countries take up 35.9%, followed by China, 23.1%; USA, 14.4%; Mongolia, 12.3%; the Middle East, 5.6%; Southeast Asia, 4.6%; Japan, 4.1%. As for their ideal major, there are overlapping answers, 47.0% responded that a medical related major would be appropriate for medical tourism coordinators, while 29.9% stated a language related major, and 23.1% responded with other majors <Table 2>.

Table 2. Job-Related Characteristics of Subjects (N=102)

Variable	Category	n	%
*Main jobs	Marketing & promotion	68	28.3
	Language translation	36	15.0
	Administration	35	14.6
	Counseling & appointment	30	12.5
	Medical service & patient care	27	11.3

	Patient service	20	8.3
	Accounting	16	6.7
	Support touring for pleasure	8	3.3
	Russia & nearby countries	70	35.9
	China	45	23.1
	USA	28	14.4
*Target country	Mongolia	24	12.3
	The Middle East	11	5.6
	Southeast Asia	9	4.6
	Japan	8	4.1
	Medical related	63	47.0
*Ideal major	Language related	40	29.9
	Others	31	23.1

*Overlapping answers.

3.2. Means of Job Characteristics, Job Burnout and Job Satisfaction

The mean score of medical tourism coordinators' job characteristics was 3.84 out of 5. Job characteristics showed 4.14 for Task Identity, followed by 4.13 for Skill Variety, 3.59 for Feedback, and 3.48 for Autonomy. The mean score of medical tourism coordinators' job burnout was 2.98 out of 7. Specifically, this finding indicated 3.52 for Emotional Exhaustion, followed by 2.77 for Personal Accomplishment, and 2.37 for Depersonalization. The mean score of medical tourism coordinators' job satisfaction was 3.46 out of 5. Specifically, this finding showed 3.90 for Co-worker(s), followed by 3.89 for Work Itself, 3.56 for Supervision, 3.35 for Turnover Intention, 3.20 for Workplace, and 2.84 for Pay <Table 3>.

Table 3. Medical Tourism Coordinators' Job Characteristics, Job Burnout and Job Satisfaction

Variable	Category	Mean	SD
Job Characteristics	Task Identity	4.14	0.58
	Skill Variety	4.13	0.64
	Feedback	3.59	0.64
	Autonomy	3.48	0.78
	Total	3.84	0.46
Job Burnout	Emotional Exhaustion	3.52	1.23
	Personal Accomplishment	2.77	1.21
	Depersonalization	2.37	1.29
	Total	2.98	0.94
Job Satisfaction	Co-worker(s)	3.90	0.73
	Work Itself	3.89	0.73
	Supervision	3.56	0.88
	Turnover Intention	3.35	0.97
	Workplace	3.20	0.60
	Pay	2.84	0.68
	Total	3.46	0.50

3.3. Differences of Research Variables According to General Characteristics

The investigation into the relationship between medical tourism coordinators' job characteristics and general characteristics, which were Sex ($t=-.87, p=.385$), Age ($F=1.56, p=.214$), Marital status ($t=.04, p=.964$), Level of education ($F=.36, p=.777$), Workplace ($F=.10, p=.902$), Facility type ($F=1.44, p=.241$), Work location ($t=1.70, p=.091$), Work experience ($F=1.36, p=.243$), Work hours ($F=.83, p=.438$), Type of employment ($t=.24, p=.808$), Salary ($F=1.73, p=.164$), Major ($t=1.20, p=.233$), and the International Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate ($t=.21, p=.828$) did not indicate significant differences.

