




Research Article

Experiences of Newly Graduated Nurses at Al-Baha Hospitals

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Abstract

Background: The transition of nurses from education to practice is associated with many difficulties and opportunities, making this period critical to the nursing profession. This study assesses the experiences of newly graduated nurses (NGNs) in Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: The researchers conducted a cross-sectional study to assess NGNs' experience. Using a convenience sampling method, they selected 101 nurses from Al-Baha Hospitals. Data were collected using an online survey from a previous study, which was analyzed using SPSS and descriptive and inferential methods.

Results: The study findings showed that most NGNs were between 20 and 29 years old, with a balanced gender distribution and a significant number of single individuals. Most have less than a year of work experience, primarily at King Fahad Hospital. While the majority are Saudi nationals, they work in various hospital units. Although they feel confident communicating with physicians and delegating tasks, they struggle to prioritize and organize patient care needs. They report predominantly positive experiences and satisfaction, particularly about having flexible shift options, weekends off, and constructive feedback.

Conclusion: The study indicated that most NGNs in Al-Baha Hospitals were satisfied with their jobs and had positive experiences. However, the 20–29-year-old Saudi nationals had better experiences and job satisfaction.

Keywords: nursing, experience, job satisfaction, Saudi Arabia, Al-Baha, graduated


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1. Introduction

Nursing is a science and an art that provides independent and team-based care to individuals, families, groups, and communities, whether healthy or unhealthy, regardless of race, gender, or location. Nurses play a pivotal role in society, especially during emergencies, working as the backbone of the healthcare system [1]. They provide care at all levels of health promotion, disease prevention and treatment, and patient rehabilitation.

Nurses represent the largest portion of healthcare professionals, so ensuring that the required number of nurses is well-integrated within the health sector is necessary for any targeted success [2].

Transitioning from education to practicing nursing in clinical settings is an essential stage in which graduates use theoretical information in actual clinical healthcare practice. During this stage, NGNs face many challenges and difficulties, which may result in poor performance, burnout, and other problems [3–7].

Saudi Arabia has a robust healthcare system that provides comprehensive health services using a promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation approach [2]. In line with the Saudi Vision, the nursing sector has the opportunity to transform into a global standard in ensuring the quality, efficiency, and safety of healthcare services for each citizen. This is a chance to reform and close the gap in the nursing sector and find suitable solutions to the challenges faced [8, 9].

Authentic leadership and structural empowerment have been demonstrated to help nurses avoid burnout at the beginning of their careers. Burnout is also associated with understaffing and work-life conflicts, which highlights how effective, empowered leadership can reduce burnout and, in

turn, improve job satisfaction and the standard of patient care [10, 11].

The number of graduate students in nursing specialization has increased with the direction of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2030 vision in the field of health. However, the first year of work is the most difficult for new graduates, and the lack of sufficient experience leads some to leave their jobs, causing a shortage of nursing staff and a decrease in productivity. This study aims to collect the experiences of the NGNs in Al-Baha Hospitals, in Saudi Arabia, and identify the factors contributing to job satisfaction and retention.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study design

This study used a cross-sectional descriptive design to assess the experiences of newly graduated nurses in the Al-Baha region, Saudi Arabia.

2.2. Study setting

The study was conducted within Al-Baha Hospitals, located in the Al-Baha region of Saudi Arabia.

The Department of Nursing at Al-Baha University was first established in 2006 and shifted to the independent nursing faculty in 2023. The curriculum includes five years of study (including one year of internship). In the first year, students have courses mainly focusing on improving their English language skills and learning general supporting sciences.

In the second year, students take foundational nursing courses such as Introduction to the Nursing Profession, Medical Terminology, and Medical Ethics. They start core and specialized nursing courses in their third and fourth years of

study, including Fundamentals of Nursing, Medical-Surgical Nursing, Maternity Nursing, Pediatric and Child Health Nursing, Gynecological Nursing, Community Health Nursing, Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, and Clinical Care Nursing. Finally, students enroll in a 12-month clinical training internship in the fifth year.

2.3. Study population

The study population involved NGNs with bachelor's degrees employed at Al-Baha Hospitals.

2.4. Sampling and sample size

A convenient sampling technique was used to select participants from the targeted hospitals. An NGN from each hospital was invited to participate. The sample size was all 101 nurses available during data collection.

2.5. Data collection

Data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire designed for this study. The questionnaire included two sections:

2.5.1. Demographic information

This section gathered data on nurses' age, gender, marital status, qualification, experience, and unit of work.

2.5.2. NGNs' experience

The NGNs' experience was measured using a scale adapted from Casey-Fink's psychometric evaluation study of NGN experiences [12].

