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Critical Assessment Of Nursing Profession In Saudi Arabia: With Reference To Work Environment

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Abstract

Promoting nursing as a viable career path that many people can pursue is one of the Ministry of Health's objectives; in order to achieve Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia, a healthy practice environment is necessary to improve patient care and nurse retention rates. The World Health Organization claims that there is a global shortage of health professionals, with nurses and midwives making up over half of the need. This present study will evaluate the scenario with a primary data approach using a detailed questionnaire, which will be exercised with the selected set of nurses in hospitals of Makkah city.

Keywords: Nurses, Saudi Arabia, hospitals, work environment, development.
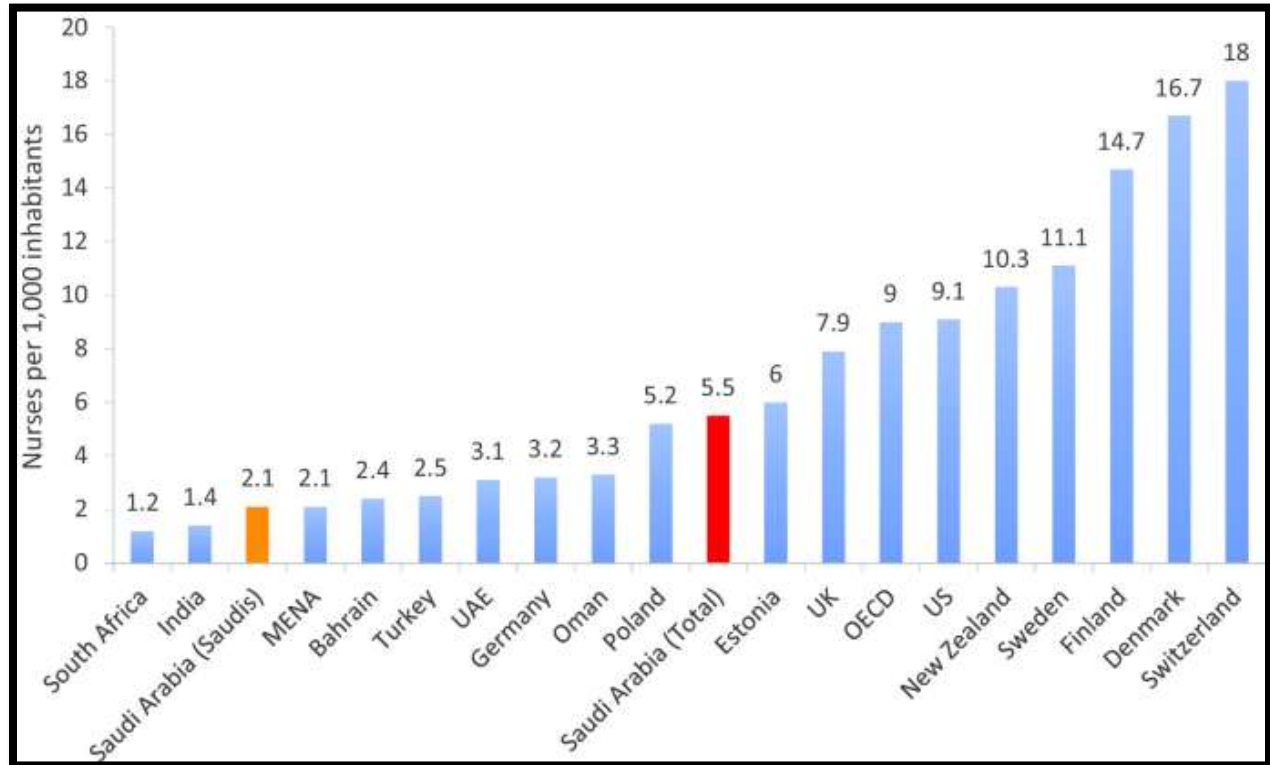
Introduction

Since nurses are at the frontline of medical nursing care and have direct patient interactions, their work performance is like the engine room for achieving successful healthcare delivery in the healthcare system. Research has indicated that work performance in the healthcare industry has a favorable impact on patients' health outcomes and satisfaction with care. A healthcare organization must thus prioritize the demands of its patients and the work performance of its healthcare professionals if it is to achieve great success. Nurses that perform very well will improve patient outcomes, significantly reduce expenses, and boost revenue. Conversely, inadequate performance will lead to a number of unintended effects and ultimately subpar healthcare service delivery.

