The Relationship of Head of Room's Participative Leadership, Work Engagement, and Interpersonal Communication with Nurses' Job Satisfaction

Solehudin[1*], Inas Syabanasyah[2]

[*1] Nursing Study Program, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Indonesia Maju, Jakarta, Indonesia
[2] Nursing Study Program, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Indonesia Maju, Jakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction among nurses is an important indicator of healthcare service quality and is influenced by various organizational and interpersonal factors. This study aims to analyze the relationship between the head nurse's participative leadership, work engagement, and interpersonal communication with nurses' job satisfaction in the inpatient units of a private hospital in Jakarta. A quantitative analytic correlational design was employed with a total sample of 214 nurses selected through proportional stratified random sampling. Data were collected using standardized and validated questionnaires measuring participative leadership, work engagement, interpersonal communication, and job satisfaction. The results of multivariate analysis using multiple logistic regression demonstrated that participative leadership (OR = 46.5; p = 0.01), work engagement (OR = 13.5; p = 0.04), and interpersonal communication (OR = 14.7; p = 0.03) significantly influenced nurse job satisfaction. Nurses who perceived good participative leadership, high engagement, and effective interpersonal communication were significantly more likely to report job satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening participative leadership practices, fostering engagement, and enhancing interpersonal communication to improve job satisfaction and support the creation of a conducive work environment in nursing units.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication; Job Satisfaction; Nurses; Participative Leadership ; Work Engagement

*Corresponding Author: Solehudin; Inas Syabanasyah
*Email: solehsolehudin412@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Nurses are the backbone of healthcare services in hospitals; the quality of service and patient safety are highly influenced by nurse well-being and job satisfaction. Issues of job dissatisfaction among nurses contribute to high rates of burnout, turnover, and a reduction in the quality of care, making it a primary concern for current nursing management. Recent studies confirm that organizational factors and leadership style play a crucial role in determining the job satisfaction of healthcare professionals (1). Leadership styles in nursing management have been proven to have a positive and significant relationship with nurse performance and job satisfaction, both individually and within a team. Additional factors such as motivation, work engagement, and adequate organizational support also influence the effectiveness of leadership style and nurse job satisfaction (2). Therefore, developing an adaptive leadership that is oriented toward enhancing organizational support is key to improving nurse well-being and performance in providing quality healthcare services.

Participative leadership, where the head nurse involves staff in decision-making and provides room for participation, is capable of increasing employees' sense of ownership, motivation, and commitment. This leadership model is also often associated with increased psychological empowerment, which in turn is closely related to job satisfaction (3). Therefore, exploring the role of participative leadership in the head nurse context is highly relevant for understanding the dynamics of nurse job satisfaction. Although some studies indicate that participative leadership can enhance job satisfaction by increasing staff motivation and empowerment, there are also findings stating that this relationship is not always statistically significant. This suggests the need for a more comprehensive approach that considers additional factors such as organizational support, effective communication, and the specific hospital context. Leaders who are able to integrate staff participation with adequate organizational support can create a conducive work environment for improving nurse satisfaction and performance (4).

Work engagement, which includes vigor, dedication, and absorption, is a crucial indicator of work well-being that is positively related to nurse job satisfaction and retention. Meta-analyses and systematic reviews in the nursing population show a moderate to strong correlation between work engagement and job satisfaction, suggesting that efforts to increase engagement can be an intervention pathway to improve job satisfaction (5). Examining the link between participative leadership and work engagement at the ward level can reveal the mechanism connecting leadership style and worker outcomes. Recent studies indicate that the participative leadership style has a significant positive influence on nurse work engagement, where leaders who involve staff in decision-making are able to enhance the nurses' energy, dedication, and focus at work. A supportive

leader who provides room for participation also increases internal motivation and feelings of being valued, which directly contribute to enhanced commitment and job satisfaction (6). Therefore, developing a participative leadership style in the care unit is an effective strategy to strengthen work engagement and the quality of nursing services.

