

## **Work Environment and Job Satisfaction among Nurses in an Urban Maternity Hospital in Kenya**

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## Abstract

**Background:** A conducive and quality work environment has been cited as the most important influence of job satisfaction among nurses. Work environment should be of optimal quality to allow nurses carry out their duties effectively. Lack of secure, attractive and adequate work environment leads to poor quality of nursing care which in turn will increase the mortality and morbidity and eventually poor economic status of a country. For nurses to effectively care for patients, they should be satisfied with their job environment. This goes a long way in ensuring positive patient's outcome.

**Objective:** This study sought to establish the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction among the nurses.

**Methods:** This was a descriptive cross-sectional study that was conducted at Pumwani Maternity Hospital located in Nairobi County. 114 nurses were sampled with a response rate of 95%. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Ethical approval was sort from University of Eastern Africa, Baraton Ethics Review Board. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Chi-square test was used to determine significance of relationships between nominal variables. A P-value of  $\leq 0.05$  was considered significant. A higher proportion of 67% (n=77) expressed dissatisfaction with their job.

**Results:** A stimulating intellectual environment ( $\chi^2 = 10.81, df=2, p=0.029$ ), an autonomous environment that allows nurses to make decisions ( $\chi^2 = 13.70, df=2, p=0.018$ ) and that which gives nurses an opportunity to use their full range of nursing skills ( $\chi^2 = 15.58, df=2, p=0.004$ ) was statistically significant.

**Conclusion:** A satisfying work environment for nurses therefore allows them to practice nursing skills, make autonomous nursing care decisions and should promote high nursing/clinical competence on their professional lives.

**Key Terms:** Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, Nurses

## **1. BACKGROUND**

The provision of a conducive and quality work environment has been cited as the most important influence of job satisfaction among nurses. Employee effectiveness is affected by poor quality in the work environment thus causing more employee dissatisfaction (Ayamolowo et al., 2013). Work environment refers to the group of factors affecting the individual at their work place. These are material conditions such as hygiene, safety and comfort relating to institutional policies, hours, salary, and job security (Jayasuria et al., 2012). There are others of a psychosocial nature corresponding to the characteristics of the job in terms of horizontal and vertical relationships of authority and communication channels (Meyer and O'Brien-Pallas, 2010)

Studies have assessed the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction and observed that work environment affects job satisfaction of employees. A study conducted in Canada to assess impact of work environment on nurse's job satisfaction and wellbeing observed that work intensity and staffing shortages were the main risk factors for both job dissatisfaction and distress among nurses (Lu et al., 2007). They suggest that shortage of qualified staff, particularly when the work atmosphere is less than ideal and the work is demanding, has a negative impact on nurses' job satisfaction and increases their distress. In another study conducted in Greece, it was observed that working environment and demographics of staff are important factors that affect productivity hence satisfaction in a job among nurses (Platis et al ,2015)

A study conducted in Pakistan, observed that a good working environment has a positive impact on the job satisfaction of employees. They indicated that bad working conditions restrict employees to portray their capabilities and attain full potential, so it is imperative that employers and institutions realize the importance of good working environment (Razik & Maulabakhsh 2015).

Ayamolowo et al (2013) concluded that healthy work environment for nurses in the primary health care settings is an important factor in improving work satisfaction, reducing turnover intention and improving nursing care outcomes. Consistent with their findings, Osinbanjo et al (2014) further observed that nurses would be more satisfied if there is improvement in job environment.

In Kenya, Goetz et al (2015) observed that job satisfaction and working atmosphere are important indicators for recruitment and retention of health care staff but also for the provision of good quality of care. They concluded that increasing job satisfaction will require improving working equipment and having effective working strategies that support working condition of health workers. Currently, nurses often need to work for long hours and under unfavourable conditions when there is an acute shortage. This is dangerous to their health and can result in fatigue, injury, and high turnover (Dambisya, 2007). Consequently, the nurses suffer in such environments and are more prone to making mistakes and medical errors. The unfortunate outcomes therefore impact on patient quality, leading to various preventable complications, increased acuity of patients especially in emergency settings, and alarming high mortality rates (Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, 2004).

The public health sector in Kenya is facing myriad problems such as dilapidated infrastructure, shortage of labour, inadequate supplies and equipment, inadequate remuneration for the health workers and general mismanagement (MOH, 2017). Despite the importance of work environment on job performance and satisfaction, there has been inadequate efforts towards evaluating and improving working environment for health care workers (Goetz et al, 2015). Therefore, this study is meant to assess the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction among the nurses at an Urban Maternity Hospital in Kenya.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study that was conducted at Pumwani Maternity Hospital located in Nairobi County. 114 nurses were sampled with a response rate of 95%. Stratified proportionate sampling method was used to select participants. Nurses were stratified by their ward of deployment. Systematic random sampling method was used in selecting nurses from each stratum. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Ethical approval was sort from University of Eastern Africa, Baraton Ethics Review Board. Participants were required to give a signed, voluntary informed consent prior to participation in the study without coercion. The anonymity of participants was ensured by serializing the structured questionnaires. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Chi-square test was used to determine significance of relationships between nominal variables. A P-value of  $\leq 0.05$  was considered significant.

