9-1-2025

Examining Nurses' Perspectives of Organizational Strategies Designed to Enhance Job Satisfaction

Kerine J. Moodie-Brown
Walden University

Walden University

College of Nursing

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Kerine Moodie-Brown

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Review Committee
Dr. Leslie Hussey, Committee Chairperson, Nursing Faculty
Dr. Susan Huehn, Committee Member, Nursing Faculty

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Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2025

Abstract

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MA, Walden University, 2018

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Abstract

Nurse job satisfaction remains a critical issue in healthcare, as it directly impacts patient care quality, nurse retention, and organizational performance. Despite numerous organizational efforts, there is limited qualitative insight into how nurses perceive strategies aimed at improving their satisfaction. The purpose of my study, guided by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, was to explore nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 RNs having at least 1 year of professional experience. Thematic analysis revealed five key themes: (a) compensation and staffing, (b) workplace safety, (c) team collaboration, (d) recognition, and (e) professional growth. Findings indicated that job satisfaction increases when nurses feel safe, supported, respected, and provided with opportunities to grow professionally. Notably, participants emphasized the significance of psychological safety and professional development, particularly in a post-pandemic context. Recommendations for future research involve examining long-term effects of career advancement strategies and organizational support mechanisms on nurse well-being and workforce stability. Findings contribute to the existing body of literature by reaffirming the importance of foundational needs while highlighting evolving expectations in modern healthcare which affect positive social change.

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Dedication

To my beloved daughters, Angelica and Ashley Brown, who inspire me every day with their boundless curiosity and joy, and to my husband, Mark Brown, whose unwavering support and encouragement made this journey possible. You are my strength, my motivation, and my greatest blessings. This work is dedicated to you, with all my love and gratitude.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family—my husband, Mark Brown, and my daughters, Angelica and Ashley Brown—for their boundless support, love, and encouragement throughout this journey. Their patience and understanding have been invaluable as I worked to complete this dissertation.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my academic advisors and mentors, whose guidance, expertise, and encouragement have been crucial in helping me reach this milestone. Special thanks to Drs. Bonnie Fuller and Leslie Hussey, for their insightful feedback and unwavering support. Your dedication to my growth as a researcher has made a lasting impact.

To my colleagues and friends who provided words of encouragement and inspiration along the way, thank you for your camaraderie and motivation. I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to my learning, whether directly or indirectly, as each interaction has enriched my experience.

Finally, I dedicate my sincerest thanks to the registered nurses who participated in my research for sharing their valuable insights and experiences, making this study possible.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Study

There is a global nursing shortage, which presents a challenge to healthcare organizations to delivery safe and quality care to patients, necessitating strategies to retain existing nurses and recruit new nurses. Haddad et al. (2023) explained that various factors contributing to this nursing shortage, including an aging nursing faculty, burnout, high turnover, inequitable distribution of nursing staff, workplace violence, an aging population, and the overall growth in healthcare. Additionally, causes of the nursing shortage are related to the aging population living longer with chronic diseases, therefore there is more demand for advanced practice nurses. Other factors contributing to the nursing shortage include decreased nursing student enrollment, aging nurse educators, and abuses nurses sustained on the job (Resnick et al., 2022).

Brenan and Jones (2024) reported that, for the 22nd consecutive year, nurses have been ranked as the most trusted and ethical profession in the United States, with 78% of Americans expressing high regard for the profession, according to Gallup Poll data. Despite this respect, the United States faces a critical nursing shortage. Haddad et al. (2023) reported on the shortage of nursing professionals, and the urgent call for effective recruitment and retention strategies emphasized by Uchmanowicz et al. (2020) highlighted the critical need for actionable solutions. Professional organizations, such as the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) have advocated for revitalizing the nursing workforce through initiatives that promote job satisfaction, ongoing education, and clinical inquiry (Cline et al., 2019).

