



Research article

Human resource management practices of nurse managers and its relationship to the job satisfaction of staff nurses in Private Hospitals

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Abstract

Effective HRM practices is a critical factor that influence job satisfaction especially in the nursing field. However, there is a dearth of literature of these studies conducted in the northern part of the Philippines and a need to highlight the implementation challenges or weaknesses of HRM practices across healthcare settings such as private hospitals. This study assessed the implementation of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices by nurse managers and its relationship to the job satisfaction of staff nurses working in private hospitals in a component city in the Northern part of the Philippines. The researchers adopted a descriptive correlational research design. A total of 137 staff nurses from the six private hospitals in Tuguegarao City were included and selected through convenience sampling technique. Data collection was done using a structured questionnaire which assessed HRM practices of nurse managers along five dimensions (training and development, performance assessment, career planning, employee participation, and job definition) and the overall job satisfaction of the staff nurses. Results were analyzed using frequency and percentage, mean, T-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson r. Results showed that good implementation of HRM practices by nurse-managers in the private hospitals included in the study. Moreover, staff nurses are satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, the difference in job satisfaction of the staff nurses were only influenced by their highest educational attainment and that all dimensions of HRM practices assessed have a significant positive correlation with the job satisfaction of the staff nurses. It can be concluded that job satisfaction of staff nurses employed in private hospitals is greatly affected by how nurse-managers implement human resource management activities. However improvements on the identifying training needs, provision of timely performance appraisals, clear career directions and job descriptions, and participation in work-related decision-making for staff nurses may be considered by nurse managers.

INTRODUCTION

Nurse managers understand innately that their ways in leading and managing their nursing unit has a significant impact on how

nursing staff perceive their job satisfaction.¹ Nurse managers play a crucial role in leadership and management, encompassing tasks such as hiring, scheduling shifts, establishing unit objectives, designing

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standards of practice, budgeting, and implementing activities to improve care quality. They are also responsible for setting a healthy and productive work environment, which significantly influences staff retention and satisfaction.^{2, 3} Nurse managers also ensure fair and just work environments, which in turn affects staff satisfaction and retention. They work simultaneously between overseeing unit operations and ensuring efficient and excellent performance.⁴ An integral part of nurse managers' responsibility is managing human nursing resources, particularly staff nurses' work. They advocate for efficient resource allocation to maintain excellence, safety, and empathic service. They serve as the voice and ears of their unit, ensuring that concerns and insights are heard, promoting cooperation and mutual respect. They also serve as educators or coaches, enabling staff nurses to efficiently move through their unit to mobilize information, support, and resources to deliver high-quality services.⁵

Within many health care systems globally, increased attention is being focused on the establishment and utilization of effective nursing human resources management (HRM) practices.⁶ Inadequate nursing HRM can lead to increased risks of exhaustion and burnout, job discontent, and a tendency to abandon the profession among nurses, hence exacerbating the labor shortage. Each of these unfavorable effects can impose additional expenditures, lower quality of care or cause work-related errors, and cause patient unhappiness.⁷ As a response, good HRM practices will be critical in increasing the performance of health-care companies.⁸ Moreover, there is mounting evidence that adopting HRM work practices, which are focused on personnel management, is fundamental to securing the achievement of hospital goals and creation of an attractive nurse practice environment in which nurses wish to continue working.⁶ Accordingly, HRM practices will promote greater degree of compatibility between employees and their

organizations, leading to improvement of the employees' attitude and behavior towards their job and for them to experience high levels of well-being.⁹ Effective HRM practices, such as proper training, conflict management, and support, are crucial for improving job satisfaction among nurses. Inadequate HRM practices can lead to reduced staff morale, increased stress, and retention issues and poor implementation negatively impact job satisfaction.^{10, 11, 12} Moreover, HRM practices were also found to impact organizational outcomes such as patient care and satisfaction as well as financial outcomes such as profit which is especially needed by private hospitals.^{11, 12} As nursing continuously evolves as a discipline, emphasis should be placed on addressing the various possibilities and expectations, and enhancement of knowledge and skills to improve job satisfaction level among nurses. Hence, nurse managers are expected to equip, lead, manage, and assess the unit's overall performance and each nurse in the unit, and they ensure a good working environment to establish a professional and harmonious relationship consistent with high-quality service, which influences self-esteem and job satisfaction.^{11, 13}

