

## ความพึงพอใจในงานของพยาบาลที่โรงพยาบาลทั่วไป ประจำจังหวัดแห่งหนึ่งของประเทศไทย

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### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยเชิงบรรยายนี้ศึกษาความพึงพอใจในงานของพยาบาล จำนวน 270 คน ในโรงพยาบาลทั่วไปแห่งหนึ่งในประเทศไทย เก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสำรวจความพึงพอใจในงานของสเปคเตอร์ (2001) ที่แปลเป็นภาษาไทยโดยเหิงยีนพีทาน (2011) ด้วยกระบวนการแปลย้อนกลับ ตรวจสอบความเที่ยงของเครื่องมือในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ด้วยค่าสัมประสิทธิ์แอลฟาของครอนบาคได้ค่าเท่ากับ 0.94 ผลการวิจัยพบว่า พยาบาลทุกแผนกพึงพอใจในงานภาพรวมระดับกลาง ยกเว้นพยาบาลในแผนกรวมสามแผนกอยู่ในระดับพึงพอใจ และความพึงพอใจของพยาบาลแต่ละแผนกมีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ เมื่อพิจารณาความพึงพอใจเป็นรายด้าน พบว่า พยาบาลพึงพอใจในการนิเทศ เพื่อนร่วมงาน ลักษณะของงาน และการสื่อสาร และพึงพอใจในระดับกลางในค่าตอบแทน การส่งเสริมความก้าวหน้า และผลตอบแทนที่เป็นรางวัลตามผลงาน แต่ไม่พึงพอใจในผลประโยชน์ที่ได้รับนอกเหนือจากค่าจ้างและเงินเดือน

**คำสำคัญ:** ความพึงพอใจในงานของพยาบาล แบบสำรวจความพึงพอใจในงาน

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## Job satisfaction among nurses working at a provincial general hospital in Vietnam

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### Abstract

This descriptive study investigated job satisfaction of 270 nurses at a provincial general hospital in Vietnam. The data were collected by a job satisfaction survey which was developed by Spector (2001) and Vietnamese translated by Nguyen Phi Tan (2011) with back translation process. The reliability of the instrument in this study tested by Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.94. The study findings showed that the overall job satisfaction of nurses in each department was neutral except job satisfaction of nurses in three combined departments (TCD) was at a satisfaction level. The satisfaction levels of nurses in different departments were statistically different. When considering in each domain of job satisfaction, nurses satisfied with supervision, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. They had neutral levels of satisfaction in pay, promotion, and contingent rewards, but dissatisfied with fringe benefits.

**keywords:** nurse job satisfaction; job satisfaction survey

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## Introduction

Nurses, the largest group of staff within a country's health care system, have a high turnover and shortage.<sup>1-4</sup> Subsequently, their job satisfaction is very crucial. Previous studies indicated that nurse job satisfaction contributed to outcomes of patients, nurses, and organizations. Nurse job satisfaction had positive impacts on patient outcomes such as patient satisfaction and health-care associated infections and was negatively correlated with nurses' turnover intention.<sup>5,6</sup> Increasing nurse job satisfaction enhanced organizational commitment of nurses. As a result, decreasing nurses' turnover intention and increasing nurses' organizational commitment help to retain nurses and decrease nursing shortage in health care organizations. Moreover, nurses who satisfied in their job had been shown to have positive affects with a nurse's personal life satisfaction and nurses' health.<sup>7,8</sup>

It's been mentioned that job satisfaction is a multifaceted phenomenon linked to the work environment, supervision, and management. A plethora of studies have reported that factors affecting job satisfaction among nurses are not much different across countries and socio-economic settings.<sup>9-12</sup> The common factors affecting job satisfaction include salary, institutional incentive, interaction with patients, co-workers and managers, workload and task requirements, opportunities for self and job advancement and autonomy, working conditions, organizational policies, recognition, and job security.<sup>11-13</sup>

In Vietnam the public health system is divided into three levels: central, provincial, and grassroots. As such, nurses are important part at every level as well as center of national healthcare improvement strategies. However, the situation of nurse's job satisfaction issue remains crucial but is

not known at current time. A study conducted in Vietnam in 2005 indicated that only 49.1% of Vietnamese nurses working in central and district hospitals were generally satisfied with their job and wages, career value and working conditions were the issues of lowest satisfaction whereas colleague relationships and family/relatives' supports resulted in higher levels of satisfaction.<sup>14</sup> The researcher is working in General Hospital which is a provincial-level hospital in Binh Dinh province and is a tertiary care hospital with the number of patients about 1500 patients. Six hundred and thirty-seven nurses are working in the hospital. In the past 5 years, the hospital has recruited more than 200 newly graduated nursing staff to work in the hospital, while many elderly nurses are retired. In 2017, there were 20 nurses left the hospital to work elsewhere. The researcher interviewed five of them about the reasons of leaving the hospital. The answers were too low fringe benefit, crowded patients and tight, and old environment. However, no study has been conducted in General Hospital at Binh Dinh province. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate job satisfaction level and differences of job satisfaction among nurses in different departments at General Hospital, Binh Dinh province. It's been expected that the results of this study will benefit nurse administrators to understand the dissatisfaction issues and implement the solving strategies. In turn, the quality of nursing care to the patients may be enhanced.