### 3.0 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Social Demographic characteristics of respondents

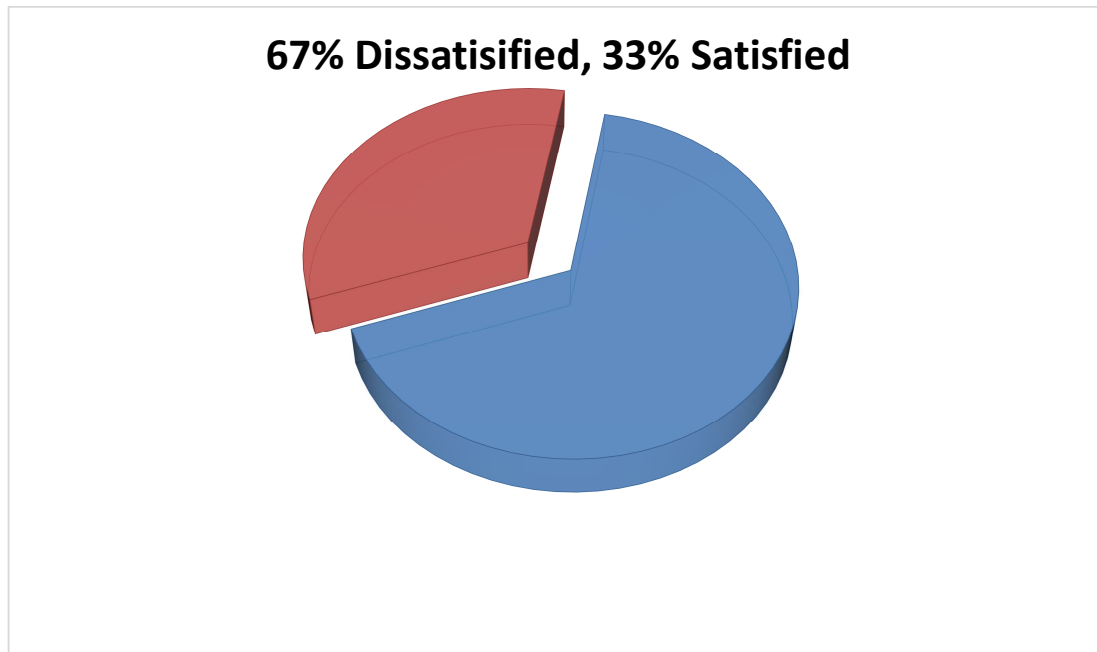
114 nurses were interviewed and completed the study questionnaire giving a response rate of 95%. More than two-thirds of the nurses were females. Those aged between 26-40 years were the majority with most of them married. For qualification, those holding a Diploma in Kenya Registered Community Health Nursing were the majority while few had attained Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) qualification. Half of the respondents had worked for less than 5 years with most of them being staff nurses. This is illustrated by Table 1.0 below.

**Table 1: Social Demographic characteristics of respondents**

Demographics	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	37	32.5
	Female	77	67.5
Age	< 25 Years	15	13.2
	26-30 Years	42	36.8
	31-35 Years	19	16.7
	>36 Years	38	33.3
Marital Status	Single	42	36.8
	Married	70	61.4
	Separated	1	0.9
	Widow/widower	1	0.9
Level of Qualification	Certificate(KECHN)	16	14.0
	Diploma	41	36.0
	Diploma-RN	36	31.6
	Midwifery		
	BScN	21	18.4
Years of Experience	<5 Years	57	50.0
	6-10 Years	28	24.6
	11-15 Years	12	10.5
	>16 Years	17	14.9
Unit of placement	Ante-Natal	15	13.2
	Labour Ward	37	32.5
	Maternity Theatre	24	21.1
	Post-Natal	23	20.2
	New-Born Unit	15	13.2
Current Role	Ward-In Charge	10	8.8
	Staff Nurse	100	87.7
	Nurse Administrator	4	3.5

### **3.2 Level of job satisfaction**

A higher proportion of 67% expressed dissatisfaction with their job, while 33% of the nurses were satisfied with their current job. This is illustrated by Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Level of job satisfaction**

### 3.3 Association between Social demographic factors and job satisfaction

Socio-demographic factors that were significantly associated with job satisfaction were: years of experience ( $X^2=6.334$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p= 0.001$ ) and unit of placement ( $X^2=5.414$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p=0.024$ ).

