

Original Article

A Descriptive Study of Thriving Nurses in a Selected Hospital in Metro Manila

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Abstract

Background: Shaping a future where the Philippines retains its valuable nurses and empowers them to thrive, embodying the Filipino spirit of compassion, resilience, and patriotism.

Objective: The study aims to uncover the factors that make the Philippines a lasting home for many nursing professionals.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive study approach, conducted in one of the private hospitals in the Municipality in NCR, Philippines. The study utilized an adapted and modified research instrument tool, where a total of fifty-seven (57) respondents participated in the study.

Findings: Factors that influence the decision of the respondents to thrive in the Philippines. The study revealed a composite mean of 3.20, with an interpretation of "agree". Participants strongly agree (M=3.32) on their job satisfaction, while they agree on work engagement (M=3.09) and answered "often" for psychological empowerment (M=3.20).

Conclusions: Based on the findings, the study highlights the importance of meaningful work, autonomy, psychological empowerment, and transformational leadership in promoting work engagement and well-being among nurses.

Keywords: Staff Retention, Thriving Nurse, Nursing Shortage

Introduction

Nurses, often termed the "heart" of hospitals, play a crucial role in healthcare. Nursing professionals are highly regarded in the Philippines, and the Philippines is known for its significant contribution to the global nursing workforce. In 2023, Commissioner Erwin Enad of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) reported that only 509,257 of the 951,105 registered nurses are active in the

Philippines during his presentation in the Senate Committee. This data pertains to 53.55% of nurses are practicing and over half of the nation's qualified nursing workforce, 316,415 licensed Filipino nurses, are seeking employment abroad (GMA News, 2023).

Filipino nurses' success overseas is notable, it raises critical questions about the consequences on the healthcare landscape in the Philippines. Concerns include the sustainability of the

healthcare system, the impact of staffing shortages, and the broader implications of brain drain on the nation's health sector. These issues are complex and multifaceted, reflecting the global demand for nursing talent and the internal challenges within the Philippines' healthcare system. Amidst this wave of migration, a resilient group of Filipino nurses remains, and they choose to stay in their home country. These nurses, who continue to thrive in their local communities, embody a deep-seated commitment to their nation. Despite the opportunities presented abroad, their decision to stay is a testament to their unwavering dedication to the Philippines.

The nursing shortage is a global issue that impacts all countries. As a result of the scarcity, patients suffer since the healthcare professionals are unprepared to meet their needs. Numerous causes in each country contribute to the nursing shortage, lowering the quality of medical care. The nursing shortage is a significant issue in the Philippines, with multiple causes and consequences. In the late 2000s, the Philippine government actively encouraged and supported the migration of nurses by training a surplus of nurses (Limpin & Artiaga, 2023). Despite being the top exporter of nurses in the world, the Philippines now faces a shortage of nurses within the country, which has negative consequences for the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for the local population. As a result, the Philippine health service's integrity and quality are deteriorating as an increasing number of nurses leave their home country to work overseas, a phenomenon known as "brain drain." Shortage has been a problem for decades, exacerbated and made more apparent by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused an estimated 40% of all Filipino nurses to leave abroad or retire. With that, the Department of Health (DOH) announced in 2023 that the Philippines has a shortage of more than 350,000 nurses (Pauls, 2023).

The call to serve their fellow Filipinos runs deep in the veins of nurses who choose to stay in the Philippines. It is not just about a paycheck; it's about the privilege of healing their

communities, the ones they hold close to their hearts. The researchers' motivation for the study is to address the shortage of nurses and the rapid turnover of nurses in the Philippines, which are crucial issues that require immediate attention. Thus, this study aims to uncover the factors that make the Philippines a lasting home for many nursing professionals. By delving into these factors, the researchers hope to shape a future where the Philippines retains its valuable nurses and empowers them to thrive, embodying the Filipino spirit of compassion, resilience, and patriotism.

Methodology

Study Design: The study adopted a descriptive study approach to investigate the factors influencing nurses' thriving in a selected hospital in the Philippines. This study approach involves gathering and analyzing data to describe the characteristics of a population, a self-assessed survey questionnaire was utilized on the demographics, and factors affecting the decision of thriving nurses.

Site of the Study: The study was conducted in one of the private hospitals in the Municipality of Pateros, Philippines. Founded on the principles of delivering quality healthcare services, it originated as a response to the growing demand for accessible and comprehensive medical care. Over the years, it expanded its reach and services, establishing a reputation for excellence in various medical fields. Its history encompassed milestones such as the introduction of innovative medical technologies and collaborations with healthcare professionals.

