

# A Study on the Development and Transformation of Caregivers' Work Values Dynamic Changes of Nurse-Patient Relationship From Laboring, Nursing, and Caregiving

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## ABSTRACT

The caregivers play a crucial role in maintaining the health and happiness of patients, typically losing their self-management abilities. This society should appreciate their work; people in the academic world should envision their work values as well as their inner mindsets in order to provide meaningful rewards and build a favorable nurse-patient relationship. This study, taking qualitative research approaches, was conducted to in-depth understand the caregivers' sense of work value the caregivers through and patients interviews and observing interaction behaviors with patients and their families. Authentic data resulted from a series of interviews accompanying on-site observations were analyzed and validated with triangulation according to research purpose. Finally, this study drew the following conclusions: 1. The caregivers generally possessed hearty patient-centered work values perceiving patients as friends, even family members; 2. Their hard work and enthusiastic dedication built the imperative trust as well as respect from patients and hospital professionals, which reciprocally enhanced the caregivers' self-recognition and work values from laboring up to actualization of social contribution; 3. The caregivers transformed their sense of work values through self-recognition, enthusiastic dedication, affable interaction with colleagues and patients, and self-respect to the work and people. Caregivers work very hard in workplace, they get positive feedback, and build colorful lives of the patients, their family, and even their own.

**Keywords:** *The Caregivers, Work Values, Dynamic Changes, Nurse-Patient Relationship*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With declining birthrates and a shrinking population of the young generation, the role played by long-term caregivers becomes increasingly important for our aging population [1]. The people lacking the ability of self-care need caregivers to maintain them in a healthy condition [2]. These caregivers, working at the frontline, are instrumental in providing good quality long-term care services. But they experience heavy workload, high pressure at the workplace, low salary, high turn-overs, and recruitment difficulty. The dilemma is created by a manpower shortage in caregiving, along with an aging population [3]. Caregivers play an important role indirect care of patients, promoting their health and well-being. Caregivers are important assistants for the nursing staff and can provide better care for patients [4]. These

caregivers provide long-hours of contacts, frequent interactions, awkward and monotonous services. At any moment, they also need to respond fast to requests of patients and their family members [5]. Caregivers (or care-attendants) form the major workforce for long-term care services, directly affecting the quality of patient care. Their services should be valued, and their work value is better realized. Here, we aimed to deeply analyze the work value of caregivers, their interactions, and affections with patients. We aimed to understand the shaping of the caregiver's work value and its temporal changes, and in-depth analysis of caregivers' awareness of work value. Results could be a reference for better management to offer friendly caregiving in medical institutes.

**1.1. Caregivers**

Their workplaces are medical institutions, nursing institutions, nursing homes, and other social welfare institutions or families. Their job duties are to assist patients, disabled physically or mentally, in their daily lives to provide physical, life care, and family services. They need to discuss the contents of the caregiving work, which often may be performed by trained care-attendants. The contents include commonality in general technical duties, cleaning, medication, and eating, excretion, comforting and physical activities. The aim of work is based on life-care, with a focus on basic care needs. The work includes physical care, life care, safety maintenance, interpersonal and communication, problem-solving and arranging leisure activities [6].

**1.2. Work Value**

**1.2.1. Definition of Work Value**

In brief, work value reflects an individual's opinion, thoughts, and judgment criteria for a job, and the value affects the individual's willingness and attitude to work and the career goal [7]. Work value is a part of one's value system, containing all the attributes of values. Viewpoints can differ across people on work value, often depending on perspectives [8]. It reflects the internal thoughts of individuals in judging the importance of their work. The same job may be perceived differently by different individuals. The work itself has no specific meaning, but the value comes from the individual's endowment, guiding the individual's behavior and development goal. It is rather a personal preference for the kind of work chosen [9]. Work value refers to an enduring belief formulated by an individual and is influenced by preference or behavior. It represents an attitude that guides the individual on work behavior and goal pursuit [10].