## Objectives of the study

1. To study levels of job satisfaction of nurses working at a general hospital of Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam.

2. To study differences of job satisfaction of nurses working in different inpatient departments at a general hospital of Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam.

## Methodology

### Study setting

The study was conducted at the provincial general hospital of Binh Dinh Province, Viet Nam. Binh Dinh province located in the central part of the country, about 600 Km from Hue city and 800 Km from Ho-Chi Minh City. It is a tertiary care hospital with about 1,500 patients taking service daily.

### Study design and participants

We conducted a cross-sectional descriptive study among 637 working nurses in the hospital. Nurses agreed to participate voluntarily in the study. The participants were selected from seven departments of the hospital including Internal Medicine, Surgery, three combined departments of Ophthalmology Otorhinolaryngology-Odonto-stomatology (TCD), Pediatrics, Examination, Surgical Intensive Care Unit and Internal Medicine Intensive Care Unit (ICU). The inclusion criteria were ability to read and communicate in Vietnamese language, and consent to participate in the study. Nurses who were off-duty during the study period and refused to participate were automatically excluded from the participation.

### Sample size

The sample size was calculated using formula of Taro Yamane.<sup>15</sup> The authors selected 95% confidence level with  $\pm 5\%$  precision, and anticipated loss of samples was set at 10%.<sup>16</sup> Sample size was calculated to be 270. Equal proportion of sample

from each department was maintained. A random sampling method was used to collect data in December 2019, when 30 nurses surveyed during a pilot study were excluded.

### Survey instrument

The research instrument consisted of a questionnaire in two parts, which would take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The first part was about demographic and work-related information's such as education, age, gender, nature of job and duration of services. The second part was job satisfaction survey (JSS), developed by Spector and translated into Vietnamese language by Nguyen.<sup>17,18</sup> JSS has 36 items and 9 facets aimed to assess employee satisfaction about the job and aspects of the job including pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (performance based rewards), operating procedures (required rules and procedures), co-workers, nature of work, and communication. A summated rating scale format was used, with six choices per item ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 6 "strongly agree". Items were written in both positive and negative directions. The satisfaction levels were interpreted from the average of sum scores of each subscale and total scale. The interpretation of subscale scores was satisfaction (16-24), neutral (13-15.99) and dissatisfaction (4-12.99), while total score was interpreted as satisfaction (144-216), neutral (108-144) and dissatisfaction (36-108). Earlier, a pilot study involving 30 participants was used to ensure clarity and appropriateness of the questionnaire, when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient achieved was 0.94.

### Data collection procedures

The researcher made an appointment with nurse participants in each department and explained the purpose of the study including benefit, the right to participate, or refuse/withdrawal. The nurses who accepted to participate were signed on a consent form, followed by distribution of survey form and requested to drop it within 2 weeks into a collection box in the hospital. Participants returned the questionnaires form in scheduled time with 100% response rate.

### Ethical consideration

This study was approved by the Ethical Committee of Human Research at Khon Kaen University (HE 622193) and Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy (H2019/391). Participants were recognized by a code. Moreover, participants had right to withdraw from the study at any time before data analysis. All information of the participants was kept confidential under the supervision of the principal investigator and used for research purpose only.

### Data analysis

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Demographic data were analyzed by descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage. Job satisfaction was analyzed by the mean and standard deviation of sum scores of each subscale and total scale. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for testing the differences of job satisfaction scores among seven departments. All statistical tests were considered significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

### Results

Most of the participants were female (92.2%) and university graduate (69%). The majority of them were 25–35 years old (57%), working as official staff (91.1%) and had worked for 6–10 years (29.7%). The department of internal medicine and internal medicine ICU had nurses with post graduate level of education. There were no contract staff in TCD, Surgery ICU, and internal medicine ICU.

Furthermore, our analysis showed that 29.6% of nurses were satisfied with their current job, while only 4.4% said that they were not satisfied. More than half of the participants were neutral to their job satisfaction (65.9%).

As illustrated in Table 1, the satisfaction levels among nurses in departments were different. Nurses in TCD were satisfied with their job but other departments nurse recorded neutral level. Nurses working in TCD department had highest score of  $150.63 \pm 18.41$ , whereas the lowest job satisfaction value was recorded for internal medicine's ICU ( $115.15 \pm 19.87$ ).

Next, the respondents were highly satisfied with co-workers ( $18.63 \pm 3.34$ ) and dissatisfied with fringe benefits ( $9.50 \pm 3.78$ ). Other subscales such as supervision, nature of work and communication were also on satisfaction levels. Pay, promotion, and contingent rewards were at neutral levels but operating conditions was at a dissatisfaction level (Table 2).