Research Instrument: The study utilized an adapted and modified research instrument tool by Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) for "Test Manual for the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale", Spreitzer (1995) for "Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace: Dimensions, Measurement, and Validation", and Ofefi-Dodoo et al., (2018)

for "Burnout and job satisfaction among family medicine residency coordinators: Family Medicine". Modifications were made to align it with the study's objectives. The research instrument was pre-tested with an overall reliability test result of 0.917, showing acceptable reliability.

Data Gathering and Analysis: The data gathered last April 30, 2024 to May 17, 2024, where a total of fifty-seven (57) respondents participated in the study. The self-administered questionnaire asked their work engagement, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. The rating scale utilized in the study, 4 (always), 3 (often), 2 (sometimes) and 1 (never) for work engagement and job satisfaction. While rating scale utilized in the study for psychological empowerment, 4 (strongly agree), 3 (agree), 2 (disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree). The data was gathered using a physical copy questionnaire and then encoding the data for statistical analysis using SPSS. The data was statistically tested utilizing the following statistical instruments: frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation coefficient and thematic analysis (for qualitative data).

Ethical Consideration: The study followed a set of guidelines for proper ethical consideration, guaranteed the credibility of the research, and protected the respondents. The three principles from the Belmont Report were utilized: (1) respect for persons, (2) beneficence, and (3) justice. The respondents were given complete information about the study to help them make informed decisions, and they were also informed that the study had undergone an ethical review board. They were given their autonomous right to self-determination; choosing to decline or be part of this study will be of their own accord, ensuring that it did not affect them in any way should they decline to

participate. They were also allowed to ask questions about the study, given that the researchers answered them truthfully. Should they wish to discontinue or withdraw from the study while amidst the data collection process, they were allowed to do so without fear of penalty. Coercion in any of its forms was not imposed on the respondents. The researchers also protected the respondents from exploitation, and the information they provided was kept strictly protected. If selected respondents chose not to participate in the study, they were treated fairly without prejudice. Any information provided by the respondents remained confidential, as did their identities.

Results

Table 1 shows the profile demographic of the respondents regarding sex, marital status, and work experience. The participants in terms of sex. It depicts that out of the 57 participants, only 17, or 29.8%, are male. On the other hand, 40 participants, or 70.2%, are female. While regarding Marital Status, it shows that out of the 57 participants, 39, or 68.4%, are single. 15 participants, or 26.3%, are married; on the other hand, only 3 participants, or 5.3%, are separated. In addition, in terms of work experience, out of the 57 total participants, the majority of the nurses have work experience of more than five years, with a frequency of 15 or 26.3% of the participants. Following closely, it consists of 13 participants, comprising 22.8% of the nurses that have work experience spanning 3-5 years. At the same time, nurses with 1-2 years of experience have a frequency of 12, representing 21.1% of the total participants. Only 11 participants, accounting for 19.3%, have 1-2 years of work experience. Lastly, the nurses with 2-3 years of work experience are six (6) participants, making up 10.5 %.

Table 2, indicator number 5,

"I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose"

has a weighted mean of 3.39, which expresses a rank of 1, meaning that the respondents find their work full of meaning and purpose.

Next is indicator number 7,

"To me, my job is challenging,"

which has a weighted mean of 3.35, garnering a rank of 2, meaning that they find that their job is challenging. Meanwhile, indicator number 6,

"My job inspires me,"

has gained a weighted mean of 3.25, garnering a rank of 3.

Table 3 revealed the top 3 psychological empowerment that influence the nurses to thrive. The indicator

"I find meaning in my job activities and I am passionate about the work I do"

got the highest weighted mean of 3.32 with interpretation of strongly agree. This is followed by

"I have the ability to do my job" with a mean of 3.28 and *"I have a chance to use personal initiative in my work."*

with a mean of 3.26. While the indicator

"I have mastered the skills to do my job"

got the least weighted mean of 3.09.

Table 4 shows that indicator 5,

"My work makes me feel satisfied,"

has a weighted mean of 3.42 and expresses a rank of 1. This is followed by

"I get satisfaction from being able to help people"

with mean of 3.40. Indicators number 2, 3, and 7,

"I feel energized after working with those I help," "I like my work as a nurse." and "I believe I can make a difference through my work."

respectively got a weighted mean of 3.39 sharing the rank of 4.

The table 5 shows the summary table of the factors that influence the decision of the respondents to thrive in the Philippines. The study revealed a composite mean of 3.20 and standard deviation of 0.489, with an interpretation of "agree." Moreover, the participants strongly agree (M=3.32) on their job satisfaction, while they agree on work engagement (M=3.09) and answered "often" for psychological empowerment (M=3.20).

