Continuing Education and Job Satisfaction among Argentine Nursing Professionals.

Capacitación Continua y Satisfacción Laboral en profesionales de enfermería argentinos.

Ornella Barbiani [1], Laura Silva [2], Karen Manzur* [3].

Faculty of Health Sciences, Adventist University of Plata, Argentina and Adventist Sanatorium of Plata, Argentina.

[1] ornella.barbiani@uap.edu.ar , https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4516-3609
[2] laura.silva@sanatorioadventista.org.ar , https://orcid.org/0009-0000-2405-4749
[3] karen.manzur@uap.edu.ar , https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2576-1554
* Correspondence: karen.manzur@uap.edu.ar

Summary. Objective : To analyze the relationship between participation in continuing education and job satisfaction among nursing professionals at a private healthcare institution, considering the impact of sociodemographic and occupational factors. **Methodology** : An observational, cross-sectional study was conducted with 77 nursing professionals who provided informed consent. A sociodemographic questionnaire, a continuing education questionnaire, and the Job Satisfaction Scale were administered. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple binary logistic regression. **Results:** 72.7% of the professionals were female, and 57.1% were graduates. 84.4% considered training important; 75.3% did so in the last year, primarily through courses or diplomas in a blended format (in-person and online). Only 62.1% indicated that this training was offered at their workplace. On the other hand, 58.5% reported moderate to high job satisfaction. Greater job satisfaction was observed among those who participated in training (OR 1.68, 95% CI 0.55-5.17) and worked less than 45 hours per week (OR 1.77, 95% CI 0.48-6.62) and lower among those who had been with the institution for less than 10 years (OR 0.68, 95% CI 0.26-1.73); however, these results were not statistically significant. **Conclusion** : These findings constitute a starting point for institutional diagnoses and educational interventions, which is essential for professionals in the Americas region because they are at a disadvantage in this area. Furthermore, understanding other factors related to job satisfaction will allow promoting the well-being and retention of professionals in the health system.

Keywords: Continuing Nursing Education, Postgraduate Nursing Education, Evidence-Based Nursing, Nursing Education, Nursing Staff, Job Satisfaction

Abstract: Objective : To analyze the relationship between participation in continuing education and job satisfaction among nursing professionals from a private health institution, considering the impact of sociodemographic and occupational factors. **Methodology** : Observational, cross-sectional study involving 77 nursing professionals who signed an informed consent. A sociodemographic questionnaire, another on continuing education, and the Job Satisfaction Scale were applied. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple binary logistic regression. **Results:** 72.7% of the professionals were female and 57.1% held a bachelor's degree. A total of 84.4% considered continuing education important, and 75.3% had participated in training over the past year, mainly through courses or diploma programs delivered in a blended format (in-person and virtual). Only 62.1% indicated that the training was offered at their workplace. On the other hand, 58.5% reported moderate or high job satisfaction. Greater job satisfaction was observed among those who had participated in training (OR 1.68, 95% CI 0.55–5.17) and worked fewer than 45 hours per week (OR 1.77, 95% CI 0.48–6.62), while lower satisfaction was found among those with less than 10 years at the institution (OR 0.68, 95% CI 0.26–1.73); However, these results were not statistically significant. **Conclusion:** These findings serve as a starting point for institutional diagnoses and educational interventions, which are essential for professionals in the Americas region, as they are at a disadvantage in this area. Additionally, understanding other factors related to job satisfaction may help promote the well-being and retention of professionals within the health system.

Keywords: Education, Nursing, Continuing; Education, Nursing, Graduate; Evidence-Based Nursing; Education, Nursing; Nursing Staff; Job Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Nursing is a profession dedicated to upholding the right of all individuals to the highest attainable standard of health through a shared commitment to providing collaborative, culturally safe, and person-centered care and services. Its practice is grounded in disciplinary knowledge based on science, technical expertise, ethical standards, and therapeutic relationships (1). In Argentina, the reconceptualization of the nursing profession for the 21st century includes functions such as health promotion, disease prevention, recovery and rehabilitation, the defense of human rights, the integration of information technologies, teaching, counseling, research, and practice with an ethical and integrative perspective, among others (2). The continuing education of professionals is a matter of public health because the knowledge on which professional competencies are built evolves with scientific progress. In addition, the new roles assumed, motivated by social changes, require training systems (3). Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the availability of digital educational resources, the acceptability of virtual learning (4-5) increased, and the need to train professionals with skills in the use of digital technologies was highlighted (6).

