

A CROSS SECTIONAL RESEARCH TO ANALYZE THE SHORTAGE OF NURSES IN SERVICES HOSPITAL LAHORE, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Background and Aim: The nursing shortage has been recognized as a global healthcare issue that can negatively impact the quality of patient care. Adequate staffing of nurses is an essential factor that can ensure the provision of high-quality healthcare services to patients. A shortage of nurses may lead to poor patient outcomes, including medication errors, patient falls, and hospital-acquired infections. Therefore, addressing the nursing shortage is critical to improve patient care and health outcomes. The aim of this study was to investigate the shortage of nursing staff at Services Hospital, Lahore.

Materials and Methods: A questionnaire-based survey was conducted at Services Hospital, Lahore. A total of 99 individuals from nursing staff participated in the study.

Results: The study explores the demographics and workplace sentiments of nurses at Services Hospital, Lahore. Key findings include a predominantly female workforce (94.95%) and varying levels of job satisfaction. Concerns exist regarding job security and trust in organizational promises, while positive aspects include perceived influence on decisions and managerial support for family responsibilities. Recommendations include enhancing recruitment, retention initiatives, and transparent communication.

Conclusion: The study sheds light on the demographics and sentiments of nurses at Services Hospital, Lahore, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address concerns and capitalize on opportunities for workforce enhancement. Implementing recommendations for recruitment, retention, and communication can foster a more supportive and effective work environment.

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare system of any country significantly relies on the availability and efficiency of its nursing workforce, which forms the backbone of patient care [1]. In Pakistan, a developing nation with a growing population and an overburdened healthcare system, the shortage of nurses remains a persistent and pressing issue [2]. Nurses play a pivotal role not only in providing direct patient care but also in supporting physicians, ensuring continuity of services, maintaining hygiene and safety standards, and contributing to public health initiatives [3]. However,

the chronic inadequacy in the nursing workforce threatens the quality of healthcare delivery and compromises patient outcomes, particularly in public hospitals.

Services Hospital, Lahore, a major tertiary care public hospital, serves as one of the busiest healthcare institutions in Punjab, catering to thousands of patients daily [4]. Despite its central role in the provincial health system, it continues to face challenges related to staffing, particularly in nursing. Reports of nurse-to-patient ratios falling far below

international standards, overburdened staff, and job dissatisfaction have raised concerns about the hospital's capacity to meet rising healthcare demands [5]. The underlying reasons for this shortage are multifactorial and may include limited training opportunities, low remuneration, poor working conditions, migration of skilled professionals to other countries, and inadequate policy implementation.

This study aims to investigate the extent and root causes of the nursing shortage at Services Hospital, Lahore, through a cross-sectional approach. By examining both quantitative data (e.g., current nurse-patient ratios, staff rosters) and qualitative insights (e.g., perceptions of healthcare workers, administrative challenges), this research seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis of the problem. Understanding these dimensions is essential for devising targeted strategies to address workforce deficiencies, improve hospital operations, and ultimately enhance the quality of patient care.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute valuable insights to policymakers, hospital administrators, and public health authorities in developing effective recruitment, retention, and capacity-building policies for nursing professionals. By shedding light on the local dynamics of the nursing shortage, this study also adds to the broader discourse on healthcare workforce planning in resource-constrained settings.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at Services Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan, with the objective of analyzing the shortage of nursing staff. The study was carried out over a period of three months, from November 1, 2022, to January 31, 2023. Data collection was performed using a structured, self-administered questionnaire that employed a 5-point Likert scale to assess perceptions and experiences related to the nursing shortage. The questionnaire

served as a primary data collection tool and was distributed among the nursing officers working at the hospital.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, targeting nursing professionals who met specific inclusion criteria. Eligible participants included nursing officers aged between 27 and 50 years, with 3 to 14 years of managerial experience. Only those holding a Post-RN BSc Nursing degree, a bachelor's degree in nursing, or an associate degree in nursing were considered. Nurses from relevant cadres actively working at Services Hospital were included in the study. Individuals not directly involved in nursing care, such as administrative staff, physicians, laboratory professionals, and pharmacists, were excluded.

The sample size was calculated using an online sample size calculator (<https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator>), with parameters set at a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and a 50% population proportion, based on a total population size of 134 nursing staff. The resulting sample size was adequately met during data collection.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Bahawalpur Institute of Medical Sciences (BIMS), and permission was also granted by the hospital administration. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study, and strict measures were taken to ensure confidentiality, privacy, and voluntary participation.

Results

The gender distribution of nurses in Services Hospital, Lahore, was examined to understand the composition of the nursing workforce. As shown in Table 1, out of the total sample of 99 nurses, the majority were female, accounting for 94.95% (n = 94) of the respondents. Male nurses represented a smaller proportion, comprising 5.05% (n = 5) of the sample.

