

## CAREER SATISFACTION OF MILLENNIAL FILIPINO NURSES EMPLOYED IN THE PHILIPPINES AND ABROAD

Ryan Michael F. Oducado  
West Visayas State University, La Paz, Iloilo City  
rmoducado@wvsu.edu.ph

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare the career satisfaction of millennial Filipino hospital nurses employed locally and abroad. One hundred seventy-nine nurses working in hospitals in the Philippines and abroad were surveyed using the Mariani Nursing Career Satisfaction Scale. The difference in career satisfaction was analyzed using the Independent sample t-test. Results indicated that while Filipino millennial nurses were generally satisfied with their nursing careers, those working abroad had significantly higher career satisfaction than those employed in local hospitals.

*Keywords: career satisfaction, millennial, nurses, Philippines*

The world is experiencing a shortage of nursing professionals, and the projected shortfall of nurses is expected to rise until 2030 (World Health Organization, 2020). Being a major sending country of foreign nurses, the Philippines has been losing skilled nurses to more developed countries (Ubas-Sumagasyay & Oducado, 2020). More than ever, research exploring career satisfaction is vital to the future of the nursing profession as it may be a critical factor for keeping nurses in the profession (Shaver & Lacey, 2003; Mariani, 2012; Mariani & Allen, 2014). Aside from staff retention, career satisfaction can also influence burnout, patient satisfaction, quality of care, and even life satisfaction and self-nurturance (Nemcek, 2007; Perry, 2008; Eseadi & Diale, 2020). Also, career satisfaction or success is a vital positive factor that can influence nurses' attitudes and behaviors in their work-life (Türe & Akkoç, 2020). Nurses typically desire a satisfying career (Perry, 2008). Nurses who are not satisfied with their careers would be more likely to leave the profession and may contribute or aggravate the current nursing shortage

(Perry, 2008; Mariani & Allen, 2014). Therefore, preventing frequent career change and termination among nurses is a paramount concern that should be given attention (Choi, 2014).

While there have been a handful of studies on nurses' job satisfaction conducted internationally and locally, little has delved into career satisfaction or the sense of fulfillment of nurses from their nursing career (Mariani, 2012; Mariani & Allen, 2014). For instance, the study of Legaspi (2019) compared Filipino nurses' job satisfaction employed locally and overseas. It is argued that how nurses feel about their current position, workplace, or jobs is different from how they feel about their careers (Mariani & Allen, 2014). Hence, this present study compared the nursing career satisfaction of millennial Filipino nurses employed in the Philippines and abroad. Millennial nurses are the focus of this study because, presently, they dominate the health workforce (Lamasan & Oducado, 2018).

## Methods

This is a cross-sectional research. This study is a part of a more extensive study of nursing graduates of a state university. In this report, the responses of 179 millennial nurses working in hospitals were included in the analysis. The sample was deemed adequate base on a priori power analysis using the G\*Power, suggesting a sample size of 128 for the statistical test on the difference between two independent means with a medium effect size of .5, .05 alpha, and .80 power. The data were gathered in October 2019 thru an online survey in Google forms posted on the Facebook alumni association page of the college. Inclusion criteria for the analysis were: a) a millennial graduate typically 23-38 years old at the time of the survey in 2019, b) graduate of the College of Nursing in the Philippines from 2009-2016, and c) working in hospitals either in the Philippines or abroad. Those working in the academe and other fields of nursing and unemployed were excluded from the analysis. The Mariani Nursing Career Satisfaction Scale (MNCSS) was the primary research tool used in this study on which participants rate feelings about their nursing career. The tool developer granted permission to use the MNCSS. The MNCSS is a univocal instrument semantic differential scale with 16 opposite adjectival pairs. It was reported that the MNCSS has a high internal consistency (Mariani & Allen, 2014). In this study, the MNCSS has a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .97. The following scale of mean was used to interpret the level

of career satisfaction: 1.00-2.66 = Low; 2.67-5.33 Moderate; 5.34-7.00 High. The IBM SPSS version 23 was used for data analysis. The data were described using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The significant difference in career satisfaction between locally employed nurses and those working abroad was tested using the t-test for Independent samples. Hedges' g was used to determine effect size. According to Hernández Blanco (2006), 100 participants would be an acceptable number for parametric comparisons. The alpha level of significance was set at .05.

## **Results and Discussion**

A total of 179 responses were included in this analysis. Table 1 shows that majority of the participants were female (74.7%), single (87.2%), with Bachelor's degree (94.4%), occupying staff positions (89.4%), and working in their present job for two years or less (61.6%). Additionally, 37.4% are working in hospitals in the Philippines and 62.5% are working abroad. Among those working abroad, 57 are in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom has been relying on overseas healthcare personnel, and Filipino nurses have been getting overseas jobs in the United Kingdom in recent years. An estimated of 40,000 Filipino staff are currently employed in the National Health Service of the United Kingdom (Ford, 2020). It is also noteworthy that more nurses were working abroad than nurses working in the country. This result may suggest an impending nursing shortage in the country if more and more nurses continue to migrate and work overseas. Greater investments must be made to attract and retain nurses to work in the Philippine health sector as the projected shortage of nurses is expected to increase in the coming years (World Health Organization, 2020).

