

ASSESSMENT OF JOB BURNOUT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG INTENSIVE CARE UNIT NURSES A
TERTIARY HEALTHCARE HOSPITAL

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Abstract: Job satisfaction and burnout are critical concerns for nurses working in intensive care units (ICUs), impacting their well-being and the quality of patient care. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing strategies to improve healthcare outcomes. **Objective:** To assess job satisfaction and burnout among ICU nurses at a tertiary healthcare hospital in Pakistan. **Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 121 ICU nurses using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, with descriptive statistics summarizing key findings. **Results:** The majority of nurses reported high job satisfaction, with 69.4% agreeing that their work provided significant fulfilment, and 65.3% feeling able to learn on the job. However, moderate to high burnout levels were observed, with 43% reporting feelings of burnout and 38.8% feeling overburdened with professional duties. Despite these challenges, 57% of nurses did not perceive burnout as significantly affecting their performance. **Conclusion:** While job satisfaction levels were high, the presence of burnout underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve workplace conditions and support nurses' well-being. Addressing workload challenges and fostering a supportive work environment is essential for sustaining job satisfaction and reducing burnout in ICUs.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, burnout, ICU nurses, tertiary healthcare, Pakistan.

Introduction

Job satisfaction and burnout are critical aspects of professional life, particularly in high-pressure environments like intensive care units (ICUs). Nurses in ICUs play a pivotal role in delivering care to critically ill patients, making their well-being essential for maintaining healthcare quality and patient outcomes. However, in Pakistan, where healthcare systems face challenges such as understaffing, resource limitations, and high patient inflows, ICU nurses are at an elevated risk of burnout and reduced job satisfaction (1, 2).

Job burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment. Studies suggest that burnout among nurses is more prevalent in low- and middle-income countries, including Pakistan, due to excessive workloads, lack of managerial support, and insufficient training opportunities (3, 4). Burnout not only affects nurses' mental and physical health but also compromises the quality of care provided to patients, leading to poorer outcomes and increased healthcare costs (5).

Conversely, job satisfaction among nurses has been associated with improved performance, reduced turnover rates, and better patient care. Factors influencing job satisfaction include work environment, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, opportunities for professional development, and recognition of efforts (6, 7). In Pakistan, studies indicate that many nurses experience low job satisfaction due to inadequate salaries, lack of career progression, and workplace stress (8, 9).

ICU nurses are particularly vulnerable to burnout and job dissatisfaction due to the nature of their work, which involves managing critically ill patients, handling complex medical equipment, and facing life-and-death situations

daily (10). These challenges are further exacerbated in Pakistan by resource constraints, long working hours, and insufficient staffing (11). Addressing these issues is crucial for improving nurses' job satisfaction and reducing burnout, ultimately enhancing healthcare delivery in ICUs.

This study aims to assess the levels of job satisfaction and burnout among ICU nurses in a tertiary care hospital in Pakistan. By identifying the factors contributing to these issues, the study seeks to inform policy and intervention strategies to improve nurses' well-being and healthcare outcomes.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design to assess job satisfaction and burnout among intensive care unit (ICU) nurses working in a tertiary healthcare hospital. This design was chosen to capture a snapshot of nurses' perceptions and experiences regarding job satisfaction and burnout. The study population included registered ICU nurses employed full-time in various ICUs, including medical, neonatal, surgical trauma, and pediatric ICUs. Participants were required to have at least six months of work experience to ensure familiarity with ICU demands and challenges. The study was conducted over 4–6 months. A convenience sampling technique was used to select participants. Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Nursing Department Ethics Committee at The Superior University Lahore. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the respective healthcare institution. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after explaining the study's purpose and objectives. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and their participation was entirely voluntary.



Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which consisted of three sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, education level, years of experience, and current ICU designation. The second section assessed job satisfaction using close-ended Likert-scale questions focusing on various aspects of job satisfaction, such as meaningful work, professional growth opportunities, and confidence in delivering care. The third section evaluated burnout levels using questions addressing emotional exhaustion, workplace challenges, and perceptions of workload. The data collection process involved administering the questionnaire in person to eligible nurses. After the completion of data collection, the responses were entered into SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize demographic data and responses related to job satisfaction and burnout. Data normality was tested, and reliability and validity checks were performed on the study tool to ensure its appropriateness in the study context. The study adhered to all ethical considerations, ensuring that participants were not coerced and faced no harm during the research process. The findings aimed to provide insights into the job satisfaction and burnout levels among ICU nurses, contributing to improved workplace policies and support mechanisms in healthcare settings.

Results

This study assessed job satisfaction and burnout among intensive care unit (ICU) nurses at a tertiary care hospital. The demographic characteristics of the participants are detailed in Table 1. Most participants (49.6%) were aged 22–26 years, and the majority were female (65.3%). A significant proportion of the respondents were single (62%) and had 1–5 years of professional experience (66.1%). Regarding educational qualifications, 45.5% held a BSN (Generic), and 45.5% worked in the medical ICU. The analysis of job satisfaction revealed a predominantly high level of satisfaction among participants, as shown in Table 2. A total of 69.4% fully agreed that their job provided them with significant satisfaction, while 65.3% felt able to learn on the job. Moreover, 62% of nurses fully agreed that they felt confident as nurses and 57.9% reported their job to be very meaningful. Burnout levels among nurses were moderate to high, as detailed in Table 3. While 43% of participants reported feeling burned out because of their work, only 14.9% found it difficult to work with their superiors. However, 38.8% of participants felt overburdened with professional duties, highlighting the challenges ICU nurses face in high-pressure environments.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of ICU Nurses