Table 1: Age wise distribution of the study participants

Gender of Nurses		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	5	5.05
Female	94	94.95
Total	99	100

Figure 1 below shows the percentage of male and female participants of the study. Only 5% of the study

participants were male while the remaining 95% were female nursing staff.

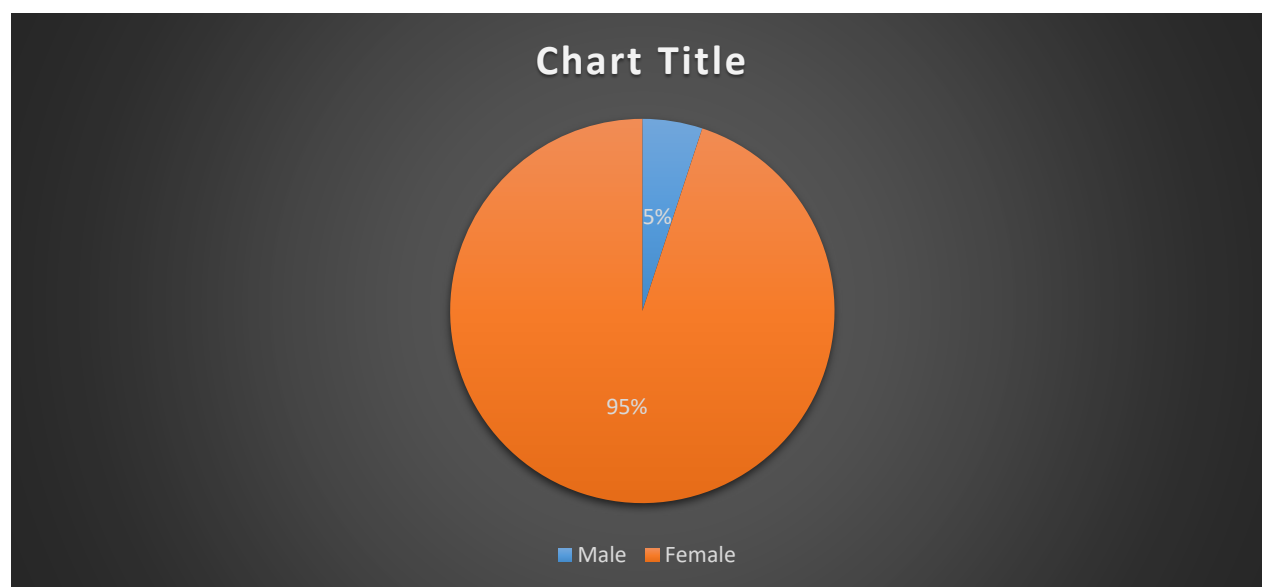


Figure 1: Percentage of Male and Female participants of the study

The age distribution of nurses was analyzed to gain insights into the demographic characteristics of the nursing staff. Table 2 illustrates the age distribution among the respondents. The majority of nurses were in the age group of less than 30 years, constituting 57.58% (n = 57) of the sample. Nurses aged between

31 years to 40 years represented the second largest group, accounting for 41.41% (n = 41) of the respondents. A smaller proportion of nurses, 1.01% (n = 1), fell within the age range of 41 years to 50 years. No nurses in the sample were above 50 years of age.

Table 2: Age-wise distribution of nurses who participate in our study

Age of Nurses		
Years	Frequency	%age of response
Less than 30 years	57	57.58
31 years to 40 years	41	41.41
41 years to 50 years	1	1.01
Above 50 years	0	0.00
Total	99	100

Figure 2 shows the age wise distribution of nursing staff who participate in our study from services hospital Lahore.

