

Nurse Job Satisfaction: Is a Revised Conceptual Framework Needed?

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Job satisfaction is a critical factor in attracting and retaining nurses. Although many studies have dealt with nurses' job satisfaction, rapid transformation of the community and health systems can alter the factors influencing this issue, hence calling for continuous monitoring of job satisfaction as perceived by nurses. Built on this necessity, the present study was conducted to identify factors contributing to job satisfaction of the nurses in an Iranian health system context.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey among 530 nurses was conducted in Shariati teaching hospital in Tehran. Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was used to measure job satisfaction. T-test was used to compare job satisfaction between nurse groups of different age and work experience. Chi-square test was used to compare nurse groups of different sex, level of education and job status. Correlation of job satisfaction in nurses with their age, gender, work experience, job status, and level of education was examined using logistic regression analysis.

Findings: A total of 424 nurses completed the questionnaires (response rate = 80%). Of the total respondents, 47.9% expressed satisfaction with their job. The highest satisfaction score was related to moral values (87.9%) followed by social services (76.1%). The lowest satisfaction score was obtained by compensations (91.8%) followed by professional advancement (84.1%). No significant difference in job satisfaction was found between demographic groups. In addition, no correlation was identified between job satisfaction in nurses and their age, gender, work experience, job status, and level of education. Our study also descriptively showed that nurses were mostly satisfied with intrinsic factors of their jobs when compared with the corresponding extrinsic factors.

Conclusions: From a descriptive point of view, improving payments and offering opportunities for advancement are the prioritized factors in improving job satisfaction among the nurses. Lack of relationship between job satisfaction and conventional demographic and professional variables would indicate the changing nature of factors affecting job satisfaction among nurses, calling for further theoretical and empirical studies.

Keywords: Nurse, Job satisfaction, Hospital

Background and Objectives

Job satisfaction is described as the degree to which employees feel good about their jobs and working conditions [1]. Satisfaction with job can improve interpersonal relationship among employees and increase their work performance. Job satisfaction has been defined as an emotional reaction resulted from the perception that one's job fulfills or allows the fulfillment of one's important values [2]. It is of special importance in healthcare industry. There is evidence

that nurses would have problems in meeting patients' needs if their workplace requirements are not met [5]. The strong association between job satisfaction and employee productivity is well-established in the literature [6-7]. In addition, turnover can be more prevalent when employees are highly dissatisfied [8-9]. Job satisfaction also is associated with physical and mental health according to the previous studies [10-11]. Nursing shortage and high turnover have become important concern for health managers as well as researchers in the related fields.

Although studies on job satisfaction among nurses are frequent, most of them are carried out in developed countries, leaving considerable room for similar research in developing countries aiming to improve understanding of the reasons for job dissatisfaction,

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especially in the healthcare industry. Understanding factors influencing job satisfaction in nurses can help develop interventional strategies to improve job satisfaction, productivity, and quality of care in nurses. On the other hand, the transforming nature of the community and health systems can alter factors influencing job satisfaction among nurses. Hence, job satisfaction should continuously be monitored. Given this necessity, the present study aimed to provide more insight into factors contributing to the job satisfaction among nurses in Iran.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted during May to August 2013. The study population comprised of all 530 nurses who worked in Shriaiti teaching hospital in Tehran, capital of Iran. The measurement tool was a short version of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) comprising 20 items measuring different aspects of job satisfaction [12]. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = 'Very dissatisfied', 2 = 'Dissatisfied', 3 = 'Neutral', 4 = 'Satisfied', 5 = 'Very satisfied'. The MSQ was translated into Persian. By testing on a group of 20 nurses (who were excluded from the main sample) the external reliability of the measurement tool was confirmed by obtaining a test-retest coefficient of 0.83. The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was assured by obtaining Cronbach's alpha of 0.80. Job satisfaction was considered as the dependent variable and was measured with scores, where higher scores reflected greater degrees of job satisfaction. The Likert-type scale was converted to a 100-point scale before data analysis. Responses ≤ 50 were considered to indicate job dissatisfaction and the scores > 50 were considered to reflect job satisfaction [12]. T-test was used to compare job satisfaction between nurse groups of the different ages and work experience. Chi-square test was used to compare nurse groups of different sexes, level of education and job status. Logistic regression was used to examine the correlation of job satisfaction in nurses with their age, work experience, job status, level of education, and gender. All statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS Version 16 Software.

