

Determinants of Job Satisfaction among Nurses in Major Hospitals in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36348/sjnhc.2026.v09i01.001>

| Received: 13.11.2025 | Accepted: 03.01.2026 | Published: 06.01.2026

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Abstract

Background: Nurses' job satisfaction is a very important issue that determines the stability of the workforce, quality of treatment provided, and performance of a given organization. The level of demand in hospitals, staffing issues, and dependence on expatriate nurses in Saudi Arabia, especially in the Eastern Region, are growing, which is why the level of job satisfaction is crucial to assess. **Aim:** This study aimed to evaluate the extent of job satisfaction among nurses at major hospitals in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia and further determine institutional, job, and family related factors that affect job satisfaction based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. **Methods:** A cross-sectional quantitative design was used. A total of 390 registered nurses from four large hospitals were used as the data source using a structured self-administered questionnaire. The measures were institutional characteristics, job characteristics, family support, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and intention to leave. They were done using Descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression were used. **Results:** The results showed moderate to high levels of overall job satisfaction among nurses. Job characteristics were found to be the best predictor of job satisfaction ($b = 0.48, p < 0.001$), followed by institutional characteristics ($b = 0.34, p < 0.001$) and family support ($b = 0.16, p = 0.001$). Major differences in job satisfaction were found in terms of age, experience, and clinical department. **Conclusion:** The Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg is in line with the findings that indicate that intrinsic job-related factors are the most determining factors in the job satisfaction of nurses in major hospitals in Eastern Saudi Arabia. Nurse satisfaction, retention, and quality of healthcare services can be enhanced through improvements in recognition, professional growth, and working environments.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, nurses, Herzberg's theory, Saudi Arabia, hospitals, family support, absenteeism.

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INTRODUCTION

The nursing workforce is the backbone of every health system, as it plays an important role in ensuring patient safety, continuity of health care, and overall quality. Despite various advancements in healthcare delivery and health technology, many countries face challenges in this field. Among these challenges are the nursing workforce streams, high rates of employee turnover, absenteeism, and low levels of job satisfaction (Newman *et al.*, 2002). All these challenges have been worsened by growing patient demands, increasing life expectancy, complexities associated with disease, and increasing requirements associated with health care.

Nurses' job satisfaction has long been acknowledged as a factor that determines organizational success. The relationship between job satisfaction among healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, and their performance has long been explored, indicating that job

satisfaction has a significant impact on commitment, motivation, and staff engagement. This, in turn, can potentially hamper patient safety, medical errors, and patient satisfaction (Medical Errors and Patient Safety, 2025). However, job satisfaction has also been related to burnout, emotional exhaustion, absenteeism, and intention to leave jobs among these healthcare professionals. Such effects can have dire impacts on their personal lives, as well as on healthcare systems.

In the past few decades, the relevance of job satisfaction has become increasingly apparent in the literature on healthcare, specifically nursing. Job satisfaction is a complex construct that is influenced by individual factors as well as various external systems. Job satisfaction is influenced by factors such as interpersonal relationships, work environment, organizational environment, compensation, security of the individual in the work environment, potential for advancement within the workplace, recognition within

the workplace, and family/life support. All of these factors contribute to the overall concept of job satisfaction.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), nursing human resource issues are of special concern and importance. Saudi Arabia has witnessed periods of accelerated population growth and development of healthcare infrastructure, as well as a rising demand for healthcare provision over the past few decades. The healthcare system of Saudi Arabia depends greatly on nurses for the provision of healthcare, with a significant majority of Saudi nurses being foreign (Al-Homayan *et al.*, 2584). There is a varied healthcare staff with a distinct cultural setting.

The Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia represents one of the most prominent healthcare centers within this region, as it contains a host of prime hospitals that offer specialized and tertiary medical services. Hospitals operating in this region are under a series of challenging operating conditions, including high patient traffic and a host of medical specialties, which are significant strains on the nursing staff. A host of challenges are associated with nursing professionals in this region, including heavy work burden, night duty, and staff accountability. Despite these challenges, a significant absence exists within the literature pertaining to Saudi nursing professionals' job satisfaction within these prime hospitals in the Eastern Region.