Job satisfaction (JS) comprises various aspects like autonomy, work environment, workload assignment, and benefits, as well as influences the quality of service, job performance, well-being, or quality of life, adds to burnout and turnover.¹ Nurses' drive to perform on their jobs greatly influences enhancing the quality of nursing services. Nurses who have a better understanding or perspective of their jobs are more likely to be committed to their healthcare organizations, which will result in increased job retention rates. Some benefits identified for working in a private hospital were more career choices, more straightforward advancement, and a manageable workload, whereas working in a public hospital offers regular training because of the government's many

partnerships, steady salary increase, and extra pay for hazards, subsistence, and even laundry as mandated by the Magna Carta for Public Health Workers as well as the retirement and health benefits.¹⁴ Private nurses in the Philippines are not happy with their fringe benefits, according to a study conducted among hospital nurses in the country. Conversely, nurses employed in public hospitals and those earning more had notably greater intentions to remain, demonstrating a substantial positive correlation with job satisfaction.¹⁵ This is consistent with findings from research done in other nations, which showed that solid job security was the main reason why nurses working in government hospitals reported greater levels of job satisfaction than those at private hospitals.

Although HRM practices greatly impact the job satisfaction of nurses, research is still needed in identifying the weaknesses and challenges of HRM practices within the nursing profession.¹⁶ Due to the dearth of research studies within the Philippine context on the implementation of human resource management practices employed by nurse-managers and its effect on nurses' job satisfaction¹ especially those conducted in the northern parts of the Philippines, this research will be a baseline study to determine what impact, if any, the Nursing Services Department has on the job satisfaction of the registered staff nurses in the private hospitals in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan.

METHODS

The researchers used a descriptive-correlational design to describe the respondents' profile, the implementation of the various human resource management practices of the nurse managers, and the nurses' job satisfaction. The study was conducted in the six private hospitals of Tuguegarao City. Out of the six, five are secondary level hospitals and one is a primary level hospital, each providing a variety of services to the community. These

hospitals have bed capacities ranging from 25-250, which may include inpatient beds and outpatient beds, diagnostics, surgery, day care, maternity, primary care, and outreach services for patients by multidisciplinary team. The study involved 137 staff nurses from six private hospitals in Tuguegarao City, selected using convenience sampling from a total of 212 nurses employed in six private hospitals in the city. The sample included those with at least six months of employment, excluding those attending to patients or in training.

The researchers utilized a structured questionnaire which consisted of three parts. The first part obtained information about the profile of the respondents. The second part consists of 27 Likert-scale type questions which measured the implementation of the HRM practices of nursing managers along the following dimensions: a) Job Definition that caters to the duties and responsibilities of the nurses' position in the organization; b) Training and Development practices that caters to the nurses' enhancement or acquisition of new set of skills and knowledge; c) Performance Assessment practices covering feedback and identifying areas that needs improvement; d) Career Planning and Development practices involving the growth and potential promotions of nurses in the organization; and e) Employee Participation practices that enable each nurses to be part of decision-making, suggestions, grievances, or clarifications for growth.¹⁷ The third part consists of 20 Likert-scale type questions which measured job satisfaction.¹⁸ Face validation from a chief nurse, nurse supervisor and nurse researcher was sought to ensure validity of the questionnaire.

Frequency count and percentage were utilized to describe the profile of the respondents. Weighted means were used to analyze the data gathered about the HRM practices of nurse managers and job satisfaction. The researchers used mean HRM practices and job satisfaction to

analyze nurse managers' HRM practices and staff nurses' job satisfaction. Independent samples T-test and one-way ANOVA were used to determine significant differences in HRM practices and a Pearson r to determine any significant correlation between HRM practices and job satisfaction.

Table 1
Profile Characteristics of the Respondents (n=137)

Mean Range	Implementation of HRM Practices	Job Satisfaction
4.50 – 5.00	Very Good	Very Satisfied
3.50 – 4.49	Good	Satisfied
2.50 – 3.49	Neither Good nor bad	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
1.50 – 2.49	Poor	Dissatisfied
1.00 – 1.49	Very Poor	Very Dissatisfied

The present study received ethical approval from University of Saint Louis Research Ethics Board Tuguegarao City, Cagayan Philippines with reference number 009-2023-03 dated April 20, 2023 before the implementation of the study protocol. Data collection was from January to April 2024 and only during the free time of the respondents. The authors do not have any form of conflict of interest in the conduct of this study.

RESULTS

As seen in Table 2 majority of the staff nurses are working as regular/ permanent employees in private hospitals within Tuguegarao City and are graduates of bachelor's degree. However, more than half of them has been working in their respective organization for less than 10 years indicating that most are relatively new employees.

Table 3. shows that there is good implementation of HRM activities in private hospitals within Tuguegarao City. This indicates that nurse managers are regularly implementing good training and development activities, performance assessments of staff nurses, career planning, employee participation and job definition activities for the staff nurses employed in private hospitals in the city.