Professional development in nursing involves lifelong learning and allows for the development, maintenance, and expansion of competencies in professional nursing practice (7). The International Council of Nurses (ICN) recommends that academic institutions provide continuing education opportunities to facilitate the adaptation of professionals to the responsibilities of their role and suggests that, in countries with poorly developed nursing training frameworks, the World Health Organization (WHO) offer technical support to promote the exchange of knowledge and good practices. (1) In its guidelines on occupational mental health, the WHO indicates that occupational mental health is a social determinant of mental health, and prolonged exposure to poor conditions can contribute to its deterioration in workers. Among the psychosocial risks identified, aspects associated with professional development, career development, and stagnation stand out (8).

Job satisfaction is a global evaluation made up of cognitive and affective components that the person makes about his or her work (9). In line with the above, the ICN considers that in the workplace, continuous learning opportunities such as specializations, workshops, conferences and online training programs should be provided, which will not only allow for having a qualified workforce, but is also a way to take care of the nursing professional, improve long-term job satisfaction and retention (10).

The results of scientific literature reviews on this topic indicated that continuing professional development for nursing professionals has a positive impact on their knowledge, skills, quality of care provided, patient safety, satisfaction, and job retention (11-16). However, in the latest WHO report on the global status of nursing, corresponding to the year 2025, only 72% of countries had continuing professional development programs, with this percentage being lower in the Americas region (67%) (5). These results are lower than those of the previous report in 2020, whose global percentage was 73% and in the Americas region it was 71% (17).

Nursing faces the challenge of continuing the educational process based on suitability, knowledge, and quality (18). Therefore, the objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between participation in continuing education and job satisfaction among nursing professionals at a private healthcare institution in Entre Ríos, considering the impact of sociodemographic and occupational factors. The hypothesis of this study was that participation in continuing education activities is associated with a higher level of job satisfaction.

2. Methods

This study follows a quantitative approach, with an observational, analytical, cross-sectional design. The sample consisted of nursing professionals from a private healthcare institution in Entre Ríos. The inclusion criteria were nursing professionals who were actively employed and who provided their consent to participate in the study. Professionals on leave and/or vacation during the data collection period were excluded. Non-probability convenience sampling was used. The sample size was determined based on a previous Argentine study that reported a mean job satisfaction score of 3.52 with a standard deviation of 0.90. Considering a 95% confidence interval and a precision of 0.21, a sample size of 71 participants was estimated (19).

Data collection instruments

A sociodemographic questionnaire was applied, in which questions were asked about sex (female, male), age (years), educational level (Professional Nurse, Bachelor's Degree, Specialist, Master's Degree, Doctorate), seniority in the profession (years), seniority in the institution (years), number of working hours per week (hours), and type of service (general ward, maternity ward, operating room, geriatric ward, office, management, infection control). Regarding training, participants were asked about the importance they place on training in their professional development (very unimportant, unimportant, neutral, important, very important), the frequency with which they receive training at their workplace (never, rarely, occasionally, frequently, always), whether they participated in any training (workshop, course, conference, conference, specialization, master's degree, doctorate) during the last year (yes, no), the mode of participation (virtual, in-person, blended), type (workshop, course, refresher course, conference, specialization, master's degree, doctorate, other), and access to said training (independent search, offered at the workplace). Finally, job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Scale validated for the Argentine population, which has 7 items answered on a Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). This instrument presented a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.87$. (20) For the present investigation, the internal consistency evaluated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient was $\alpha = 0.874$. The scores are added and the average is calculated, the higher values indicate greater job satisfaction. Later an Argentine scale was developed, and from the sum of the scores, low satisfaction is considered between 7-24 points, moderate between 25-28 points and high between 29-35 points (19).

