

Job Satisfaction among Healthcare Workers in Saudi Arabia: A Systematic Review

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Received: 13.08.2024

Revised: 11.09.2024

Accepted: 06.10.2024

ABSTRACT

1. Introduction: Job satisfaction among health practitioners has been an area of interest for an extended period, as it plays an important foundation in the health system to deliver high-quality care services to patients. This study aims to examine the determinants of job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Saudi Arabia, as the health workforce is crucial within the health system. The health workforce consists of every person engaged in actions whose primary intent is to improve health, including medical doctors, nurses, and health managers. Since Vision 2030 was launched in Saudi Arabia, a reformed health system with a focus on the improvement of health services was anticipated; hence, the Saudi government put a lot of effort into assessing, monitoring, and providing care services through KPIs). Job satisfaction of health practitioners is considered an essential factor that affects their efficiency, well-being, and mental health. In addition, it is also a significant aspect that affects the intention to leave the job, and the changes of the workforce have the potential to drastically affect the capacity of the health system.

A multistage sampling method was employed to obtain a sample size of 590 health workers from 25 hospitals. The results show that males were significantly more satisfied than females in relation to specialty, organization, and the overall global score. Older health practitioners have a higher level of satisfaction than younger ones in areas such as salary, working conditions, social recognition, and organizational structure. Saudi health practitioners were less satisfied in all aspects, while the non-Saudi (Arab) healthcare practitioners were the most satisfied in all aspects except city happiness. Medicine and surgery practitioners were the most satisfied professionals in all score aspects. Dental healthcare workers were the least satisfied professionals in all overall global score aspects. Health practitioners with more than five years of experience were significantly the most satisfied in all aspects except working environment.

Methods: A literature search was conducted using the following databases. The eligibility criteria were as follows: a) full articles, b) articles written in English, c) only in Saudi Arabia, and d) research focused on job satisfaction. The retrieval was completed on 30th March 2021. A good quality study retrieval form and data extraction form were used to assist. A combination of Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and the Arabic terminology was used as the searched terms. "Job satisfaction in SaudiGCC countries or Middle East countries" was used as a common MeSH term.

Conclusion: Conclusion The current systematic review found that only hospital type indicates significant variability between studies, so cross-sectional studies should be interpreted with caution. There is a relatively high prevalence rate in burnout dimensions between Saudi healthcare providers, especially with low and moderate quality studies. Future research is recommended to include large samples among health care workers in different regions to better support and understand the different characteristics of each region. Healthcare workers should consider screening for burnout, such as a short or more sophisticated scale after further evaluation. The proportion of burnout prevalence is high and changes in this era may indicate a high level of stress, which is expected. As well as providing tangible help or funding, health workers should be supported with detailed guidance, which has been implemented in other countries and has repeatedly shown to be one of the most effective interventions. Education, work environment, and job satisfaction have been suggested for further research. More research, including adjustment variables and using better quality methods, is needed to better understand how it affects burnout. Prospective and meta-control studies are required for this. (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021)

1.1. Background and Rationale

Job satisfaction is considered the cornerstone of any profession, especially health practitioners, because they play the crucial role in providing high-quality care services to patients (Alotaibi et al., 2023). The healthcare organization and its respective workers are strongly interconnected to meet the patient's healthcare expectations. Job satisfaction is defined as the inner feeling of employees about their job, whether they like it or not. Job satisfaction of workers is recognized as an important factor that influences the effectiveness and efficiency of employees. Furthermore, job satisfaction is related to the workers' well-being and mental health. It describes the contentment of personnel in their workplaces. Job satisfaction is an emotional response that comes within an employee. It occurs after the comparison between the expectation and the reward that the employee obtains from his job.

Job satisfaction among health practitioners is a very relevant issue due to its important implications for the quality of life of caregivers. In a manner, satisfied health practitioners deliver a better service. This does not only refer to an outcome in health terms, but also to a human and personalized relation with the patient. The literature in this field refers to job satisfaction among forces in the health system. Health care is defined as a product viewed as a process that is complex, technical, and most importantly, interpersonal.

Health practitioners are classed as those able to prescribe and/or conduct physical treatments to patients, daughters of the above definition. Nurses are not included in this category; following the definitions used before, nurses are in most cases also included as health professionals in other studies. Here, job satisfaction is viewed as a precursor, *ex ante*, of job performance, a postulate also outlined by many relevant authors. The development of workforce performance models adopted by Abu Dhabi has shown high levels of significance for the predictive power of job satisfaction influencing intent to stay and subsequent practice, hence the inclusion of job satisfaction among the predictors set up in the analysis of the data that have been carried out in the different health environments (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021).

