

Exploring the Job Satisfaction of Cross-Trained Nurses in a Tertiary Hospital in Marikina City

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive phenomenological study investigated the lived experiences of cross-trained nurses on clinical units and their effects on their job satisfaction. Interviews were conducted and analyzed using Colaizzi's methods for descriptive phenomenology. The themes that emerged from the study are: (1) Cross-Training as a Foundation for Professional Growth Through Diverse Clinical Exposure; (2) Navigating Uncertainty: From Initial Anxiety to Gradual Adaptation in the Cross-Training Experience; (3) Empowering Growth Through Guidance, Mentorship, and Supportive Learning Environments; (4) Recognition and Collaborative Relationships Foster Professional Fulfillment and Commitment; and (5) Enhancing Cross-Training Through Structured Preparation, Organizational Support, and a Culture of Lifelong Learning. The study concluded that cross-training could enhance nurses' professional skills and self-confidence, improve their ability to adjust to new environments, increase job satisfaction, and facilitate a deeper understanding of their fields, areas of concern, and specialties. Fear and uncertainty were experienced at first, but they can adapt with training, effective mentorship, supportive supervision, and a culture that supports continual learning. They view that cross-training should be recognized as a career development opportunity and not a staffing measure for filling a vacancy or shortages. It concludes that cross-training is beneficial to nurses' professional development, continued professional growth and development, and contributes to delivering quality patient care through an efficient and flexible workforce. It is recommended to implement structured competency-based cross-training programs for nurses, provide necessary support, mentorship, and learning opportunities, and foster a culture of a continuously learning organization.

Keywords: Cross-training nurses, clinical competence, job satisfaction, professional development, mentorship

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction among nurses is an important variable in health care, as it has been identified as a factor related to health care quality, retention, and organizational performance. Nurses are viewed as the 'heart of the health care delivery system'; hence, job satisfaction among nurses influences their productivity and job turnover. In today's environment of increasing patient care requirements, staff shortages, and changing work settings, nurses will continue to face evolving work roles that may shape their work. The main purpose of this study is to assess the extent and influences of cross-training on nurses' job satisfaction in a health care setting. Specifically, the study would attempt to understand cross-trained nurses' level of

job satisfaction, identify factors influencing satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and determine the effects of cross-training on nurses' work experience.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to examine the experiences of cross-trained nurses when deployed to various clinical units and the impact of their experience on job satisfaction within a tertiary hospital setting. In describing their deployment experience in the varied units of a clinical setting, what factors of this experience do cross-trained nurses articulate, and how do they impact their job satisfaction?

Scope and Delimitations

The respondents of this study shall be restricted to licensed staff nurses who have been continuously employed in the hospital for at least one (1) year, have undergone a cross-training program for another unit, and must have at least two (2) months of cross-training roles. First, it is limited in scope and scale, as it will be carried out in a single hospital. Secondly, the findings might not be generalizable due to a potentially small sample size. Thirdly, since the proposed study depends on self-reporting, personal biases, selective memory, and social desirability may influence the results.

Review of Related Literature

There are many studies on the relationship between job satisfaction, intention to turn over, and nurses' performance, because job satisfaction is directly connected to nurses' intention to work hard and to leave their jobs. According to Lee and Chang (2022), nurses' job satisfaction and work flexibility were negatively associated with burnout. Blytt et al. (2022) found significant relationships between the degree of job satisfaction and nurses' intention to turn over. Nurses with more health problems due to shift work were more likely to exhibit increased turnover intention when factors such as age, working conditions, and social support were considered. In terms of organizational factors, Huang et al. (2024) reported that organizational culture and trust positively affect NPs' job satisfaction. In summary, cross-training is an effective workforce development strategy that increases the flexibility, mobility, and knowledge of the workforce, making them adaptable to changing needs and situations, improving efficiency, ensuring the seamless continuation of patient care, and optimizing resource utilization.

