

## ■ Original article

## The relationship between nurses' personality type and job satisfaction

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### Abstract

**Background and Purpose:** Nurses constitute the largest group of human resources in healthcare systems of almost all countries; they also play a significant role in community health promotion. Nurses' job satisfaction is of great importance in the promotion of healthcare quality. Therefore, the present study aimed to analyze the relationship between personality type (type A & B) and job satisfaction in nurses.

**Methods:** In this correlational study, personality type and job satisfaction were evaluated, using Friedman & Rosenman questionnaire and Varo questionnaire, respectively. Overall, 142 nurses were selected via stratified random sampling from Bu-Ali Sina Treatment and Educational Center of Sari, Iran. For data analysis, t-test, Pearson's correlation test and ANOVA were performed, using SPSS version 14.

**Results:** As the results indicated, the majority of samples were female (90.1%) and staff nurses (81.7%); also, 92.3% of the participants had bachelor's degrees. Overall, the mean score of job satisfaction was estimated at 48±10. The findings suggested a significant relationship between personality type and job satisfaction ( $P=0.032$ ). Also, subjects with type B personality were more satisfied with their careers, compared to those with type A personality; the observed difference was statistically significant ( $P=0.035$ ). Additionally, nurses' job satisfaction was significantly associated with their educational level ( $P=0.025$ ).

**Conclusion:** Considering the characteristics of nurses with type B personality, they were more satisfied with their careers, compared to others. In order to increase nurses' job satisfaction, practitioners are recommended to conduct interviews and psychological tests to identify nurses' personality type and accordingly, provide them with systematic, regular psychological consultation.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Nurse, Personality Type A, Type B

### Introduction

Nurses constitute the largest group of human resources in healthcare systems of almost all countries (1). The insufficient number of nurses and their high salaries are global issues in developed and developing countries. According to statistics, one-third of English and Scottish nurses and one-fifth of American nurses are willing to give up their nursing career (2).

According to previous studies, job dissatisfaction is one of the factors leading to individuals'

reluctance to choose nursing careers (2). Generally, job satisfaction refers to one's tendencies or positive emotions about his/her career (3). Robert and Angelo defined job satisfaction as emotional reactions to various job dimensions (4).

Job satisfaction, particularly among nurses, is a vital challenge for healthcare organizations (5). According to conducted studies, maximum job satisfaction was reported among nurses in U.S.A (41%), Scotland (38%), England (36%) and

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Germany (17%), respectively (1). Moreover, the results reported by Mirzabeigi et al. suggested that approximately one-third of Iranian nurses (34.30%) are satisfied with their career. Also, Nolan et al. showed that 85% of nurses view their career as fulfilling (5).

Job dissatisfaction among nurses leads to a vicious cycle in healthcare systems. It can encourage nurses to quit their job, which leads to nursing staff shortage and eventually increased risk of factors associated with job dissatisfaction and exhaustion such as work overload and unpleasant work shifts. Lack of attention to job satisfaction disrupts the organizational system in the long run and results in anger, reduced sense of responsibility and finally resignation among the staff (2).

Various factors such as salary, hospital policies, assigned procedures, job dimensions, work disciplines and personality traits influence job satisfaction (3). According to previous studies, attention to the following factors can promote nurses' job satisfaction: eradicating the shortcomings through enhancing freedom of action among nurses, removing stress-causing factors, promoting cooperation among physicians and nurses, boosting communication among nurses and promoting payment systems (5).

Motives, tendencies and thoughts are the building blocks of human character (6). Personality is a set of long-standing, unique characteristics, which may change in response to different situations (7). Personality traits can be a primary guide to identifying individuals' cognitive and emotional status. They also affect one's emotional, social and interpersonal behaviors.

Personality has various broad dimensions and each dimension is known as a personality type (8). Friedman and Rosenman have identified two personality types: type A and type B (9). Characteristics of individuals with type A personality have recently attracted the attention of many researchers. Individuals with such personalities are hyperactive, restless, aggressive, highly competitive and overhasty. Therefore, nurses with this personality type are considered hasty and impulsive in their interactions with patients.

Individuals with type A personality try to control all aspects of life, even the uncontrollable, and are extremely anxious and active. If these individuals do not feel in control of their surroundings, they become severely aggressive and frustrated (8). For these people, the negative side of life is more pronounced, and they seek negative criticisms to correct themselves when they cannot perform properly on a task.

Individuals with type A personality are punctual and have high standards about their own performance; they might even arrive at work earlier than the due time. They eat, speak and walk hastily and feel frustrated in case others work slowly. In contrast, individuals with type B personality are lenient, organized, cautious, less overambitious, more patient and less ill-tempered, compared to those with type A personality. They also place more value on quality of life (10) and are even more realistic in times of anger (11).