Ethical Issues

Before conducting the study, official permission was obtained from hospital administrators. Researchers informed all nurses that their participation will be voluntary and respondents' anonymity was insured.

Results

Demographic Data

Out of 530 questionnaires, 424 were completed yielding a response rate of 80%. Table 1 shows the descriptive characteristics of the participants. Approximately 89% of responders were female. The mean (SD) age of participants was 34.1(7.76). More than three fourth of the responders were younger than 40 years of age (78%) and were permanently employed nurses (76.6%). In addition, 93% of respondents held a bachelor degree.

Table 2 summarizes the responses to the MSQ and presents the correlations between different aspects of job and overall job satisfaction. The mean score of overall job satisfaction was 3.03 ± 0.67 . The highest satisfaction score was given to moral values (4.17) followed by social services (3.82). The lowest satisfaction score was received by compensation (1.64) followed by advancement (2.22). Logistic regression analysis identified no statistically significant association between sex, age, work experience, job status, level of education and overall job satisfaction (Table 3).

Discussion

Nurses are among the most important healthcare workers, directly responsible for providing care to the patients [13]. Studies have indicated that the quality of care is related to nurse job satisfaction. The shortage of nurses in several health systems, including Iranian health system, highlights the importance of understanding variables affecting job satisfaction in nurses [16].

In our sample, more than half of the nurses were dissatisfied with their work. While a low level of nurse job satisfaction was observed in many studies, [17-22], some investigations have found a relatively high satisfaction level among nurses [23-26]. Nurses in our survey expressed a lower level of satisfaction with compensation. This finding is congruent with some studies [20-21, 25, 27-29]. However, other studies having found a weak association between payment and job satisfaction [27, 30]. Nevertheless, payment should be regarded as one of the most important factors influencing job satisfaction among employees because of its determining role in quality of life [31]. The relationship between payment and job satisfaction has two facets: First, adequacy of payment, and second level of payment as compared with other organizations [32]. Indeed, one reason for dissatisfaction with salary among nurses could arise from comparison with the workers of other professionals and other organizations [34].

According to Herzberg, salary is not a motivator for

Table 1 Demographic and professional characteristic of the nurses

Variables	Total N (%)	Dissatisfied N (%)	Satisfied N (%)	Significance
Gender				0.62
Male	46 (10.9)	23 (11.4)	23 (10.5)	
Female	376 (89.1)	179 (88.6)	197 (89.5)	
Degree				0.28
Undergraduate	29 (6.9)	10 (4.9)	19 (8.6)	
Graduate	394 (93.1)	193 (95.1)	201 (91.4)	
Job status				0.44
Permanent	305 (76.6)	149 (78)	156 (75.4)	
Contract	93 (23.4)	42 (22)	51 (24.6)	
Age	34.01	33.86	34.11	0.75
Work experience	10.25	10.02	10.35	0.67

employees, although they want to be paid fairly [4]. However, other studies carried out on nurses job satisfaction in Iran also have shown a low job satisfaction, where salary and job security were found to be the most important factors leading to nurses' dissatisfaction with their jobs [35-36].

Another factor in our study leading to job dissatisfaction was related to career advancement. This observation is supported by several studies which have found a strong relationship between opportunities for professional advancement and job satisfaction [23, 36-38]. Therefore, administrators of healthcare institutes need to support professional advancement of their employees by allowing them to develop higher skills to increase their productivity and make them feel more valuable.

