

Assess Nurses' Job Satisfaction and Marital Quality

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ABSTRACT

Background: The nursing workforce faces persistent challenges, including job dissatisfaction, high turnover rates, and stress, which negatively impact healthcare outcomes. Previous research has indicated a potential link between marital status and job satisfaction, but little is known about how marital quality, specifically, affects job satisfaction among nurses. This study aimed to explore the relationship between marital quality and job satisfaction among married female nurses, considering the role of sociodemographic factors.

Methods: A descriptive correlational study was conducted using a web-based survey distributed to 2,296 married female nurses from tertiary hospitals. Participants were employed full-time for at least one year and were in their first marriage. Data were collected on demographics, marital quality, and job satisfaction. Marital quality was measured using the Chinese Marital Quality Inventory, and job satisfaction was assessed using the Chinese Nurses Job Satisfaction Scale. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, t-tests, Pearson correlation, and linear regression.

Results: The overall response rate was 71.6%. A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.05$) was found between marital quality and job satisfaction. Factors such as age, monthly income, average daily hours spent with a spouse, and marital quality were identified as significant predictors of job satisfaction. Nurses with higher marital quality, higher income, and more time spent with their spouses reported greater job satisfaction.

Conclusion: This study suggests that marital quality is positively correlated with job satisfaction among married female nurses. Addressing factors such as marital quality and work-life balance could improve job satisfaction and potentially reduce turnover rates in nursing. Further research is needed to explore these relationships in different cultural and professional contexts.

Keywords: Quality Inventory, cultural, spouse, linear regression.

INTRODUCTION

The global nursing workforce faces significant challenges due to shortages and high turnover rates, which adversely affect healthcare system performance and patient care outcomes [1–4]. Job dissatisfaction and stress are prevalent issues among nurses, with dissatisfaction being a primary factor contributing to turnover [5–7]. Additionally, nurses' intentions to leave their positions are a growing concern [8]. Some research has examined how marital status relates to job satisfaction, finding that unmarried nurses often report lower levels of satisfaction compared to their married counterparts, with marriage itself positively linked to higher job satisfaction [9]. While these findings emphasize the influence of marriage on job satisfaction, there has been little investigation into how the quality of a marital relationship impacts job satisfaction among nurses.

Marital quality, often defined by factors such as marital adjustment, happiness, and satisfaction, has been linked to overall job satisfaction in prior studies [10,11]. However, research exploring the connection between these two factors among healthcare professionals is scarce, with only one study in a different professional context

reporting no significant relationship between marital satisfaction and job satisfaction [9]. For many women in nursing, balancing career and marital responsibilities presents unique challenges [12]. Studies have demonstrated a negative correlation between work–family conflict and job satisfaction, as such conflicts frequently contribute to both job and marital dissatisfaction [13,14]. Role conflicts between professional and family life can diminish satisfaction in both areas, affecting overall well-being and career contentment [15–17]. On the other hand, some evidence suggests that conflicts between work and marriage are not inevitable [18]. Research in certain contexts has shown that nurses report high satisfaction levels in their interactions with peers, patients, and supervisors [19], but the potential relationship between job satisfaction and spousal relationships remains underexplored.

In many regions, evidence indicates that healthcare institutions often neglect to address the familial responsibilities of female nurses, which may contribute to lower marital quality compared to the general population [22]. Similarly, job satisfaction among nurses has been reported to be suboptimal, with several contributing factors identified [23]. Preliminary findings suggest a positive and significant relationship between marital quality and job satisfaction, though further exploration is needed [9]. This study hypothesizes a potential link between these variables, proposing that diminished marital quality could correspond with reduced job satisfaction, or vice versa. The aim is to investigate this relationship through a web-based survey of married female nurses, while also examining how demographic factors influence both marital quality and job satisfaction.

METHOD

A descriptive correlational approach was adopted for this study, utilizing a convenience sampling method. Participants were drawn from a diverse range of regions to ensure representativeness. The sample included 2,296 married female nurses working in tertiary hospitals. Surveys were conducted over a period of several months. Inclusion criteria specified participants as (1) registered nurses who were married, (2) in their first marriage, and (3) employed full-time for at least one year. Exclusion criteria included male nurses, trainee nurses, and those who were divorced or single.

Data Collection

An online questionnaire was created using a web-based platform and distributed through social media applications. A brief introduction explained the study's purpose and the role of the principal investigator. Participants could only submit the survey once, either via mobile phone or computer.

