

Job Satisfaction of Nursing Students Working at a Pakistani Military Hospital in Lahore, Pakistan

MUHAMMAD ASHRAF CHAUDHRY¹, NOOR UL AIN LASHARI², DANIYAL ASIM KHAN³, JAVARIA NOSHEEN⁴, JAVED RAFIQUE MALIK⁵, AYESHA NAVEED⁶

¹Professor and Head of Department of Community Medicine, CMH Lahore Medical College, Lahore

²Assistant Professor of English, Institute of Nursing, CMH Lahore Medical College, Lahore

³Medical Officer, Rural Dispensary Kalyam Awan, District Health Authority, Rawalpindi

⁴Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, CMH, Lahore

⁵Professor of Surgery, Department of Surgery, University of Lahore Medical College, Lahore

⁶Assistant professor, School of Health Professions Education, CMH Lahore Medical College & Institute of Dentistry, Lahore

Correspondence to Dr. Muhammad Ashraf Chaudhry, Email: drmachaudhry@gmail.com, Phone: 03135598859

ABSTRACT

Aims: To assess overall job satisfaction of military student nurses in a tertiary care hospital in Lahore and to assess their satisfaction with salary, working environment, attitudes and behaviours of other healthcare professionals, patients and administration.

Methodology: This analytical cross-sectional study was carried out at the Institute of Nursing at CMH Lahore Medical College from January to March 2022. Convenience sampling was used to select 152 nursing students enrolled at the college. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on job satisfaction in terms of variables like satisfaction with salary, work environment, workload, attitude of healthcare professionals, patients, and management. SPSS 20 was used for data analysis.

Results: Out of 152 nurses, the majority, 95 (62.5%) expressed overall job satisfaction, with 85 (55.9%) and 126 (82.8%) being satisfied with their salary and working environment respectively. The majority of nurses also expressed satisfaction with attitudes of healthcare professionals, patients, and administration. However, the majority had reservations over not getting enough time to rest and insufficient holidays.

Conclusion: The majority of nurses from our study appeared satisfied with their job, salary, and overall working environment. The majority also expressed satisfaction with attitudes of their healthcare colleagues and patients. It is recommended to ensure better job satisfaction by reducing workload and providing entertainment facilities.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Nursing, Burnout

INTRODUCTION

Let the beauty we love be what we do.¹ Sufi poet Rumi wrote these lines in the 13th Century, but they still hold true today¹. Life is a precious gift, and a purposeful life is what most people aspire to. Stephen Hawking, the quadriplegic physicist celebrated worldwide for his work on the Universe said, 'Work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it². Indeed, there is joy and a sense of achievement from a job well done. The 'pleasure you get from doing your job' is known as job satisfaction³. Job satisfaction has immense importance in the healthcare sector, which basically depends on its human resource, especially on nurses and midwives who constitute half the global workforce, with demand rising continuously. In addition to the current strength of 27 million, an additional 9 million nurses and midwives will be required globally by 2030 to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A United Nations (UN) commission has concluded that investment in health and social sectors give a 3-fold return in the form of better health and financial security. Nurses are essential to achieve these outcomes as they play a central role at all levels of health care⁴. However, the unfortunate reality is that there is an acute shortage of nurses worldwide, which has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. A US staffing firm that analysed data from over 400,000 nursing profiles and surveyed over 2500 nurses concluded that more than a third planned to leave the field entirely by the end of 2022; the major reason cited by 44% respondents was excessive stress⁵. Shortage of nurses can cause healthcare systems to collapse. This can be catastrophic for a country like Pakistan which is one of the five countries with the largest deficit of nurses and already facing a shortage of 1.3 million nurses before the pandemic⁶.

This issue has to be addressed on a war footing, so it is important to look into the reasons that are discouraging nurses from pursuing the field they worked so hard to get into. Nursing is one of the most demanding fields that is both emotionally and

physically exhausting, making it susceptible to burnout, characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and decreased personal achievement⁷. It requires passion and a high level of job satisfaction in order to sustain the pressure. While a certain level of stress is desirable for high performance, excessive prolonged stress can lead to job dissatisfaction. This has consequences for the individual as well as for the organization. For the former, it negatively impacts health and well-being, and for the latter it may lead to low morale and high staff turnover, eventually impacting patient care⁸. Multiple studies have shown that job satisfaction of nurses is a key element in maintaining desired outcomes of quality healthcare delivery, thereby ensuring patient satisfaction and reducing staff turnover⁹. In the nursing profession, Liu stressed three attributes that best describe job satisfaction: 'the fulfilment of desired needs within the work environment, happiness or gratifying emotional response towards working condition, and job values or equity¹⁰'.