Nurses' job satisfaction can promote the quality of provided care for patients (12). Based on previous studies, one of the factors affecting job satisfaction is personal characteristics (5). So far, no research has evaluated the relationship between nurses' personality type and job satisfaction. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between personality type and job satisfaction among nurses.

## Materials and Methods

This descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted on 142 nurses, selected via stratified random sampling at Bu-Ali Sina Treatment and Educational Center of Sari in 2014. To determine the sample size, Krejcie-Morgan table was used. According to this table, out of 235 cases, the sample size was estimated at 142.

All nurses (i.e., nurses with planned contracts and registered nurses) with associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees were included in the study. The exclusion criterion was unwillingness to participate in the study. To select the nurses, the list of working nurses was gathered from the nursing office. After coding, 142 nurses were selected via stratified random sampling.

The study sample was classified in terms of gender (i.e., male and female). Class-to-community ratio was calculated to be 0.1 for men and 0.9 for women, based on  $P = (ni/N)$  formula. Also, the ratio of study sample to community was calculated ( $nK=p.n$ ). Therefore, 14 male and 128 female subjects were enrolled in the study. Overall, 142 cases were randomly selected by drawing lots.

In the present study, a demographic questionnaire, Friedman & Rosenman personality type questionnaire and job satisfaction scale by Varo and colleagues were employed. To establish the subjects' personality type, the standard Friedman & Rosenman personality questionnaire, which consists of 25 items, was applied. After completing the demographic questionnaire, the subjects filled out Friedman & Rosenman questionnaire. They expressed their personal views by selecting "Yes" or "No" options.

In Friedman & Rosenman questionnaire, a score of 13 or lower indicates type B personality and scores higher than 13 are indicative of type A personality (10). The validity of this questionnaire has been estimated at 0.7-0.8 in the majority of conducted studies (11). In the present study, its reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0.9$ ).

Nurses' job satisfaction was assessed, using a 15-item questionnaire by Varo and colleagues. Subjects based on their personal opinions completed the questionnaire by selecting one of the following options: very satisfied, satisfied, indifferent, dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied. The minimum and maximum scores were reported to be 15 and 75, respectively. In a study by Asghari et al., the validity of this questionnaire was verified and its reliability coefficient was reported to be 0.97 (12). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of the questionnaire ( $\alpha=0.87$ ).

In order to analyze the data, descriptive and statistical methods were applied. Data were analyzed by SPSS version 14 (95% confidence interval). To establish the relationship between subjects' personality type (type A & B) and job satisfaction, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was utilized. Also, in order to determine the

association between personality types and job satisfaction and the difference in job satisfaction among male and female nurses, independent t-test was applied. Additionally, to compare nurses' job satisfaction, work experience and educational level, ANOVA test was performed.

### **Ethical considerations**

In order to distribute the questionnaires, the researcher visited the hospital and provided the ward administrators with the questionnaires in the morning shift. By frequent follow-ups and giving subjects enough time, 142 questionnaires were completed and collected.

In order to observe ethical considerations, the subjects were assured about their random selection in the questionnaire guide. They were also informed that the questionnaires were only used for research purposes, and therefore, they were not required to mention their name. Moreover, they were assured about the confidentiality of the data.

### **Results**

In this study, among 142 subjects, 55 (38.7%) and 87 (61.3%) nurses had type A and type B personalities, respectively. Overall, 14 (9.9%) and 128 (90.1%) nurses were male and female, respectively. Work experience in 102 (71.8%), 32 (22.5%) and 8 (5.6%) subjects was less than 10 yrs, 11-20 yrs and 21-30 yrs, respectively. Regarding subjects' educational level, 4 nurses (2.8%) had associate's degree, 131 nurses (92.3%) had bachelor's degree and 7 nurses (4.9%) had master's degree.

According to Pearson's correlation test, there was a significant negative relationship between nurses' personality type and job satisfaction (Table 1). In addition, independent t-test revealed that individuals with type B personality were more satisfied with their

**Table 1.** The relationship between personality type and job satisfaction

Statistical indices	N	r	df	P-value
Personality type Job satisfaction	142	-0.181	140	0.032

**Table 2.** Comparison of job satisfaction in male and female nurses with type A and type B personalities

Statistical indices	N	Mean	SD	t	df	P-value
Job satisfaction in nurses with type A personality	55	45.65	9.2920	2.133	140	0.035
Job satisfaction in nurses with type B personality	87	49.26	10.1425			
Job satisfaction in male nurses	14	48.28	8.3429	0.166	140	0.86
Job satisfaction in female nurses	128	47.82	10.1333			

**Table 3.** The relationship between work experience, educational level and job satisfaction

	Sum of Squares	Df	MS	F	P-value
Work experience					
Intergroup comparison	160.906	2	80.453	0.811	0.446
Intragroup comparison	13787.551	139	99.191		
Total	13948.458	141			
Educational level					
Intergroup comparison	717.875	2	358.938	3.77	0.025
Intra group comparison	13230.582	139	95.184		
Total	13948.458	141			

career, compared to those with type A personality. The mean score of job satisfaction in male nurses was higher than that of women, although the difference was not statistically significant. In fact, no difference was found between female and male nurses in terms of job satisfaction (Table 2).