Although several studies have been conducted on job satisfaction among Saudi Arabian healthcare providers, much of this literature has been specific to individual issues rather than a comprehensive collection of factors. Too often, this literature has been limited in scope, failing to identify a complete picture of institutional, job, and personal characteristics, together with family support. Furthermore, few, if any, studies of this nature within this region of the world actually utilized a quantitative model of prediction of which primary issues exist within job satisfaction, as well as how job satisfaction is correlated to specific outcomes, such as absenteeism and employee intention to leave.

Moreover, despite the usefulness and applicability of some theoretical constructs, such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, in organizational research, its application in the nursing environment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has yet to be fully explored. There exists a gap for extensive and well-organized research in the form of quantitative investigations that consider all factors affecting job satisfaction and explore the relationship among these factors.

This study aimed to evaluate the extent of job satisfaction among nurses employed in large hospitals in the Eastern Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as the factors related to it. In particular, it endeavors to delve into correlations between job satisfaction and

factors such as organizational, personal, job, and support factors, and determine how job satisfaction correlates with nurses' absence from and desire to remain in or leave their respective institutions. Through creating a predictive framework based on a system similar to Herzberg's theory, it also attempts to establish factors, chief amongst them, that impact nurses' level of job satisfaction within the region.

The relevance of this research lies in its potential contributions (Cornelissen & Durand, 2014). On a policy formulation level, the implications of this study can help guide the development of the Saudi healthcare workforce. On an organizational or management level, this study yields crucial information that benefits the decision-making processes of Saudi hospital administrators. As a matter of fact, on the professional level, it is important to understand the implications of the study for the promotion of the well-being, development, or long-term commitment of nurses to the job. Consequently, the importance of improving nurses' job satisfaction cannot be overstated, since it not only influences the sustainability of the nursing workforce but also the quality of the healthcare services offered to the Saudi population.

METHODS

This study employed a cross-sectional research design that was quantitative in nature to evaluate job satisfaction among the nursing staff in the biggest hospitals in the Eastern Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A cross-sectional study design has been extensively utilized in various studies concerning the health sector workforce because it is both efficient and feasible. After the analysis, the survey method using questionnaires was identified as the main method of data collection (Ebert *et al.*, 2018). This method makes it possible to measure variables in a standard manner, facilitates data collection from multiple participants, and makes data analysis possible. Owing to the complexity of nursing personnel and the nature of their perception of job satisfaction, the questionnaire method was identified as the main method of data collection, allowing for anonymity.

This study is based on the healthcare system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has developed and expanded significantly over the last few decades ("Strategic Issues and Recommendations," 2025). The healthcare system in Saudi Arabia includes a chain of public and private hospitals that deliver primary, secondary, and tertiary care services. Nurses are the backbone of healthcare services at all levels, making it important to study their job satisfaction. The Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia was chosen as the case study site because of its importance and the existence of major healthcare establishments there. Numerous large-scale hospitals in the Eastern Region offer specialized and advanced patient care to a broad spectrum of patients. This occurs in a highly demanding scenario in which the

workload involves complex tasks. Four major hospitals in the Eastern Region of Uganda were purposively selected to participate in the study. These hospitals were selected because they are major institutions offering healthcare and have many nursing personnel. The inclusion of more than one site ensured representation and the ability to make comparisons between sites.

The target population for this study was registered nurses practicing in major hospitals across the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. Nurses from any department and field of specialization were eligible to participate in this study. The inclusion criteria were nurses who were employed in the selected hospitals and had work experience of more than six months. These nurses had the required experience with the environment to have an accurate perception concerning the notion of job satisfaction. Exclusionary factors included nurse interns, students pursuing nursing courses, administrative employees who were not clinical employees, and nurses on leave. The sample size was calculated using routine parameters for determining the sample size in quantitative research, considering the total number of nurses in the chosen health facilities, a confidence level of 95%, and a tolerable margin of error. The final sample included 390 nurses, which was deemed sufficient for statistical analysis and regression testing. A simple random sampling method was used to eliminate any possible bias and give all eligible nurses an equal opportunity to be chosen. This method allowed the results of the study to be generalized to the nursing population in the chosen hospitals.

