

ANALYSIS OF NURSES' JOB SATISFACTION IN RELATION TO HOSPITAL OWNERSHIP STATUS

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Abstract: Meeting the increasing demand for quality health care places pressure on health care facilities to have an adequate number of health care staff. The study is centred on nurse staffing as a key element in delivering high-quality care. Attention was paid to the ownership status of hospitals as it impacts the working conditions of nurses. An adequate number of nurses is vital to provide quality health care, but the growing demands in the industry have resulted in a shortage of nurses. The purpose of the study was to identify the level of satisfaction of nurses employed in hospitals in Slovakia based on their ownership status. The Methods section of the study emphasizes the importance of assessing satisfaction with nurse staffing as a crucial indicator of healthcare quality. The methodology aims to gather quantitative data from hospitals in Slovakia to assess the level of satisfaction with nurse staffing in various types of hospitals. The study was conducted in hospitals in Slovakia using the chi-square test on data obtained from a survey questionnaire among nurses. The questionnaire survey was conducted under the APVV and VEGA project. The research findings indicate that hospital ownership status and nurse shortages in hospitals are significantly correlated. Several job factors were compared to reveal that nurses were the least satisfied with the staffing in public hospitals.


Keywords: nurses, private hospital, public hospital, staffing, workload

JEL Classification: I11, J10, J28


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Introduction

The shortage of qualified healthcare workers is one of the most significant challenges facing healthcare systems around the world. This situation has a negative impact on the satisfaction of nurses with their working conditions. The Slovak Republic is no exception in this area. The long-term shortage of nurses in public and private hospitals poses a serious problem in terms of job satisfaction, as well as the provision of healthcare. The presented article focuses on the analysis and identification of factors influencing the satisfaction of nurses with staffing in hospitals in Slovakia. The research section specifically deals with the analysis of nurses' satisfaction with staffing in the context of the ownership status of hospitals.

Literature review

The healthcare of a country includes various factors such as human resources, finances, materials, technology, and institutionalization. The degree of innovation in the system also plays a role (Tupá, 2020a). The nursing workforce is the largest among all healthcare professions worldwide. Providing quality care and patient safety requires effective nursing workforce allocation and evidence-based nurse staffing (Morioka et al., 2022).

The shortage of skilled health personnel can negatively affect the quality of healthcare services globally. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a shortage of 15 million health workers including doctors and nurses is projected globally by 2030. WHO has identified this as one of the most pressing global health issues of our time (Senek et al., 2020). Slovakia is also facing a crisis in its nursing workforce. The shortage of nurses is not unique to Slovakia and is prevalent in low-income countries. The shortage of nurses is a serious issue that needs to be urgently addressed to ensure that adequate health care is provided to the population (Ondrušová et al., 2023). An adequate number of nurses is essential to providing quality care and safe working conditions. The shortage of nurses can lead to burnout, work overload, fatigue, physical and mental exhaustion, elevated stress levels, and increased turnover rates among nurses (Fernet et al., 2017; Guo et al., 2018; Han et al., 2021; Acea-López et al., 2021). Unsatisfactory working conditions for healthcare workers may lead to higher rates of migration to other countries and encourage those remaining to leave the profession or seek opportunities elsewhere (George et al., 2019). Research on health worker emigration has examined the reasons behind their decision, including push factors such as individual motivations, working conditions and the socio-political-economic climate in their home country (Ferreira et al., 2020). The lack of competitive jobs for locals presents a serious staffing issue, hindering access to health services due to a shortage of healthcare personnel (Poliaková et al., 2022). The Workload Indicators of Staffing Need (WISN) method is a reliable tool for health workforce planning, suitable for various regional settings. WISN has shown to be a promising method for accurately predicting the required healthcare workforce (De Menezes et al., 2022). Heavy workloads are a global situation in the