Based on ANOVA test results, no association was observed between nurses' job satisfaction and work experience. However, job satisfaction was significantly correlated with nurses' educational level (Table 3).

## Discussion

The present study showed a significant relationship between personality type and job satisfaction among nurses. This finding was incompatible with some previous studies (6) and consistent with multiple domestic and foreign studies (13-15). The discrepancy between the reported findings can be attributed to differences in measurement tools, study samples, environmental factors and work conditions. On the other hand, the observed consistency can be due to similarities in the characteristics of subjects with these personality types, which might lead to similar results regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and personality type in subjects with various professions.

Our findings showed that job satisfaction varies

among nurses with type A and type B personalities. In other words, nurses with type B personality were more satisfied with their career, compared to those with type A personality. This finding was in line with some previous studies (6, 14) and inconsistent with the results reported by some other studies, which indicated no difference in job satisfaction among subjects with different personalities (6).

The mentioned finding can be explained by the behavioral patterns of individuals with type B personality. These individuals are carefree and flexible, work at a constant speed, patiently manage the details and do not easily get annoyed. Even when they become angry, they accept the conditions more realistically and adapt with different situations such as their work environment (10).

The more a job matches one's personality, the higher job satisfaction will be. On the other hand, lower adjustment leads to lower rates of job satisfaction. For this reason, nurses with type B personality have a more positive attitude towards their work conditions, compared to those with type A personality. We can conclude that nurses with type B personality feel more satisfied with their careers.

According to the findings of the present study, job satisfaction did not differ among male and female nurses. This finding was in accordance with some domestic and foreign studies, which have indicated no association between job satisfaction and gender

(16-18); on the other hand, the results were inconsistent with multiple studies (2, 3, 5, 12, 19).

To explain the mentioned finding, we can assume that the difference in job satisfaction was not tangible since the number of male nurses was limited in our sample. In other studies, which reported a meaningful relationship between job satisfaction and gender, factors including cultural differences and subjects' conditions such as being a breadwinner, managing an independent life and women's career expectations were influential (12).

Moreover, according to the findings, job satisfaction did not vary among nurses with different work experiences. This finding was in accordance with the results reported by multiple studies (3, 12, 16, 18, 20) and inconsistent with some studies, which indicated that nurses with more work experience are more satisfied with their careers (2, 21-23).

Some factors including noise distractions in the workplace, dim light of the environment, work overload, long working hours, inappropriate work shifts and personnel insufficiency (5) affect job satisfaction in the majority of nurses, regardless of their work experience. This might be in fact the reason why job satisfaction did not vary among nurses with different work experiences in our study.

Additionally, in the present study, nurses' job satisfaction was significantly associated with their educational level. In other words, job satisfaction in nurses with master's or bachelor's degree was lower than nurses with associate's degree. In some domestic and foreign studies, a significant relationship has been reported between job satisfaction and education. In a study on Kuwaiti women working in a state department, 90% of the staff with lower academic degrees had higher job satisfaction, compared to those with higher academic degrees (2, 16, 19, 20, 24). Also, in another study, job satisfaction was greater in those with higher academic degrees (3).

The mentioned finding can be justified by the fact that nurses with higher educational levels have more expectations from the organization they work for, compared to nurses with lower educational levels. Therefore, normally, their expectations about their privileges, work environment, assigned

responsibilities, managers' expectations and behaviors, professional status and social position are not met; this is the reason why they get dispirited and their job satisfaction declines.

## Conclusion

The current findings showed that nurses with type B personality had higher job satisfaction, while those with higher educational levels had lower job satisfaction. Compatibility between one's job and personality results in greater job satisfaction, whereas lower compatibility leads to lower job satisfaction, followed by several negative consequences. Overall, before hiring nurses, practitioners are recommended to conduct interviews and psychological tests in order to identify nurses' personality types. Also, psychological consultation needs to be provided for all nurses on a regular, systematic basis. In addition, in order to increase nurses' satisfaction, managers should identify the relevant factors and by developing and implementing the required measures, they should take actions to increase their job satisfaction.

## Conflicts of interest

There were no conflicts of interest in this study.

## Author's contributions

Z. Fallahnejad collected and analyzed the data and prepared the draft of the paper. R. Hassanzadeh and evaluated and supervised the entire process of study.

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