

An Investigation of Healthcare Employees' Job Satisfaction: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract

Aim and Background: The level of job satisfaction and stress experienced by healthcare employees is a major factor in turnover rates for the profession. It is worthwhile to investigate the levels of job satisfaction experienced by Healthcare Employees and the factors that contribute to that satisfaction in the context of different hospitals in Saudi Arabia, so that the results can be examined to those obtained in public hospitals and private hospitals located in other countries.

Design: A cross-sectional questionnaire based study was done among Saudi male and female health care professionals to investigate the impact of job satisfaction on health service quality. The participants were chosen using a random selection procedure.

Results: Two hundred seventy-five employees participated, with a 95.56% response rate. The overall job satisfaction rate was 41.46%. Job satisfaction was connected with compensation (benefits) (beta 0.448 [95% CI 0.341 to 0.554]), acknowledgment by management (beta 0.132 [95% CI 0.035 to 0.228]), and potential for advancement (beta 0.123 [95% CI 0.020 to 0.226]). A unit increase in income, incentives, and management recognition resulted with 0.459 (95% CI 0.356 to 0.561) and 0.156 (95% CI 0.065 to 0.247) unit increases in work satisfaction, respectively.

Conclusion: Overall, health workers were dissatisfied with their jobs. Salary and incentives, management recognition, career possibilities, and patient appreciation were all significant indicators of employment satisfaction.

Keywords: healthcare services, healthcare employees, job satisfaction, job performance.

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Introduction

Despite the fact that human power is the backbone for the provision of quality health care for the population and high level of professional satisfaction among health workers earns high dividends such as higher worker force retention and patient's satisfaction, there is limited amount of literature in the areas related to factors affecting job satisfaction and retention¹. The job satisfaction of health care workers has become an important topic. Job satisfaction is the degree to which employees have a positive affective orientation towards employment by an organization. Job satisfaction has been conceptualized both globally (general satisfaction with a job) and dimensionally (satisfaction with specific dimensions of a job such as remuneration, promotion, and relationships with colleagues)². Job satisfaction in hospital departments is of interest because it is an important determinant of the performance of health professionals. Job satisfaction has been linked to health worker motivation, stress, burnout, absenteeism, intention to leave, and turnover.

Within the global health care system healthcare employees are the largest group of professionals, with a total of 19.3 million nursing and midwifery personnel in the world³. Global concern to growing shortage of registered healthcare employees⁴. Understanding factor influencing on job satisfaction give chance to leaders to development of strategy to retain healthcare employees and maintain their institution with shortage of staff.⁵

Considering the relevance of human resources in an organization's success⁶. Employee satisfaction and motivation are becoming increasingly important in businesses. Many studies have been conducted to determine the impact of job happiness and reward on employee productivity. The goal this study was to provide description of job satisfaction of healthcare employees and the factors influencing it. Job satisfaction have a major role in health care system which lead staff to stay or leave their position⁷. Employee's performance and quality of health care⁸. Showed that job satisfaction is a key factor in predicting who will miss work. It throws

off schedules, forces companies to hire more people than they need, and raises costs. Absenteeism is also strongly linked to turnover, which is when an employee leaves the company.

Since the shortage of healthcare employees is global problem and Saudi Arabia suffers from this problem and the direction of many of the healthcare employees is to leave the hospital, studying the job satisfaction of among healthcare employees working in some different hospitals in Madinah Region, Saudi Arabia. Healthcare employees job satisfaction should be a concern to any health care institution⁹.

With job dissatisfaction, healthcare employees may leave their jobs or change their careers. The replacement of experienced and licensed professionals is costly and time consuming. There is paucity of studies conducted in Saudi Arabia setting on job satisfaction and intention on healthcare employees to leave different hospitals in Madinah Region, Saudi Arabia¹⁰.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the levels of job satisfaction, job stress, and quit intentions among healthcare employees working in different hospitals, and to identify the factors that contribute to these constructs.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Herzberg's Theory of Motivation was used as the theoretical framework for this study. This theory postulates that intrinsic and extrinsic factors enable individuals to satisfy their personal needs and experience job satisfaction in a work environment¹¹. Herzberg's Theory of Motivation postulates that the phenomenon of job satisfaction and/or no satisfaction, is the function of two need systems, namely, extrinsic or hygiene and intrinsic or motivation factors. These two groups of factors enable employees to avoid unpleasant situations and discomfort and to meet their personal development needs¹¹. (In terms of Herzberg's theory the term "no satisfaction" is used, not dissatisfaction, because the lack of satisfaction is implied, not the state of being "dissatisfied").