Good interpersonal communication, both among nurses and between the head nurse and staff, plays a central role in task coordination, problem-solving, and the creation of a supportive work climate. The leader's communication competence and the quality of interpersonal communication have been linked to increased work engagement, satisfaction, and a reduction in team conflict within the healthcare context (7). Therefore, the interpersonal communication variable should be included as a factor that may mediate or moderate the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction. Recent studies indicate that good interpersonal communication has a significant positive relationship with nurse job satisfaction. Effective communication can improve coordination, reduce conflict, and strengthen emotional and professional support among nursing team members (8). Thus, enhancing interpersonal communication competence in the workplace has the potential to strengthen the positive effect of leadership on nurse well-being and job satisfaction.

This study is important to examine the simultaneous relationship between head nurse participative leadership, work engagement, and interpersonal communication on nurse job satisfaction. The results of the study are expected to provide empirical evidence for hospital management to design effective leadership interventions and communication training aimed at enhancing nurse engagement and job satisfaction, which ultimately impacts the quality of service and nursing staff retention. The findings can also serve as a basis for managerial policy recommendations at the unit/ward level. Previous studies have shown that participative leadership has a significant positive influence on nurse work engagement and job satisfaction, and that interpersonal communication strengthens this relationship by mediating and moderating the dynamics of working relationships within the team (9). Therefore, integrating these three variables in a joint analysis can help understand the complex mechanisms underlying the holistic improvement of nurse work well-being and performance.

The practical implications of this research include the development of leadership training programs that focus on staff participation, enhanced communication skills, and the stimulation of engagement to improve the productivity and loyalty of nursing personnel in the hospital. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between head nurse participative leadership, work engagement, and interpersonal communication with nurse job satisfaction in the nursing service unit.

2. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative design with a correlational analytic approach to determine the relationship between the head nurse's participative leadership, work engagement, and interpersonal communication, and their effect on nurses' job satisfactione. The population of this study was all implementing nurses working in the inpatient units of a private hospital in Jakarta, totaling 458 individuals. The sampling technique used was proportional stratified random sampling, adjusting for the number of nurses in each ward/unit. The total sample size was 214 respondents. The instruments used were standardized questionnaires that have established validity and reliability, consisting of the following: Participative Leadership, measured using a participative leadership style questionnaire based on modern leadership theory. Work Engagement, measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). Interpersonal Communication, measured with an interpersonal communication scale that includes the aspects of openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positiveness, and equality. Job Satisfaction, measured using the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) questionnaire. Data analysis consisted of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis. Univariate analysis was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents and the scores of each research variable. Bivariate analysis was performed to test the relationship between the independent variables and nurses' job satisfaction, utilizing the Spearman or Pearson correlation test, depending on the data distribution. Multivariate analysis employed multiple logistic regression to determine which variable had the most significant influence on nurses' job satisfaction after controlling for other variables.

3. Results And Discussions

a. Result

1. Characteristics of Informants

Table 1. Results of the Descriptive Analysis

Respondent Characteristics	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	32,30	7,35	23	51
Length of Service	6,06	4,61	1	21
	N		**%**	
Education				
Diploma/Academy	122		37,9	
Bachelor's Degree	81		57	
Master's Degree	11		5,1	
Participative Leadership				
Poor	99		44,4	
Good	115		55,6	

Work Engagement		
Poor	100	46,7
Good	114	53,3
Interpersonal Communication		
Poor	99	46,3
Good	115	53,7
Job Satisfaction		
Less Satisfied	95	44,4
Satisfied	119	55,6

2. **Age**

The average age of the nurses was 32,30 years with a standard deviation of 7,35, ranging from 23 to 51 years. This indicates that most respondents belong to the professionally productive and mature age group, which typically possesses adequate clinical experience and is capable of objectively assessing leadership styles, work engagement levels, interpersonal communication, and job satisfaction. A relatively mature age can also influence their perception of the work environment and their interactions with the head of the unit/room.

