



## Evaluating Association Degree Nursing Faculty Job Satisfaction<sup>1,2,3</sup>



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### ABSTRACT

This study identified factors of Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) faculty job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Qualified applicants are denied admission to nursing programs because of faculty shortages, but little is known about the factors that support faculty retention. A nationwide survey was conducted and found that factors of dissatisfaction were salary, organizational policies, and workload. Factors of greatest satisfaction were interactions, professional status, and autonomy. These findings provide important information from which to create innovative solutions to retain current faculty.

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### Introduction

Qualified nursing school applicants are being denied admission into Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) nursing programs because of a shortage of nursing faculty (National League of Nursing [NLN], 2014). Not only must faculty be recruited, but once they are hired, they also need to be retained. Increasing the job satisfaction of current faculty may retain those members in their organizations. Although studies exploring faculty satisfaction have been conducted, little is known about ADN faculty. The factors that support positive ADN nurse faculty job satisfaction have not been adequately identified and, therefore, not addressed. A foundational step toward initiating changes to retain nursing faculty is the identification and dissemination of the factors that contribute to ADN faculty job satisfaction.

### Background

ADN programs were initially created to provide a faster, more cost-efficient means of entry into the nursing job market, a necessity following the nursing shortages that occurred after World War II and the Korean War (Weiss & Tappen, 2015). Today, they remain a more

economical means of educating entry-level nurses compared with 4-year baccalaureate programs. In 2012, ADN programs turned away 45% of qualified applicants, with 28% of those programs citing the primary factor as a lack of faculty. This is a higher percentage than applicants turned away from Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs (36%) and diploma programs (18%; NLN, 2014). With more than 60% of the nursing workforce initially educated at the ADN level, a faculty shortage in ADN programs impacts the majority of prospective nurses and the general public who will not have adequate numbers of nurses to care for them (McCallister, 2012).

#### Theoretical Model and Project Framework

The theory of motivation-hygiene (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1993) was utilized to guide this project in determining what factors constitute job satisfaction for ADN faculty. The primary tenet of this theory is that people gain satisfaction in their jobs from the intrinsic of what they do; these factors are called *motivating factors* and include items such as autonomy, recognition, achievement, advancement, and responsibility or the challenge of the work itself. Jobs, however, consist of extrinsic factors as well. These hygiene or extrinsic factors include items such as pay, supervision, work environment, organizational policies, benefits, and relationships with colleagues. Herzberg et al. (1993) found that, when people were dissatisfied with their jobs, they were unhappy with the conditions surrounding the job, as opposed to the work itself, causing them to want to leave. Herzberg theorized that the extrinsic or hygiene factors independently do not lead to satisfaction, yet, without these hygiene factors, there will be a lack of motivation.

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The Index of Work Satisfaction (Stamps, 1997) was selected and adapted for this project because it was specifically designed to

- measure the motivation-hygiene factors of nurses' job satisfaction;
- be easily understood and utilized as a reliable and valid measurement; and
- is utilized routinely for the benefit of nurses (Stamps, 1997).

#### Setting and Target Population

We identified 703 associate degree nursing programs accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing across the United States. Using information from these programs' web pages, a list of e-mail addresses was compiled for all part- and full-time faculty. This resulted in 9,402 potential participants.

#### Analysis

##### Techniques for Data Collection and Analysis

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from Boise State University prior to the start of this project. A survey was e-mailed to all the identified nursing faculty members along with a brief introduction to the project purpose and participant consent information. The survey consisted of two parts: Part A utilized a paired-comparison technique that required the participants to choose which of two factors was most important to them. These 15 paired questions were based on six components: pay, autonomy, task requirements, organizational policies, professional status, and interaction (Herzberg et al., 1993). Part B utilized these same six factors and presented a series of 44 questions framed in both a positive and negative manner to identify how satisfied they were with certain factors of their jobs utilizing a 1–7 Likert scale (*strongly agreed–strongly disagreed*). Follow-up reminders with a link to the survey were sent at 1 week and 2 weeks to enhance participation.

#### Results

The survey was e-mailed to 9,402 faculty across the United States in October 2016. The respondents ( $n = 2,479$ , 26.3%) were predominately Caucasian females between 55 and 64 years old, which reflects similar national nursing faculty characteristics reported in the literature (NLN, 2016). Over one half (51.77%) of respondents were from the central region of the country, 26.49% were from the middle and south Atlantic states, and the remaining were from the western and New England states (Table 1).