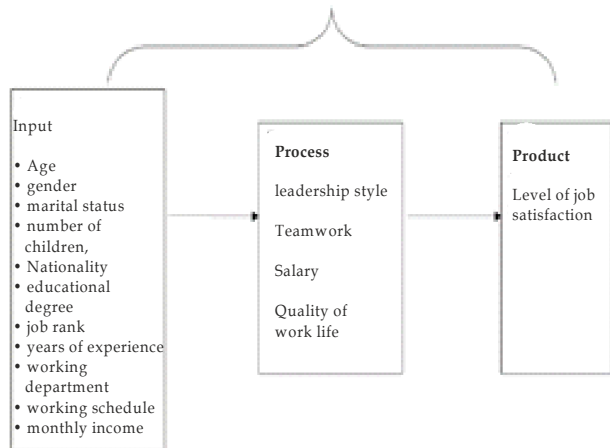


Figure 1: Energy: A Concept Analysis Model

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is important concept for health administrators¹⁸. Job satisfaction has been defined as the employee's expectation of what their job provides to them¹². Lee and Cummings defined job satisfaction, generally as a feeling, experience and expectation of what a job should be, based on personal and work-related factors. Healthcare leadership style play an important role on job satisfaction^{13,14}. There was significant relation between job satisfaction and leadership styles like authentic leadership effect directly or indirectly¹⁵ task-oriented stronger than relationship-oriented¹⁶ and healthcare employees more satisfied with transformational leadership rather than transactional leadership style¹⁷. Higher level of job satisfaction connected with high teamwork at their workplace. Absence of teamwork leads to instability of the healthcare system which reduces job satisfaction¹⁸.

Several studies have found improve healthcare employees job satisfaction could be by increase employees' salaries¹⁹ found lowest satisfaction with pay. Palmer showed in his study most of employee's dissatisfaction because their pay. Increase job satisfaction and decrease turnover of new graduates can be thro enhance quality work environments²⁰. Workload was most frequently workplace stressor²¹ There were negative relations between stress and job satisfaction (Strategies should be developed by healthcare leaders to increase level of job satisfaction²².

Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional, quantitative research design. It took place in public and private hospitals of Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire was piloted in January 2020 using a small group of 22 Saudi and non-Saudi employees. Healthcare employees were recruited at public and private hospitals using random sampling. A sample size of 275 people was chosen after obtaining consent for voluntary participation, as no personal identifiers or information was gathered. The study included all Saudi citizens' health care workers, while participants who were non-Saudi citizens were excluded. An online questionnaire was developed, face validity, content validity, and a pilot study were done. All Saudi health care employees were given access to a well-designed online questionnaire, which they were instructed to fill out and submit on their own time. Data was analyzed using IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, version 18.0. The healthcare employees' job satisfaction, job stress, demographic and job-related factors were summarized using descriptive statistics. Pearson's correlation was utilized to investigate the association between job satisfaction, job stress, intention to resign, and demographic data such as age in internal data. The Spearman's Rho test was used to analyze the relationship between job satisfaction, job stress, and healthcare employees' socio-demographic variables such as education level (in ordinal level) with no violation of variance homogeneity ($p > 0.05$) seen among the data. If they were found to be connected, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was used to assess the differences in levels of job satisfaction and/or job stress amongst subgroups in terms of their demographic variables. The significant level of all statistical tests was set at 0.05.

Result

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, with 280 completed and returned (a response rate of 74.3%). Finally, 275 questionnaires were used for data analysis, with five deleted due to substantial missing data (>5% of items in either the whole set of questionnaires or one scale). The final respondents constituted 21% of the overall target population of healthcare employees.