Table 1

*Demographics and distribution according to the country where nurses work*

Profile	f	%
Sex		
Male	47	23.3
Female	132	74.7
Marital status		
Married	23	12.8
Single	156	87.2
Highest educational attainment		
Master's degree	10	5.6
Bachelor's degree	169	94.4
Job Position		
Supervisory	19	10.6
Staff	160	89.4
Years in the present job		
3 years and above	69	38.5
2 years and below	110	61.5
Location		
Philippines	67	37.4
Abroad	112	62.6
UK	57	
USA	15	
Germany	8	
Australia	6	
Ireland	6	
New Zealand	6	
Canada	4	
KSA	4	
UAE	3	
Singapore	3	

Table 2 shows that the composite mean of the participants in the MNCSS was 5.64+.95 indicating a relatively high level of nursing career satisfaction. Moreover, nurses had a high nursing career satisfaction whether employed locally or abroad. However, the t-test Independent sample revealed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $t=-2.139$ ,  $p=.034$ ) in the nursing career satisfaction between nurses working abroad (5.76+.95) and nurses working in the Philippines (5.45+.91) with Hedges'  $g$  value of .33 indicating a small to moderate effect size. From the 16 adjectival pairs in the MNCSS, there was a statistically significant difference in the nursing career satisfaction in the following items: satisfaction ( $t=-2.202$ ,  $p=.029$ ), fulfilment ( $t=-2.087$ ,  $p=.038$ ), contentment ( $t=-2.566$ ,  $p=.011$ ), success ( $t=-2.182$ ,  $p=.030$ ), worth ( $t=-2.235$ ,  $p=.027$ ), security ( $t=-3.866$ ,  $p=.000$ ), gratification ( $t=-3.383$ ,  $p=.001$ ), reward ( $t=-3.321$ ,  $p=.001$ ), and dependability ( $t=-2.078$ ,  $p=.039$ ). No significant difference ( $p>.05$ ) was noted in stimulation, accomplishment, enjoyment, optimism, confidence, meaning, and pride items.

Table 2

*Comparison of nursing career satisfaction*

Items	Philippines	Abroad	Total	t	p-value
	Mean+SD	Mean+SD	Mean+SD		
Satisfaction	5.48+1.17	5.86+1.08	5.72+1.13	-2.202	.029
Fulfillment	5.39+1.17	5.76+1.41	5.63+1.16	-2.087	.038
Contentment	5.01+1.31	5.51+1.21	5.32+1.27	-2.566	.011
Success	5.16+1.07	5.54+1.12	5.40+1.11	-2.182	.030
Worth	5.37+1.27	5.79+1.19	5.64+1.24	-2.235	.027
Security	5.19+1.33	5.93+1.17	5.65+1.28	-3.866	.000
Gratification	5.22+1.22	5.80+1.10	5.59+1.17	-3.383	.001
Reward	5.22+1.33	5.83+1.08	5.60+1.21	-3.321	.001
Dependability	5.54+1.05	5.87+1.01	5.74+1.03	-2.078	.039
Composite Mean	5.45+.91	5.76+.95	5.64+.95	-2.139	.034

This study found that nursing is generally a satisfying career. Research on the satisfaction of nurses in their careers conducted elsewhere similarly found moderately high to high career satisfaction (Shaikh, 2004; Mariani & Allen, 2014). While a smaller percentage of nurses were satisfied with their job, more nurses love what they do and were satisfied with their nursing careers (Wood, 2015). The intrinsic motivation to nurse, the altruistic nature of the profession, the opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives, or sense of being able to help and provide care to patients may help explain why nurses find the profession a rewarding and satisfying career (Perry, 2008; Legaspi, 2019; Stokowski et al., 2019). Furthermore, this study demonstrated that Filipino millennial nurses working abroad had significantly higher nursing career satisfaction compared to nurses working in the Philippines. A study comparing nurses' satisfaction locally and abroad found that career growth, advancement, and opportunities to learn new things were some intrinsic factors reported by Filipino nurses overseas (Legaspi, 2019). Furthermore, migration to other countries offers Filipino nurses economic, personal, professional, and societal benefits (Marcus et al., 2014). It has been found that pay, autonomy, professional status, career plateau, and workplace factors play important roles in career satisfaction (Hoffman, 2000; Laschinger, 2012; Kim, 2016). Notably, job-related factors such as being overworked and underpaid were other reported reasons why Filipino nurses migrate to other countries (Ubas-Sumagasyay & Oducado, 2020). With such a case scenario, nurses feel that staffing shortage interferes with their ability to meet the needs of their patients (Shaver & Lacey, 2003). These factors may have contributed to the general career satisfaction of nurses and may explain the difference in career satisfaction of nurses working in the Philippines and abroad.

### **Conclusions**

This study highlights that Filipino nurses are satisfied with their nursing careers and that Filipino nurses abroad have significantly higher career satisfaction than nurses employed in the Philippines. To attract and retain nurses to work in the country, policymakers and those involved in the welfare of nurses may initiate more significant investments and develop strategic efforts to increase the career satisfaction of nurses. Nevertheless, despite the valuable findings of this present research, generalization of the results is limited to nurses included in the study. Further exploration of nurses' career satisfaction may widen the scope of the investigation involving nurses in other fields and may consist of a random and representative sample of nurses. Still, this research provided empirical evidence regarding the career satisfaction of Filipino nurses working locally and abroad.

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