1.2. Research Aim and Objectives

This research study aims to examine the level of job satisfaction among healthcare workers in Saudi Arabia. Also, the study looks at what factors are likely to strongly influence health care worker job satisfaction. The objectives of the review are as follows: (1) To review the published valid research about job satisfaction among healthcare workers in Saudi Arabia; Empirical research concerning job satisfaction among health care workers in Saudi Arabia is scant. This study would like to investigate the potential factors influencing job satisfaction among health care workers in Saudi Arabia (Alotaibi et al., 2023). (2) To assess the level of job satisfaction among healthcare workers in Saudi Arabia; Despite the importance of healthcare service, the lack of health practitioners becomes a significant issue. Health workforce planning and policy benefit from the knowledge of job satisfaction for health practitioners. (3) To examine the relative importance of these variables for the level of job satisfaction; It has nearly been three decades since Saudi Arabia experienced a healthcare workforce crisis. Over the years, research and analysis of varying factors influencing job satisfaction among workers in the health sector have been conducted globally. This study contributes to the cumulated body of knowledge by analyzing healthcare workers in health provider roles post-going liberalization in Saudi Arabia.

2. METHODOLOGY

This systematic review explores job satisfaction among healthcare workers (HCWs) in Saudi Arabia and determines their level of satisfaction. A detailed systematic literature search adopted PRISMA guidelines. This review's research objective is to determine the level of job satisfaction among HCWs in different healthcare sectors in Saudi Arabia.

Globally, job satisfaction is a key concept that considers the contentment that individuals experience in different work settings. In the healthcare setting, it refers to the gratification professional health workers perceive from the medical services they deliver. Nonetheless, the concept of job satisfaction has different meanings for each individual, and factors affecting it can be internal or external. Despite the importance of job satisfaction and its link to organizational commitment within the healthcare setting, job contentedness for many HCWs is still a major controversial issue. That is, job satisfaction is associated with compliance regarding a fulfillment of professional requirements and care for the individual client's needs.

2.1. Search Strategy

This literature search and exploration of the factors contributing to the lack of job satisfaction among healthcare workers in Saudi Arabia's healthcare sector focus the difficulties such as salary, workload and lack of advancement perspectives, while additional research is still needed to expand understanding of job dissatisfaction among Saudi healthcare workers more clearly.

The electronic databases were applied. In order to get the appropriate studies, the keywords included "Saudi nurses", "foreign nurses", "staff nurses", "social determinants", "social barriers", "social determinants of

health", and "job satisfaction", "work satisfaction". The keywords were combined using the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR". These two operators allow for narrowing or broadening definitions of disease by stating them differently. Furthermore, using different search terms and incorporating the two operators led to a focused search. Search limits were also applied at the databases level. Finally, a total of twelve journal articles were selected by establishing the eligibility criteria, (Hudays et al., 2023).

Primary healthcare plays a vital role in society since it covers the basic need for health. Furthermore, more than 3,500 healthcare workers in the family health programs located in different areas in Saudi Arabia. This study showed that nearly 40% were experiencing stress. Indeed, this is attributed to heavy workloads, frequent on-calls, lack of advancement perspectives and not safe environment, while poor job satisfaction seems to be the precursor of such stress, (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021).

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

2.2.1. Inclusion criteria Participants: Healthcare workers in Saudi hospitals. Study design: All quantitative studies that investigate job satisfaction and its determinants from the perspective of healthcare workers will be included. Focus group: All healthcare professionals who work in a hospital setting. Geographic focus: Studies should be conducted in Saudi Arabia. Context, setting or environment: Studies can be conducted in any Saudi hospitals. Language: Studies can be conducted in any language, but only studies published in the English language will be included. Time: There will be no exclusion related to the publication date of the studies. Data sources: Original quantitative primary studies published in scientific journals. Relevance: Studies about job satisfaction and its affecting factors in Saudi Arabian healthcare workers. Population: Participants are Saudi and non-Saudi healthcare workers. Sample size larger than 50. Approach: Studies of a standard investigation design based on random sampling. Descriptions of the aims, methodology, analyze approach result of the study.