The global shortage of nurses is affecting the quality and safety of patient care worldwide. According to the AACN (2024), nursing is the largest healthcare profession in the United States, with nearly 4.7 million registered nurses (RNs) nationwide, of which approximately 89% are actively employed in nursing roles. RNs account for 59% of the global healthcare workforce (Kim & Chang, 2022) and are uniquely positioned to maintain continuous engagement with patients. This statistic underscores the critical role of nurses in sustaining the healthcare workforce (AACN, 2024).

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ, 2021a) reported that nurses are essential decision-makers in patient treatment plans in clinical practice. AHRQ (2021a) stated that nurses are the primary historians, providing vital information on patient activities and incidents to the multidisciplinary team, which relies on and trusts these reports to create and adjust comprehensive treatment plans. This reliance emphasizes nurses' central role in coordinating and ensuring quality patient care (AHRQ, 2021b). Insights derived from this study promoted social change by informing strategies that foster nurturing work environments, thereby contributing to a more stable and sustainable nursing workforce.

Background

Job satisfaction is a pivotal factor in the professional and personal lives of nurses. Montuori et al. (2022) described it as a pleasurable or positive emotional state stemming from the appraisal of one's job experiences, significantly influencing overall life quality, including social relationships, family connections, and perceived health status. These factors underscore the importance of job satisfaction which influences job performance,

attendance, and turnover (Son & Ham, 2020). Over the years, increasing emphasis has been placed on job satisfaction due to its critical role in boosting productivity through staff retention. For instance, Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) emphasized job satisfaction is an integral connection to nurses' well-being and professional contentment, highlighting its relevance to patient safety and quality care.

Several studies explore the nuances of job satisfaction among nurses. Goktas et al. (2022) found that motivational texts improved nurses' job satisfaction, communication skills, and compassion fatigue. Similarly, Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) identified a moderate correlation between job satisfaction and quality of life in a cross-sectional study, reinforcing the link between well-being and organizational outcomes. Leamon et al. (2023) evaluated a clinical ladder program that enhanced professional development and retention, revealing that such programs positively impact nurses' commitment to their organizations. These findings suggest that professional development plays a vital role in job satisfaction strategies.

Nursing retention is the ability of a healthcare organization to maintain its nursing staff over time (Williamson et al., 2022). Despite implementing various strategies, retaining nurses remains a significant challenge closely linked to job satisfaction. Son and Ham (2020) demonstrated that job satisfaction is essential for reducing turnover rates, thereby improving care quality and patient safety. Likewise, Li et al. (2020) examined the complex interplay between organizational commitment, workplace violence, and turnover intentions, offering valuable data on how organizational strategies can influence job satisfaction and retention. Loft and Jensen (2020) added a qualitative perspective,

identifying coworker relationships and work-life balance as key factors in experienced nurses' decisions to remain in their roles.

In exploring how organizational strategies meet nurses' needs, frameworks like Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (MHNT) offer valuable insights. Logan and Everall (2019) utilized MHNT to analyze service prioritization in libraries, and my research will adapt this model to examine strategies addressing nurses' needs. Similarly, Moultrie (2023) focused on themes such as professional development, emotional support, and workload flexibility among perioperative nurses, emphasizing the importance of addressing these areas for job satisfaction and retention.

The challenges of job satisfaction are further examined by Mousazadeh et al. (2019), who identified dissatisfiers among ICU nurses, informing strategies to improve retention. Meanwhile, Pillay et al. (2022) highlighted nurse managers' perspectives on retention strategies, emphasizing workplace conditions as critical to nurse satisfaction. Polat and Terzi (2021) supported these findings by showing a strong positive correlation between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, underscoring the role of support in enhancing nurses' workplace experiences.

For new nurses, early career challenges significantly impact job satisfaction. Rose et al. (2023) explored rural nurses' perspectives on strategies to improve satisfaction and retention, offering insights into organizational support during critical career phases. Lastly, Son and Ham (2020), using ecological system theory, provided a comprehensive view of individual and organizational factors influencing job satisfaction among Korean nurses, enriching the broader context of this issue.

These studies collectively contributed to a deeper understanding of job satisfaction among nurses and the strategies healthcare organizations can implement to foster well-being, retention, and quality care.