The work locations of medical tourism coordinators indicated significant differences regarding job burnout ($t=-2.06, p=.042$). This finding indicated that medical tourism coordinators employed in the Seoul metropolitan region (2.85 ± 0.90) have a lower level of job burnout than those in other regions (3.25 ± 0.98). However, medical tourism coordinators' job burnout regarding general characteristics, which were Sex ($t=-.54, p=.589$), Age ($F=1.81, p=.169$), Marital status ($t=.72, p=.469$), Level of education ($F=.55, p=.647$), Workplace ($F=.31, p=.734$), Facility type ($F=1.68, p=.191$), Work experience ($F=1.09, p=.367$), Work hours ($F=.62, p=.540$), Type of employment ($t=-.28, p=.773$), Salary ($F=.78, p=.506$), Major ($t=.55, p=.583$), the International Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate ($t=-.24, p=.821$) did not indicate a significant difference.

The work locations of medical tourism coordinators were found to have a significant effect on job satisfaction ($t=2.09, p=.039$). It was found that medical tourism coordinators employed in the Seoul metropolitan region (3.53 ± 0.51) have a higher level of satisfaction than those in other regions (3.31 ± 0.46). However, levels of job satisfaction and general characteristics, which were Sex ($t=-1.41, p=.160$), Age ($F=2.38, p=.097$), Marital status ($t=-.30, p=.761$), Level of education ($F=.30, p=.825$), Workplace ($F=2.32, p=.103$), Facility type ($F=.76, p=.468$), Work experience ($F=.59, p=.704$), Work hours ($F=2.43, p=.093$), Type of employment ($t=.27, p=.784$), Salary ($F=2.59, p=.057$), Major ($t=.71, p=.474$), the International Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate ($t=1.02, p=.310$) were found not to be significantly related <Table 4>.

Table 4. Differences of Research Variables According to General Characteristics

Variable	Category	Job Characteristics		Job Burnout		Job Satisfaction	
		M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)
Sex	Male	3.79±0.36	-.87	3.05±0.84	.54	3.37±0.48	-1.41
	Female	3.87±0.51	(.385)	2.94±1.00	(.589)	3.51±0.51	(.160)
Age	21-30	3.76±0.40	1.56 (.214)	2.91±0.82	1.81 (.169)	3.56±0.52	2.38 (.097)
	31-40	3.93±0.42		3.17±1.00		3.33±0.49	
	Over 41	3.78±0.60		2.73±0.97		3.53±0.45	
Marital status	Married	3.84±0.54	.04	3.06±1.04	.72	3.44±0.51	-.30
	Unmarried	3.83±0.40	(.964)	2.92±0.86	(.469)	3.47±0.50	(.761)
Level of education	College	3.78±0.48	.36 (.777)	2.62±0.87	.55 (.647)	3.62±0.48	.30 (.825)
	University	3.81±0.40		2.96±0.95		3.44±0.52	
	Ongoing master's M.A degree or above	3.86±0.48 3.92±0.61		3.14±0.72 3.10±1.06		3.48±0.43 3.42±0.51	
Workplace	Local clinic	3.89±0.40	.10 (.902)	2.86±0.85	.31 (.734)	3.71±0.49	2.32 (.103)
	Hospital	3.82±0.44		2.94±0.92		3.45±0.49	
	General hospital	3.83±0.50		3.06±1.00		3.38±0.50	
Facility	National/Public	4.00±0.39	1.44	3.35±0.98	1.68	3.32±0.53	.76