2.6. Data analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive and inferential statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, were used, as well as the chi-square test for comparison.

3. Results

Table 1 shows the demographics of NGNs in Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia, with a sample size of 101 nurses. The age group 20–29 years was the most (88.1%), with a smaller proportion between 30 and 40 years (11.9%). They were male (51.5%) and female (48.5%). Most of them were single (82.2%). King Fahad Hospital (44.6%) was the most common workplace, followed by Prince Meshari Hospital (35.6%). Most participants were Saudi nationals (82.2% compared to 17.8% non-Saudi nationals). They worked in different departments, including medical-surgical (24.8%) and emergency (29.7%).

Table 2 presents the experiences of NGNs at Al-Baha Hospitals. It shows a positive agreement between nurses who feel confident communicating with physicians (74.3%), delegating tasks to Nursing Assistants (68.3%), and preparing to complete their job responsibilities (65.3%). Significant disagreements were seen in the difficulty of prioritizing patient care needs (40.6%) and organizing patient care needs (40.6%).

Figure 1 summarizes the experience of NGNs in Al-Baha Hospitals. Most nurses had a positive experience, with 43.6% agreeing and 56.4% strongly agreeing.

Table 3 reflects the satisfaction of NGNs at Al-Baha Hospitals with different aspects of their job. It shows that the most notable factors associated with their satisfaction were the opportunity to choose the shifts they worked (67.3%), having weekends off per month (60.4%), and the amount of encouragement and feedback they received

(59.4%). Meanwhile, the nurses' salary (25.7%) and vacation (22.8%) were the factors most strongly associated with less satisfaction.

Figure 2 reflects the NGNs' satisfaction with different aspects of their jobs. Most nurses are satisfied with their jobs, with 47.52% satisfied with various aspects and 38.61% very satisfied.

Table 4 shows the association between the demographic variables of NGNs and their experience level. It reveals the age of NGNs is

strongly associated with their experience level, with the NGNs aged 20–29 years having higher levels of experience than those aged 30–40 years ($P = 0.029^*$). Furthermore, Saudi NGNs were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree with their experience ($P = 0.028^*$). Table 5 reveals the association between the demographic characteristics of NGNs and their satisfaction levels. It shows that NGNs aged between 20 and 29 years are significantly more satisfied than nurses in other age groups ($P = 0.016^*$).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of newly graduated nurses in Al-Baha, Saudi Arabia ($n = 101$).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (yrs)		
20–29	89	88.1
30–40	12	11.9
Gender		
Male	52	51.5
Female	49	48.5
Marital status		
Single	83	82.2
Married	18	17.8
Experiences (months)		
0–4	33	32.7
5–10	38	37.6
11–12	30	29.7
Workplace		
King Fahad Hospital	45	44.6
Prince Meshari Hospital	36	35.6
Mandaq General Hospital	7	6.9
Irada Psychiatric Hospital	2	2.0
Al Aqiq General Hospital	4	4.0
Primary Health Care Centers	7	6.9
Nationality		
Saudi	83	82.2
Non-Saudi	18	17.8
Department		
Medical Surgical	25	24.8
Emergency	30	29.7
Intensive Care Unit	15	14.9
Psychiatric	3	3.0

Table 1: Continued.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pediatric	9	8.9
Maternity	3	3.0
Outpatient Department	3	3.0
Operation Room	11	10.9
Other	2	2.0

Table 2: Experiences of the newly graduated nurses ($n = 101$).

Item	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
I have confidence to communicate with physicians.	15.8	74.3	9.9	0
I am comfortable providing a care for a dying patient.	31.7	62.4	5	1
I feel comfortable to delegate tasks to the assistant.	17.8	68.3	12.9	1
I feel at ease to ask for assistance from other registered nurses.	25.7	64.4	8.9	1
I have difficulty to prioritize patient care needs.	15.8	26.7	40.6	16.8
I think that the preceptors provide needed encouragement and feedback.	21.8	59.4	17.8	1
I find senior staff to guide me during new procedures.	26.7	60.4	11.9	1
I feel overloaded with obligations and workload.	23.8	47.5	23.8	5
I have opportunities to practice skills and procedures more than once.	27.7	65.3	5.9	1
I feel comfortable to communicate with patients and their families.	26.7	60.4	9.9	3
I have ability to complete tasks of patient care.	28.7	61.4	6.9	3
I think the demands placed on me by this employment are reasonable.	17.8	64.4	15.8	2
I feel competent to accomplish my tasks.	26.7	65.3	6.9	1
I feel ease offering recommendations for modifications to the nursing plan of care.	25.7	58.4	13.9	2
I face difficulties to organize needs for patient care.	12.9	27.7	40.6	18.8
I worry that my inexperience could harm the patient.	15.8	31.7	32.7	19.8
On my unit, there are good role models who I can look up to.	29.7	60.4	9.9	0
The supervisor provide support to develop my experience.	43.6	52.5	4	0
I have support from family/friends.	35.6	52.5	8.9	3
I feel satisfaction with the nursing profession.	36.6	54.5	5.9	3
I feel my job seems thrilling and exciting.	31.7	55.4	11.9	1
I think my supervisor provides motivation and support on my tasks.	22.8	40.6	28.7	7.9