This is illustrated by Table 2.0 below

**Table 2: Association between Social demographic factors and job satisfaction**

Factors	Categories	Satisfied with current job		Chi-Square Test of Independence
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Gender	Male	24	13	$\chi^2=0.080, df=1, p= 0.777$
	Female	52	25	
Age	< 25 Years	9	6	$\chi^2=2.071, df=3, p=0.558$
	26-30 Years	26	16	
	31-35 Years	15	4	
	>36 Years	26	12	
Level of Qualification	Certificate(KECHN)	9	7	$\chi^2=0.995, df=3, p= 0.812$
	Diploma	28	13	
	Diploma-RN	25	11	
	BScN	14	7	
Years of Experience	<5 Years	38	19	$\chi^2=6.334, df=3, p= 0.001$
	6-10 Years	19	9	
	11-15 Years	11	1	
	>16 Years	8	9	
Unit of placement	Ante-Natal	12	3	$\chi^2=5.414, df=4, p=0.024$
	Labour Ward	24	13	
	Maternity Theatre	19	5	
	Post-Natal	12	11	
	New-Born Unit	9	6	

### 3.4 Perception on work environment versus job satisfaction

Work related factors that were significantly associated with job satisfaction included: work environment gives an autonomous of nursing care ( $\chi^2 = 13.70$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.018$ ), work environment provides stimulating intellectual environment ( $\chi^2 = 10.81$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p>0.029$ ) and work environment gives an opportunity to use a full range of nursing skills ( $\chi^2 = 15.58$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). This is illustrated by table 3.0 below

**Table 3: Perception on work environment versus job satisfaction**

Perception on work environment	Categories	Level of satisfaction		Chi-Square Test
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Opportunity to use a full range of nursing skills	Agree	39	15	$\chi^2 = 4.36, df=2, p=0.359$
	Disagree	20	14	
	Neither	17	9	
Make autonomous nursing care decisions	Agree	42	9	$\chi^2 = 13.70, df=2, p=0.018$
	Disagree	13	15	
	Neither	21	13	
Provides a stimulating intellectual environment	Agree	23	7	$\chi^2 = 10.81, df=2, p=0.029$
	Disagree	25	20	
	Neither	28	10	
Provides time to engage in research as you want	Agree	15	3	$\chi^2 = 5.47, df=2, p=0.36$
	Disagree	36	25	
	Neither	25	10	
Promotes a high level of clinical competence on your unit	Agree	39	12	$\chi^2 = 6.78, df=2, p=0.148$
	Disagree	24	17	
	Neither	13	9	
Gives you the opportunity to use a full range of nursing skills	Agree	40	11	$\chi^2 = 15.58, df=2, p=0.004$
	Disagree	12	15	
	Neither	24	12	



#### **4. DISCUSSION**

In this study, a higher proportion of 67% expressed dissatisfaction with their job. This is consistent with findings of a study by (Syed et al., 2014) which indicated that 43% of nurses expressed disappointment with their work and intended to quit their nursing job within a year. Chang et al (2009) indicated that job satisfaction in nursing can predict nurse turnover and in order to retain its best-qualified employees, an organization needs to implement competitive measures that satisfy employee needs.

The study revealed that work environment that gives autonomy to nurses was associated with job satisfaction. This is consistent with findings of this study, Goetz et al (2015) indicates that job satisfaction and working atmosphere are important indicators for recruitment and retention of health care staff but also for the provision of good quality of care. They concluded that increasing job satisfaction will require having a work environment that allow nurses to effectively practice their skills and acquire higher clinical competency. Ayamolowo et al, (2013) and Papathanassiou et al., (2014) also observed significant correlations between motivation of nurses and the characteristics of their work, such as autonomy that was given to them, working conditions, quality of supervision by their superiors and the relationships between them. In creating motivating environment managers should ensure that nurse have sufficient work time, autonomy to make decisions, open communication and be empowered to manage the complexity of their work.

Furthermore, this study observed that nurses work environment that provides stimulation of intellectual environment and that gives one an opportunity to use full range of their nursing skills was associated with job satisfaction. This agrees with (Sarafis et al., 2016) who observed that occupational pressure among nurses impacts negatively on the nurse performance and contributes to poor quality of care to patients. It is the view of the researchers that in order to retain its best-qualified employees, an organization needs to implement competitive measures that satisfy employee needs.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The study demonstrated a high level of job satisfaction among nurses. Nurses perceived their work environment as being conducive. A satisfying work environment for nurses allowed them to practice nursing skills, make autonomous nursing care decisions and promoted high nursing/clinical competence on their professional lives. The researchers recommend a large scale study to allow for generalization.

## **6. COMPETING INTERESTS**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## **7. FUNDING**

This research was not funded.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The authors wish to give special thanks to the research participants, Pumwani Maternity hospital administration for their cooperation and University of Eastern Africa, Baraton Ethics Review Board for granting the approval to conduct the study.

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