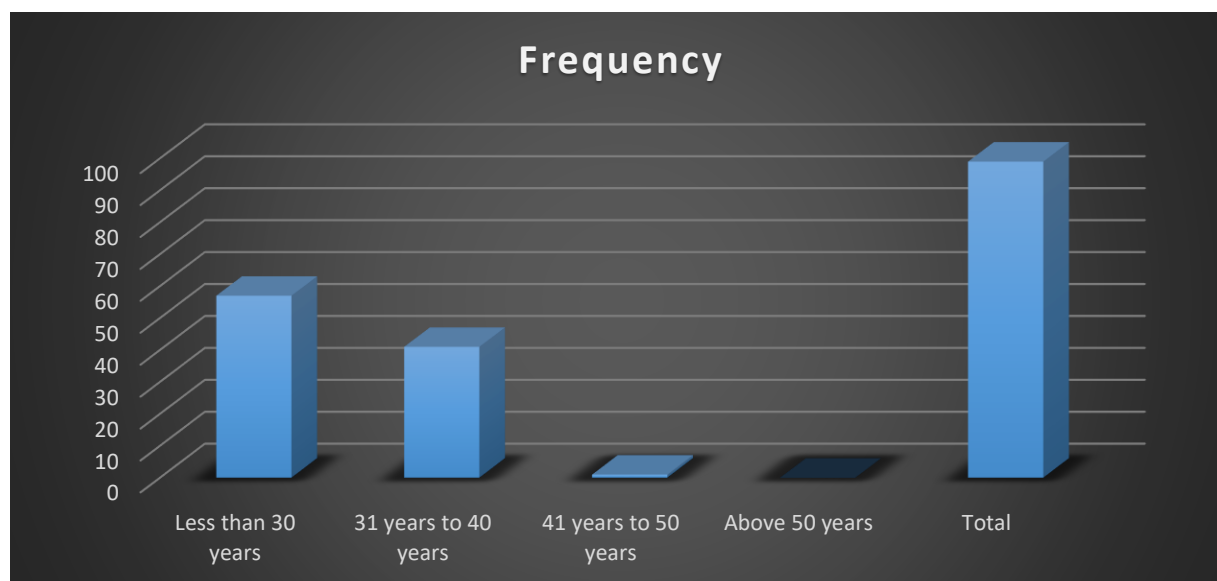


Figure 2: Age-wise distribution of study participants

Table 3: Represents the results of the survey conducted at Services Hospital, Lahore.

Statement/Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses
Overall I am satisfied with my job	7 (7.2%)	9 (9.0%)	5 (5.4%)	44 (40.5%)	40 (37.8%)	99
My job is secure in this workplace	46 (42.3%)	38 (35.1%)	9 (9.0%)	7 (7.2%)	6 (6.3%)	99
I am satisfied with the influence I have on organizational decisions in my job	9 (9.0%)	6 (6.3%)	9 (9.0%)	29 (27.9%)	52 (47.7%)	99
I trust my Hospital to meet their promises to me and other employees	11 (10.8%)	47 (43.2%)	35 (32.4%)	6 (6.3%)	7 (7.2%)	99
People working here are encouraged to develop their skills	41 (37.8%)	41 (38.7%)	9 (9.0%)	5 (5.4%)	9 (9.0%)	99
In general relations between employees and management are good	9 (9.9%)	8 (8.1%)	9 (9.0%)	40 (36.9%)	39 (36.0%)	99
Managers here show understanding about employees having to meet family responsibilities	41 (38.7%)	42 (38.7%)	10 (9.9%)	5 (5.4%)	7 (7.2%)	99
Public policies to improve the supposed shortage have focused greatly	8 (8.1%)	55 (51.4%)	8 (8.1%)	20 (18.9%)	14 (13.5%)	99
Shortage of nurses is a so much old crisis and also constant to be a danger to the nursing career.	8 (8.1%)	43 (40.5%)	41 (39.6%)	4 (4.5%)	7 (7.2%)	99
Hospital has good performance improvement system	30 (28.8%)	38 (35.1%)	13 (12.6%)	13 (12.6%)	11 (10.8%)	99
complicated recruitment requirements and low income of the nurses are the some major factors that influence the shortage	16 (16.2%)	10 (9.9%)	6 (6.3%)	30 (27.9%)	43 (39.6%)	99
People working here receive good pay and benefits	43 (40.5%)	39 (36.0%)	11 (10.8%)	8 (8.1%)	4 (4.5%)	99

The results of the survey indicate a mixed sentiment among the respondents regarding various aspects of their job and workplace environment. When asked about overall job satisfaction, a significant portion, comprising 40.5%, agreed, while 37.8% strongly agreed. However, a notable minority, 16.2%, felt that complicated recruitment requirements and low income were major factors influencing the shortage of nurses, reflecting dissatisfaction or concern in this area.

In terms of job security, a sizable proportion, 42.3%, disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting a lack of confidence in the stability of their positions within the Services Hospital. Similarly, trust in the hospital to fulfill promises to employees was relatively low, with 43.2% expressing disagreement or strong disagreement.

On the positive side, nearly half of the respondents, 47.7%, felt satisfied with the influence they had on organizational decisions in their job, indicating a sense of empowerment. Additionally, a significant

majority, 47.7%, believed that managers at the hospital showed understanding about employees' family responsibilities, fostering a supportive work environment.

When it comes to skill development and performance improvement, opinions were more evenly divided. While a considerable number of respondents, 37.8%, felt that employees were encouraged to develop their skills, a smaller proportion, 28.8%, believed that the hospital had a good performance improvement system in place.

Regarding the broader issue of the nursing shortage, opinions were somewhat polarized. While 40.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the shortage is a constant danger to the nursing career, 39.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting differing perspectives on the severity and persistence of the crisis.

