

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG CRITICAL CARE NURSES IN AL BAHA, SAUDI ARABIA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background/Objective: The area of critical care is among the most stressful environments and affects the job satisfaction levels among critical care nurses. The aim of this study was to determine the job satisfaction levels and factors influencing job satisfaction among critical care nurses in Al Baha, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: This is a descriptive, cross-sectional study. It was conducted at four governmental hospitals in Al Baha from January to March 2015. Sixty nurses from critical care settings (such as intensive care units, emergency rooms, and operating rooms) were selected by convenience sampling. The data was collected using a questionnaire that consisted of two parts. The first part contained the demographic variables, including information about the nurses' age, level of education, place of work, and job satisfaction level (1. Very dissatisfied or 5. Very satisfied). The second part used a five Likert-type scale with 21 items, wherein the nurses were asked to determine the extent to which they perceived the listed factors important to their job satisfaction. The data was analyzed by the computerized method Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), English Version 20.

Results: The nurses who participated in the study displayed high levels of job satisfaction. All respondents considered the factors influencing their satisfaction levels as important (the mean was 4.4). The relation between nurses' ages and job satisfaction levels was significant ($p = 0.04$), while that between the place of work and job satisfaction levels was insignificant ($p = 0.008$).

Conclusion: The participating nurses demonstrated high levels of job satisfaction. Age was significantly related to job satisfaction; older nurses were found to be more satisfied with their jobs.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, factors, critical care nurses

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INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is defined as the beliefs and emotions individuals have about their job¹. It is affected by several variables. These include, but are not limited to, individual characteristics (such as age, gender, and level of experience) and the level of satisfaction with a specific aspect of work (such as the work itself, salaries, and hospital policies). Job satisfaction is strongly linked to the shortage of critical care nurses that exists globally². Given this dearth, the patient-to-nurse ratio worldwide could increase. This would result in increased

workload for the nurses, leaving them feeling overwhelmed, distressed, and dissatisfied with their jobs³. The consequences of this dissatisfaction would dilute the quality of patient care, decrease patient safety, increase financial cost from training and recruitment, and render medical institutions unable to meet the requirements of the accreditation standards⁴.

Job satisfaction was studied widely in Europe, the US, and Canada. Results indicated promotions, salaries, workload, autonomy, and the attitude of the nursing administration are all contributing factors to job satisfaction among nurses⁵. The result of these studies may not be significant for nurses in Saudi Arabia. Currently, a number of hospitals in Saudi Arabia seek

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international accreditation. The sense of prestige associated with an accreditation has little to do with the title and more to do with the recognition of the solution executed by the nursing manager to enhance nurses' job satisfaction, thus promoting retention, clinical excellence, quality, and patient satisfaction. As limited studies have been conducted on the subject in Saudi Arabia, the aim of this study was to determine the job satisfaction levels and factors influencing job satisfaction among critical care nurses in Al Baha, Saudi Arabia.

METHODS

A descriptive, cross-sectional design utilizing a questionnaire was selected to achieve the aim of this study. From January to March 2015, 60 nurses from critical care settings (such as intensive care units, emergency rooms, and operating rooms) were selected by convenience sampling from the four major governmental hospitals in Al Baha. The distribution of nurses was as follows: 20 from King Fahad Hospital, 18 from Baljurashi Hospital, 17 from Almandaj Hospital, and 5 from Algara Hospital.

The study was approved by the Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences at Al Baha University. The selected nurses were given a cover letter explaining the purpose and outcomes of the study, assuring them their participation would be voluntary and they held the right to withdraw from the study without any penalty. Furthermore, the nurses were assured all the information they provided would be kept confidential; the researcher held the right only to review the study and not use it for other purposes. The nurses who agreed to participate were requested to sign a written consent form.

The data collected by questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part of the demographic variables includes information about the nurses related to their age, level of education, job satisfaction level (1. Very dissatisfied or 5. Very satisfied), and place of work. The second part uses a five Likert-type scale with 21 items, wherein the nurses were asked to determine the extent to which they perceived the listed factors

important to their job satisfaction. The scale was adopted from a study conducted in China in 2007⁶. The job satisfaction questionnaire was adopted from the Likert scaling methods. An adopted version reliability coefficient of 0.87 was calculated from the answers of two groups of nurses (15 each from Mikhwah Hospital and Gilwah Hospital). The validity was evaluated by comparing the results of the two groups. The mean was 77.1 for the Mikhwah group and 66.4 for the Gilwah group. Data was entered and processed using the SPSS English Version 20.

RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, 60 nurses working in critical care settings (ICU, ER, or OR) at four governmental hospitals in Al Baha participated in this study. The nurses' qualifications primarily consisted of bachelor's degrees (75%), diplomas (23.3%), and just one master's degree (1.7%). They were 33 ± 9 years old and had worked for 11 ± 8 years.

As shown in Table 2, the nurses who participated in the study displayed high levels of job satisfaction. The respondents considered the factors influencing their satisfaction levels as important (the mean was 4.4).