Measurements

The survey consisted of three sections: demographic details, marital quality, and job satisfaction.

- **Marital Quality**

Marital quality was defined as an individual's perception and attitude toward their spouse and marital relationship. The Chinese Marital Quality Inventory [24] was used to measure this variable. This inventory comprises 90 items across 10 dimensions, including communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, emotions, sexual life, parenting, social relationships, family roles, and overall life satisfaction. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. For positive statements, a higher score indicates greater agreement, while for negative items, a higher score indicates disagreement. The total score ranges from 90 to 450, with higher scores reflecting better marital quality. In this study, the instrument demonstrated strong internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .87) and a content validity index of .76.

- **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction was conceptualized as an individual's response to their work experience [25]. It was measured using the Chinese Nurses Job Satisfaction Scale [26], which includes 38 items across eight dimensions: administrative support, workload, coworker relationships, job aspects, compensation and benefits, professional growth opportunities, recognition, and work–family balance. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicate greater satisfaction. The total score ranges from 38 to 190. In this study, the scale exhibited excellent internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .90) and a content validity index of .88.

Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 21.0 (IBM Corp.). Descriptive statistics, t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson correlation, and linear regression were employed. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

RESULTS

Out of 3,207 individuals who accessed the survey, 2,296 completed valid questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 71.6%.

The participants' average age was 33 years ($SD = 9.32$, range = 23–43 years). Most participants (95.3%) had one

child, 55.7% held a bachelor's degree, and 29.0% reported a monthly income exceeding 8,000 RMB (equivalent to approximately \$0.16 USD per RMB). Among the participants, 21.6% held permanent nursing positions with job security until retirement, while 78.4% were contract nurses with fixed-term employment. The mean marital duration was 8.72 years (SD = 3.84), and participants spent an average of 9.60 hours daily with their spouses (SD = 3.30).

The overall mean marital quality score among participants was 298.61 (SD = 41.74), and the mean job satisfaction score was 119.92 (SD = 21.33). Analysis of the relationship between marital quality and job satisfaction revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.05$)

- **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction scores were compared across various sociodemographic factors, such as education, income, and employment status. Participants with monthly incomes exceeding 8,000 RMB demonstrated significantly higher job satisfaction scores. Correlation analysis showed weak but statistically significant relationships between job satisfaction and age ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$), and average daily hours spent with a spouse ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$). No significant association was observed between job satisfaction and marital duration.

- **Marital Quality**

Marital quality scores were analyzed against sociodemographic variables, including education, income, and employment status, but no significant differences were identified. Correlation analysis of marital quality with age ($r = 0.04$), marital duration ($r = 0.03$), and average daily hours spent with a spouse ($r = -0.02$) also indicated no statistically significant relationships ($p > 0.05$).

A multiple linear regression analysis identified age ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.033$), monthly income ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.018$), average daily hours spent with a spouse ($\beta = 0.26$, $p = 0.001$), and marital quality scores ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.001$) as significant positive predictors of job satisfaction after adjusting for sociodemographic variables.

Table 1: Association of Demographics with Job Satisfaction and Marital Quality (N = 2,296).

| Variable | Number (%) | Mean job satisfaction score (SD) | p | Mean marital quality score (SD) | p |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| Age (yrs) | | | .045 | | .264 |
| <30 | 928 (40.4) | 110.23 (16.14) | | 302.69 (32.54) | |
| 30–40 | 946 (41.2) | 121.81 (18.95) | | 281.12 (37.93) | |
| >40 | 422 (18.4) | 137.50 (24.93) | | 328.37 (43.59) | |
| Number of children | | | .856 | | .178 |
| 1 | 2,188 (95.3) | 119.81 (21.42) | | 299.00 (42.01) | |
| ≥2 | 108 (4.7) | 121.83 (15.42) | | 280.15 (39.32) | |
| Monthly income (RMB) | | | .029 | | .207 |
| <5,000 | 216 (9.4) | 112.49 (19.05) | | 301.09 (37.56) | |
| 5,000–8,000 | 1,414 (61.6) | 111.19 (20.66) | | 287.01 (37.54) | |
| >8,000 | 666 (29.0) | 143.18 (16.24) | | 321.82 (42.69) | |
| Educational status | | | .264 | | .114 |
| Diploma | 918 (40.0) | 124.44 (25.26) | | 290.89 (30.17) | |
| Bachelor's | 1,279 (55.7) | 117.88 (19.57) | | 298.29 (33.10) | |
| Master's and higher | 99 (4.3) | 105.89 (22.24) | | 300.66 (42.43) | |
| Employment status | | | .095 | | .099 |
| Permanent nurse | 496 (21.6) | 132.69 (21.89) | | 320.19 (41.13) | |
| Contract nurse | 1,800 (78.4) | 116.12 (21.79) | | 292.78 (36.49) | |

Note. RMB = Renminbi; SD = standard deviation; yrs = years.