Job Satisfaction, Job Stress and Intention to Quit

Table 1 summarizes the means and standard deviations of the IWS (work satisfaction) and ASQ (job stress). In Cook et. al. (1981) study, the mean total scores of the IWS and ASQ were 3.81 (SD=0.37; possible score range 1-7) and 24.04 (SD=3.74; possible score range=16-32), respectively, showing a moderate degree of overall job satisfaction in healthcare employees and a below normative ASQ score of 33.23 (SD=5.0). The IWS's 'Professional status' (mean=4.52, SD=0.68) and the ASQ's 'Job-induced strain' (mean=11.22, SD=2.11) subscales had the highest mean scores. Among the IWS subscales, 'Task demand' had the lowest mean score (mean=3.07, SD=0.73).

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of IWS (N=275).

Instrument	Mean	SD
IWS (1-7)^	3.81#	0.37
Professional status (1-7)	4.52#	0.68
Pay (1-7)	4.27#	0.71
Autonomy (1-7)	3.95#	0.66
Organizational policy (1-7)	3.83#	0.71
Interaction (1-7)	3.34#	0.43
Task requirement (1-7)	3.07#	0.73
ASQ (16-32)	24.04	3.74
JIT (7-14)	11.22	2.11
ST (5-10)	6.93	1.46
GFU (4-8)	5.89	1.00

According to the ASQ item scores, over 70% of the healthcare employees said they "worked under a great lot of anxiety" and "had problems getting to sleep or staying asleep," and 64% said "their employment directly harmed their health." According to the MQAQ (intention to quit) scores, the average intention to quit score among healthcare employees was 3.22 (SD = 1.39; possible score range 1-7), indicating a moderate level of desire to leave the institution. However, according to hospital human resources data, the real turnover rate of healthcare employees over a six-month period was 2.7%.

Job Stress and Intention to Quit Related to Job Satisfaction

Pearson's correlation test results are shown in Table 2 for the mean scores of the IWS (job

satisfaction) and its subscales, the ASQ (work stress) and its subscales, and the MOAQ (intention to quit). Overall, these healthcare employees' job satisfaction was found to be adversely linked with job stress and intention to quit (both p=0.01). Furthermore, the IWS mean score was negatively connected with all three ASQ subscales (JIT: r= -0.392, p= 0.01; ST: r= -0.338, p=0.01; GFU: r= -0.207, p= 0.05); whereas the MOAQ (intention to quit) mean score was favorably correlated with all three ASQ (job stress) subscales (JIT: r= 0.405, p= 0.01; ST: r= 0.386, p= 0.01; GFU: r= 0.200, p= 0.05)

Table 2. Correlation of job satisfaction with job stress and intention to quit (n=275).

Correlation of job satisfaction with job stress and intention to quit (n=275)		
	ASQ	MOAQ
IWS	-0.409*	-0.461*
Pay	-0.189*	-0.291*
Autonomy	-0.431*	-0.453*
Task requirement	-0.243*	-0.239*
Organizational policy	-0.239*	-0.304*
Professional status	-0.267*	-0.320*
Interaction	-0.026	0.031
ASQ	--	0.368*
JIT	0.465*	0.405*
ST	0.386*	0.386*
GFU	0.407*	0.200*

Relationships Between healthcare employees Job Satisfaction and Socio-Demographic Variables

The findings of the correlation tests between job satisfaction and socio-demographic variables of the employee respondents in this study are shown in Table 3. Age, post-registration experience, and working experience in the hospital under study were all substantially and positively correlated with overall job satisfaction (p=0.01), as well as the subscales 'Pay' and 'Autonomy' (p values = 0.05 or 0.01). Their job experience was positively associated to the 'Interaction' subscale (p=0.05); their greatest qualification was negatively related to the 'Organizational policy' subscale (p=0.05); and their rank position was positively related to the 'Pay' subscale (p=0.01). Employee to- employee interaction was positively connected with age (r=0.258, p=0.01),

post-registration experience ($r=0.206$, $p=0.05$), and working experience in a private hospital ($r=0.214$,

$p=0.05$) in terms of healthcare employees' satisfaction with 'Interaction.'

Table 3: Correlations between healthcare employees' job satisfaction and socio-demographic characteristics.