3. **Length of Service**

The average length of service (or work tenure) of the respondents was 6,06 years with a standard deviation of 4,61, ranging from 1 to 21 years. This relatively long work tenure indicates that some respondents have a deep understanding of the organizational culture, leadership patterns, and quality of communication in their working unit/ward. Nurses with a longer length of service tend to be more emotionally stable and have a more comprehensive perception of job satisfaction.

4. **Education**

Most respondents held the following educational qualifications: diploma/academy 122 people (37,9%), Bachelor of Nursing 81 people (57%), master of nursing 11 people (5.1%). The dominance of the bachelor's degree level indicates that the respondents possess good cognitive and analytical abilities in evaluating participative leadership and the dynamics of interpersonal communication. Higher education often increases expectations for supportive leadership and a conducive work environment.

5. **Participative Leadership, Work Engagement, Interpersonal Communication, Job Satisfaction**

The participatory leadership category of the unit/ward manager was rated by the respondents as follows: Poor/less effective 99 people (44,4%),

good/effective 115 people (55,6%). The majority of respondents rated the unit/ward manager as having a good participatory leadership style. This indicates that the unit/ward manager involves nurses in the decision-making process, provides opportunities for expressing opinions, and encourages two-way communication. This condition generally correlates positively with nurses' motivation and job satisfaction. Work Engagement; Poor/low 100 people (46,7%), good/high 114 people (53,3%). The level of work engagement was mostly in the good category, indicating that the nurses felt energized, dedicated, and fully absorbed in their work. This condition can be an important factor in improving productivity and job satisfaction. Interpersonal communication, poor/low 99 people (46,3%), good/high 115 people (53,7%). The majority of respondents rated the interpersonal communication within the unit/ward as good. Effective communication between nurses and the unit/ward manager is crucial in building a harmonious work environment, supporting teamwork, and strengthening professional relationships among staff. Nurse job satisfaction, dissatisfied/low satisfaction 95 people (44,4%), satisfied/high satisfaction 119 people (55,6%). The majority of nurses felt satisfied with their jobs. This relatively high level of job satisfaction can be influenced by good participatory leadership, high work engagement, and effective interpersonal communication.

The characteristics of the respondents indicate that most nurses are in their productive age, hold a bachelor's degree, and have sufficient work tenure to understand the organizational culture. The majority of respondents rated participatory leadership, work engagement, and interpersonal communication in the good category. These findings support the presumption that these three variables potentially have a positive relationship with nurse job satisfaction.

a) The Relationship Between Head Nurse's Participative Leadership, Work Engagement, and Interpersonal Communication, and Job Satisfaction

Tabel 2. Results of the Multiple Logistic Regression Test

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p	Odds Ratio
Intercept	-12,58	1,88	-6.69	< .001	3,44E-06
Participatory Leadership	3,84	1,39	2,75	0,01	46,5
Work Engagement	2,6	1,25	2,08	0,04	13,5
Interpersonal Communication	2,69	1,25	2,16	0,03	14,7

Model Coefficients - Job Satisfaction

Participative leadership, estimate 3,84; p-value 0,01; odds ratio (OR) 46,5. The unit/ward manager's participative leadership has a significant influence on nurse job satisfaction. Nurses who rated the unit/ward manager's leadership as good have a 46,5 times greater chance (or odds) of being satisfied with their jobs compared to nurses who rated the leadership as less participative (or poor). A work environment that provides nurses with the opportunity to be involved in decision-making, values their input, and offers emotional and motivational support, is proven to increase their feeling of being valued, thereby strengthening job satisfaction. Work engagement, estimate 2,6; p-value 0,04; odds ratio 13,5. Work engagement has a significant influence on job satisfaction. Nurses with a good level of work engagement have a 13,5 times higher chance (or odds) of being satisfied with their jobs compared to those with a low level of work engagement. When nurses feel energized (vigor), dedicated (dedication), and fully absorbed (absorption) in their work, they tend to have a positive perception of their jobs and feel more satisfied. Interpersonal communication, estimate 2,69; p-value 0,03; odds ratio (OR) 14,7. Interpersonal communication has a significant influence on nurse job satisfaction. Nurses who rated the interpersonal communication within the work unit as good have a 14,7 times greater chance (or odds) of being satisfied compared to nurses who rated the communication as poor (or less effective). Effective interpersonal communication including clarity of instructions, mutual respect, team collaboration, and open two-way communication is capable of creating a harmonious work environment, thereby increasing job satisfaction.