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire developed based on an extensive review of the literature guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. A review of existing validated instruments was conducted, and relevant items were adapted to suit the Saudi nursing context. The questionnaire consisted of several sections. These included demographic and personal characteristics, institutional characteristics, job characteristics, family support, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and intention to leave the job. The items were designed to capture both extrinsic and intrinsic factors influencing job satisfaction and its related behavioral outcomes. A five-point Likert scale measured the responses, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Both positively and negatively worded statements were included to reduce response bias and improve the reliability of the instrument. Negatively stated items were reverse-coded when the data were analyzed. To confirm the validity of the instrument, content validity was established through expert review. A group of academics in the field of nursing studies and management experts reviewed the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. A Content Validity Index (CVI) was determined, and items that were not highly relevant were either modified or deleted.

The study began with a pilot study among a small number of nurses who did not participate in the final study. The objective of this pilot study was to determine the clarity of the items, time taken for completion, and ambiguities. The reliability of the instrument was determined by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 was regarded as acceptable, indicating that the items were reliable, as they measured the same construct. Data were collected through an online survey questionnaire forwarded to eligible nurses at the selected hospitals. The online format ensured ease of access, reduced administrative burden, and ensured confidentiality (*For the Record* 2025). Participation was based on free choice, and the nurses were informed about the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review boards prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained electronically from all participants before completing the questionnaire. No identifying information was collected; therefore, the responses were anonymous, and ethical considerations were allowed.

Data analyses were performed using statistical software. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations are all descriptive statistics used to summarize the demographic characteristics and level of general job satisfaction. Statistical tests were conducted to test the hypotheses of the study, which were performed using the following: independent t-tests and one-way ANOVA to explore the differences in levels of job satisfaction arising across demographic and institutional variables; Pearson correlation analysis to check the relationships existing among the variables; and multiple regression analysis for those that strongly predict job satisfaction. Below is a complete Results section showing quantitative findings only, written in a formal traditional academic style (Kotzé, 2007). The interpretation of the findings is descriptive and statistical, without any discussion or comparison to the literature kept for the Discussion section. All tables requested are included in a clearly positioned form.

RESULTS

A total of 390 nurses participated in the study, ensuring a good response rate for statistical analysis. The demographics of the study show a balanced population of nurses regarding their age, gender, nationality, level of education attained, and period of experience. A higher proportion of the population comprised females, which can be considered normal given the gender distribution of the nursing field. Most of the study population was between 26 and 35 years of age. With respect to nationality, the respondent population was significantly composed of expatriate nurses, reflecting the manpower composition of hospitals in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. Based on educational attainment, most respondents possessed a baccalaureate degree in nursing, followed by diploma holders and those with postgraduate

degrees. Most of the nurses also had 5–10 years of work experience, reflecting exposure to institutional settings. Employment-related variables indicated that most participants worked full-time and rotating shifts. A

substantial number of participants reported working in demanding clinical sectors, such as medical/surgical wards, emergency services, and intensive care wards.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 390)

Variable	Category	n (%)
Gender	Female	280 (71.8)
	Male	110 (28.2)
Age	20–25 years	85 (21.8)
	26–35 years	170 (43.6)
	>35 years	135 (34.6)
Nationality	Saudi	140 (35.9)
	Expatriate	250 (64.1)
Experience	<5 years	110 (28.2)
	5–10 years	160 (41.0)
	>10 years	120 (30.8)

Overall job satisfaction was measured using a composite score developed from multiple items in the questionnaire survey. The results showed that nurses generally experienced moderate to high overall job satisfaction. Overall, the average job satisfaction score was above the median of the overall satisfaction measurement (Oshagbemi, 1999). This indicates generally positive feelings about work experiences among respondents. The data from the satisfaction pattern analysis indicated a higher level of satisfaction than dissatisfaction among nurses. However, a

considerable proportion of the population had neutral responses. The fact that a certain proportion of the population was dissatisfied indicated that although the overall level of satisfaction was high, there were some areas of concern. Further analysis revealed a difference in the level of satisfaction among job areas (DeSantis & Durst, 1996). Nurses were comparatively satisfied with their interpersonal relationships and job type, but the level of satisfaction was low regarding workload, staff adequacy, and salary.