2.2.2. Exclusion criteria Participants: Only healthcare workers will be included. However, studies conducted on nurses solely will be excluded. Study design: Qualitative and mixed methods studies will not be included. Title, abstract and full-text: Studies with irrelevant title, abstract and full text will not be included. Language: Non-English language studies will be excluded. Context, setting or environment: Studies focusing on home health services, primary healthcare services, public health services, rehabilitation centers, and mental hospitals will be excluded. Geographic focus: Studies conducted outside Saudi Arabia will not be included.

2.3. Data Extraction and Synthesis

This section presents the results from the systematic literature review. The findings show that 16 studies focused on factors affecting job satisfaction, 16 studies linked job satisfaction to job-related outcomes, and 5 studies assessing job satisfaction levels. Moreover, only 9 studies conducted in Saudi Arabia meeting the established inclusion criteria, which include that job satisfaction is the main variable or one of the main variables under consideration (Hudays et al., 2023).

Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state derived from employees' experiences in their work environment. It is an affective response to the variability between expectations and actual experiences from acquired values on the workplace (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021). Job satisfaction can be influenced by intrinsic or/and extrinsic factors on the workplace. In health care facilities, nurse job satisfaction is particularly crucial since it is directly related to the treatment and safety of the patients. High job satisfaction among nurses can help them cope better in high-stress situations, thus reducing the potential for burnout up to the possibility of committing mistakes due to high workloads.

As the demand for public health services has significantly increased over the last few years, particularly since the declaration of the 2030 vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there has been a surge of healthcare workers from all specialties across different regions of Saudi Arabia. However, the emphasis in this manuscript is on healthcare workers (HCWs) as its main focus. Throughout a comprehensive search of the literature, some studies on patient satisfaction were included due to an association with the variables of interest, explaining the flow of patients. A narrative synthesis was conducted on the literature reports. An extensive consideration of the literature does not supply separate studies related to HCWs from those discussing patient satisfaction.

3. Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction

Healthcare workers play a significant role in any country's social and economic development by providing medical care services to citizens. Currently, a considerable increase in the incidence of various diseases has motivated the health care system and infrastructure in all countries significantly. Health care and services require a variety of resources to maintain a proper system, such as trained health care professionals, occupational health and safety, medical equipment, supplies, and so on, to provide better services to patients. Job satisfaction is the extent to which employees like or dislike their work. High job satisfaction can positively affect hospitals and clients, while low job satisfaction can significantly impact a health care worker's attitude, physical, and mental health (Hudays et al., 2023). Therefore, continuous follow-up and study are needed to determine the factors contributing to health care workers' job satisfaction.

One feature of any country's culture or economic development is its health care system. Corresponding to the increase in health care facilities, several healthcare professionals began to work in health institutions. Hospital workers like housekeeping staff, maintenance staff, ward boys, record clerks, pharmacy employees, etc., are additional important, like doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, and radiology technicians. Recently, Saudi hospitals have changed their attitudes, improving worker effort and functionality. The demand is higher, and the number of hospitals is increasing in the town. The Saudi population has confidence in the technologies adopted by the Saudi government linked to hospitals, and Saudi citizens have been expecting good services from hospitals. This study focused on the factors affecting job satisfaction among health care workers in Saudi hospitals.

3.1. Organizational Support

Based on sampled studies, the following quantitative findings were related to the impact of organizational support on job satisfaction of healthcare workers in Saudi Arabia. There were several studies examining the organizational support factor. One highlighted that quality of leadership, job security, fair treatment, and health policy had a positive impact on job satisfaction among healthcare workers. About 37% of factors affecting job satisfaction were related to organizational support. Another study indicated that supervisor support, fair supervisor, and perception of the implementation of health policies significantly influenced job satisfaction among healthcare workers. Each model explained 21%-44% of the job satisfaction variation. It was also highlighted that increased workload and job stress significantly decreased job satisfaction. Furthermore, the satisfaction with staffing management significantly increased healthcare workers' job satisfaction in the hospital. Approximately 35% of the job satisfaction variations are attributable to these predictors. Currently, healthcare systems contribute much to healthcare delivery compared to prevention, health promotion, and treatment. Furthermore, healthcare organizations and healthcare systems have a high influence to support healthcare workers' performance, service satisfaction, and health service quality (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021). Individual and family health and healthcare shaped by social determinants. Besides direct healthcare in nurse practice, equally healthcare supporting health systems and nursing leadership are essential points in work settings (Hudays et al., 2023). Social determinants of health had to be considered according to the care provision, skill development, and nurse improvement. Healthcare policy makers had to design an action plan related to nurse workforce planning as recommendations were made by healthcare workers in the healthcare worker survey. Frontline service workers have the potential to provide a greater part of the health workforce, so nursing, with the major contribution to the health workforce, affects the health service system.