Data collection procedure and ethical aspects

Participants were invited by the institution's Teaching and Research Department through digital means such as WhatsApp groups. Researchers also visited the various services by sharing the access link or QR code. Data were collected between mid-December 2024 and March 2025. Informed consent, along with the data collection instruments, was administered using a Microsoft Forms form. Participants first provided their consent to participate in the study and then accessed the instruments. The data were stored in the institutional cloud system with restricted access. This research was evaluated and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of a private educational institution under Resolution No. 157/24.

Data analysis procedure

The data were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using R Studio software. First, a descriptive analysis was performed for each categorical variable using frequencies and percentages. Next, a multiple binary logistic regression was performed to identify factors associated with job satisfaction using the forward stepwise selection model. Job satisfaction was considered the dependent variable, and continuing education was considered the independent variable. The variables sex, educational level, weekly working hours, and seniority at the institution were considered potential confounders. First, a bivariate analysis was performed using simple binary logistic regression for each independent variable. Crude odds ratios (ORs), their confidence intervals (95% CIs), and the Wald test results were estimated. Second, variables that showed a significant association using a flexible criterion (p < 0.20) or that were considered clinically relevant were selected. Third, the model was built by progressively entering variables according to their OR and statistical significance, and assessing their contribution through changes in the coefficients, deviance, log-likelihood, the likelihood ratio test (Likelihood Ratio Test), and multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor - VIF). Once the final model was obtained, variables with a p-value <0.05 were considered statistically significant determinants of job satisfaction, and the adjusted ORs with their

95% confidence intervals (CI) were used to measure the strength of the association. The proportion of variability explained by the model was assessed using the Nagelkerke R^2 coefficient. Finally, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test could not be applied due to the limited sample size and the unbalanced distribution of the dependent variable.

3. Results

A total of 77 nursing professionals participated, 72.7% (n=56) female, with an average age of 36.84 (standard deviation (SD) 9.61; Median (Mdn), 35) years. No missing data were observed in each of the administered questionnaires. Regarding educational level, 31.2% (n=24) were Nurses, 57.1% (n=44) were Graduates and 11.7% (n=9) were Specialists. The average length of service in the profession was 10.21 (SD 7.50; Mdn 10) years and in the institution 8.87 (SD 6.89; Mdn 9) years. In addition, the professionals work an average of 40.30 (SD 7.34; Mdn 40) hours per week and the most frequent service was General Ward Nursing (Table 1). Regarding the importance given to training for professional development, 71.4% (n=55) consider it very important and 13% (n=10) important, while 1.3% (n=1) have a neutral position, 1.3% (n=1) perceive it as unimportant and 13% (n=10) very unimportant. On the other hand, 45.5% (n=35) indicated that they frequently receive training at their workplace (Figure 1). In addition, 75.3% (n=58) reported having participated in some training during the last year and the mixed modality (face-to-face and virtual) was the most frequent (36.2%, n=21), followed by face-to-face (32.8%, n=19) and virtual (31%, n=18). On the other hand, 62.1% (n=36) indicated that such training was offered at their workplace and the usual type of training was a course or diploma (27.3%, n=21), followed by a refresher course (26%, n=20), workshops (22.1%, n=17), other (10.4%, n=8), conference (9.1%, n=7) and specialization (5.2%, n=4).

Table 1. Type of Service.