However, among all the dimensions assessed, employee participation to organizational activities and decisions can be considered a weakness of the nurse managers' HRM practices. Moreover, extensive trainings addressing all aspects of quality (mean=4.31), identification of training needs through formal appraisal (mean=4.31), provision of performance-based feedback and counselling (mean=4.23), faith or trust in performance appraisal system (mean=4.23), awareness of employees of career path in the organization (mean=4.23), involvement of employees in decisions related to cost and quality matters of work (mean=4.07) and clearly defined and up-to-date duties/ job description in the organization (mean=4.34) are also among those considered by the staff nurses to be weaknesses of the HRM practices of their nurse managers.

Table 2
Profile Characteristics of the Respondents (n=137)

Variable	f	%
Length of Service		
0-5 years	80	58.4
6-10 years	48	35.0
11-15 years	4	2.9
16-20 years	5	3.6
Employment Status		
Contractual	19	13.9
Regular/Permanent	118	86.1
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	104	77.0
Master's Degree	31	23.0

Table 3
Level of implementation of HRM practices by
Nursing Services Department

Dimensions	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
Training and Development	4.37	Good
Performance Assessment	4.27	Good
Career Planning	4.28	Good
Employee Participation	4.15	Good
Job Definition	4.35	Good
Overall implementation of HRM practices	4.28	Good

As seen in Table 4, majority of the staff nurses working in private hospitals in the Tuguegarao City are satisfied with their job. The staff nurses are most satisfied with the way their co-workers get along with each other (mean=4.39). On the other hand, they were least satisfied with their working conditions (mean=4.12), the chance to work alone on the job (mean=4.04), and the pay and amount of work (mean=3.96).

Table 4
Staff nurses' level of job satisfaction (n=137)

Categories	f	%
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	5	3.6
Satisfied	85	62.0
Very satisfied	47	34.3
Mean Job Satisfaction	4.23	Satisfied

As seen on Table 5, there is a significant difference in the job satisfaction of the

Table 5
Difference on respondents' job satisfaction when grouped according to their profile variables

Categories	t-F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Length of Service	.99	.401	Not Significant
Employment Status	1.40	.164	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	3.97	.000*	Significant

* $p < .05$ is Significant

Table 6
Relationship between implementation of HRM activities and staff nurses' job satisfaction

Categories	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Training and Development	.540**	<0.001	Significant
Performance Assessment	.575**	<0.001	Significant
Career Planning	.728**	<0.001	Significant
Employee Participation	.610**	<0.001	Significant
Job Definition	.614**	<0.001	Significant

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

Results of the study revealed that the nurse managers in private hospitals in Tuguegarao City implemented good HRM practices in all dimensions assessed in the study namely training and development, performance assessment, career planning, employee participation, and job definition. Good and effective HRM practices by nurse

respondents when grouped according to their highest educational attainment, in which respondents with Master's Degree in Nursing had are better satisfied with their job than the nurses who are bachelors' degree holders. Moreover, the job satisfaction of staff nurses is significantly the same regardless of their length of service, employment status and ward assignment.

Table 6 shows that the implementation of HRM practices in terms of training and development, performance assessment, career planning, employee participation, and job definition have a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction. This indicates that any improvement in the implementation of HRM practices by the nurse managers will lead to an improvement of the job satisfaction of staff nurses and vice versa.

managers are essential for enhancing employee performance, satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness.^{11, 19} Staff nurses, in this study, were provided by their nurse managers with a job description that caters to the duties and responsibilities of the nurses' position in the organization; provided opportunities for trainings and development practices that caters to the staff nurses' enhancement or acquisition of

new set of skills and knowledge; relevant feedback and identification of areas that needs improvement; provided with opportunities for growth and potential promotions within the organization; and are able to be part of decision-making, suggestions, grievances, or clarifications for growth.^{17, 20} Similarly, employee participation, career development and training opportunities are identified are important HRM practices that favor positive employee engagement in the health care setting.^{12, 19}

Among the five dimensions of HRM practices assessed in the study, employee participation was identified as the weakness of the nurse managers. This indicates that nurse managers may not allow the full participation of staff nurses in decision making related to work matters. It is pointed out, however, that employee participation is the most significant factor that determines employee engagement.^{12, 19} Leadership styles and communication skills of nurse managers may influence the extent by which they allow employee participation. Good communication skills and transformational leadership styles are favorable for nurse managers and allow good employee participation.³ Results also reveal the specific weaknesses of nurse managers along the five dimensions assessed in the study. Although the nurse managers are able to provide training and professional development opportunities for their staff nurses, there is a need to assess the training needs of staff nurses. As with any other field of discipline, nursing is constantly evolving in response to continuous changes in the educational system, health care system, health research. It is important for nurse managers to understand the individual professional development needs of nursing staff in order to plan current and relevant training and development programs.²¹ Performance appraisal in an essential tool by managers to assess employee performance. In this study, it was revealed that the trust of staff nurses to performance appraisal and the timely

provision of feedback regarding performance are among the weaknesses of the nurse managers' HRM practices. Effective and timely performance appraisal by nurse managers can help improve staff nurses' weaknesses and job performance.^{20,22}