In his landmark work during the late 1950s, Herzberg described two categories of factors affecting job satisfaction, short term external factors that are related to the work environment e.g., company policies, job security, salary, and interpersonal relations and the more important intrinsic factors including challenging work, responsibility, achievement, and opportunities for advancement and growth¹¹. Many studies have highlighted variables that affect job satisfaction and organisations can concentrate on them to improve outcomes. Elsherbeny and El-Masry showed that improving communication between colleagues and better attitude of the nursing supervisor can improve satisfaction levels of nurses¹². In a recent systematic review, 88% studies showed a positive correlation between leadership style and job satisfaction with transformational style of leadership, characterised by charisma and positive relationships, having the most effect. Such leaders inspire and motivate their employees to perform beyond expectations⁹. In contrast, working with a toxic manager predicted dissatisfaction with the job and higher absenteeism, to the extent of causing intention to quit the profession¹³. A report on dealing with staffing shortages in US nurses recommends that organisations should provide comfortable working environment

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including flexible and competent scheduling, better teamwork, attractive pay and opportunities for career growth⁵. Proper scheduling that ensures equitable and fair distribution of work is usually a strength of military hospitals and a study in an Army hospital in Indonesia showed a significant correlation of comprehensive scheduling management with a higher level of job satisfaction among nurses. The study recommends that nursing managers improve their capability and proactively establish a fair scheduling policy ensuring a fair nurse-patient ratio and adequately compensated working hours¹⁴.

Many studies have been done worldwide addressing job satisfaction among nurses, but most are old, and very few have been conducted in Pakistan, especially in recent years. Therefore, we decided to conduct one such study that could throw light on the prevailing situation regarding job satisfaction in the Pakistani nursing community. The results could assist healthcare institutions to have systems in place that can ensure job satisfaction and staff retention, ultimately ensuring high quality patient care.

The aim of the present study was to assess the overall job satisfaction of military student nurses in a tertiary care hospital in Lahore, and to assess their satisfaction with salary, working environment, attitudes and behaviours of other healthcare professionals, patients and administration.

METHODOLOGY

This was an analytical cross-sectional study carried out among 152 nursing students at the Institute of Nursing (ION) of Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Lahore Medical College, selected by Convenience Sampling, from January to March 2022. All the nurses enrolled in the Institute, all of them single females, were eligible and were invited to take part in the study. Participation was voluntary and informed verbal consent was taken from the respondents and complete confidentiality assured. Ethical permission for the study was taken from the Ethical Review Committee of the College (#.4412 /ERC/CMH/LMC). Job satisfaction was defined as satisfaction with salary, work environment, attitude and behaviour of healthcare providers, patients and the administration¹⁵. Data collection was done via a self-designed questionnaire which was based on one previously used in a published study¹⁵. Reliability was checked via Cronbach Alpha (.69) and validity of the study was ensured by getting expert opinion of public health specialists. The questionnaire consisted of four sections consisting of closed-ended questions. The first one pertained to demographic data i.e., age, place of residence and year of study. Section B consisted of questions regarding working hours, salary, satisfaction with salary, working environment and entertainment facilities. Section C ascertained opinions regarding attitude of healthcare workers, patients and administration. The last part included questions about workload e.g., night duties, time for rest and holidays, and overall job satisfaction.

SPSS Version 20 was used to analyse the data. Qualitative variables were depicted using descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage. Mean and Standard deviation were used to depict quantitative variables. Chi-square test of significance was used to see the association between different variables. P-value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

This study had a sample size of 152 with 100% response rate. The mean age of nurses was 20.7±1.5 years with maximum of 24 and minimum age of 17 years. Mean working hours per day were 9.92 and mean salary of respondents was Rupees 24138/month. Demographic details are given in Table 1. Out of 152 student nurses, the majority expressed overall job satisfaction and was also satisfied with the salary and working environment. Details are shown in Table 2.

Satisfaction with attitude of doctors, fellow nurses, paramedical staff, male patients, female patients, and

administration is shown in Table 3, where again the majority expressed satisfaction. One hundred students (65.8%) were not satisfied with the entertainment facilities provided. The majority of students, 112 (73.7%) felt they were not getting enough rest, and 140 (92.1%) complained of not getting enough holidays. The majority, 111 (73%) found the job tiring. Most of them, 101 (66.4%) said they had to do 10-12 night-duty shifts monthly. Overall, 95 students out of 152 (62.5%) expressed satisfaction with their jobs. From the residents of rural areas, 15 (34.9%) expressed satisfaction with their salary package, compared to 70 (64.2%) residents of urban areas. Significant association was found between type of residence & satisfaction with salary (p .001). However, no significant association was found between year of study, salary package, and working environment with overall job satisfaction (p>0.05).