Overall, the survey results highlight both positive and negative aspects of working at Services Hospital, Lahore. While some employees express satisfaction with job influence and managerial support, concerns persist regarding job security, trust in the organization, and the ongoing nursing shortage, particularly regarding recruitment challenges and compensation issues.

Discussion

The comprehensive examination of the nursing workforce at Services Hospital, Lahore, unveils a rich tapestry of insights into both demographic composition and prevailing sentiments regarding various aspects of the workplace environment. Beginning with an exploration of gender distribution, the overwhelming prevalence of female nurses, comprising 94.95% of the total sample, underscores the gender dynamics within the nursing profession, a phenomenon commonly observed globally. This skew towards female representation reflects broader societal trends in occupational segregation, where certain professions, such as nursing, continue to be predominantly occupied by women [6, 7].

Delving deeper into the age demographics of the nursing staff, a nuanced picture emerges, revealing a diverse spectrum of age groups comprising the workforce. The majority of nurses fall within the younger age brackets, with 57.58% aged below 30 years and an additional 41.41% falling within the 31

to 40 years age range. This distribution underscores the youthful vigor characterizing a significant segment of the nursing workforce, potentially indicative of a profession that attracts younger individuals seeking to embark on a career path dedicated to healthcare provision [8].

Conversely, the scarcity of nurses above the age of 50, with none represented in the surveyed sample, raises pertinent questions regarding the retention and career longevity of nursing professionals within the hospital setting. While the absence of older nurses could be attributed to various factors, including retirement, attrition, or career transitions, it underscores the imperative for organizations to implement strategies aimed at fostering career progression, professional development, and retention among experienced nursing staff [9].

Transitioning to the qualitative aspect of the study, the survey results offer a nuanced portrayal of employee sentiments regarding various facets of their job and workplace environment [10]. The overarching theme that emerges is one of mixed sentiments, with respondents expressing a blend of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and ambivalence across different dimensions [11].

In terms of job satisfaction, while a considerable proportion of respondents conveyed contentment, with 40.5% expressing agreement and an additional 37.8% strongly agreeing, there exists a notable minority, comprising 16.2%, who identify complex recruitment requirements and low income as significant factors influencing the nursing shortage. This sentiment underscores the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction, which extends beyond intrinsic fulfillment to encompass external factors such as compensation, workload, and career advancement opportunities [12].

Similarly, perceptions regarding job security and organizational trust evoke a sense of apprehension and uncertainty among a significant portion of the workforce, with 42.3% expressing disagreement or strong disagreement regarding job security and 43.2% expressing skepticism regarding the hospital's ability to fulfill its promises to employees. These findings underscore the pivotal role of organizational transparency, communication, and employee engagement in fostering a sense of trust and

confidence among staff members, essential elements for nurturing a conducive work environment [13].

On a positive note, however, the survey reveals pockets of optimism and satisfaction, particularly regarding employees' influence on organizational decisions and the perceived understanding of managers regarding family responsibilities. Nearly half of the respondents, comprising 47.7%, expressed satisfaction with their influence on organizational decisions, indicative of a workplace culture that values employee input and participation in decision-making processes. Additionally, a comparable proportion, also 47.7%, believed that managers displayed understanding and accommodation towards employees' familial obligations, underscoring the importance of empathy and flexibility in leadership practices [14].

Furthermore, the findings shed light on perceptions regarding skill development, performance improvement, and the overarching issue of the nursing shortage. While opinions regarding skill development and performance improvement were somewhat divided, with 37.8% feeling encouraged to develop their skills and 28.8% perceiving the hospital's performance improvement system as effective, the issue of the nursing shortage elicited divergent perspectives. While 40.5% agreed or strongly agreed that the shortage posed a constant danger to the nursing career, 39.6% held contrasting views, suggesting varying perceptions regarding the severity and persistence of the crisis [15].

The study findings provide valuable insights into the demographic composition and prevailing sentiments within the nursing workforce at Services Hospital, Lahore. From gender dynamics and age demographics to nuanced perceptions regarding job satisfaction, security, organizational trust, and the nursing shortage, the study offers a multifaceted understanding of the challenges and opportunities shaping the workplace environment. Moving forward, addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities will require a concerted effort from organizational leadership, policymakers, and stakeholders to foster a supportive, inclusive, and empowering work culture conducive to the well-being and professional growth of nursing professionals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the demographic profile and workplace experiences of nurses at Services Hospital, Lahore, revealing a predominantly female and youthful workforce, while also highlighting concerns around job security, organizational trust, and staffing shortages. The findings emphasize the need for collaborative efforts to improve recruitment, retention, and professional development, alongside fostering a transparent and supportive work environment to build a resilient and empowered nursing workforce.

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