The results of the study further revealed that staff nurses in private hospitals in the city are satisfied with their job. This is in contrast with the findings of the other studies conducted outside the Philippines which reveal a general dissatisfaction of staff nurses especially regarding their workload, autonomy, recognition and pay.^{23, 24} Studies conducted in the Philippines also reveal that nurses are neither satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs.^{15, 24} However, a study conducted in Mindanao revealed a similar finding with study that staff nurses are also satisfied with their jobs especially along their relationships with their colleagues.^{25, 26} Similarly, job satisfaction of staff nurses in the Philippines were also found to be along the nature and location of their jobs, relationships with co-workers, opportunities to use their skills, and the degree of independence in their role.^{15, 25, 19} A good work environment with team members and supervisors was found to positively influence the job satisfaction of nurses.²³ It was also revealed in this study that staff nurses are least satisfied with their working conditions, a chance to work alone or their autonomy, pay and amount of work. This is consistent with the results of previous studies conducted in the Philippines and abroad.^{15, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26} Among the demographic characteristics, highest educational attainment was revealed to significantly influence the job satisfaction of staff nurses. It was revealed that nurses with a higher educational levels or those with masters' degree are more satisfied than the BSN graduates. Higher educational achievement was found to positively influence job satisfaction among nurses.²⁷ Another possible contributing factor to this is the increase in salary that

comes with higher educational qualifications. Salary was also found to be a determining factor for the job satisfaction of nurses especially in the private hospitals.^{15, 19} Moreover, nurses with higher educational qualifications are more equipped with the skills they need in practice which may give them better autonomy in the workplace. And as previously discussed, autonomy of staff nurses in the workplace is another factors that significantly influences job satisfaction.²⁵

The results of this study also revealed a significant positive correlation between HRM practices of nurse managers and the job satisfaction of staff nurses. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted in and outside the Philippines. These studies revealed that good and effective HRM practices can positively impact employee outcomes such as competence development, motivation, job satisfaction, retention, and performance.^{11, 12} In addition, the results of this study found that the strongest relationship was seen in HRM practices–career planning, employee participation, and job definition and job satisfaction. This is supported by previous studies which state that HRM practices such as increasing a sense of belonging to the company and positive relationships with nurse managers, positively influence overall job-related satisfaction among nurses and vice-versa.^{7, 20, 23, 25} Good leadership of nurse managers is also a strong determining factor for the job satisfaction of staff nurses.²³ Job satisfaction is also directly impacted by the employees' perceptions of their organization as a perfect place to work, their feelings about being a part of it, their beliefs about eventually rising to positions they deserve, and their alignments with their future through HR career planning, employee participation, and job definition.²⁰ These findings were contradictory to the findings of previous studies which showed that HRM practices with strongest correlation with job satisfaction of nurses are ecruitment and personnel selection and training and

development, and compensation and benefits.^{17,20}

The study was limited to five dimensions of HRM practices of nurse managers. Also, the study only utilized quantitative study and that it was only carried out among a small number of staff nurses in private hospitals in Tuguegarao City. Further research should therefore be done to find out more what influence other HRM practices have on nurses' job satisfaction. Moreover, the weaknesses of the HRM practices identified was based on the lowest mean score in the questionnaire, an in-depth exploration of the challenges and weaknesses of the HRM practices of nurse managers is therefore beneficial to have a better understanding of these weaknesses or challenges.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that nurse managers of the private hospitals included in this study are able to implement good and effective human resource management practices. These HRM practices also positively impact the job satisfaction of their staff nurses. However, in order to optimize the implementation of these HRM practices, certain improvements need to be made especially along the implementation of holistic training related to quality, identification of training needs of nursing staff to ensure appropriateness of training programs being implemented, conducting objective performance appraisal with timely feedback and counselling, orientation on the career paths for the staff nurses within the organization, provision of involvement opportunities to work-related decision-making and provision or clearly defined and up-to-date job descriptions for the staff nurses. It can also be concluded that despite these identified issues, staff nurses working in private hospitals included in the study are satisfied with their jobs especially on their relationships within the organization. Moreover, educational attainment also has an influence in their job satisfaction.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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