Table 1: Demographic data of nursing students (n=152)

	Frequency (f)	%age
Age (in years)		
17-20 years	74	48.7
21-24 years	78	51.3
Total	152	100
Residence		
Urban	109	71.7
Rural	43	28.3
Total	152	100
Year of Study		
1 st Year	41	27.0
2 nd Year	32	21.1
3 rd Year	41	27.0
4 th Year	38	25.0
Total	152	100

Table 2: Nursing students' satisfaction with job, salary and working environment (n = 152)

Satisfaction with Attribute	Yes	No
Overall job satisfaction	95 (62.5%)	57(37.5%)
Salary	85 (55.9%)	67(44.1%)
Working Environment	126 (82.8%)	26(17.1%)

Table 3: Nursing students' satisfaction with attitude of doctors, fellow nurses, paramedical staff, male patients, female patients, and administration (n=152)

Satisfaction with Attribute	Yes	No
Doctors	105 (69.1%)	47(30.9%)
Fellow nurses	141 (92.8%)	11 (7.2%)
Paramedical staff	123 (80.9%)	29(19.1%)
Male patients	110 (72.4%)	42(27.6%)
Female patients	108 (71.1%)	44(28.9%)
Administration	84 (55.3%)	68(44.7%)

DISCUSSION

In our study, the majority of nurses (62.5%) were satisfied with their job, whereas 37.5% were dissatisfied. These results contrast to a study conducted in a public and a private hospital of Rawalpindi & Islamabad, which found 80.4% nurses satisfied with their career¹⁶. A survey of nurses from a university hospital in Egypt showed over 60% of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with their jobs¹². A study from three tertiary care hospitals in Rawalpindi showed the majority of nurses (65.71%) were dissatisfied with their jobs; only 12.86% nurses were highly satisfied and another 21.43% were satisfied with their jobs¹⁵. Job satisfaction rate among nurses from an army hospital in Jakarta was 67.11% but 28.8% were dissatisfied with their salary¹⁴. Our study showed that almost 56% of nursing students were satisfied with their salary, with those from urban areas appearing more satisfied with their salary compared to rural ones (64.2% versus 34.9%) with this difference being statistically significant. A similar study from Rawalpindi showed that 48.57% nurses were satisfied with their salary¹⁵. The reason for higher satisfaction of military nurses with their salary could be the fact that they enjoy fringe benefits such as free boarding and messing, free transport and a safe and comfortable living and working environments. In a survey

from US nurses, 27% showed inadequate compensation being the second biggest reason for dissatisfaction after stress⁵. Gulavani and Shinde reported from an Indian tertiary care hospital that only 63% nurses felt satisfied with the compensation they received for their work⁸. The respondents from the present study also indicated dissatisfaction with the entertainment facilities provided to them.

From our study, 69.10% nurses expressed satisfaction with the attitude of doctors. Similarly, over 70% were satisfied with the attitude of male and female patients. These results are similar with a study carried out in Rawalpindi where 65.71% nurses were satisfied with the attitude of male patients; however, a greater number, 80% nurses were satisfied with the attitude of female patients. However, only 47.14% expressed satisfaction with the attitudes of the patients' attendants¹⁵. These results can probably be explained with the fact that males, the dominating members of our society, behave gently with females and thus display nice manners when dealing with nurses who are mostly female in our setup. Almost two third nurses from a US survey reported being subjected to verbal or physical abuse by patient or their attendants⁵. From an Indian hospital, 49% nurses reported experiencing conflict with doctors, and another 48% felt stressed due to interaction with patients and their attendants⁸.

Most of the nurses from our study (82.8%) expressed satisfaction with the general working environment. This could be attributable to the fact that they were working in an Army hospital where Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place, ensuring fair and practical scheduling, good compensation packages, and opportunity for career enhancement including higher education opportunities. All these measures help the organization to run smoothly and provide optimum services to patients, and at the same time ensure high worker retention rates¹⁴. In spite of the positive feedback regarding working environment, the majority of the nurses (73.7%) from our study felt they were not getting enough rest and were overworked. An overwhelming majority (92%) also complained about not getting enough holidays. This is a very important aspect for managers to look into, as quality work requires adequate rest and recreation to be productive, otherwise one runs the risk of burnout. A Rawalpindi study also recommended that workloads be reduced along with better compensation¹⁵.

A small sample size from a single institution along with use of Convenience Sampling for data collection is the major limitation of this study as this prevents generalizability of the results to nurses in Pakistan. The responses of the nurses may include under-reporting or over-reporting. Larger randomized studies, including qualitative ones, are recommended to determine the level of job satisfaction of nurses all over Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The majority of nurses from our study appeared satisfied with their job, salary, and overall working environment. The majority also expressed satisfaction with attitudes of their healthcare colleagues and patients. It is recommended to ensure better job satisfaction by reducing workload and providing entertainment facilities.

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