Inter-department job satisfaction when compared among nurses, the results showed that there was a significant difference in mean value of satisfaction scores ( $F = 7.125$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Nurses

from TCD department had the highest levels of average satisfaction value (150.63), followed by the internal medicine department (139.59), and the lowest (115.15) was recorded for internal medicine ICU, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Mean, SD., level, and comparison of nurse job satisfaction of each department (n=270)

Departments	Mean	SD	Levels	F	P
Internal medicine	139.59	18.25	Neutral	7.125	<0.001
Surgery	133.36	18.04	Neutral		
Three combined departments (TCD)	150.63	18.41	Satisfaction		
Pediatrics	125.47	13.17	Neutral		
Examination	135.41	17.52	Neutral		
Surgery ICU	129.27	22.90	Neutral		
Internal ICU	115.15	19.87	Neutral		

**Table 2** Mean, SD and levels of nurse job satisfaction of each subscale (n=270)

Subscale	Mean	SD	Levels
Pay	13.75	3.49	Neutral
Promotion	14.47	3.62	Neutral
Supervision	18.52	3.83	Satisfaction
Fringe Benefits	9.50	3.78	Dissatisfaction
Contingent rewards	13.50	2.95	Neutral
Operating conditions	11.53	3.06	Dissatisfaction
Coworkers	18.63	3.34	Satisfaction
Nature of work	17.84	3.72	Satisfaction
Communication	16.60	3.97	Satisfaction

## Discussion

The study explored general characteristics and job satisfaction levels among nurses working at public hospital located in Binh Dinh province, Viet Nam. Our results indicated that more than half of the participants were neutral to their job satisfaction; however, lower scores were seen in the areas of fringe benefits and operational conditions. It is to mention that the demographic characteristics of age, years of experience in nursing and years of experience were known to be positively correlated with the job satisfaction factor of salary.<sup>19</sup>

More than half of the participants in our study were 25–35 years and majority of the nurses (70–80%) have been working for six or more years. This is important because it has been reported that over a five year period, nurses in the same hospital (public and private) were found to experience significant increases in workload that required more shifting of priorities, involvement with life and death situations, and pressure from being required to perform tasks beyond their competency.<sup>20</sup> It may lead to dissatisfaction in job. Next, most of the participants were having under university degree and this could have contributed to “neutral” score of job satisfaction

in our result. In a study, nurses with a diploma or associate degree reported greater professional commitment and lower role conflict than those with a baccalaureate degree but based upon educational level, no significant differences were found regarding job satisfaction.<sup>21</sup>

Our findings are a bit different in comparison to a Vietnamese study in 2005 reporting that about 50% of nurses were satisfied with job.<sup>14</sup> This could be due to the difference in modified lifestyles and increased needs, as there is a gap of more than a decade between two studies. The rate of job dissatisfaction in nurses in our research is lower than in a study by Molyneux.<sup>22</sup> Job dissatisfaction may vary in countries, places, departments and health settings due to many factors. Subsequently, job satisfaction of nurses across departments in our study was different. Participants working in TCD department were satisfied, may be due to less tedious nature of the work and fewer patients compared to other departments for example, internal medicine ICU. None of the participants in internal medicine ICU was satisfied with the job, rather majority expressed neutral view. Moreover, all the nurses except from internal medicine ICU and pediatric department were neutral to the contingent rewards. So it is necessary to have a proper review on inter-departmental associated factors in order to improve the quality of care and health services for patients.

Across all dimensions, nurses showed their highest satisfaction with co-worker relationships, in line with a previous study involving health workers in two districts of Hanoi district.<sup>23</sup> Recent studies on the satisfaction of nurses suggest that compensation,

promotion, contingent incentives, operating conditions and marginal benefits play a significant role in job satisfaction.<sup>24,25</sup> In developing world where there is resource-scarce settings, health workers were usually dissatisfied with the availability of equipment and supplies, facility infrastructure, and professional development.<sup>26-28</sup> We found two subscales in which participant nurses were dissatisfied, namely fringe benefits and operating conditions. These results were similar to the results by Khunou et. al.<sup>29</sup> In the Asian context, social support/relationships, workload, incentives and work environment were most influential attributes of job satisfaction among nurses.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, we recognize facility, infrastructure and incentives as factors to improve job satisfaction among nurses. The management must understand these local issues in order to enhance retaining and avoid shortage, more importantly the quality care.

The authors are aware of the limitations in the study. Firstly, this is a cross-sectional descriptive study; the data were collected once but job satisfaction among nurses may change with time. Secondly, the scope is a quite narrow considering the site and setting. Thirdly, our sample size might be too small for correlations between variables. Finally, all data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire, which could make findings prone to response bias.<sup>31</sup>

## Implications

The study revealed that majority of the nurses has neutral feeling for their job, and fringe benefit was the factor with lowest job satisfaction score. Of importance, significant difference in job

satisfaction of nurses working at various section within the hospital demands a better plan and policies to improve the working qualities as well as the welfare policies. It is recommended for hospital policy to increase nurses' satisfaction in general and help them secure their work and enable them to improve their qualifications and career development. Doing so may improve job satisfaction among nurses resulting better health care quality and low turnover.

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