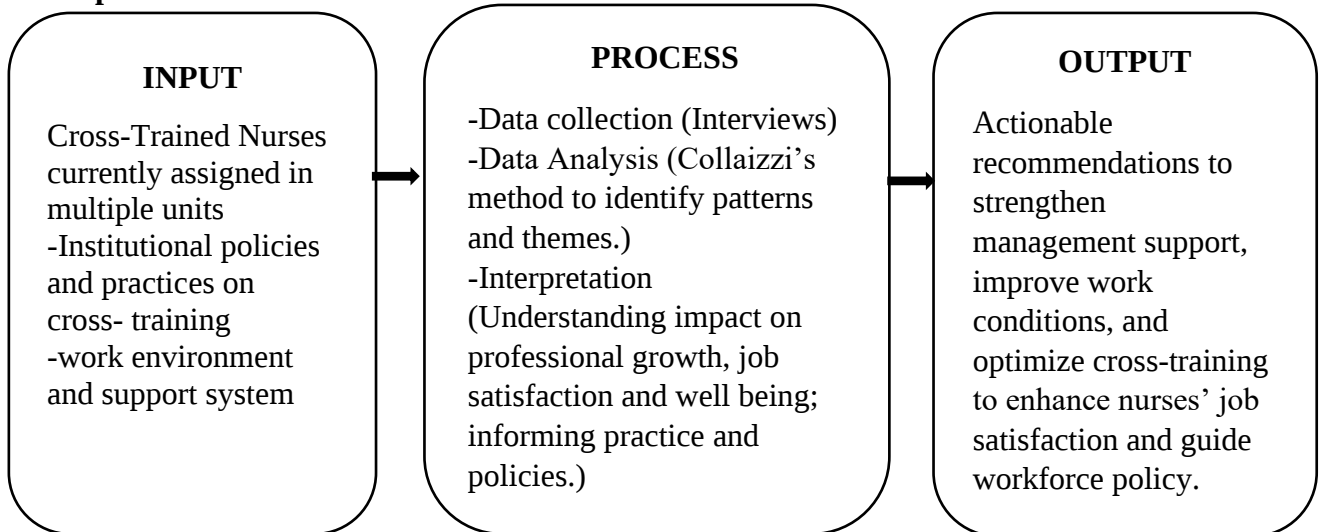
Theoretical Framework

The Adaptation Model, by Sister Callista Roy (Gonzalo, 2024), defines a person as a system that must adapt to internal and external stimuli through coping mechanisms. Self-concept, role function, and physiologic, as well as the interdependence modes of adaptation, could promote positive outcomes of enhanced confidence and satisfaction on the job or negative outcomes of job role confusion and dissatisfaction on the job, respectively. Hildegard Peplau,

Theory of Interpersonal Relations: During cross-training, nurse-nurse relationships would not only relieve stress during cross-training, for instance, clear communication, collaboration, and role clarity will provide positive nurse-nurse relationships on new teams,

but on the other hand, negative nurse-nurse relations would not only bring up negative emotions but also result in anxiety and poor satisfaction. **Novice to expert** by Patricia Benner asserts that nurses develop skill over time with exposure and experience.

Conceptual Framework



This qualitative research study explores the job satisfaction of cross-trained nurses in a tertiary hospital in the Philippines.

Research Design

The purpose of the descriptive phenomenological research design was to gain an understanding of the lived experience of the cross-trained nurse and their feelings towards job satisfaction in the organizational environment. The study employed purposive non-probability sampling, in which the sample is selected with particular reference to research purposes.

Research Steps

The research began with a review of relevant literature on cross-training among nurses to establish the study's foundation and identify existing concepts and research gaps. Based on the findings, the researchers developed and validated the research instrument. After obtaining the necessary approvals, data were collected from the selected participants and analyzed using Collaizi’s method. The results were then interpreted to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations regarding cross-training among nurses.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Data collection for this study will begin after obtaining the necessary institutional and ethical approvals, and then an appeal letter will be submitted to the College Dean and the Director of Nursing. Institutional approval and ethical clearance were secured. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to explore cross-trained nurses' job satisfaction by examining their experiences during deployments across different units. Each interview lasted for 15-30 minutes and was audio recorded with the participants' permission.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis employed the Collaizzi Method, in which Important statements concerning the phenomenon under study were identified from the transcripts and closely examined. The meanings of these statements were extracted and organized into themes related to shared participant experience. These themes were further developed into a thorough description of the phenomenon and essential structure of the participants' lived experience with job cross-training and job satisfaction. The study's interpretations and results were returned to the participants for confirmation and validation. Direct quotations of participant experience were used to further illustrate identified themes

Research Hypotheses and Validation

During the study, steps were implemented to ensure thoroughness and accuracy. The interview guide questions consisted of open-ended questions and follow-up probes and were validated by 3 experts in nursing, research methodology, and healthcare management. It was subsequently pilot-tested with three cross-trained nurses who were not included in the study. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained, and all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription and enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and respecting their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence. The researchers also ensured that participants' lived experiences were represented accurately and respectfully throughout the data analysis and reporting process. As a qualitative descriptive phenomenological study, the findings were limited to the experiences of the selected participants and may not be generalized to all nurses or healthcare settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research suggests that cross-training should be recognized as a structured professional development approach rather than solely a staffing strategy, as it strengthens nurses' competencies and supports quality patient care. Effective cross-training programs incorporate competency-based education, structured orientation, formal mentoring, continuous training, and clearly defined learning objectives within a supportive organizational culture characterized by strong leadership, collaboration, workplace safety, and recognition of nurses' professional contributions. These elements enhance nurses' confidence, professionalism, adaptability, and job satisfaction, ultimately improving the quality and safety of patient care.

SUMMARY

The study indicated that the majority of the success of cross-training initiatives was attributable to supportive learning environments. In this context, learning occurs at multiple levels of support; from senior nurses, preceptors, and colleagues to managers and nursing leaders. The provision of orientation, shadowing, mentoring, and immediate feedback to new nurses fostered a sense of security and reinforced their skills. Emotional support, affirmation,

and a positive sense of the organization supported participant motivation, satisfaction, and lifelong learning motivation. As confidence grew many indicated that the next generation of nurses now had an expectation and obligation to mentor the novice nurses.

CONCLUSIONS

Cross-training should be viewed by healthcare organizations not simply as a staffing strategy but rather as an investment in an adaptable workforce, enhanced professional practice and ultimately, the provision of safe, effective, high-quality and patient-centered healthcare.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested: structured pre-orientation, competency-based orientation, a formal mentor, continuing professional development, the provision of leadership support, and treating it as professional growth rather than merely staff relief. Nurses also asked that communication be open, the length of training be consistent, nurses participate in the selection process for field assignments, and the organizational environment be one of encouragement, resilient support, and lifelong growth.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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