nursing profession owing to the perception of staff shortages. That is why large numbers of nurses are leaving the profession or seeking employment outside their home country. Identifying appropriate staffing standards is crucial for both private and public hospitals as nurse caseloads may differ substantially based on the ownership status (Mrayyan, 2007; Albsoul et al., 2023). Slovakia has been facing a difficult situation regarding the staffing and working conditions of nurses for an long time. For years, the Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives (SKSaPA) has raised concerns that the current system compels nurses and midwives to seek employment abroad. In 2018, there were 31,000 practicing nurses, of whom 10% were over 60 years old. According to recent data, there is a shortage of almost 4,500 nurses in the age category of 20-29 years and 30-39. SKSaPA has issued a warning about a potential loss of up to 20% of the country's healthcare workforce in a short period of time (Tupá, 2020b; Ondrušová et al., 2023). In 2021, 965 nurses and midwives left the healthcare system. The number is higher than in the previous year of 2020, which was at the start of the pandemic. Although 437 graduates have entered the system, there is still a significant shortage of 14,000 nurses, and unfortunately, the trend is not improving (Prohuman, 2022). The purpose of the study is to identify the level of satisfaction of nurse staffing in hospitals in Slovakia based on their ownership status.

Methods

Research methodology and research sample

The study was carried out under the APVV-19/0579 project entitled “Setting up personnel management processes in hospitals and their impact on the migration of physicians and nurses to work abroad”. The research sample was 752 nurses employed in hospitals across Slovakia. A questionnaire was used to gather information from the respondents. 95% of the respondents were females, 68.5% had attained the first and second level of higher education. 53% of the respondents work in faculty/university hospitals, 13% work in specialized hospitals, and 34% are employed in general hospitals in Slovakia. The purpose of the study was to identify the level of satisfaction of nurse staffing in hospitals in Slovakia based on their ownership status.

H0: The staffing and working conditions of nurses are independent of the ownership status of a hospital.

“Hospital ownership status” – either a private hospital (1) or a public hospital (2). “Shortage of nurses and related workload, overtime, on-call shifts and emergent cases” – in this question, the level of nurses' satisfaction with staffing was examined. The respondents had 5 response options: 1 – Satisfied; 2 – Rather satisfied; 3 – Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 4 – Rather dissatisfied; 5 – Dissatisfied.

To analyse the data, the responses “Satisfied” and “Rather satisfied” were merged and assigned a numerical value of 2. The responses “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” were not included in the sample. The responses “Dissatisfied” and “Rather dissatisfied” were also merged and assigned a numerical value of 1. The data was

cleaned, sorted, and recoded, resulting in a sample size of 604 respondents. The following variables were used in the chi-square test: nominal, categorical variables: hospital ownership status and ordinal variables: shortage of nurses and associated workload, overtime, on-call shifts, emergent cases, etc. In accordance with the scheme outlined by Hendl (2012), the variables were classified and recoded accordingly to satisfy the requirements for the chi-square test.

Results

Statistical analysis using the chi-square test was used to explore the relationship between the hospital ownership status and the shortage of nursing staff. The test was to analyse whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the variables. In addition, descriptive statistics were used to compare various factors that impact the working conditions of nurses in Slovakia. The obtained results enabled us to gain an expert viewpoint regarding the issue and pinpoint pertinent elements to consider when tackling the shortage of nursing staff in hospitals.

Table 1. Case processing summary

Hospital ownership * Shortage of nurses and associated workload, overtime, duty and emergency cases	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
	604	100.0%	0	0.0%	604	100.0%

Source: Authors' own research data

Table 2. Chi-square test: count, expected count, adjusted residual

		Shortage of nurses and associated workload, overtime, duty and emergency cases		Total	
		1.0	2.0		
Hospital ownership	1.0	Count	131	35	166
		Expected count	143.7	22.3	166.0
		Adjusted residual	-3.4	3.4	
	2.0	Count	392	46	438
		Expected count	379.3	58.7	438.0
		Adjusted residual	3.4	-3.4	
Total	Count	523	81	604	
	Expected count	523.0	81.0	604.0	

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Table 1 outlines the data processing information for the chi-square test. Out of the total 752 cases, 149 respondents' answers were excluded as a result of statistical inappropriateness for the sample. Thus, the usable sample size was reduced to 604. The analysis investigated the connection between the hospital ownership status and nurse shortages, along with the related workload, overtime, on-call shifts, and emergency cases. The data from the questionnaire was used, from which the answer “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” was removed during cleaning.