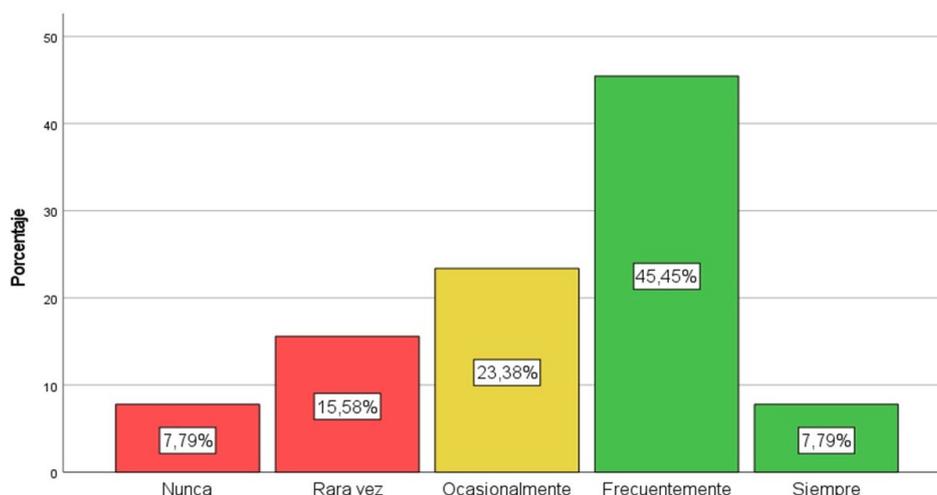|	% (n)
General Hall	50.6 (39)
Other	26 (20)
Nursing Management	10.4(8)
Geriatric	7.8(6)
Infection Control	2.6 (2)
Maternity	2.6 (2)

% percentage; n frequency

Figure 1. Frequency of training received in the workplace (Nunca, never; Siempre, Always)

Regarding Job Satisfaction, an average of 3.62 (SD 0.81, Mdn 3.71) points was obtained, and according to the scale, 58.5% (n = 45) reported moderate or high Job Satisfaction (Figure 2). To study the factors associated with Job Satisfaction, a multiple binary logistic regression analysis was performed using a stepwise methodology. It is important to highlight that the quantitative variables weekly working hours and years in the institution did not show a linear relationship with the dependent variable; therefore, they were grouped into two categories: less than 45 hours per week

and 45 hours or more; less than 10 years in the institution and 10 years or more. On the other hand, the dependent variable Job Satisfaction was grouped into moderate/high and low, and the educational level was classified as Nursing and Licensed/Specialist. These categorizations also reflect the sample size of this study, in order to ensure adequate representation of each category.
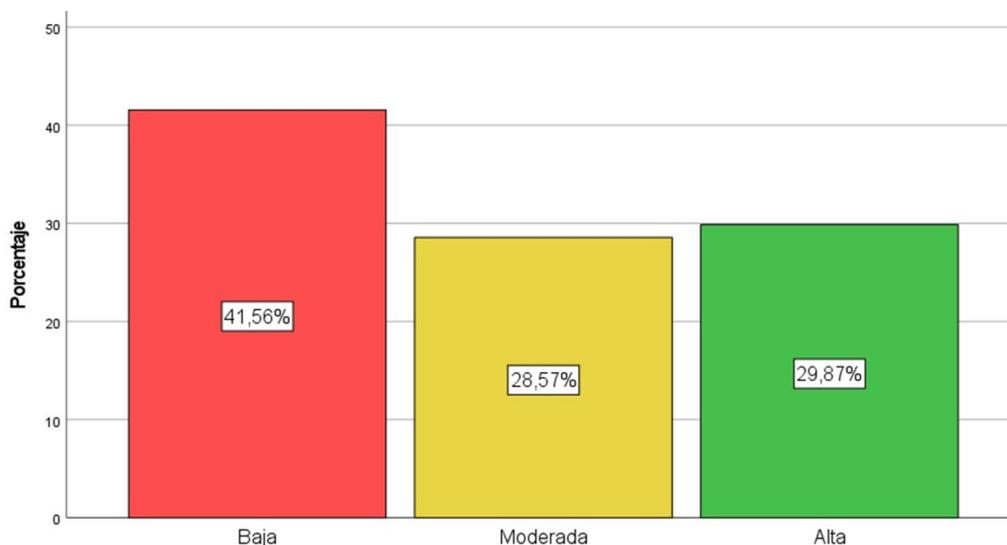

Figure 2. Job satisfaction of professionals

The results of the simple binary logistic regression showed no statistically significant associations between job satisfaction and sex, educational level, having completed any training in the last year, weekly working hours, and length of service at the institution (Table 2). Therefore, the variables included in the model based on their theoretical relevance and the focus of this study were: having completed any training (1st), weekly working hours (2nd), and length of service at the institution (3rd). The evolution of the construction of the multiple binary logistic regression model is detailed in Table 3.