Table 1. Profile Demographics of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	17	29.8
Female	40	70.2
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	39	68.4
Married	15	26.3
Separated	3	5.3
Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)

6 months-1 year	11	19.3
1-2 years	12	21.1
2-3 years	6	10.5
3-5 years	13	22.8
More than 5 years	15	26.3
TOTAL	57	100

Table 2. Factors Influencing the Decision of Thriving Nurses in terms of Work Engagement

Work Engagement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Ranking
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	2.75	0.606	Often	10
2. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	2.98	0.719	Often	7
3. I can continue working for very long periods at a time.	2.96	0.755	Often	8
4. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.	3.21	0.725	Often	4
5. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	3.39	0.726	Always	1
6. My job inspires me.	3.28	0.750	Always	3
7. To me, my job is challenging.	3.35	0.790	Always	2
8. I feel happy when I am working intensely.	3.09	0.808	Often	6
9. I am immersed in my work.	3.16	0.727	Often	5
10. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.	2.72	0.978	Often	9
WEIGHTED MEAN	3.09	0.561	Often	

Legend: 3.25 to 4.00 — Always, 2.50 to 3.24 — Often, 1.75 to 2.49 — Sometimes, 1.00 to 1.74 — Never

Table 3. Factors Influencing the Decision of Thriving Nurses in terms of Psychological Empowerment

Psychological Empowerment	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Ranking
1. I find meaning in my job activities and I am passionate about the work I do.	3.32	0.469	Strongly Agree	1
2. My opinion counts in the work group decision making.	3.19	0.441	Agree	6
3. My job is well within the scope of my abilities.	3.19	0.398	Agree	6
4. I am confident about my ability to do my job.	3.21	0.491	Agree	4
5. I have mastered the skills to do my job.	3.09	0.544	Agree	10
6. I have the ability to do my job.	3.28	0.453	Strongly Agree	2
7. I have a chance to use personal initiative in my work.	3.26	0.483	Strongly Agree	3
8. I have influence over what happens in my work group.	3.19	0.480	Agree	6
9. I decide how to go about doing my work within the established guidelines and policies.	3.14	0.441	Agree	8
10. I have a great deal of control over my job.	3.11	0.524	Agree	9
WEIGHTED MEAN	3.20	0.348	Agree	

Legend: 3.25 to 4.00 — Strongly Agree, 2.50 to 3.24 — Agree, 1.75 to 2.49 — Disagree, 1.00 to 1.74 — Strongly Disagree

Table 4. Factors Influencing the Decision of Thriving Nurses in terms of Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation	Ranking
1. I get satisfaction from being able to help people.	3.40	0.623	Always	2
2. I feel energized after working with those I help.	3.39	0.726	Always	4
3. I like my work as a nurse.	3.39	0.648	Always	4
4. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with my work and responsibilities.	3.11	0.817	Often	9
5. My work makes me feel satisfied.	3.42	0.565	Always	1
6. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I help and how I can help.	3.25	0.786	Always	7
7. I believe I can make a difference through my work.	3.39	0.675	Always	4
8. I am proud of what I can do to help.	3.21	0.796	Often	8
9. I have thoughts that I am a success as a nurse.	3.09	0.808	Often	10
10. I am happy that I chose to do this work.	3.32	0.5600	Always	6
WEIGHTED MEAN	3.30	0.7004	Always	

Legend: 3.25 to 4.00 — Always, 2.50 to 3.24 — Often, 1.75 to 2.49 — Sometimes, 1.00 to 1.74 — Never

Table 5. Summary Table of the Factors Influencing the Decision of Nurses to Thrive

Factors Influencing the Decision of Nurses	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Work Engagement	3.09	0.561	Agree
Psychological Empowerment	3.20	0.348	Often
Job Satisfaction	3.30	0.560	Strongly Agree
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.20	0.489	Agree / Often

Legend: For Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction: 3.25 to 4.00 — *Always*, 2.50 to 3.24 — *Often*, 1.75 to 2.49 — *Sometimes*, 1.00 to 1.74 — *Never*; For Psychological Empowerment: 3.25 to 4.00 — *Strongly Agree*, 2.50 to 3.24 — *Agree*, 1.75 to 2.49 — *Disagree*, 1.00 to 1.74 — *Strongly Disagree*

Discussion

Nursing is a profession generally populated by female nurses. In the Philippines, 70% of the total population of nurses are females, while the remaining 30% are males (WHO, 2020). As it is stereotyped that nurses should be females, male nurses encounter gender conflicts and problems in both categories of educational and clinical experience, hence why fewer males opt to take nursing (Younas et al., 2019).