The standardized residuals show several high values, indicating a potential correlation between the hospital ownership status and nurse shortage (Table 2). In the test, the condition of expected count greater than 1 is met. Adjusted residuals are used to assess whether there is a statistically significant relationship between two variables in a chi-square test. Adjusted residuals quantify the difference between the actual count of a variable and its expected count. The first set of adjusted residuals (-3.4 and 3.4) indicates a significant relationship between ownership status and nurse shortage and the associated workload. The values show a significant deviation from zero, indicating that there is a relationship between them. The sign of the adjusted residuals is important in interpreting their significance. The negative value (-3.4) implies that 1.0 ownership status is considerably associated with higher levels of nurse shortage and workload. The positive value of 3.4 signifies that a 2.0 ownership status leads to a lower incidence of nurse shortage and workload.

Table 3. Chi-square test results

	Value	df	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)	Exact sig. (2-sided)	Exact sig. (1-sided)
Pearson's chi-square	11.608 ^a	1	0.001		
Continuity correction^b	10.715	1	0.001		
Likelihood ratio	10.771	1	0.001		
Fisher's exact test				0.001	0.001
Linear-by-linear association	11.589	1	0.001		
Number of valid cases	604				

^a 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. Minimum expected count is 22.26;

^b Computed only for 2×2 table;

Source: Authors' own elaboration

The chi-square test revealed a significant relationship between ownership status and nurse shortage, as well as workload, overtime, on-call shifts, and emergency cases. Pearson's chi-square value is 11.608, with a significance level of 0.001. The chi-square test calculation table demonstrates a statistically significant relationship between the hospital ownership status and the shortage of nurses, thereby supporting the alternative hypothesis.

Table 4. Symmetric measures

		Value	Approximate significance
Nominal by nominal	Phi	-0.139	0.001
	Cramer's V	0.139	0.001
	Contingency coefficient	0.137	0.001
Number of valid cases		604	

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Table 4 deals with the symmetric metrics for the categorical variables. The P-value is -0.139 and its significance level is 0.001 . The value of Cramer's V is 0.139 and the significance is 0.001 . The metric is similar to P, yet more accurate. The value of Cramer's V is 0.139 with a significance level of 0.001 . Cramer's V represents a measure of the dependence between variables that is used in the chi-square method of calculation. The value of association ranges from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong). The results of Cramer's V analysis indicate a weak positive association between the ownership status and the shortage of nurses and the associated workload. The ownership status of hospitals has thus been found to have a significant impact on the situation regarding the nurse shortage. An alpha value of 0.05 indicates a significance level of 5% , typically used to determine whether to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis. H1: There is a relationship between the hospital ownership status and the working conditions of nurses.

Comparison of satisfaction with other factors of nurses' work

A comparison was made between the job factors using a questionnaire survey. The factors included were communication and relationships with patients and superiors, advantages/benefits, instruments and equipment, training, professional and career development, shortage of nurses and related workload, overtime, on-call shifts, and emergency cases.

It follows below from the graph that nurses are highly dissatisfied with various job factors, in particular understaffed wards, and the related workload, overtime, on-call shifts, and emergencies. Next, they are dissatisfied with the advantages/benefits provided by their employers, followed by remuneration for the work performed. The shortage of nurses on wards has a detrimental effect on both the work of nurses and the quality of care received by patients. The migration intentions of nurses are attributable to challenges posed by insufficient staff numbers.