Table 2. Simple binary logistic regression.

	OR (95%CI)	Standard Error	p
Sex (ref Female)			
Male	0.71 (0.26-1.98)	0.37	0.510
Educational level (ref. Nurse)			
Graduate/Specialist	0.78 (0.28-2.08)	0.39	0.627
Training (ref Without participation)			
Participation in Training	1.37 (0.48-3.91)	0.73	0.555
Weekly working hours (ref ≥ 45hs)			
Less than 45 hours	1.50 (0.43-5.29)	0.95	0.520
Seniority in the institution (ref ≥ 10 years)			
Under 10 years old	0.74 (0.30-1.85)	0.35	0.524

*, OR, odds ratio; 95% CI, 95% confidence interval; p, statistical significance

Table 3. Evolution of the multiple binary logistic regression model

M	OR (95%CI) and Wald Test (p)			D	L	R^2	LKRT	VIF
	Chap	Hs	Years					
1	1.37 (0.48-3.91) 0.555			104.19	-52.09	0.006		
2	1.54 (0.52-4.57) 0.437	1.71 (0.47-6.29) 0.414		103.52	-51.76	0.017	0.414	Chapter 1.07 Hs 1.07
3	1.68 (0.55-5.17) 0.361	1.77 (0.48-6.62) 0.384	0.68 (0.26-1.73) 0.420	102.87	-51.43	0.029	0.417	Chapter 1.11 Hs 1.07 Years 1.04

Cap: Training, Hs: Weekly working hours, Years: Seniority at the institution. Model 1: Cap; Model 2: Cap + Hs; Model 3: Cap + Hs + Years; D: Deviance, L: Log- likelihood R^2 Nagelkerke coefficient, LKRT: likelihood ratio test, VIF: Variance Inflation Factor.

In the construction of the three models, no statistically significant associations were found between the variables included. Although having participated in training and working less than 45 hours presented OR values greater than 1 in all models, no statistically significant association was found. The Nagelkerke coefficient of determination (R² = 0.029) indicated a low explanatory capacity of the model. Finally, no collinearity was evident between the variables included in the model (VIF ≤ 1.11).

4. Discussion

In this study, the highest percentage of professionals were female and had a bachelor's degree. These findings are consistent with the gender distribution in the WHO report on the global status of nursing, where 82% of professionals were women. Regarding bachelor's degrees, this document states that this training provides a higher level of critical thinking, clinical judgment, and leadership, but highlights that the available scientific studies that support this statement are from high-income countries (5). In this regard, it is of interest to describe these findings since Argentina is not part of this group of countries. Furthermore, more than 80% of professionals consider training important for professional development. Of those who completed training in the last year (75.3%), the most frequent type was a course or diploma, followed by a refresher course. These results are consistent with an Argentine study conducted on nursing professionals, in which workshops and courses were the predominant training options (21). Furthermore, these learning opportunities are in line with the recommendations of the International Council of Nurses (10).

Regarding the modality, the mixed option (in-person and virtual) was the most frequent. The incorporation of the virtual instance was driven by the pandemic (4-5). However, a review highlighted that in some cases, participants opted for the online format, due to its lower cost and flexible scheduling, but others preferred in-person, since they value the quality of teaching and geographical accessibility (13). The WHO, in its latest report, indicates that, although the online modality was valued during the pandemic, nursing education after this stage should be oriented towards mixed approaches, (5) coinciding with the findings of the present research.

On the other hand, among those who received training, only 62% indicated that it was offered in their workplace. This result is in line with other studies that indicated that the lack of organizational support is a barrier to accessing continuous professional development (12). The main challenge facing nursing is generating learning cultures, that is, leveraging the workplace as a learning resource, so that the approach is "top-down." Organizations are responsible for providing training so that it is transferred to practice and benefits patients (14). Continuing education has a positive impact on different work-related aspects such as performance, safety, and improved patient outcomes (22). For example, in a study that developed an institutional continuing education program for nursing professionals, improvements in knowledge and staff skills and a reduction in inconsistencies in clinical records were observed (23).