Recent research underscores the significant impact of marital status on career success, particularly highlighting the challenges and advantages faced by individuals in different marital situations. Research suggests a marital status of an individual can significantly impact

of career success, and married nurses may benefit organizational support. This organizational support can enhance their proactive career and overall career satisfaction according (Agrawal & Singh, 2021). However, according to the study by Sun, Mao, & Zhou (2022) balancing family responsibilities with career advancement remains a challenge. And, marital satisfaction can positively influence job performance through emotional exhaustion, work engagement, and work meaningfulness. The need to support a family and self-efficacy were found to moderate these relationships,

suggesting that marital satisfaction can provide psychological resources that enhance job performance. These findings suggest that while single employees often have fewer family obligations and can focus more on their careers, married employees benefit from organizational support to enhance their career satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics is essential for organizations aiming to effectively support their employees' career development.

The current study revealed that experience of nurses had been working in a hospital setting for over five years. Nurses with more experience often report increased contentment and satisfaction as they possess the knowledge and skills to effectively treat patients and have witnessed significant improvements in patient care (Melencio, 2019). While, according to healthcare workers working an average of 46 months or less than five years in their current workplace, reported that most intent to stay in their workplace. It indicates that nursing is a profession that remains consistent across various levels of experience. Perhaps the duration of work experience may not be the determining factor for nurses' decision to remain in the Philippines.

Nurses play a pivotal role in healthcare delivery, and their well-being is essential to ensuring quality patient care. As the study

delved into the factors influencing work engagement among nurses. This study highlights the importance of meaningful work, autonomy, and psychological empowerment in fostering job satisfaction and reducing turnover intentions.

One of the most significant factors influencing work engagement is the perception of finding fulfillment, purpose, and meaning in the job. This aligns with previous research highlighting the importance of meaningful work in enhancing job satisfaction and performance (Yandi & Havidz, 2022). When nurses feel that their work contributes to the well-being of patients and society, they are more likely to experience a sense of purpose and satisfaction. While autonomy, the ability to make decisions independently, is another critical factor in promoting work engagement. Nurses who have control over their work schedules, patient assignments, and clinical decisions are more likely to feel empowered and motivated. Additionally, autonomy can lead to increased job satisfaction and reduced burnout (Aungsuroch et al., 2024).

Psychological empowerment, a multidimensional construct encompassing meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact, has been shown to be a strong predictor of work engagement and organizational commitment. A study by Dong-Yeol Yoon et al. (2022) found that psychological empowerment and job embeddedness are critical for organizational commitment. When nurses feel that their work is meaningful, they are more likely to be committed to their organization and less likely to leave.

Transformational leadership, characterized by behaviors such as inspiration, motivation, and intellectual stimulation, can significantly enhance psychological empowerment and work engagement. A study by Kamran Iqbal et al. (2019) emphasized the role of transformational leadership in enhancing psychological empowerment, boosting organizational commitment, and reducing turnover intentions. When leaders create a positive work environment, provide support and

encouragement, and recognize the contributions of their employees, nurses are more likely to feel valued and motivated.

Nurses often derive satisfaction from helping others and contributing to patient care. This aligns with Zhang et al.'s (2020) study, where a nurse expressed finding energy and motivation from assisting patients. Additionally, nurses may find fulfillment in overcoming challenges and personal growth, as noted by Cadge (2021). Nurses often advocate for positive changes within the healthcare system. However, as Nilsen et al. (2020) point out, the extent to which nurses can influence these changes may be limited by hierarchical structures and limited opportunities for participation.

A supportive work environment and the ability to take initiative are crucial factors influencing nurse satisfaction, as emphasized by Kagan et al. (2021). While nurses generally demonstrate engagement in their work, in the study by Falguera et al. (2022) highlighting the positive impact of work engagement on both work and personal life.

Workload is a significant factor that can negatively impact work engagement and well-being. Excessive workload can lead to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and increased turnover intentions. To address this issue, organizations should implement strategies to manage workload effectively, such as optimizing staffing levels, implementing efficient scheduling systems, and providing adequate support to nurses.

In addition, supportive work environment is essential for promoting work engagement and well-being. This includes factors such as adequate staffing levels, fair compensation, opportunities for professional development, and a positive organizational culture. When nurses feel supported by their colleagues and supervisors, they are more likely to be engaged and satisfied with their jobs.

Conclusion: The findings of the study highlight the importance of meaningful work, autonomy, psychological empowerment, and transformational leadership in promoting work engagement and well-being among nurses.

Meaningful work, autonomy, psychological empowerment, and transformational leadership emerged as key factors contributing to these positive outcomes. When nurses feel valued, empowered, and supported, they are more likely to be engaged in their work and committed to their organization. Excessive workload can lead to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and increased turnover intentions. Therefore, organizations should implement strategies to optimize staffing levels, implement efficient scheduling systems, and provide adequate support to nurses. Moreover, investing in nurse education, training, and mentorship programs, organizations can enhance the skills and knowledge of their nursing workforce, leading to improved patient care and better outcomes. By implementing strategies to enhance these factors, healthcare organizations can create a more positive and supportive work environment, leading to improved patient care and reduced turnover intentions.

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