**1.2.2. The Concept, Content, and Function of Work Value**

The concept of work value, which is a mental structure that internally supports an individual's over behavior. It is generally divided into three categories: intrinsic value, external value and incidental value. Work value spans three sets of factors (with six values). They include: (a) achievement and independence being self-oriented reinforcements; (b) relationship and affirmation being socially-oriented reinforcements; and (c) support and working conditions being the environment-oriented reinforcements [11]. External work values include independence, prestige, economic reward, sense of security, working environment, the relationship between colleagues, relationship with supervisor, changeability, and lifestyle. [8] proposed work value to include three levels: (a) intrinsic values: self-growth value and self-

identity value, (b) external values: social identity value and (c) additional value: interpersonal interaction value. Changes occur with social experience, and personal work and career choices var internal standards.

**2. METHOD**

**2.1. Research Design**

We adopted a qualitative research approach for our present study. Specifically, some personnel currently engaged in caregiving were interviewed, and we collected data on their work values and their interactions with patients. We aimed to obtain a deeper understanding, through data analysis, on the feelings of the caregivers. The conceptual architecture diagram of this study is as follows in figure 1.



**Figure 1** Research Design

**2.2. Research Participants**

The researcher of this study is a senior clinical nursing staff with >22 years of work experience. The interviewed subjects were two clinical caregivers. Two of them agreed to participate in our qualitative interviews. Approvals of the present study were granted by both the care-service agency and the administrator of the hospital. This study protocol was based on knowledge from the relevant literature and clinical experience for drafting the interview outline. Interviews were conducted based on a semi-structured questionnaire. The two caregivers were interviewed in-depth by the researcher and their behaviors observed.

**2.3. Data Collation and Analysis**

After the meeting, the researcher transcribed the recorded contents into verbatim manuscripts. A qualitative analysis verbatim was then made. Both the themes and concepts for each topic were summarized. Each subject was assigned a code number for privacy protection purposes (first subject: C1 and second subject: C2). When analyzing contents in records and transcribed data, efforts were made to identify topics and relationships among topics. From the basic information of the interviewees, it was clear that the caregiver job is

an ordinary occupation, requiring no special skills nor high qualification.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The entry of an individual into the profession of long-term caregivers is generally based on financial consideration. It is not a job highly respected by society. Because the job is characterized by features like high work pressure, low pay and low social status, the caregiving profession has faced for years problems of workforce shortage and high turnovers [3].

"I started working as a caregiver after job-hunting. The purpose of getting a job was satisfied, as I earned income. Since then, I have been doing what I have been doing for the last 22 years. It is hard work. (C1)"

"December 28, 1997: I was introduced to the job by my sister-in-law, who is a caregiver and she also works in my institute. At that time, I talked to her about my intention to find a new job. I think it is a decent job for taking care of the elderly. So, I made up my mind to become a caregiver. (C2) "

Every caregiver wants a job and a stable income, in work schedules compatible with family life. The job turns out to have an additional value in life. While caregiving is tough work, it can also make a great career. But once inside the profession, the development is rather limited. It is not easy to change jobs later on, and caregiving then becomes a lifelong career.

Long-term caregivers generally recognize and accept their fate to work hard. Caregivers on the average work 5 days a week, >10 hours a day, with 15 hours/month in working overtime. Caregiving has become the focus of their daily life [3].

"Taking care of patient's daily life, assisting them in bathing, washing clothes, changing linens, brushing their teeth, washing their faces, help eating, leading activities, chatting and other things like that. (C2) "

"Professional skills: such as skills on turning patients in bed, in gavage, feeding, how to restrain them without causing them physical injuries, and how often we need to check on them. Other things on caring would depend on personal experiences. (C1)"

During working hours, we need coordination with the nursing staff. Anything of attention is informed and communicated between us. Nursing staff is very considerate, and they are very good at communication. (C2) "

Caregiving jobs require patience. Not only drains energy and mind, but also many difficult situations arise in caring for them. Caregivers often feel unwell respected. But they choose to accept the situation and adhere to the profession. Coordinating with patients and

nursing staff, with emphasis on teamwork, and establishing excellent communication and interaction.