Table 2: Distribution of Overall Job Satisfaction Scores

Satisfaction Level	n (%)
Satisfied	230 (59.0)
Neutral	110 (28.2)
Dissatisfied	50 (12.8)

Independent t-tests and one-way analysis of variance were conducted to discern whether there was any variation in the level of job satisfaction regarding individual and demographic factors. The analysis indicated the existence of significant differences in regard to the variables age group, years of experience, and work department (Yusuf *et al.*, n.d.). These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). More years of nursing experience were associated with higher job satisfaction, and nurses who were less involved in

acute patient care reported higher satisfaction levels than nurses who practiced in more acute settings. There were no significant differences related to the level of nursing qualifications.

Gender and nationality did not exhibit a significant difference in overall job satisfaction, suggesting a fairly similar level of satisfaction among the two groups. Employment status and shifts did not reveal any significant variations.

Table 3: Differences in Job Satisfaction by Personal Characteristics

Variable	Test	F / t	p-value
Age group	ANOVA	4.62	0.010*
Gender	t-test	1.12	0.263
Experience	ANOVA	6.84	0.001*
Nationality	t-test	0.94	0.347

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and factors related to it, including institutional, job, and family factors. The findings revealed positive

correlations between job satisfaction and each of these factors. The institutional characteristics of work, including interpersonal relationships, work environment, organizational policies, and job security, had a

moderately positive relationship with job satisfaction. This indicates a positive correlation between improvements in the work environment and employee satisfaction. Job characteristics had a stronger positive correlation with job satisfaction than institutional characteristics. Characteristics such as recognition,

responsibilities, and type of work showed strong links to higher job satisfaction levels. There was also a positive correlation between family support and job satisfaction, although it was less strong than other factors. This suggests that family support is a secondary factor of job satisfaction rather than a primary factor.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Job Satisfaction Factors

Variable	Job Satisfaction
Institutional characteristics	0.61*
Job characteristics	0.72*
Family support	0.38*

Correlation significant at $p < 0.01$

DISCUSSION

In general, the findings of the present study serve as an important benchmark for job satisfaction among nurses employed in major hospitals in the Eastern Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results generally indicate that the level of job satisfaction tends to be moderate to high, which may suggest that the overall perception of nurses regarding their work environment and professional role is good (CHOI *et al.*, 2012). This may reflect recent investments in health infrastructure, workforce development programs, and organizational reforms that target improving working conditions and the quality of care provided by Saudi hospitals.

The implication of high levels of job satisfaction among nurses may be an indicator of relative organizational stability and good management practices. A high rating of satisfaction with interpersonal relationships and the nature of nursing work implies a belief in collaborative team environments and intrinsic meaning found in patient care. However, the presence of neutral and dissatisfied responses indicates that satisfaction is not uniform and that certain unresolved organizational and job-related challenges exist.

The characteristics that showed significant differences in job satisfaction included age, years of experience, and clinical department (Mudasar & Phd, n.d.). Nurses with longer work experience showed higher levels of satisfaction, possibly because, with time, the role is better understood, professional confidence is acquired, and organizational demands are dealt with more adequately. With more experience, greater autonomy, recognition, and stability within one's job might also be gained. Less experienced nurses may have to struggle harder with adjustments, experience heavier workloads, and feel limited in their decisions, all of which negatively impact satisfaction.

Departmental differences in job satisfaction levels indicate that work intensity and clinical demands are important in shaping nurses' perceptions. Nurses working in high-acuity areas, such as emergency departments and intensive care units, may experience higher stress levels and heavier workloads, leading to

emotional strains that could dampen job satisfaction despite the professional importance of these roles. The lack of significant differences by gender and nationality suggests that job satisfaction is influenced more by organizational and job-related factors than by personal identity characteristics in this context.