Figure 1 indicates the level of satisfaction among the nurses increased with age. The relation between a nurse's age and job satisfaction level was significant ($p = 0.04$).

Figure 1. Relation between age and level of job satisfaction at Al Baha hospitals, 2015 (n = 60)

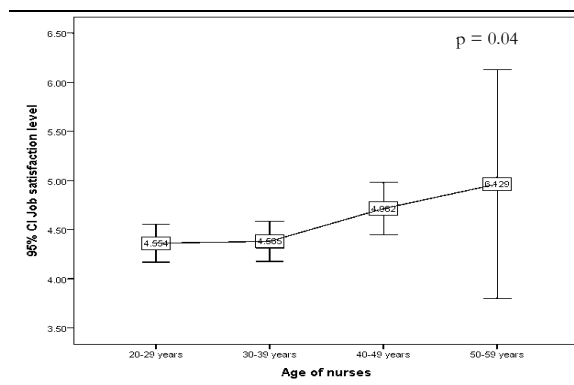


Figure 2 displays the relation between the place of work and job satisfaction. It was found the place of work was not an influencing factor

in the level of job satisfaction, but no significant differences were calculated ($p = 0.08$).

Figure 2. Relation between place of work and level of job satisfaction at Al Baha hospitals, 2015 (n = 60)

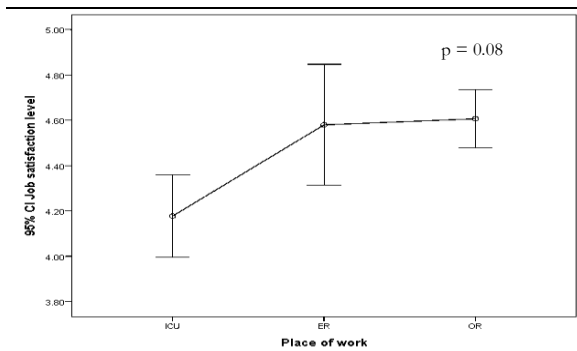


Figure 3 shows the relation between the years of experience and level of job satisfaction. It was found the years of experience were not an influencing factor in the level of job satisfaction ($p = 0.34$).

Figure 3. Relation between years of experiences and level of job satisfaction at Al Baha hospitals, 2015 (n = 60)

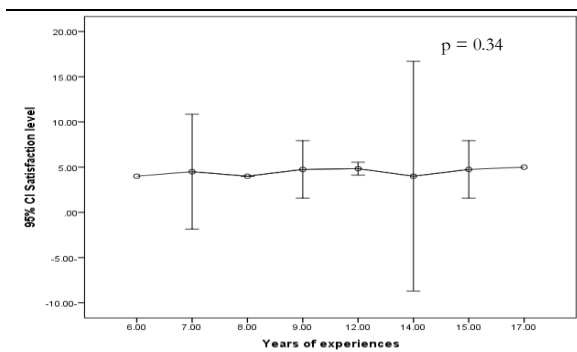


Figure 4 displays the relation between the level of qualification and job satisfaction.

relation was not found to be significant ($p = 0.12$).

Figure 4. Relation between qualification and level of job satisfaction at Al Baha hospitals, 2015 (n = 60)

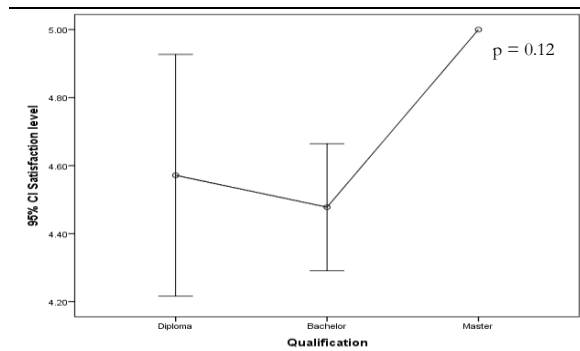


Figure 5 shows the relation between the nurse-to-patient ratio and job satisfaction ($p = 0.74$).

Figure 5. Relation between nurse-to-patient ratio and level of job satisfaction at Al Baha hospitals, 2015 (n = 60)

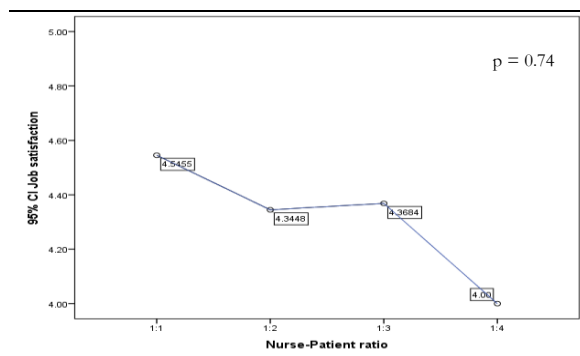


Table 1. Demographic characteristics of nurses under study at Al Baha hospitals, 2015 (n = 60)