Table 2: Bivariate Correlation Coefficients of Job Satisfaction and Marital Quality with Age, Marital Duration, Average Daily Hours Spent with Spouse, and Marital Quality (N = 2,296).

| Variable | Job satisfaction | p | Marital quality | p |
|--|------------------|-------|-----------------|------|
| Age (mean = 33.00, SD = 9.32) | 0.12 | .029 | 0.04 | .469 |
| Marital quality score (mean = 298.61, SD = 41.74) | 0.63 | <.001 | | |
| Marriage duration (in years) (mean = 8.72, SD = 3.84) | 0.01 | .806 | 0.03 | .545 |
| Average daily hours spent with spouse (mean = 9.60, SD = 3.30) | 0.24 | <.001 | -0.02 | .756 |

Note. SD = standard deviation.

DISCUSSION

To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is among the first to investigate the link between marital

quality and job satisfaction among nurses. While previous research has examined the marital quality of nurses [12,18,23], none have delved into its correlation with job satisfaction.

Consistent with earlier findings [12], this study highlights a decline in marital quality among Chinese nurses compared to the general population [27]. Similar trends have been reported in other studies [18,23], suggesting that nurses experience unique challenges in maintaining marital harmony. This may stem from the demanding nature of their profession, which requires constant attention to patient well-being and involves significant mental strain. Nurses frequently report heightened stress levels, emotional fatigue, and difficulty balancing their personal and professional lives due to work pressures [15]. Additionally, irregular and extended shift hours often leave nurses with insufficient time to dedicate to their families and spouses. Hospitals are therefore encouraged to implement flexible shift options to help nurses better manage their work-life balance.

The average job satisfaction score in this study (119.92 ± 21.33 , range: 52–155) reflects relatively low satisfaction levels among married female nurses. This aligns with earlier studies [9,28]. Nearly half of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with aspects such as income, benefits, and opportunities for career growth, paralleling findings from other research [2]. Measures like reducing workloads, offering further education and training, and improving career advancement opportunities could significantly enhance job satisfaction.

This study found a positive association between marital quality and The job satisfaction, although no comparable research was available to confirm or challenge this finding. It is plausible that dissatisfaction in one area, such as work, could spill over into personal relationships, and vice versa. The use of convenience sampling to recruit participants and the sensitive nature of the topic posed some limitations to the study. Notably, a previous study examining physicians' marital and job satisfaction found no significant relationship, potentially due to the male-dominated sample, with 88.7% of participants reporting high levels of job satisfaction [3].

While factors like autonomy, job stress, and collaboration between nurses and physicians have been linked to job satisfaction [19], the influence of job satisfaction on family dynamics and marital quality has not been extensively studied. Overburdened nurses often experience heightened fatigue, making it more difficult to handle additional pressures [14,29]. A U.S.-based study revealed that nurses face considerable conflicts between work and family life [17], with such conflicts significantly reducing job satisfaction, the nursing profession inherently impacts family life, often leading to strained relationships or altered career trajectories. Challenges such as patient-provider conflicts, heavy workloads, and irregular shifts exacerbate work-family conflicts for married female nurses. Poor marital quality, in turn, can adversely affect professional performance through psychological, social, and environmental mechanisms. Effective communication and mutual support within the marriage are vital for nurses to gain social backing and sustain motivation in their roles.

Nurse managers play a critical role in addressing these challenges. They should prioritize initiatives like relationship counseling and training programs for married nurses to mitigate the adverse effects of low job satisfaction on marital quality [30,31]. Such efforts embody a human-centered management approach, fostering well-being and happiness among nurses while laying a strong foundation for improved professional performance.

CONCLUSION

The relationship observed between marital quality and job satisfaction underscores the importance of considering marital well-being as a key factor in enhancing job satisfaction among nurses. The findings suggest that initiatives to support nurses in balancing their professional and personal lives could have a significant positive impact on their job satisfaction.

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