All predictor variables in the model (participative leadership, work engagement, and interpersonal communication) have a significant influence on nurse job satisfaction. This means that a consistent increase in these three factors significantly raises the odds (or likelihood) for nurses to feel satisfied working in the nursing unit.

b. **Discussion**

1) The relationship between participative leadership and job satisfaction

Participative leadership is a leadership style that involves subordinates in decision-making, listens to input, and provides staff with autonomy/room to contribute. This style enhances employees' sense of being valued and their psychological control, which is theoretically and empirically related positively to job satisfaction. When workers feel their voices are heard and there is involvement in decisions, they tend to be more satisfied with their job and the organization (10). This leadership style has also been reported to contribute to increased organizational performance, affective commitment, and employee innovation, as the autonomy provided facilitates a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation to achieve shared goals (11).

Fatoki's (2023) quantitative study found a positive correlation between participative leadership and job satisfaction. Therefore, the higher the perception of participation, the higher the employee's job satisfaction. This finding supports the argument that employees feel in control of their work processes and outcomes. A key element of participation is that it directly triggers feelings of appreciation and psychological empowerment, which are key predictors of job satisfaction and staff retention (12). This research demonstrates several mechanisms that explain how participative leadership increases job satisfaction, particularly psychological empowerment and work engagement. Participative leadership increases empowerment and engagement, and both of these variables, in turn, increase job satisfaction. In other words, the effect of participative leadership is often mediated by empowerment and engagement.

A study by Rahmawati et al. (2025) found weak or insignificant effects under certain conditions, such as very high workloads, a highly hierarchical organizational culture, or low quality of participation implementation. This means that results depend on the organizational context, job characteristics, and other moderating variables such as organizational support, culture, or compensation (13). The success of participative leadership in increasing job satisfaction is not universal and requires a thorough analysis of situational factors. To achieve a strong positive correlation, organizations must ensure that the implementation of participation is supported by a high level of trust and accompanied by a fair compensation and recognition system, as well as adequate workload management (14).

To improve job satisfaction, managers can implement participatory practices, involve staff in operational decisions, establish input forums, delegate clear authority, and provide ongoing feedback. This will increase empowerment and engagement, which mediate the positive effect on job satisfaction (15). Managers need to be careful to ensure that the participation offered is authentic and genuine, ensuring that any input is seriously considered and, if not implemented, the reasons for the rejection are communicated transparently, there by maintaining trust and avoiding employee cynicism.

2) The relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction

Work engagement is typically defined as a positive psychological state in which employees exhibit high energy (vigor), dedication, and full involvement in their work. This state is the opposite of burnout and has been consistently shown to be positively correlated with increased individual performance, innovation, organizational commitment, and better mental health (16). In the context of participative leadership, work engagement often acts as a mediator, where leaders who involve staff in decisions make them feel empowered and motivated, ultimately significantly improving their work engagement.

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel satisfied with their jobs, including the emotional and evaluative aspects of their work and the work environment. Job satisfaction is an affective attitude that arises from comparing what

employees receive, such as pay, treatment, and opportunities, with what they believe they should receive (17). High levels of job satisfaction are an important indicator of organizational health because they are empirically negatively correlated with turnover intentions and deviant behavior, and positively correlated with employee performance, work engagement, and psychological well-being (18).