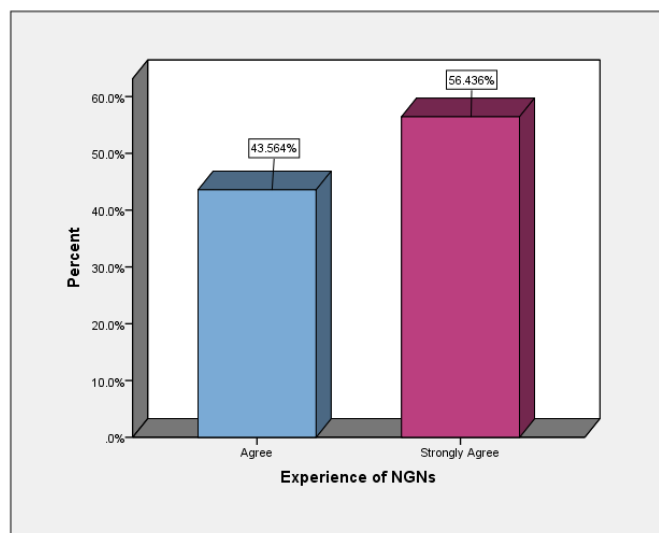


Figure 1: The newly graduated nurses' overall experiences ($n = 101$).

Table 3: The newly graduated nurses' satisfaction with different job aspects ($n = 101$).

Item	Strongly satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Strongly dissatisfied (%)
Salary	6.9	44.6	12.9	25.7	9.9
Vacation	8.9	48.5	16.8	22.8	3
Benefits package	13.9	48.5	17.8	14.9	5
Hours that you work	16.8	50.5	10.9	11.9	9.9
Weekends off per month	16.8	60.4	11.9	6.9	4
Your amount of responsibility	17.8	56.4	18.8	3	4
Opportunities for career advancement	17.8	52.5	19.8	5.9	4
Amount of encouragement and feedback	20.8	59.4	7.9	7.9	4
Opportunity for choosing shifts worked	12.9	67.3	8.9	5	5.9

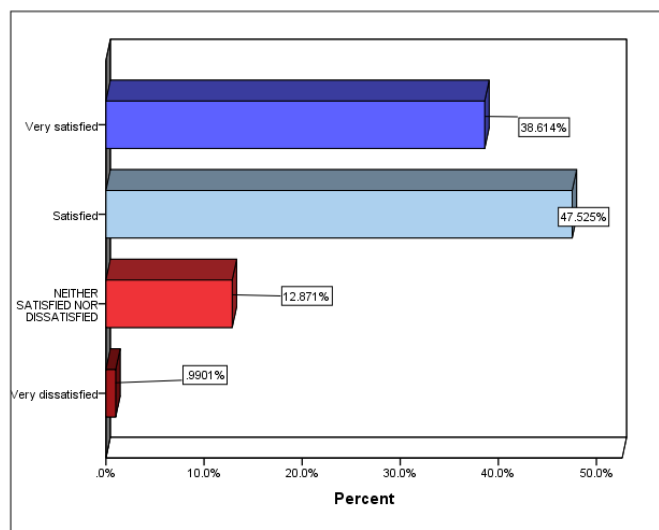


Figure 2: Newly graduated nurses' overall satisfaction of different job aspects ($n = 101$).

Table 4: Association between the demographic characteristics of the NGNs and their experiences ($n = 101$).

Variables	Agree		Strongly agree		P-value
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Age (yrs)					
20–29	35	39.3%	54	60.7%	0.029*
30–40	9	75.0%	3	25.0%	
Gender					
Male	22	42.3%	30	57.7%	0.843
Female	22	44.9%	27	55.1%	
Marital status					
Single	35	42.2%	48	57.8%	0.363
Married	9	50.0%	9	50.0%	
Experiences (months)					
0–4	13	39.4%	20	60.6%	0.680
5–10	16	42.1%	22	57.9%	
11–12	15	50.0%	15	50.0%	
Nationality					
Saudi	32	38.6%	51	61.4%	0.028*
Non-Saudi	12	66.7%	6	33.3%	

*Significant

Table 5: Association between the demographic characteristics of NGNs and their satisfaction with different job aspects ($n = 101$).