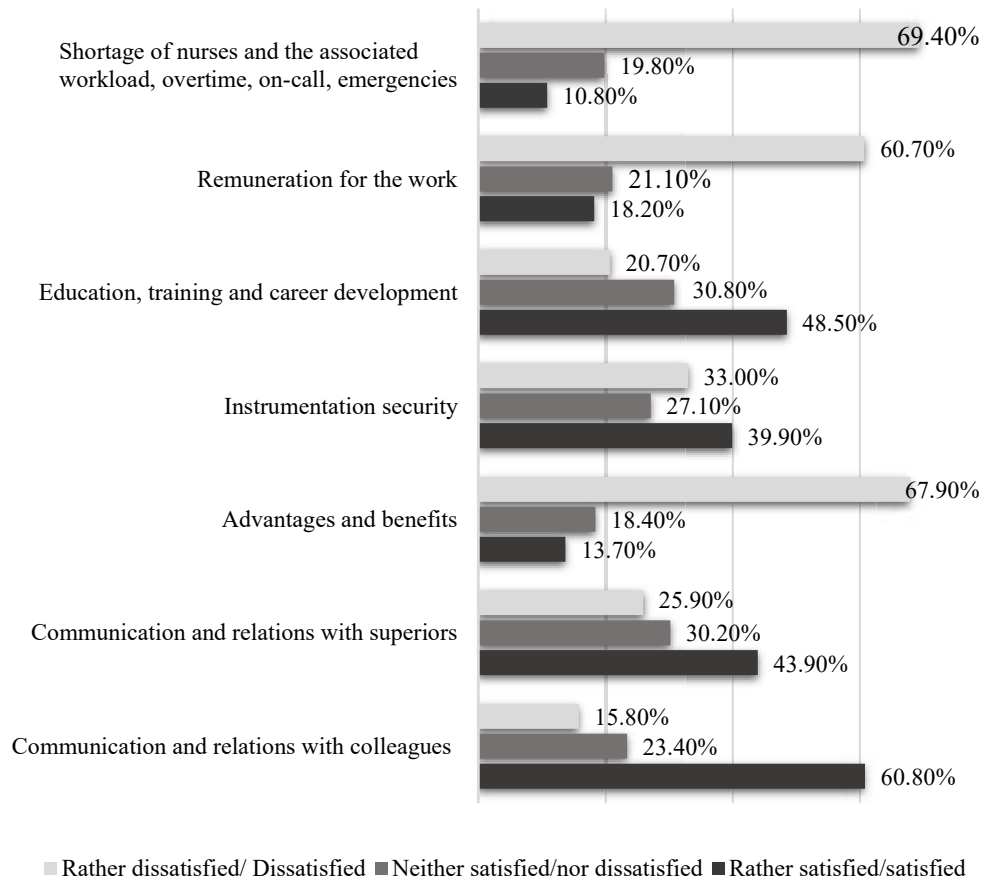


Figure 1. Nurses' satisfaction with other job factors

Source: Authors' own elaboration

The analysis reveals that the level of satisfaction of nurses in public hospitals is considerably lower compared to private hospitals, with up to 73% expressing dissatisfaction with the number of nurses compared to 61% of nurses in private hospitals. According to the respondents, the second factor negatively affecting their work is the advantages and benefits. 64.6% of nurses working in private hospitals expressed dissatisfaction with their advantages and benefits in relation to 69% of nurses working in public hospitals. The nurses expressed dissatisfaction with the pay they receive for their work, making it the third most common response among the surveyed individuals. 57.5% of the nurses in private hospitals are unhappy with their pay, according to the questionnaire survey. Similarly, 62% of the respondents from public hospitals also reported dissatisfaction with their pay.

Discussion

The research findings by Cho et al. (2015) suggest that increasing nurse staffing is associated with a decrease in missed care. Fewer omissions of required nursing care are expected to improve nursing surveillance and patient outcomes, such as patient falls, pressure ulcers and pneumonia. Thus, adequate nurse staffing should be ensured to reduce unmet nursing needs and improve patient outcomes. Based on the analysis of national data on nursing homes, Wan (2003) highlighted the link between adequate nurse staffing and quality of care provided. According to Tong (2011) skilled nursing facilities (SNF) constrained by the new regulation increase the absolute and relative hours worked by the lowest skilled type of nurse. Using this regulation change as an instrument to measure nurse staffing levels, it is determined that increases in nurse staffing reduce on-site SNF patient mortality.

According to an applied study (Yew et al., 2020), private hospitals in Malaysia have low job satisfaction with remuneration and organizational policies as well as role assignments. Based on our results, it can be confirmed that nurses in private hospitals have a high level of dissatisfaction with the mentioned factors as in the study by (Yew et al., 2020). However, in our case, there is more dissatisfaction with the working conditions in government hospitals. The most important factor in the study of (Erdoğan et al., 2020) is the amount of salary. In our study, this factor is ranked third in Figure 1. According to (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2023), there are factors that contribute significantly to the shortage of nurses such as staff turnover as a consequence of workload and job dissatisfaction. In our study, we pointed out the high level of dissatisfaction of nurses with the staffing shortage. The findings presented in their work (Chen et al., 2022) indicate the intention of nurses to leave their jobs if they are dissatisfied with the work structure, participation in employment decisions, and relationships among colleagues. Our analysis demonstrates the opposite results; the nurses who responded to our questionnaire show high levels of satisfaction with both colleagues and supervisors, which may further positively influence their job satisfaction.