Research by Widyastuti and Wahyuningsih (2024) shows that the higher a person's work engagement, the more likely they are to feel satisfied with their job. The results found an increasing trend in the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction across countries (19). Work engagement serves as a driving force that makes employees feel their work is meaningful and valuable, thus transforming positive attitudes into positive job evaluations. This reciprocal relationship creates a positive cycle, satisfied employees tend to maintain high levels of engagement, which in turn contributes to improved individual performance and talent retention within the organization (20).

Job engagement brings energy, commitment, and dedication, contributing to positive perceptions of work, thus increasing job satisfaction. The synergy between the two creates a positive feedback loop; highly engaged employees tend to view work challenges as opportunities, take pride in their roles, and become fully immersed in their tasks (21). These positive feelings then translate into a high overall evaluation of their work and work environment, known as job satisfaction (22). Therefore, work engagement can be considered a proactive driver that generates psychological resources, while job satisfaction is the result of a more stable affective attitude and the ultimate evaluation of the work experience.

3) The relationship between interpersonal communication and job satisfaction

Interpersonal communication is the process of communication between one individual and another within an organization, both verbally and non-verbally. It encompasses aspects such as openness, empathy, social support, mutual respect, and clarity of communication. Job satisfaction is the positive feeling an employee has toward their job as a whole, achieved by evaluating their work, working conditions, relationships with colleagues or superiors, development opportunities, and other aspects of the job. Good interpersonal communication can enhance a sense of acceptance, social support, mutual respect, and understanding within the organization, which, in turn, increases job satisfaction (23).

Recent research suggests that when interpersonal communication is conducted with a supportive style such as being open, empathetic, and communicative it not only increases job satisfaction but also supports work performance and loyalty (24). Good interpersonal communication facilitates social support, task clarity, trust, and a sense of being valued in the workplace. Encompassing these aspects is important for employees' psychological well-being and their positive perception of their jobs (23). When communication flows well both horizontally (among colleagues) and vertically (between superiors and subordinates), employees tend to feel that the work environment is

conducive (favorable), more comfortable, and they develop an emotional bond with the organization/their job. This, in turn, drives job satisfaction (25). Conversely, if communication is poor for example, lacking openness, involving conflict, experiencing miscommunication, or lacking support, it can lead to stress, uncertainty, and interpersonal conflict, thereby reducing job satisfaction (23).

There are several practical implications for organizations or human resource management, namely that paying attention to aspects of interpersonal communication such as communication training, building a culture of open communication, empathy, and mutual support can be a strategy to increase job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizations should facilitate communication not only top-down but also horizontal, and create an environment that supports interpersonal interaction.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the participative leadership of the head nurse, work engagement, and interpersonal communication have a significant relationship with nurses' job satisfaction:

1) The participative leadership of the head nurse is proven to contribute positively to nurses' job satisfaction. When the head nurse involves nurses in decision-making, provides opportunities for them to express their opinions, and fosters a democratic work atmosphere, nurses feel more valued and develop a sense of ownership towards the work unit. This, in turn, impacts the increase in job satisfaction.

2) Work engagement has a strong influence on job satisfaction. Nurses who are actively involved in the work process, feel important within the team, and have a commitment to their nursing tasks tend to demonstrate a higher level of satisfaction. A good level of engagement creates internal motivation and boosts morale.

3) Interpersonal communication also shows a significant relationship with job satisfaction. Open, empathetic, and mutually supportive communication among nurses, as well as between nurses and the head nurse, creates a harmonious work environment. Effective communication helps reduce conflict, improve coordination, and provides a sense of comfort in working, thereby increasing job satisfaction.

4) Simultaneously, the three variables, participative leadership, work engagement, and interpersonal communication, collectively have a meaningful influence on nurses' job satisfaction. This indicates that job satisfaction is not only affected by individual factors but also by how the leader behaves and how interpersonal relationships are built within the work environment.

5. Compliance with ethical standards
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Disclosure of conflict of interest

This research collaboration is a positive thing for all researchers so that conflicts, problems and others are absolutely no problem for all writers.

Statement of informed consent

Every action we take as authors is a mutual agreement or consent.

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