Long-term caregivers generally are able to have good interactions with the relevant personnel in the workplace, and to create win-win situations.

"Build in their mind a sense of trust in us. They will then be happy to allow us to take care of them. In this way, they would be willing to tell us what is in their minds. (C1)"

"I usually contact their family members by phone and the internet LINE. I become a good friend of the family members, and together we take care of the elderly patient. The family members would use LINE to show their agreement and gratitude. (C2)"

"In the event of matters requiring special attention arise in the workplace, the nursing staff would remind me. Sometimes when a doctor visits the unit, he would say 'thank you', and so I was much touched. (C1) "

Emotions are internally connected. Interacting frequently with patients, giving out greater care and more greetings, would facilitate reciprocal trusts. Thereafter both parties feel free to talk to each other. The end result is meeting care needs of all possible aspects with a gentle and an intimate attitude. Patient feedback is the prime motivation for caregivers in continuing their career, making their job more meaningful and valuable. The work of caregivers is hence internally valued and externally being respected, affirmed and recognized. These factors on identity, value and feeling could eventually change their attitude and value on caregiving work.

Long-term caregivers, after 5 years on job, generally cherish their work and develop a positive view of their occupation and work duties. Thus, it can raise their sense of honor, and improve public image of care service professionals and their important role in society.

"After starting my caregiving job, I feel happy every day, chatting with patients, taking good care of them, and interacting well with them. I am happy every day. My current job is relatively meaningful and fulfilling. I have a great sense of achievement. (C1) "

"After finishing the scheduled work at hand, we will go to chat with patients, take them out for a walk, treat them like my own grandparents. (C2) "

"Sharing with their family members every bit of the patient's life, funny little things and patients' reactions during interactions. I usually avoid telling family negative happenings to avoid their anxiety. This job gives me great sense of achievement. Because I can take care of patients, make them happy, live in a stable condition and enjoy every day. (C1) "

Caregivers often work enthusiastically and conscientiously. They have empathy with the patients

and can share feelings of their underlying illness. They treat patients as their own family members and closely connect with them in emotions. Engaging in work as a caregiver can be recognized and appreciated by the community. Transformation or even sublimation of work values come from work experiences, services, caring for patients and interests in people. Being recognized and approved in favor by others, able to learn, work enthusiasm, sense of accomplishment, and inner joy are important reasons why caregivers love their job. Innovation the caregivers' value and recognize, they will devote themselves on the work and take care of the patients very well.

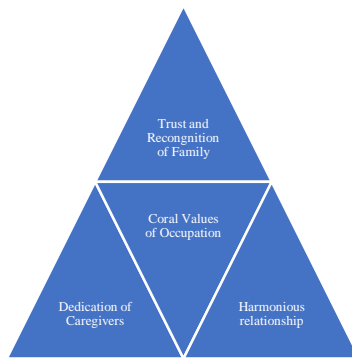


Figure 2 Graph of Research

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Caregivers have always been classified in an occupation with low-pay, low-rank, and doing soiled work. They are regarded not as the mainstream "professional" jobs. The reason for the job invaluable to the level it deserves is because of hidden abilities people do not see behind its non-skilled requirements.

It is a transformation of the relationship between caregivers and those they serve. The work of caregiving is tough. Their work is lowly viewed by the general public. Despite this, caregivers still like their job. The key factor is that they agree with the work value and accept their job. They can see the true value of their services, the value of their own lives, together with the values of patients and the society that shows in Figure 2. It is the recognition of these values that has made them very happy and respect their job.

#### Suggestions

To teach patients and their families to respect caregivers, and to show gratitude. In this way, the approval they perceive is more solid. The government, in coordination with educational institutes, to run related vocational training for caregivers, to establish a system for their professional licensing, to strengthen career development, and to shape their social images for better professional identity and self-identity, and to consolidate their awareness of work value.

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