Parameters	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Hospitals	King Fahad Hospital	20	33.3%
	Buljurashi Hospital	18	30.0%
	Almandaj Hospital	17	28.3%
	Algara Hospital	5	8.3%
Nurses' qualifications	Diploma	14	23.3%
	Bachelor	45	75.0%
	Master	1	1.7%
Work area	ICU	22	36.7%
	ER	23	38.3%
	OR	15	25.0%
Nurse-to-patient ratio	1:1	11	18.3%
	1:2	29	48.3%
	1:3	19	31.7%
	1:4	1	1.7%
Age	Mean		33
	SD		9
Years of experience	Mean		11
	SD		8

ICU = Intensive care unit, ER = Emergency room, OR = Operating room, SD = Standard deviation

Table 2. Factors influencing job satisfaction at Al Baha hospitals, 2015 (n = 60)

Cluster	Mean	SD
1. The feeling of fulfillment and satisfaction you get from your job	4.47	0.6
2. Recognition from the supervisor	4.30	0.6
3. Respect from co-workers	4.62	0.45
4. Feedback from the supervisor	4.22	0.6
5. Feedback from patients	4.23	0.8
6. Promotion	4.23	0.8
7. Opportunities for further learning, e.g., professional training	4.57	0.5
8. Career development	4.98	3.7
9. Responsibility allotted to you	4.42	0.7
10. Flexibility and independence	4.40	0.6
11. The feeling of being treated equally	4.45	0.8
12. Salary	4.60	0.6
13. The rules and routines of supervision	4.37	0.7
14. The comprehensive goals and guidelines in your hospital	4.40	0.8
15. The organizational climate	4.27	0.9
16. The quantity of work allotted to you (workload)	4.40	0.9
17. The equipment used in your hospital	4.50	0.8
18. The criticality	4.48	0.7
19. Relationships with doctors	4.47	0.8
20. Relationships with co-workers	4.45	0.8
21. Relationships with patients	4.40	0.9
Average perceived importance of factors affecting the satisfaction level	4.4	0.5

SD = Standard deviation

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted among nurses from four governmental hospitals in Al Baha. Sixty nurses from critical care settings (ICU, ER, or OR) at four governmental hospitals in Al Baha participated in this study. They were 33 ± 9 years of age and had worked for 11 ± 8 years, and most of them had bachelor's degrees in nursing.

It was found that critical care nurses in Al Baha were highly satisfied with their jobs, and ranked the factors influencing job satisfaction as important. These results were higher and in disagreement with findings from previous studies. For example, in a survey conducted, the majority of nurses serving in emergency departments in Addis Ababa (91.42%) were dissatisfied with their jobs. Several factors were identified as determinants for this dissatisfaction, such as income, working environment, and administration-related issues⁷. In another study conducted in Pakistan, 51% of nurses who worked in critical care units, 71.4% who worked in emergency departments, and 60% who worked in operating rooms were moderately satisfied with their jobs⁸. The difference in satisfaction levels could be due to the significant support extended by the Saudi

government to the healthcare sector to develop the healthcare system and nursing profession in the region. Another reason could be that nurses who work in critical care units have a great sense of responsibility. However, it is important to note that a nurse's intention to leave is a serious problem, and should be addressed and monitored closely.

In a current study, older nurses reported higher levels of job satisfaction. This result was similar to the findings of a study conducted in Kuwait, wherein older nurses and nurses in ICUs were more satisfied with their jobs⁹. These findings were inconsistent with the results of a study conducted in Pakistan, wherein young ICU nurses were more satisfied than older nurses⁸. This could be interpreted by the trend in the labor market in Saudi Arabia. It is difficult for older nurses, regardless of degree and specialization, to find employment in Saudi Arabia so they may have directly displayed high levels of dissatisfaction. Conversely, the fair treatment by the nursing administration and good promotions older nurses received could have contributed to their higher levels of satisfaction.

In our study, years of experience were not an influencing factor in the level of job satisfaction. We found nurses working in ORs were more satisfied than those serving in ICUs. These findings contradict the previous results in Kuwait, wherein nurses with more clinical experience were more satisfied with their jobs. In addition, nurses working in ICUs were more satisfied with their jobs than those working in ORs⁹.

On the contrary, our findings indicated nurses with diplomas enjoyed higher levels of job satisfaction than nurses with bachelor's degrees; this is consistent with the findings of the study conducted in Kuwait⁹. The possible explanation for our results could be that there was an insignificant difference in the salaries of those nurses who held diplomas and those who held bachelor's degrees at the surveyed hospitals.

Nurses who work in ICUs are exposed to various types of job stress¹⁰. In a study conducted in Oslo, Norway, it was found the workload and staff-to-patient ratio affected the job satisfaction among ICU nurses¹¹. Similarly, in our study, however, this was not statistically significant as the nurse-to-patient ratio was not found to have an influence on job satisfaction. Nurses assigned to a single patient were more satisfied than those assigned to two, three or four patients.

It could be concluded that the participating nurses expressed high levels of job satisfaction. The levels of satisfaction were significantly higher among older nurses.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

We declare this study is one of our own works. It was not submitted to any journal. We also declare we have no competing interests related to this study.

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