Therefore, to maintain the standard of healthcare delivery in the healthcare system, government agencies and healthcare management must guarantee that top-notch nurses perform at the highest level. Job performance can be influenced by a number of elements, including demands on one's body, mind, and emotions; pressures connected to one's work and family; and organizational, social, and personal resources. The purpose of this research is to assess how the work environment affects nurses' job performance. High employee turnover in healthcare institutions and a dearth of nurses remain problems for Saudi Arabia's health authorities.

Promoting nursing as a viable career path that many people can pursue is one of the Ministry of Health's objectives; in order to achieve Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia, a healthy practice environment is necessary to improve patient care and nurse retention rates. The World Health Organization claims that there is a global shortage of health professionals, with nurses and midwives making up over half of the need. By 2030, the

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WHO projected that an additional 9 million nurses and midwives would be required worldwide (WHO, 2022). 184,565 nurses were employed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2018.

However, only 70,319 (about 38%) were Saudi citizens (MOH, 2018). This compares to other high-income nations where the average availability of nurses is 8.24 nurses/1,000 persons (OECD, 2020), meaning that there are only 5.5 nurses per 1,000 residents (The Saudi Health Council, 2019). The foundation of medical care is provided by nurses, so nursing leaders should create and maintain a safe workplace that supports and empowers nurses to lower turnover and increase organizational involvement. The lack of medical personnel in Saudi Arabia is one of the reasons why healthcare costs have increased.   Public   health issues and serious issues with human resources management have also resulted from staff reductions.

Source: Alluhidan et al (2020)
Figure 1: Nurses per 1000 persons in KSA

Concerns about nurses quitting the Saudi health system because of a shortage of staff and knowledge are growing in the kingdom. In light of the nursing shortage, managers and leaders must learn from different leadership philosophies and employee empowerment techniques to create a work environment that fosters nursing staff dedication to patients and their organization. However, due to the severe nursing shortage in Saudi Arabia, healthy nursing practice environments are important for attracting and keeping nursing practitioners in the country. Most nurses want a healthy workplace that makes them feel valuable, and hospital performance improves when there is a pleasant organizational atmosphere.

Given the current health issues, policymakers may be able to comprehend the connection between nurses' work environments and job performance thanks to this study. Establishing a healthy work environment is therefore necessary in the contemporary global health care settings in order to improve nurses' performance, productivity, and level of satisfaction. Literature expertise and a better understanding of how the workplace affects nurses' overall job performance will be provided by this study. In Saudi Arabia, the nursing profession and working circumstances will be clarified by this study. It will cover the difficulties nurses encounter in providing healthcare management with the information they need to identify the factors influencing their workers' working conditions and come up with solutions that will increase healthcare workers' productivity and, in turn, revitalize the nation's healthcare system. Regarding the impact of the workplace on nurses' job performance, there isn't enough data in the literature.

Objective of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to investigate how registered nurses perceive their work performance and whether there is a relationship between the hospital environment and nurses' job performance.

Research Process

The purpose of this study was to find out how the work environment affected the nurses' job performance in a few hospitals in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. To evaluate the impact of the work environment on nurses' job performance, this study used a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional research methodology. A very accurate depiction of the current situation is given by descriptive research. makes it possible to come up with new research subjects. Additionally, cross-sectional research makes it possible to examine predicted relationships between variables and create predictions. In this study, a descriptive questionnaire in English was used. The three-part questionnaire, which uses standardized measuring scales, takes 15 to 20 minutes to complete. There are numerous Saudi and foreign nurses employed in Makkah, which has a big population (1,323,624). Nurses employed by King Faisal Hospital and King Abdulaziz Hospital, two significant public hospitals in the Makkah region of Saudi Arabia, provided the study's data. Male and female nurses working in two hospitals in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, made up the study's population of interest. Two hundred responders made up the study's sample. The convenience sampling approach was used to gather and examine data from professional nurses who have been employed at King Faisal Hospital and King Abdulaziz Hospital in the Makkah region of Saudi Arabia for at least six months.