	Age+ (n=124)	Post registration experience (n=272)	Working experience in the hospital+	Highest qualification# (n=269)	Rank# (n=275)
IWS	0.244*	0.195*	0.213*	-0.156	0.118
Pay	0.275*	0.227*	0.192*	0.073	0.307*
Organizational policy	0.063	0.014	0.021	-0.221*	0.001
Autonomy	0.249*	0.214*	0.256*	-0.080	0.150
Task requirement	0.056	0.074	0.083	-0.108	-0.001
Professional status	0.068	0.026	0.011	-0.040	0.034
Interaction	0.164	0.140	0.191*	-0.073	0.071

Discussions

In our study, healthcare employees in a Saudi private hospital reported overall moderate job satisfaction, with a mean IWS score of 3.81 (SD = 0.37, possible range of 1-7). Comparing the findings to a comparable study conducted in Hong Kong by Lee to assess the job satisfaction of over 300 healthcare employees in two public hospitals. With a mean score of 3.46 and a standard deviation of roughly 0.8, work satisfaction in private hospitals was better than in state hospitals. The findings indicated that healthcare employees in western countries had a more positive attitude toward their working environment, which could be attributed to small employee -patient ratios in most clinical units and better professional development, autonomy, and interdisciplinary collaboration in countries such as the United States and England.

Salary was also found to be a major determinant in employee happiness, ranking second only to benefits in this survey. There hasn't been consistency between this result and other studies. In Lee's research, for instance, salaries ranked fourth but were found to be the least satisfying in the United States, Ireland, and Australia. This discrepancy may be explained, at least in part, by the fact that salaries in private Saudi hospitals are significantly higher than those in public hospitals both in Saudi and abroad. Possibly higher daily expenditures and tax payments in western countries could account for the reported

decreased satisfaction with salary compared to Saudi Arabia. As a result, healthcare employees in other developed nations can often count on a greater wage to make up for the challenges of working irregular hours, performing night shifts, and paying a disproportionate share of their income toward social welfare and security.

Employees job satisfaction was found to have a strong inverse relationship with both job stress and quit intent, which is consistent with previous research. Heavy workload, shift duty, and poor interpersonal relationship were identified by another study²³ as characteristics that negatively impacted job satisfaction. Since some of these factors were also identified as the source of job related stress, it is hypothesized that job stress and heavy workload might contribute to low job satisfaction among healthcare employees, while poor interpersonal relationship and interaction between healthcare employees and other healthcare professionals would eventually exacerbate the situation, and therefore increase their intention to quit. Future studies should examine how the interplay of such variables affects healthcare employees' retention.

Furthermore, a few demographic parameters, such as healthcare employees' age, years of experience, and working experience in the hospital, are highly and positively connected with job satisfaction of the study. Younger healthcare employees and those with less work experience may

have more difficulty adjusting to and cooperating in workplace conditions, as well as fewer gratifying experiences and less agency compared to their more senior colleagues.

Conclusion

Relationships between demographic variables and healthcare employees' reports of job satisfaction, stress, and intent to leave were also examined. In this private hospital, healthcare employees reported average levels of job stress, job dissatisfaction, and job intention. Stress at work was correlated negatively with both job satisfaction and a desire to leave the company. Moreover, the results of this study indicated that healthcare employees with more years of experience in hospitals reported higher levels of job satisfaction, both in terms of pay and professional freedom in clinical settings. They also felt less stress on the job and had more opportunities to socialize with other medical professionals. Healthcare employees with bachelor's or master's degrees reported less satisfaction with organizational policies than healthcare employees with less education. Administrators of private hospitals are urged to establish strategic ways to boost job satisfaction and to lessen the impact of job stress on the intention to quit in an effort to lower the cost of recruiting and training new staff in the healthcare system. There needs to be more investigation into the factors that contribute to the retention or turnover of healthcare employees, as well as studies on job satisfaction in large samples of healthcare employees working in public and private hospitals and/or community setting.

Ethical Consideration

The study was adhered to the ethical principles by the Research Ethical Committee. The research study was conducted after obtaining official written approval from the Institutional Review Board, Directorate of General Affairs, Najran. After providing a complete explanation of the aim and the nature of the study. Informed consent was obtained from the study samples after providing them with details about the nature of the study including the benefits and risks. Participants were informed that the study is voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw without any responsibility. Moreover,

they were assured that their data are coded, and their personal information is kept confidential.

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