Problem Statement

The urgent global nursing shortage has emerged as a critical issue, necessitating effective strategies for retaining existing nurses and attracting new talent. Cline et al. (2019) discussed the significant challenges healthcare leaders face in retaining and recruiting nurses, prompting the implementation of diverse strategies to enhance job satisfaction and retention. Nurses as decision-makers in treatment plans provide a comprehensive perspective within the multidisciplinary healthcare team, ensuring coordinated care delivery.

Research by Son and Ham (2020) demonstrated a positive correlation between nurse happiness, job satisfaction, and engagement, which ultimately contributes to retention. Loft and Jensen (2020) similarly emphasized the favorable impact of job satisfaction on work-life balance and the quality of patient care. Rose et al. (2023) argued for the necessity of healthcare organizations to invest in understanding nurses' perceptions of job satisfaction strategies, which can positively influence the broader healthcare community. The literature consistently affirms that job satisfaction is integral to reducing turnover, enhancing care quality, and ensuring patient safety. Son and Ham (2020) explored how nursing job satisfaction influences various factors, including quality of care, burnout, turnover, and resilience. Their findings indicate that job satisfaction is directly linked to reduced turnover rates, improved retention, and higher standards of

care. In contrast, Uchmanowicz et al. (2020) highlighted the detrimental effects of low job satisfaction, which can lead to burnout, unhappiness, and attrition.

Understanding nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies for job satisfaction is vital for developing targeted interventions that truly address their needs. Given the ongoing challenges in nursing, such as high turnover rates and workforce shortages, insights from this research can inform healthcare organizations to create supportive environments that foster job satisfaction and retention (Son & Ham, 2020). Ultimately, enhancing job satisfaction among nurses improves their well-being and patient outcomes, making this research significant for the nursing profession and the healthcare system.

A significant gap exists in the literature regarding nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies aimed at enhancing job satisfaction. Although several studies, including those by Goktas et al. (2022), Son and Ham (2020), Uchmanowicz et al. (2020), and Leamon (2023), have examined interventions and strategies related to nursing retention and job satisfaction, few have specifically addressed how nurses perceive these strategies. The study conducted by Rose et al. (2023) is an exception, as it delves into the experiences of RNs. Most existing research has predominantly focused on factors influencing nursing turnover, retention, and the efficacy of job satisfaction interventions.

Li et al. (2020) and Moultrie (2023) investigated nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies for job satisfaction. Li et al. examined turnover intentions among emergency nurses, highlighting the roles of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and workplace violence, whereas Moultrie explored the experiences of

perioperative nurse residents after completing a residency program, emphasizing their intentions to remain in the field of perioperative nursing.

Understanding the nurses' perception of organizational strategies is crucial for job satisfaction, leading to nursing retention. By actively fostering job satisfaction among nurses, leaders can significantly influence retention rates, contributing to the overall success and stability of the healthcare community and the region. There is inadequate information on the nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and well-being initiatives. Job satisfaction among nurses is critical to retention, professional performance, and the overall quality of patient care (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of my study, guided by MHNT, was to explore nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being. The significance of my research lies in its potential to contribute to broader social change by fostering positive work environments that enhance nurses' well-being and performance.

Research Question

What perceptions do nurses have of their healthcare organization's strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay

incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study was grounded in MHNT, a psychosocial framework developed by Abraham Maslow, which highlights the role of motivation in individual growth and development (Maslow, 1943). The MHNT is a behavioral framework that organizes human needs into a five-level pyramid. This hierarchy begins with basic physiological needs and progresses through physical safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and culminates in self-actualization, where individuals achieve their full potential (Maslow, 1943). The MHNT is directly aligned with the study's approach and research questions, because the MHNT emphasizes that individuals' motivation and well-being are driven by fulfilling basic to complex needs in a hierarchical order—from physiological needs to self-actualization. In the context of this study, MHNT helps to categorize and prioritize the various factors that may impact nurses' job satisfaction, such as salary, safety, a sense of belonging, professional respect, and growth opportunities. The logical connection between MHNT and this study was how I applied the MHNT to analyze nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies for job satisfaction. By using the MHNT framework, nurses can assess how various strategies meet their needs at different levels of Maslow's hierarchy, from basic physiological and safety needs up to self-actualization. The concepts of the MHNT imply that individuals must have their lower-level needs met before progressing to higher-level

needs, as unmet basic needs prevent individuals from achieving their full potential (Logan & Everall, 2019).