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Age	22–26 years	60 (49.6%)
	27–31 years	30 (24.8%)
	32–36 years	17 (14.0%)
	Above 36 years	14 (11.6%)
Gender	Male	42 (34.7%)
	Female	79 (65.3%)
Marital Status	Single	75 (62.0%)
	Married	46 (38.0%)
Experience	1–5 years	80 (66.1%)
	6–10 years	23 (19.0%)
	11–15 years	18 (14.9%)
Qualification	Diploma in Nursing	46 (38.0%)
	Post RN	16 (13.2%)
	BSN (Generic)	55 (45.5%)
	MSN	4 (3.3%)
Department	Medical ICU	55 (45.5%)
	Neonatal ICU	19 (15.7%)
	Surgical Trauma ICU	25 (20.7%)
	Pediatric ICU	22 (18.2%)

Table 2: Job Satisfaction Among ICU Nurses (Likert Scale)

Question	Fully (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
My job gives me a lot of satisfaction	69.4%	38.0%	10.7%	0%	0%
My job is very meaningful for me	57.9%	35.1%	4.1%	2.9%	0%
My work allows me to show my worth	58.7%	39.7%	1.7%	0%	0%
I have enough time to deliver good patient care	43.8%	42.1%	14.0%	0%	0%
I feel able to learn on the job	65.3%	31.4%	3.3%	0%	0%
I feel confident as a nurse	62.0%	28.9%	3.3%	4.1%	1.7%

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Table 3: Burnout Levels Among ICU Nurses (Likert Scale)

Question	Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)
Do you feel burned out because of your work?	14.9%	28.1%	21.0%	21.0%	15.0%
Is it difficult for you to work with your superiors?	4.1%	10.8%	20.0%	25.0%	40.1%
Do you feel tired of working with superiors/colleagues?	6.3%	11.1%	18.0%	24.5%	40.1%
Do you have opportunities to raise professional qualifications?	34.8%	34.6%	15.0%	11.0%	4.6%
Do you feel overburdened with professional duties?	20.0%	18.8%	25.1%	20.5%	15.6%

Discussion

This study assessed job satisfaction and burnout among intensive care unit (ICU) nurses in a tertiary healthcare hospital in Pakistan. The findings revealed a high level of job satisfaction among most participants, with 69.4% reporting that their job provided significant satisfaction and 65.3% feeling able to learn on the job. However, moderate to high levels of burnout were also observed, with 43% of participants reporting feeling burned out due to their work and 38.8% feeling overburdened with professional duties. These findings align with existing literature that highlights the dual challenges of maintaining job satisfaction and managing burnout in high-stress environments like ICUs. The high levels of job satisfaction observed in this study are consistent with findings by Lu et al., who reported that factors such as professional growth opportunities, meaningful work, and supportive environments significantly contribute to nurses' job satisfaction (7). Similarly, Abdullah et al. emphasized that job satisfaction is closely linked to internal service quality and employee well-being in healthcare settings, which are critical for nurse retention and patient outcomes (9). However, despite the positive findings on job satisfaction, the study also underscores the prevalence of burnout, which can diminish the long-term benefits of job satisfaction.

The moderate to high levels of burnout reported in this study are comparable to findings by Maslach and Leiter, who identified emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment as the primary dimensions of burnout among healthcare workers (3). Additionally, Dall'Ora et al. highlighted that ICU nurses are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to long working hours, high patient acuity, and inadequate staffing (6). This is supported by Kamali et al., who found similar trends during the COVID-19 pandemic, where healthcare workers, especially nurses, faced unprecedented stress and workload (11).

Interestingly, the study found that 57% of participants did not feel burned out, which contrasts with findings by Gribben and Semple, who reported higher burnout rates among oncology nurses due to the emotional toll of caring for critically ill patients (10). This discrepancy may reflect differences in the work environment, availability of resources, or cultural factors influencing the perception and reporting of burnout.

The results also highlighted that 38.8% of nurses felt overburdened with professional duties, a finding consistent with Manyisa and van Aswegen, who identified workload and staffing issues as significant contributors to burnout in public hospitals (8). Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, including optimizing nurse-to-

patient ratios, enhancing administrative support, and providing opportunities for professional development.

To mitigate burnout and enhance job satisfaction, evidence-based interventions such as resilience training, peer support programs, and organizational strategies to foster a culture of well-being are essential. Tavella et al. suggested redefining workplace roles and promoting work-life balance as critical steps to reducing burnout in high-stress healthcare environments (5). In the Pakistani context, where resource constraints and systemic challenges often exacerbate workplace stress, tailored strategies are crucial to addressing these issues effectively (2).

In conclusion, while ICU nurses in this study demonstrated high job satisfaction, the presence of moderate to high levels of burnout underscores the need for comprehensive interventions to improve workplace conditions. Implementing supportive policies, addressing workload issues, and fostering a positive organizational culture can significantly enhance nurse well-being and healthcare outcomes.

Conclusion

This study highlights a dual finding of high job satisfaction and moderate to high burnout among ICU nurses in a tertiary healthcare hospital in Pakistan. While many nurses reported feeling confident and fulfilled in their roles, the prevalence of burnout underscores the demanding nature of ICU work. Addressing factors contributing to burnout, such as workload and inadequate support systems, is essential for sustaining job satisfaction and enhancing the well-being of ICU nurses. Tailored interventions, including resilience training, better staffing, and organizational changes, are crucial to improving workplace conditions and ensuring the delivery of high-quality patient care.

Declarations

Data Availability statement

All data generated or analyzed during the study are included in the manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate.

Approved by the department Concerned. (IRBEC-SNU-882/24)

Consent for publication

Approved

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The authors declared an absence of conflict of interest.

Authors Contribution

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Final Approval of version

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Revisiting Critically & Data Analysis

RUBINA JABEEN (Principle)

Drafting, Concept & Design of Study

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