type	Domestic corp.	3.78±0.53	(.241)	2.88±0.95	(.191)	3.49±0.54	(.468)
	Private	3.83±0.38		2.94±0.90		3.47±0.43	
Work location	Seoul metropolitan region	3.89±0.51	1.70	2.85±0.90	-2.06	3.53±0.51	2.09
	Others	3.74±0.34	(.091)	3.25±0.98	(.042)	3.31±0.46	(.039)
Work experience (years)	Less than 1 year	3.85±0.41		2.66±0.89		3.53±0.53	
	1-2 years	3.67±0.36		3.17±0.81		3.38±0.54	
	2-3 years	3.90±0.25	1.36	2.82±1.31	1.09	3.28±0.62	.59
	3-4 years	3.88±0.51	(.243)	3.24±0.81	(.367)	3.44±0.39	(.704)
	4-5 years	3.70±0.20		2.97±1.05		3.42±0.48	
	Over 5 years	4.00±0.65		3.08±0.97		3.55±0.46	
Work hours (per week)	Less than 40 hrs	3.83±0.37		2.97±1.01		3.42±0.37	
	40 hrs	3.90±0.54	.83	2.87±0.93	.62	3.58±0.48	2.43
	Over 40 hrs	3.78±0.41	(.438)	3.09±0.94	(.540)	3.35±0.53	(.093)
Type of employment	Permanent	3.84±0.49	.24	2.97±0.98	-.28	3.46±0.52	.27
	Temporary	3.82±0.35	(.808)	3.03±0.81	(.773)	3.43±0.46	(.784)
Salary (monthly) Unit: Korean currency (Won)	2 million	3.67±0.37		3.13±0.77		3.36±0.41	
	2-2.5 million	3.85±0.33	1.73	2.81±0.90	.78	3.60±0.50	2.59
	2.5-3 million	3.81±0.40	(.164)	3.16±1.05	(.506)	3.25±0.51	(.057)
	Over 3 million	3.96±0.60		2.90±1.02		3.54±0.52	
Major	Health related	3.91±0.58	1.20	3.05±0.99	.55	3.50±0.49	.71
	Others	3.79±0.35	(.233)	2.94±0.91	(.583)	3.43±0.51	(.474)
* Certificate	Acquired	3.89±0.72	.21	2.80±1.52	-.24	3.71±0.74	1.02
	Not acquired	3.83±0.45	(.828)	2.99±0.92	(.821)	3.44±0.49	(.310)

* International Medical Tour Coordinator Certificate; domestically certified.

3.4. Correlations among the Research Variables

The findings showed a positive correlation between job characteristics and job satisfaction ($r=.26$, $p=.008$) along with a negative correlation between job burnout and job satisfaction ($r=-.59$, $p<.001$) <Table 5>.

Table 5. Correlations among Job Characteristics, Job Burnout and Job Satisfaction of Medical Tourism Coordinators

Variable	Job Characteristics	Job Burnout
	r (p)	r (p)
Job Satisfaction	.26 (.008)	-.59 (<.001)

3.5. Impacting Factors on Job Satisfaction

It was found that the variables of job characteristics ($\beta =.20$, $p=.012$) and job burnout ($\beta =-.57$, $p<.001$) were impacting factors on job satisfaction. They accounted for 38.4% of job satisfaction <Table 6>.

Table 6. Impacting Factors on Job Satisfaction

Variable	β	t	p	Adjusted R ²	F	p
Job Characteristics	.20	2.56	.012	38.4	32.46	<.001
Job Burnout	-.57	-7.32	<.001			

4. Discussion

In the results of this study, the job characteristics of medical tourism coordinators are a higher level than those found in a study of employees in domestic corporations by Kim et al. [20]. The findings of job burnout of medical tourism coordinators are similar to a study of hospital nurses proving a high level of emotional exhaustion by Kang [21]. Additionally, this result is similar to international studies of nurses [22-24]. The findings of job satisfaction of medical tourism coordinators are similar to a study of hospital coordinators by Jung [25] and higher than a study of cancer clinical research coordinators by Choi [26]. Interestingly, the levels of medical tourism coordinators' job burnout and satisfaction were discovered to be different according to their work locations. However, job characteristics did not differ according to general characteristics. In this study, a positive correlation between job characteristics and job satisfaction along with a negative correlation between job burnout and job satisfaction were discovered. As a result, the level of perception of medical tourism coordinators' job characteristics affects their job satisfaction in a positive way. And the level of perception of medical tourism coordinators' job burnout affects their job satisfaction in a negative way. Moreover, it was found that job characteristics and burnout were impacting factors on job satisfaction accounting for 38.4% of job satisfaction. Thus, it is important not only to define job characteristics more clearly through job analysis, but also to analyze the factors likely to result in job burnout in order to increase job satisfaction.

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