MHNT has been widely used in nursing research to investigate job satisfaction by identifying key motivators. When applied to nursing, this framework emphasizes building on individual strengths, focusing on personal growth and development rather than deficiencies. By empowering nurses to reach self-actualization—the pinnacle of MHNT—job satisfaction, well-being, retention, and recruitment will likely improve within healthcare environments. The MHNT framework guided the design of semi-structured interview questions used for data collection. Ravitch and Carl (2020) emphasized that semi-structured interview questions in qualitative research are essential for gathering individualized and contextualized data, offering depth and insight into participants' experiences.

I designed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A) that allowed me to conduct in-depth exploration of nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies to enhance job satisfaction. The interview questions (see Appendix B) were open-ended and semi-structured, a format well-suited for capturing nuanced perspectives. For example, questions like, "Tell me about the aspects of work that make you feel happy and engaged," or "What organizational strategies for job satisfaction help meet your basic needs, and why?" encouraged participants to reflect and elaborate on their responses. The data collected through these interviews contributed valuable insights into the current social issue, helping to address existing research gaps and suggesting new ideas for improving job satisfaction and retention among nurses.

The central theoretical propositions of this study, grounded in MHNT, suggested that nurses' job satisfaction is shaped by the extent to which healthcare organizations meet their hierarchical needs. First, strategies that address basic physiological needs—such as providing adequate pay, regular breaks, and safe staffing levels—are essential for fulfilling nurses' foundational requirements. At the second level of the pyramid, nurses' sense of safety and stability is supported by organizational measures that ensure job security, a safe work environment, and effective communication. At the third and fourth levels of the pyramid, fostering supportive team dynamics and recognition and respect from peers and leaders enhances nurses' sense of belonging and self-esteem. Finally, opportunities for career development, professional growth, and skill advancement empower nurses to reach self-actualization and achieve their full potential. More detail on the MHNT is presented in Chapter 2, where the theoretical foundation and relevant literature are thoroughly reviewed.

The MHNT framework establishes logical connections among nurses' job satisfaction, MHNT concepts, and healthcare organizations' strategies. According to the concept of the MHNT, individuals progress through a hierarchy of needs that influences their motivation and satisfaction (Maslow, 1943). Similarly, nurses experience job satisfaction based on how well healthcare organizations meet these hierarchical needs (Wan, 2024). Wan (2024) explained the connection begins at the foundational level, organizational strategies that address basic physiological needs, such as adequate salary and safe staffing, establish a baseline for job satisfaction. When these needs are met, nurses can focus on higher-level needs, such as safety, a sense of belonging within their

teams, and self-esteem bolstered by recognition and respect from peers and leaders (Wan, 2024). At the top of Maslow's hierarchy, self-actualization is achieved through professional growth and career development opportunities, allowing nurses to feel fulfilled and motivated in their roles.

The MHNT framework posits that if healthcare organizations align their strategies with the hierarchical needs of nurses, they will support higher levels of job satisfaction, positively influencing retention, morale, and patient care quality (Wan, 2024). In Chapter 2, I provide a more thorough analysis of these connections, examining how MHNT can serve as a guiding framework for assessing and improving organizational strategies to enhance job satisfaction among nurses.

Nature of the Study

To address the research questions in this qualitative study, I conducted a basic qualitative inquiry, a systematic inquiry into social phenomena in their natural environment (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Patton (2015) explained that the basic qualitative inquiry originates in constructionism and phenomenology, which help understand one's experience with the phenomena. With basic inquiry design, the research problem becomes the research question, as seen in my research problem and question (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

I used the MHNT which emphasizes understanding the subjective experiences of nurses and how organizational strategies impact their fulfillment of needs at various levels. The basic inquiry approach aligns with this paradigm by allowing for a flexible, open-ended exploration of nurses' views without imposing predetermined categories or

outcomes (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Understanding how nurses perceive their organizations' strategies will be essential for future strategic implementation of job satisfaction strategies.