In the late 1950s, Frederick Herzberg developed a well-known two-factor motivation-hygiene theory. According to this theory, job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are two distinct concepts [3]. On the basis of Herzberg theory, extrinsic factors, including organization policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relationships, and working conditions can reduce dissatisfaction, but do not necessarily lead to job satisfaction. On the other hand, intrinsic motivators, including achievement, recognition, responsibility and advancement can positively impact

job satisfaction [4]. In our study, a higher nurse satisfaction with intrinsic aspects of job was observed, including moral values and social service and a lower satisfaction was identified with extrinsic aspects of job such as compensation.

We identified no significant association between job satisfaction and demographic variables. This result is consistent with the findings of other studies that have shown little effect for age [20, 22,41], gender [20, 22, 41-42], level of education [43], work experience [23], and job status [42] on job satisfaction. Lack of relationship between job satisfaction and demographic and professional variables observed in present and several previous studies would be an indication of changing nature of factors affecting nurse job satisfaction along with rapid revolution of community and health systems, calling for development of new conceptual frameworks for valid assessment of nurse job satisfaction.

Study Limitations

Our study was a cross-sectional in nature. Hence it does not offer the possibility of causal conclusions from findings because we cannot rule out all alternative explanations. The sample was limited to a teaching hospital which limits generalizability of our results. In addition, our data

Table 2 The mean score of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire items

Matter of satisfaction	Mean \pm SD	Dissatisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Spearman Rho*
Moral values	4.17 \pm 0.86	12.1	87.9	0.34
Social service	3.82 \pm 1.01	23.9	76.1	0.38
Independence	3.66 \pm 1.06	29	71	0.46
Supervision T	3.57 \pm 1.14	35.7	64.3	0.58
Coworker	3.56 \pm 1.06	32.9	67.1	0.42
Activity	3.47 \pm 1.15	34.8	65.2	0.47
Supervision HR	3.41 \pm 1.25	39.1	60.9	0.59
Ability utilization	3.39 \pm 1.19	37.7	2.3	0.59
Authority	3.21 \pm 1.13	46.4	53.6	0.63
Variety	3.20 \pm 1.19	48.3	51.7	0.54
Achievement	3.01 \pm 1.31	53.1	46.9	0.74
Creativity	2.90 \pm 1.07	65	35	0.63
Working condition	2.85 \pm 1.25	66.4	33.6	0.57
Responsibility	2.85 \pm 1.06	68.4	31.6	0.69
Security	2.62 \pm 1.31	63.3	36.7	0.61
Recognition	2.52 \pm 1.26	72	28	0.59
Social status	2.43 \pm 1.29	69.3	30.7	0.66
Policies	2.41 \pm 1.69	81.2	18.8	0.65
Advancement	2.22 \pm 1.15	84.1	15.9	0.68
Compensation	1.64 \pm 0.95	91.8	8.2	0.57
Overall job satisfaction	3.03 \pm 0.67	52.1	47.9	1.00

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3 Multiple regression statistics on demographic variables

Variables	B	Odds ratio	CI95%	Sig
Age	-0.030	0.971	0.90-1.05	0.436
length of service	0.046	1.047	0.97-1.13	0.255
Job status	-0.277	0.758	0.39-1.45	0.405
Degree	-0.508	0.602	0.26-1.139	0.236
Gender	0.301	1.352	0.69-2.65	0.380

was obtained based on a subjective (self-reporting) evaluation. We recommend that future studies address both subjective and objective indices of job satisfaction.

Conclusions

From a descriptive point of view, improving payments

and offering opportunities for advancement are the priority factors in improving nurse job satisfaction. Lack of relationship between job satisfaction and conventional demographic and professional variables would indicate the changing nature of factors affecting job satisfaction among nurses, which call for further theoretical and empirical investigations.

Abbreviations

(MSQ): Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions

RM and NI designed the study. NI and GP were involved in data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the initial manuscript. RM revised and finalized the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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