Variables	Very dissatisfied		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		Satisfied		Very satisfied		P-value
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Age (yrs)									
20–29	0	0.0%			12	13.5%	40	44.9%	0.016*
30–40	1	8.3%			1	8.3%	8	66.7%	
Gender									
Male	0	0.0%			9	17.3%	27	51.9%	0.184
Female	1	2.0%			4	8.2%	21	42.9%	
Marital status									
Single	0	0.0%			11	13.3%	38	45.8%	0.131
Married	1	5.6%			2	11.1%	10	55.6%	
Nationality									
Saudi	0	0.0%			12	14.5%	38	45.8%	0.113
Non-Saudi	1	5.6%			1	5.6%	10	55.6%	

*Significant

4. Discussion

The outcomes of this study have provided insight into the experience of NGNs and their satisfaction with their jobs. The study's findings revealed that

most NGNs have positive experiences communicating with physicians, delegating tasks, and preparing for their job responsibilities but struggle with prioritizing and organizing patient care needs. These findings suggest that while NGNs are

generally confident in their interactions and tasks, they face challenges related to patient care management.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that factors affecting job satisfaction among NGNs at Al-Baha Hospitals include the choice of shifts, monthly weekends off, and social encouragement, while salary and vacation caused dissatisfaction. This implies that NGNs in Al-Baha are generally content with their working conditions, but financial and leave-related concerns remain sources of discontentment.

While previous research has focused on orientation, shiftwork, rural settings, and work readiness, these results demonstrate that experience and job satisfaction imply completeness for them and are essential. These findings align with those provided by Musaad Salem Alghamdi and Omar Ghazi Baker (2020), according to which NGNs have substantial and statistically significant job satisfaction [6]. The results contradict the claims of Kramer *et al.* (2012) that are associated with the NGNs having strong concern about delegation nurses and collaboration and prioritization with preceptor [5].

Kathy Casey *et al.* (2004) provided similar findings where the graduate nurses reported significantly higher job satisfaction except for their salary [4]. It highlighted the positive impact of the presence of trainers in the workplace, with participants emphasizing the value of having knowledgeable supervisors who could provide them with direction, guidance, and ongoing assistance. This is similar to another qualitative research by Alharbi *et al.* (2023), which provided identical results from the experiences of first-year nurses in Taif [3]. Similarly, other previous studies showed that nurses and nursing students are satisfied with their jobs, especially regarding their salary and environment in Saudi Arabia [13–15].

It was found that NGNs aged 20–29 were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree with their experiences and satisfaction than those

aged 30–40. Additionally, nationality seemed to have a significant association with job satisfaction, with Saudi NGNs being more likely to be satisfied with their experiences than non-Saudi NGNs.

These results should be taken into account when examining the future experience of nurses in hospitals to provide them with ways of coping with their new working field, which will affect their ability to provide high-quality care for their patients. This finding is similar to previous studies by Ahmed *et al.*, which showed that nursing students adopted different and effective coping strategies in response to stressors during clinical training [7].

However, this study has included the experiences of both Saudi and non-Saudi NGNs and used validated data collection tools. It has some limitations, such as the lack of generalizability. The results are limited to the hospitals in the Al-Baha region, and the sample was selected from one region, which may not reflect the situation all over the country. Time constraints also limited the study's methodological choices.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study indicates that, overall, NGNs in the region have positive experiences and are mainly satisfied with their jobs, although there is room for improvement in certain areas. These findings add value to the evidence of nursing practice and contain suggestions for improving the NGNs' experience. More research on this topic in different settings and with a larger sample size is necessary.

Declarations

Acknowledgments

The authors express their gratitude to the NGNs who willingly participated in the study and acknowledge the nursing department at Al-Baha University for permitting it.

Ethical Considerations

The college dean gave ethical permission for the study, which was conducted according to the Helsinki guidelines. Before completing the survey, consent was obtained from all participants.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that the study was conducted as part of their bachelor's study in nursing, specifically their graduation project. Furthermore, they declare that no conflicts of interest are associated with the study.

Availability of Data and Material

The data is available upon request from the corresponding author.

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None.

Abbreviations and Symbols

NGNs: Newly graduate nurses

SPSS: Statistical package for social sciences

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