Patton (2015) explained that the basic qualitative inquiry originates in constructionism and phenomenology, which helps to understand one's experience with the phenomena. With basic inquiry design, the research problem becomes the research question, as seen in my research problem and question (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The basic inquiry approach allowed the nurses to share their experiences with strategies their organizations have used to enhance their job satisfaction and explain how these strategies influenced their job satisfaction (Patton, 2015).

This paradigm is further grounded in interpretivism, which focuses on gathering in-depth insights into individuals' lived experiences within their specific social and organizational contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The interpretive approach supports the goal of this study to understand the nuanced, personal factors that influence nurses' job satisfaction, including physiological needs (such as salary and staffing), safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Patton, 2015). I collected using individual interviews with RNs with at least 1 year of experience in clinical settings. Individual interviews allowed for a detailed exploration of nurses' experiences and the strategies they perceive as beneficial to job satisfaction, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

My rationale for selecting a qualitative design was to capture nurses' complex, subjective experiences and perceptions regarding job satisfaction and organizational

strategies. A qualitative approach, grounded in the constructivist paradigm, allows the researcher to conduct in-depth exploration of how nurses interpret and evaluate healthcare organizations' strategies to address their needs (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). A qualitative design is particularly suited to the study focus on the individual and shared perceptions of nurses, as it facilitates open-ended inquiry into nuanced aspects of job satisfaction that quantitative methods may overlook (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Employing a basic qualitative inquiry tradition aligns with the aim of the study to understand and interpret these experiences within the framework of MHNT.

The basic inquiry approach allowed the nurses to share their experiences with strategies their organizations have used to enhance their job satisfaction and explain how these strategies influenced their job satisfaction. Characteristic group sampling facilitates purposive sampling, which provides the advantage of choosing participants with specific characteristics (Patton, 2015). Understanding how nurses perceive their organizations' strategies was essential for future strategic implementation of job satisfaction strategies.

The key concept investigated in this study was nurses' job satisfaction within the healthcare setting. Various organizational factors influence nursing job satisfaction, such as compensation, work environment safety, team dynamics, recognition, and professional growth opportunities. I used purposeful sampling to select participants who can provide detailed insights into their perceptions of organizational strategies to enhance job satisfaction. Ravitch and Carl (2020) stated that qualitative inquiry is distinguished by its personalized, contextualized, and foundational nature, ensuring a thorough exploration and generation of high-quality data.

The MHNT guided the formulation of interview questions. The interviews were meticulously recorded verbatim using a voice recorder, and the subsequent transcription was through Speechnotes, a professional transcription service. I analyzed the data thematically to identify recurring themes and patterns that reflect nurses' experiences and perceptions of job satisfaction.

Definitions

Belonging and love needs: The desire for social support, teamwork, and a sense of inclusion at work. For nurses, meeting these needs through cohesive team dynamics and a supportive culture enhances job satisfaction, morale, and cohesion within the workplace (Kim & Chang, 2022).

Compassion fatigue: The emotional and physical exhaustion nurses may experience due to patient care demands, particularly in high-stress or traumatic situations. This condition impacts job satisfaction and underscores the need for organizational support systems to address workplace stress (Uchmanowicz et al., 2020).

Esteem need: Recognition, respect, and acknowledgment of nurses' skills and contributions from peers, leaders, and the organization. Fulfillment of these needs boosts job satisfaction by making nurses feel valued and competent in their roles, contributing to retention and engagement (AACN, 2022; Cline et al., 2019).

Healthcare leadership: Guiding, influencing, and supporting healthcare staff to meet organizational goals. Effective leadership is pivotal in shaping a supportive work environment, directly influencing nurses' job satisfaction and retention (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024).

Interprofessional communication: Interactions between nurses and other healthcare team members. Effective communication fosters teamwork, meets safety needs, and supports a cohesive approach to patient care, contributing to nurses' job satisfaction and the overall safety of healthcare delivery (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022).