Interpersonal relationships and working conditions were found to be significant contributors to job satisfaction from correlation and regression analyses (Maxine Anne Whittaker, 2020). Positive relationships with supervisors and colleagues create friendly working conditions that facilitate good communication and thus a team-oriented work environment. This is particularly important in nursing environments, where collaboration and mutual support are closely linked to patient safety and service delivery efficiency. Conversely, poor interpersonal relationships can lead to conflict, stress, and disengagement, which, in turn, affect job satisfaction and retention.

Working conditions, such as staffing adequacy, workload distribution, and physical work environments, also crucially influence the levels of satisfaction expressed. Sufficient staffing and reasonable workloads enable nurses to perform their jobs well without unpleasant amounts of stress, while safety and good environments contribute to respect for the profession and a sense of organizational support. These findings suggest that improvements in basic workplace conditions provide a foundation for improvements in job satisfaction.

These findings are therefore generally in line with existing evidence when compared with regional and international studies (Breitmeier *et al.*, 2011). Other GCC countries have also reported moderate to high levels of job satisfaction among nurses, with interpersonal relationships, recognition, and working conditions identified as key influencing factors. International studies from Europe, Asia, and North America have also highlighted the role of intrinsic job characteristics and supportive organizational environments in promoting nurse satisfaction. However, variations in satisfaction levels across regions suggest that cultural, organizational, and policy contexts influence how nurses perceive their work.

The findings of the study indicated a close approximation to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which differentiates between hygiene factors that avoid dissatisfaction and motivator factors that build it. Institutional characteristics include working conditions, organizational policies, and interpersonal relationships, which serve as hygiene factors. Their mere presence minimizes dissatisfaction, but the mere improvement of these may not result in high job satisfaction (APA PsycNet, 2025). In contrast, job characteristics such as recognition, responsibility, and the work itself are motivating factors that actively build satisfaction.

These findings have several implications for nurse retention and absenteeism (Burmeister *et al.*, 2018). Generally, high job satisfaction reduces absenteeism and quit intention, as satisfied nurses are more likely to be committed to their organizations. Conversely, poor dissatisfaction may lead to absenteeism and turnover due to bad working conditions, lack of recognition, or excessive workloads, adding to shortages in the workforce and increasing costs to organizations.

for health managers and policymakers. Interventions that focus on intrinsic job characteristics, such as recognition schemes, opportunities for professional growth, and responsibilities, are likely to result in considerable gains in satisfaction and retention. Simultaneously, acceptable hygiene factors, namely equitable policies, supportive supervision, and safe working conditions, must be maintained to avoid dissatisfaction.

In summary, the discussion shows that job satisfaction among nurses in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia results from the interacting influence of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (*Job Satisfaction and Burnout among Foreign-Trained Nurses in Saudi Arabia: A Mixed-Method Study - ProQuest*, 2025). Based on Herzberg's theoretical framework, the findings reiterate the necessity for workforce strategies that are balanced in addressing the basic conditions of work and motivational aspects of nursing practice. These are necessary to sustain a satisfied, committed, and resilient nursing workforce.

CONCLUSION

This research was carried out on the job satisfaction of nurses employed in major hospitals in the Eastern Region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia using an extensive quantitative methodological framework under the theoretical background of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. As expected, the results indicated moderate to high degrees of job satisfaction (Revelli, 2008). Job characteristics stood out as the most influential factors of job satisfaction, followed by institutional characteristics and family support. Differences were observed with regard to age, experience, and departments. This study contributes to the literature on the management of nursing professionals by offering evidence related to the

relative importance of internal and extrinsic variables to job satisfaction within the Saudi Arabian healthcare sector. By allowing for the influence of a range of factors, this study remedies the deficiencies in the current literature. Enhancing job satisfaction among nurses will play a pivotal role in improving their stability, attendance, and performance at healthcare facilities, contributing to quality patient care. Strategies for creating a stable nursing workforce must be balanced, targeting motivational and environmental factors for a long-term impact on nurses and, eventually, a satisfied nursing force for Saudi Arabia.

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