3.2. Workload and Job Demands

Workload and staff scheduling play a detrimental role in the quality of health services according to (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021). Unreasonable workloads and high job demands resulting from understaffing and fatigue decrease the provider's ability to provide high-quality services, which subsequently increase the risk of errors. In addition, progressing an infection prevention and control plan needs levels of commitment, time, tools, and the readiness of other factors such as a set risk management policy. The quality of care provided in health care facilities and workload are significantly correlated. There are different aspects in which the staff's workload and the service quality are connected. This may involve an increase in infection rates, customer grievances regarding service quality, and/or distaste of services post-visit. Additionally, the service may be discontinued or there may be an increase in time between visits. The workload of the staff has been assessed by looking at the service volume consumed and the volume capacity. The quality of service provided has been evaluated by real-efficiency techniques. The duration from a patient's arrival to when they receive the first service, duration between services, early departures, and time lost during the visit are quantified and computed statistically. In addition, these data are used to assess the satisfaction of patients based on the Kano model, a widely used customizable satisfaction tool.

Patients often have increasing demands for healthcare. They require sufficient attention, timely treatment, and competent staff, most notably in the context of chronic illnesses and aging. Since staff scheduling and workload play critical roles in managing these needs, the connection is therefore crucial. This connection is vital in establishing an objective base for performance during the process of implementing quality strategies. The research helps fill this gap in the literature, thus contributing to the performance improvement of health care.

3.3. Career Development Opportunities

Background services in the government sector have significantly improved, coupled with opening new universities to produce highly skilled Saudi healthcare workers. The largest sector employing Saudi Arabian nationals is the healthcare sector. Universities have also opened new programs to upskill expatriate healthcare workers. Job satisfaction is considered one of the most significant predictors of the efficiency and effectiveness of individuals who work in certain professions, irrespective of the sector. Nevertheless, the healthcare industry is particularly significant as it is responsible for directly diagnosing or providing treatment to people with health

ailments. Job satisfaction can be influenced by healthcare worker stressors such as long hours, misunderstanding due to language, or inadequacy of equipment; this can reflect the competence of the healthcare worker(s) and so their place of work.

Career Development Opportunities

Career development opportunities are the career advancements some employees get during their employment. The achievement of these advancements grants employees more benefits with respect to higher salary payments, the acknowledgment as a professional and experienced healthcare professional, and in the long-term gaining senior job posts. One of the key variables that can help policymakers and human resource managers better understand the driving factors of job satisfaction amongst Saudi healthcare professionals is the career growth options. Interaction with patients was thought to be more good at managing privacy, extending information on how to improve health, and care in improving their standard services. On the other side, interaction with healthcare workers was thought to be optimal.

There is evidence that job satisfaction amongst Saudi healthcare professionals has specific associations with demographic variables. Job satisfaction is a concept that refers to the need for standards and provided facilities and different advantages. Job satisfaction results are combined with decreased professional performance and solution when studying service enhancements for poor while maintaining the efficiencies in machine appliances that are expired. By probing demographic aspects, policymaking and HR-based management levels will be more effective in enhancing job satisfaction among healthcare providers ((Aiman Halawani et al., 2021)).

4. Impact of Job Satisfaction on Healthcare Delivery

There are many elements and requirements that influence an effective healthcare system, and it is vital to know the basic requirements for a successful healthcare sector. One of the most important factors in the healthcare delivery system is the healthcare workforce. It is the biggest resource as well as a major input in the healthcare sector. The labor and services supplied by the healthcare workers play a crucial role in the healthcare industry of any country where they serve (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021). Job satisfaction of healthcare workers is important due to its impact on the healthcare sector. Healthcare workers are at the centre of healthcare delivery; if they are satisfied with their job, then the level of performance they show will improve from normal to the highest level. The healthcare industry is different from other industries. With a range of job places that puts people's life on the edge, it is one of the most important challenges for the healthcare staff and perhaps responsible for move to other jobs outside the medical field.