Job satisfaction: The extent to which nurses feel fulfilled, valued, and motivated in their workplace. Job satisfaction is influenced by various factors, including compensation, working conditions, support, recognition, and career advancement opportunities. Studies have shown that high levels of job satisfaction contribute to improved retention, enhanced patient care quality, and increased safety (Son & Ham, 2020; Haddad et al., 2023). This research explores how job satisfaction impacts nurses' professional stability and well-being.

Job security: Employment stability and the assurance of a safe, supportive work environment. For nurses, this includes confidence in their roles without concerns over frequent turnover, layoffs, or unsafe conditions, which are vital to retaining staff and enhancing job satisfaction (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024).

Leadership style: The way nursing leaders and administrators interact with and support nursing staff. Leadership approaches such as transformational or participative leadership can positively impact nurse morale, job satisfaction, and team cohesion (Uchmanowicz et al., 2020).

Organizational strategies: Healthcare institutions' policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at improving nurse job satisfaction which include compensation, staffing, professional development, workplace safety, and support systems, which vary

across different healthcare settings and significantly impact nurse retention (Pillay et al., 2022).

Patient safety: Healthcare organizations' measures to minimize patient harm. Ensuring patient safety is fundamental to job satisfaction for nurses, as it supports their sense of competence and job security in providing safe care (Rose et al., 2023).

Perceived organizational support: Nurses' evaluations of how much their organization values their contributions, cares for their well-being, and provides necessary resources for job satisfaction. High levels of perceived support are linked to enhanced engagement and retention among nurses (Cline et al., 2019).

Physiological needs: The most basic level of Maslow's hierarchy, refer to fundamental requirements for survival, including adequate salary, rest breaks, and a comfortable work environment. In nursing, fulfilling these needs is essential to ensure nurses can perform their duties effectively and maintain their well-being (Leamon, 2023).

Professional autonomy: The independence and authority to make clinical decisions within their scope of practice. Autonomy is closely tied to job satisfaction, as it meets both esteem and self-actualization needs within Maslow's framework (Leamon, 2023).

Professional growth and development: Opportunities for nurses to advance their skills, knowledge, and careers. Healthcare organizations provide these opportunities through training programs, leadership development, certifications, and clinical ladders, which contribute to long-term career satisfaction and self-actualization (Loft & Jensen, 2020).

Safety needs: Job security, a safe working environment, and reliable support systems that safeguard nurses' physical and professional stability. Addressing safety needs is crucial to fostering a supportive work environment and mitigating burnout, a significant issue within nursing (Uchmanowicz et al., 2020; Haddad et al., 2023).

Scope of practice: The procedures, actions, and processes that nurses are licensed and trained to perform. The scope of practice defines professional boundaries and is integral to job satisfaction as it determines the level of professional autonomy nurses can exercise in patient care (Kim & Chang, 2022).

Self-actualization: The drive to achieve one's full potential, which for nurses is often attained through opportunities for personal and professional growth, skill advancement, and career development. When healthcare organizations provide these pathways, nurses experience a sense of accomplishment and are more likely to remain committed to their roles (Moultrie, 2023).

Support systems: In healthcare include resources like mental health services, peer support groups, and mentorship programs designed to help nurses manage workplace stress. These systems are essential for promoting job satisfaction and reducing stress-related turnover (Cline et al., 2019).

Assumptions

Creswell and Creswell (2023) defined assumption in research as a foundational belief or premise that is accepted as true without direct evidence in the context of a study. These are essential for framing the research but are not tested or verified as part of the study. Assumptions often relate to the validity of data collection methods, the honesty of

participant responses, or the applicability of a theoretical framework to a specific context. Assumptions guide the research process and influence the interpretation of findings. The assumption of this study is critical to the study's meaningfulness. These assumptions are aspects believed to be true but are beyond verification. Each assumption is essential to the study's framework and approach:

The first assumption was that participants provided truthful and accurate responses during the interviews about their perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational strategies.