The study found that the working conditions in private and public hospitals do differ, with the shortage of nurses being the key issue that affects the workload, overtime, on-call shifts, and emergency cases. The shortage of staff in the healthcare industry can lead to inadequate care for patients as well as increased levels of stress and overtime for nurses. Additionally, the results imply a high level of dissatisfaction among nurses working in both private and public hospitals regarding inadequate staffing levels, in addition to insufficient pay and advantages/benefits. These are the factors that contribute to the overall dissatisfaction of nurses in the workplace.

Conclusions

The study examining the level of satisfaction among nurses with staffing revealed unfortunate results in Slovakia. The country is facing a state of emergency due to a severe shortage of healthcare workers. The study addresses the shortage of healthcare personnel, particularly nurses, in both the global and Slovak healthcare

systems. Shortages among the nursing workforce have detrimental consequences on the treatment provided to patients and the working conditions of nurses. The shortage of nurses has been found to exacerbate their workload, leaving them with an excessive number of tasks to handle, ultimately prompting them to consider migrating. According to the findings, workload, overtime, and understaffing are the primary sources of dissatisfaction among nurses. Private and public hospitals differ in terms of nurse dissatisfaction, with more dissatisfaction reported among nurses in public hospitals. This can have a negative impact on the quality of care provided. The level of satisfaction with pay and advantages/benefits is low as well. The shortage of staff in the healthcare sector coupled with the dissatisfaction of the existing staff with their working conditions has highlighted the need for better health workforce planning.

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Authors' Contribution: Veronika Mozolová – 40%; Dana Jašková – 30%; Monika Gullerová – 30%.

Conflict of Interest: I declare on my honour that I have no conflicting interests.

Acknowledgements and Financial Disclosure: Scientific paper was elaborated within the framework of the project APVV č. 19-0579 “Personnel management processes set-up in hospitals and its impact on the migration of physicians nurses to work abroad”.

PROBLEMY PERSONALNE PIELĘGNIAREK W REPUBLICE SŁOWACJI

Streszczenie: Zaspokajanie rosnącego zapotrzebowania na wysokiej jakości opiekę zdrowotną wywiera presję na placówki opieki zdrowotnej, aby dysponowały odpowiednią liczbą personelu medycznego. Badania koncentrują się na personelu pielęgniarskim jako kluczowym elemencie zapewniania wysokiej jakości opieki zdrowotnej. Zwrócono uwagę na status własnościowy szpitali, gdyż ma on wpływ na warunki pracy pielęgniarek. Odpowiednia liczba pielęgniarek ma kluczowe znaczenie dla zapewnienia wysokiej jakości opieki zdrowotnej, ale rosnące wymagania w branży spowodowały niedobory pielęgniarek. Celem badania była identyfikacja poziomu zadowolenia z personelu pielęgniarskiego w szpitalach na Słowacji w oparciu o status własnościowy placówek. Metodologia ma na celu zebranie danych ilościowych ze szpitali na Słowacji w celu oceny poziomu zadowolenia z personelu pielęgniarskiego w różnych typach szpitali. Badanie przeprowadzono w szpitalach na Słowacji, stosując test chi-kwadrat na danych uzyskanych z ankiety zrealizowanej wśród pielęgniarek. Badanie ankietowe przeprowadzono w ramach projektu APVV i VEGA. Wyniki badania wskazują, że status własności szpitali i niedobory pielęgniarek w szpitalach są znacząco skorelowane. Porównano kilka czynników związanych z pracą, aby wykazać, że pielęgniarki były najmniej zadowolone z personelu w szpitalach publicznych.

Słowa kluczowe: pielęgniarki, szpital prywatny, szpital publiczny, personel, obciążenie pracą

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