Once healthcare professionals move to the field of health services, it could make an outstanding contrast to the ordinary sector, increasing the life and well-being of the patients, which is the main basic of this sector. Healthcare services and healthcare workers' behavior contain a variety of external and internal factors. Most healthcare systems are established based on WHO principals. Many healthcare agencies suggest that the methodology should be implemented for better healthcare services, particularly the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties. Despite this, the World Health Organization had considered some initial companies to the healthcare settings. The Saudi Era was one of them. As time has progressed healthcare services become an essential concern in the Kingdom. Therefore, the Saudis were planning to focus strongly on the healthcare industry to boost the quality of healthcare services. With the potential advantages in this sector, they have sought to leave this industry on the advanced position to meet the standard required. At the same time, healthcare professionals are generally the key to discuss the quality of the healthcare sector interlinked with the people and the healthcare workforce. (Chowdhury et al., 2021)(Young et al.2021)

4.1. Quality of Patient Care

Job satisfaction and the quality of the provided care are strongly associated with each other (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021). The overall level of job satisfaction among health care providers in Saudi Arabia was low, and the dimension that had the lowest score was pay and fringe benefits. The highest dimension was the ability of doctors and relatives to communicate with each other. High job satisfaction can reduce the rate of burnout among health care providers. Most of the participants believe that physical violence and heavy workload are both a source of conflict and impairment of patient safety in governmental hospitals. Some argue that unpaid residents generally provide a higher level of care compared to their paid counterparts as they are in direct competition with them for admission to prominent fellowships.

4.2. Staff Retention and Turnover

Job satisfaction is particularly relevant in healthcare settings; lower levels of job satisfaction (JS) often lead to significant changes in the field or departure from the professional role. However, healthcare institutions in Saudi Arabia face significant turnover, which limits their performance. The importance of understanding the satisfaction of healthcare professionals amplifies this scenario, hoping to contribute to the development of better organizational strategies. Many employed persons spend about one-third of their day at the office, where

inadequate environmental conditions, long hours, not satisfactory communication, high team spirit are common. Job satisfaction is broadly viewed as a major concept in academic foundations and the labour market because it is a trigger for numerous sectors like turnover, absenteeism, job performance, efficiency productivity, motivation, and the extra-overall assurance. Job satisfaction is multi-dimensional in nature and involves cognitive, affective, and behavioural components, according to Locke. Job satisfaction is generally defined as the secondary experience of an individual's profit, which is made with the existing situation (Aiman Halawani et al., 2021). Staff retention (ST) is the dedication of one's subsequent intentional finding to pursue the performance of the company and scenario for an indefinite timescale, however, high remuneration could have been seen in other sector particularly in comparison. Staff retention (ST) impacts organizational performance, service quality therefore reducing turnover expenses, which means economic losses. Evidence on which ST is dependent was reached by utilizing a unique platform from Saudi Arabia, blending theories of conducting individuals and the executing process (Bander Sayaf Z, 2014). Various causes for attrition are indicated by lack of JS and the enhancement of individual's functioning of hired personnel, particularly their notions of profession. There have been subsequent declines in both affordability and performance.

5. Conclusion and Implications for Practice

Job satisfaction of health practitioners plays an important foundation in the health system to deliver high-quality care services to patients. Job satisfaction is considered an essential factor that can affect the efficiency and effectiveness of health practitioners and impact their well-being and mental health. The health sector constitutes a dynamic entity, being driven by constant advancements in technology and ever-changing patient demographics. One way to improve that efficiency is to ensure healthcare practitioners are satisfied. Thereby, health care practitioners would become more efficient when they are satisfied (Alotaibi et al., 2023). Accordingly, the health service quality would be enhanced and the patients' needs would be gratified. Health workforce comprises the largest occupational group of Saudi Arabia civil service in 2020. Therefore, it is so important to understand the determinants of job satisfaction to plan a revised Workforce Planning Strategy.

A cross-sectional study was conducted through a web-based survey collecting 1063 valid samples. This study found that males were significantly more satisfied than females in relation to specialty, organization, and overall global score. There is evidence for a significant association between age groups and job satisfaction. Older health practitioners had a higher level of satisfaction than younger ones. Regarding nationality, Saudi health practitioners were less satisfied, while non-Saudi (Arab) healthcare practitioners were the most satisfied in all aspects except city happiness. This research work has found that health practitioners aged between 30 and 40 years were the most satisfied, while health practitioners older than 50 years had the highest satisfaction. Moreover, statistically significant differences have been found in terms of age group regarding pharmaceutical, medical service, surgery, RS, and lab professional groups. Lastly, health practitioners with more than five years of experience were significantly the most satisfied in relation to professional development, working environment, and overall global satisfaction.

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