Results from Part A of the survey indicate that participants find, of the six factors, that interactions, professional status, and autonomy provide the greatest job satisfaction. A total score was calculated for each component in Part B of the survey on a scale ranging from 5 to 70. A score between 5 and 25 represents the first quartile, indicating dissatisfaction, and a range of 28–70 represents the fourth quartile, indicating satisfaction. Results indicate that interactions (49.56), professional status (41.46), and autonomy afforded by their position (38.76) are the three factors that provide the most job satisfaction, whereas salary (19.22), interactions between faculty and administrators (23.85), and task requirements (24.16) were of least satisfaction.

Interestingly, multiple questions in the top three factors elicited a significant number of responses whether *strongly agreeing*, *agreeing*, *disagreeing*, or *strongly disagreeing*, indicating that the participants were strongly opinionated about the question. For example, the participants felt very strongly about a nurse faculty job being exceptionally important and would still go into nursing, if given a second chance. The answers in the bottom three factors (pay, task requirements, and

**Table 1**  
Displays other descriptive characteristics about the participants

Characteristic	% of respondents	# of respondents
Teach exclusively in an ADN program	81.35	2,145
Work full time as a nurse educator	86.55	2,142
Have tenure at organization of employment	39.38	2,123
On a tenure track	39.11	2,038
Hold a master's degree in nursing	94.45	2,126
Hold a master's degree in a nonnursing field	8.29	2,110
Hold a doctoral degree in nursing	10.34	2,128
Hold a doctoral degree in a nonnursing field	3.92	2,115
Have been nursing faculty for 10 years or more	44.47	2,143
Have been nursing faculty for 5–10 years	29.91	2,143
Have been nursing faculty for 0–5 years	25.62	2,143
Is a certified nurse educator	14.7	2,136
Organization will reimburse or increase salary for certified nurse educator certification	21.37	2,078
Works a 9-month contract	57.66	2,029
Works a 10-month contract	40.15	1,051
Works a 12-month contract	43.87	775
Would work 12 months/year if given that option	36.18	1,993
Belongs to a bargaining unit	36.93	2,131

organizational requirements) were generally spread out over all seven choices, indicating a more neutral stance on these factors.

It is not surprising that salary was identified as a job dissatisfier. The salaries of nursing faculty are typically 76%–79% of the salaries allocated for other academic disciplines in public institutions (McNeal, 2012). While ongoing efforts to address any organizational pay inequities are necessary, innovative ways to provide a higher remuneration, such as overload pay or shared academic and clinical roles that each provide a portion of the faculty's salary, should be explored. Organizational policies should be created in collaboration with faculty and be transparent and equitable. Task requirements were also acknowledged as dissatisfiers. When faculty shortages necessitate a greater teaching load or service expectations, the use of administrative staff to perform appropriate tasks may help to alleviate some of the burden of these increased expectations. This may assist faculty in completing key tasks within the workday and eliminate the need to frequently bring work home to be completed outside of general work hours (Bitner & O'Connor, 2012). A healthy work–life balance is increasingly important, particularly for those born in the early 1980s–early 2000s, a group often referred to as *millennials* (Clark, 2017).

Interactions, overall, was a top component of job satisfaction. However, when categorized into faculty–faculty interactions and faculty–administrator interactions, the latter component was an area of job dissatisfaction. This implies that program directors should focus on strategies to improve relationships between administration and faculty members in order to increase faculty's organizational commitment and retention.

#### Conclusion

The information collected about job satisfaction and ADN faculty is congruent with similar findings of studies surveying baccalaureate and graduate nursing faculty (Derby-Davis, 2014; Evans, 2013; Roughton, 2013). The nursing faculty shortage is a symptom of the worldwide nursing shortage. The findings provide program directors with important information that can be utilized to create innovative solutions that help retain current nursing faculty. In order to ensure that adequate nursing faculty is available to educate the next generation of nurses, the areas of least satisfaction for ADN faculty need to be addressed. Efforts to support greater faculty autonomy and to improve faculty interactions with administrators will create a positive environment that encourages faculty to remain in academia.

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