Results

	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	% of agreement
Nurse Participation in Admin Issues					
1 Career development opportunity	25%	50%	21%	2%	23%
2 Opportunity to participate in policy decisions.	9%	28%	35%	26%	62%
3 Opportunities for advancement	42%	49%	6%	2%	8%
4 Cooperative Administration	42%	48%	6%	2%	9%
5 Staff nurses are involved in the internal governance of the hospital	27%	51%	18%	3%	21%
6 Staff nurses have the opportunity to serve on nursing committees.	25%	53%	17%	4%	21%
7 Administrators consult with staff on daily problems and procedures.	19%	31%	35%	13%	48%
Nursing Foundations for Quality of Care' items					
1 Programs of staff development and Education	21%	51%	14%	13%	27%
2 High expectations of the administration	17%	57%	12%	12%	25%
3 Policy of best patient care environment	16%	56%	14%	12%	27%
4 Clinically competent colleagues	38%	51%	7%	2%	9%
5 Clear and updated plans for patient care	17%	49%	18%	14%	32%
6 Use of nursing diagnoses.	21%	34%	32%	11%	43%

Role of Supervisory Staff						
1	Supervisors are supportive	28%	49%	18%	3%	22%
2	Mistakes are used as learning opportunities	24%	44%	24%	6%	31%
3	Our supervisor is a good leader	24%	53%	9%	12%	21%
4	Recognition for good work	22%	41%	27%	8%	36%

Important Findings and Researcher's Observations

Based on their characteristics, the majority of nurses were Saudi and female, and they were mostly in the age range of 30 to 40. The majority of nurses, however, had a baccalaureate degree in nursing as their greatest level of education. The results of the study also show that 43 percent of nurses had five to 10 years of work experience. Outcomes align with previous studies conducted in Saudi Arabia. Comparing this modest assessment of the Saudi Arabian workplace to the total amount of money the government spends on the healthcare delivery system, however, is disheartening. Ranking fifth on the 2019 Health Care Index, Saudi Arabia spends $2.4 billion annually on healthcare.

Nine percent of the total government budget, or 90 billion Saudi Riyals, was spent on the healthcare system in 2018. These negative work environment levels can, however, be linked to the difficulties that the Saudi nursing workforce is currently facing. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had 184,565 nurses working for it in 2018. Unfortunately, only 70,319 (about 38%) were Saudi citizens (MOH, 2018). This translates to 5.5 nurses per 1,000 people, which is nearly half as many as comparable high-income nations where the average availability is 8.24 nurses per 1,000 people. In addition, a lack of medical personnel has contributed to the cost of healthcare in Saudi Arabia, and staff reductions have resulted in serious issues with public health and human resources management.

Nurses gave the subscale of staffing and resources adequacy excellent ratings, but the work environment scale had a composite score that was negative, and the nursing foundation of quality of care subscale had the lowest score. These findings suggest that hospitals with sufficient staffing and resources do not always provide a suitable setting for providing high-quality care. A well-equipped workplace was a strong predictor of nurses' job satisfaction. According to this research, enhancing every facet of the workplace will boost staff loyalty while maintaining the hospital's strengths and competitive advantages. According to recent research, nurses' capacity to deliver high-quality care is significantly influenced by their work settings. Job satisfaction, retention or resignation, and health status are only a few of the nursing outcomes that are confirmed to be significantly correlated with a positive work environment. These results suggest that having more nurses and team members can lessen workloads and allocate more time to patient care, both of which are linked to improved job performance. Frontline nurses have the opportunity to participate in internal governance, policy, and practice decisions at hospitals through the organizational phenomena known as nurse participation in hospital affairs. Furthermore, Canadian studies have shown that involvement in hospital matters helps to avoid burnout. The nursing practice environment's elements, such as nurses' involvement in hospital operations and enough staffing and resources, were also linked to nurses' job satisfaction and emotional weariness. In a nation with a severe nursing shortage, the authors came to the conclusion that conducive work environments are essential for attracting and retaining nurses in Saudi Arabia. Improving job design and staff participation, helping people satisfy their psychological needs, and bolstering their need satisfaction can all improve nurses' job performance.

Conclusion

Healthcare companies nowadays need to be more adaptable in order to expand their staff and take pride in their contributions. Job performance reveals nurses' intention to quit their training or position and turnover. Consequently, this study gives the nursing profession a voice by demonstrating how the Saudi Arabian nursing practice environment affects nurses' job performance. According to the current survey, nurses felt they performed poorly on the job and worked in an unsatisfactory practice environment. However, the current study's findings showed a statistically significant difference in the job performance of older nurses with more years of experience and higher educational attainment compared to other nurses. The results of

the present study showed that a healthy nursing practice environment had an increasing impact on the nurses' job performance when compared to the findings of earlier literature.

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