Regarding Job Satisfaction, in the present investigation an average of 3.62 points was obtained, results similar to the Argentine study that originated the scale of this scale (19) and according to the scale, 58.5% (n=45) expressed a moderate or high Job Satisfaction. Other investigations carried out in Brazil and Mexico with nursing staff, report that the levels of job satisfaction range between 49.3%, in a sample of 134 professionals (24), 84.8% in 92 professionals (25) and 90.8% with moderate or high satisfaction in a sample of 229 professionals. In addition, in this last study a positive and statistically significant correlation was obtained between the level of job satisfaction and the satisfaction of the patients treated in these institutions (26). It is important to note that the comparison of these findings with those from other countries is approximate, since in some cases the authors used different measurement instruments, although applied to nursing professionals, and in others, the same job satisfaction scale was used, but in populations that did not correspond exclusively to nursing professionals.

On the other hand, no statistically significant association was found between sex, educational level, and length of service in the institution. These results are consistent with previous studies (19, 27) except for length of service. The explanatory model of job satisfaction for nursing indicates that increased length of service could be associated with greater satisfaction due to an increase in perceived compatibility with the environment, task, and group (27).

Finally, greater job satisfaction was observed among those who participated in training, but this was not statistically significant. These results are inconsistent with previous findings suggesting a relationship between the two variables (5, 10, 12, 14). This lack of significance could be explained by various factors, such as having participated in training that did not meet the professionals' real needs (12), low levels of resilience or perception of meaningful work (27), and work overload, mainly because the sample was predominantly composed of female professionals, and studies indicate that women live with a double shift: a paid work shift and an unpaid shift related to household chores (28). Furthermore, the presence of Burnout Syndrome or high emotional exhaustion (29-30) could have influenced the perception of job satisfaction. Other intervening variables may include: specific workload associated with the task, type of work unit, organizational climate, supervisor support, available resources, among others. Based on the above, it is recommended that future research delve deeper into the relationship between these variables and job satisfaction in the Argentine context. Furthermore, the sample size of this study may have limited the ability to detect significant associations; therefore, it is suggested that future studies utilize larger samples. It is recommended that future research utilize multicenter probability sampling, incorporating professionals from different institutions, and employ job satisfaction instruments specifically designed for nursing. Furthermore, it is essential to further develop the variable of continuing education so that its operational definition is multidimensional.

This study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design does not allow for establishing cause-effect relationships. Second, the use of non-probability sampling and the participation of professionals from one institution limits the representativeness and generalizability of the results to other populations of healthcare professionals, affecting external validity. Furthermore, invitations via WhatsApp and QR codes introduce bias into the selection of participants. Third, the job satisfaction scale is validated for Argentine workers, although it was not specifically designed for the nursing context. Fourth, the current sample size could have limited the statistical power of the tests applied. Finally, other variables, not included in this study, may also influence nursing professionals' perceptions of job satisfaction.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, this research addressed a construct that has been understudied in the Argentine nursing context: job satisfaction. It used a validated instrument and a recently published scale, contributing to the production of relevant scientific information at the national level. Furthermore, given the limited information on continuing education for nursing professionals, these results constitute the starting point for future institutional diagnoses and educational interventions aimed at strengthening continuing education processes, which is essential for Argentine nursing professionals, who belong to the Americas region and are disadvantaged in this area.

5. Conclusions

- A high percentage of nursing professionals consider ongoing training important for their professional development; however, a smaller percentage have accessed an educational opportunity in the last year, and in many cases, it was not offered by their workplace.
- Job satisfaction reached moderate levels, and although greater satisfaction was observed among those who received training and worked less than 45 hours per week, these differences were not statistically significant.
- Therefore, understanding other factors related to job satisfaction will help promote the well-being and retention of professionals in the healthcare system.

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