The second assumption was that nurses inherently seek job satisfaction, as it is a fundamental factor influencing their well-being, performance, and professional fulfillment.

Scope and Delimitations

I explored nurses' perceptions of healthcare organizations' strategies to improve job satisfaction, focusing on strategies aligned with MHNT using basic qualitative design. I chose a basic qualitative design to recognize the link between job satisfaction and retention rates in the nursing profession, which directly impacts patient care quality and organizational stability. By concentrating on MHNT's framework, the study aims to understand how healthcare organizations meet nurses' physiological, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs.

I recruited experienced RNs with a minimum of 1 year of experience was selected to ensure participants have sufficient familiarity with organizational practices and can provide informed perspectives on the effectiveness of these strategies. The exclusion

criteria were nurses with less than 1 year of clinical experience and nurses without an RN degree.

I considered alternative designs other than the basic inquiry approach to research nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies for job satisfaction. I considered phenomenology and heuristic Inquiry, where the focus is on understanding the lived experiences of individuals regarding a specific phenomenon (Kazlauskaite & Fife, 2021). Kazlauskaite and Fife (2021) used this approach to explore the experiences of adolescents' involvement with medical providers during a parent's terminal illness. Phenomenology and heuristic inquiry design would allow an in-depth exploration of nurses' lived experiences with organizational strategies to enhance job satisfaction and could uncover deeper emotional and psychological aspects of how nurses experience these strategies. I did not choose the phenomenology and heuristic Inquiry because it is highly detailed and time-consuming and may extend beyond the scope of my intended focus on perceptions.

I considered the case study design which enables the researcher to examine a particular case within a real-life context, which could involve studying a specific healthcare organization or department to explore how their strategies impact nurses' job satisfaction (Yin, 2022). I chose not to use the case study approach, because I thought it would shift my study focus, which is broad and aimed at understanding general perceptions across nurses rather than analyzing a specific case in-depth.

I considered using the grounded theory, the data collected from participants which could generate a new theoretical framework for understanding how organizational

strategies impact job satisfaction in nursing (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2020). I did not choose the grounded theory for my study because the MHNT aligned better with my research to explore nurses' perceptions rather than creating a new theory.

I considered using the narrative to explore the stories and narratives of individuals to understand their experiences (Mueller, 2019). I chose not to use the narrative inquiry because I thought it would shift my study focus from getting data on the nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies to individual storytelling, which would not align with my research purpose.

The mixed method approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Mixed methods design could incorporate surveys or other quantitative tools alongside qualitative interviews to triangulate findings on job satisfaction. I chose not to use the mixed method approach because my research specifically aims to capture nurses' perceptions qualitatively, making quantitative methods less aligned with my goals.

The boundaries of this study are defined by its focus on a specific population, theories, and frameworks relevant to the research topic. The target population were RNs with a minimum of 1 year of experience in healthcare settings, allowing for insights from professionals familiar with workplace conditions and organizational practices. I chose this population to ensure that participants have sufficient practical experience to assess the strategies implemented by healthcare organizations aimed at improving job satisfaction. New nurses or those with less than 1 year of experience are excluded to avoid the influence of limited exposure to organizational strategies on the findings.

My study was grounded in MHNT, which served as the primary conceptual framework to explore how healthcare organizations meet nurses' hierarchical needs, from physiological to self-actualization, as they relate to job satisfaction. I chose the MHNT because of its structured approach to human motivation and its relevance to understanding workplace satisfaction. Other psychological and organizational behavior theories—such as Herzberg's two-factor theory, self-determination theory, or social exchange theory—are acknowledged as relevant to job satisfaction but are not explored in depth because this study focuses on nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies.

Herzberg's two-factor theory is a widely used framework in studies on job satisfaction, focusing on motivators and hygiene factors (Ibrahim et al., 2023). However, I chose the MHNT was chosen over Herzberg's theory as MHNT provides a more comprehensive, needs-based view of satisfaction rather than isolating factors, making it suitable for understanding the hierarchy of needs relevant to healthcare professionals.

By establishing these boundaries, I maintained a clear focus on how MHNT can be applied to healthcare strategies, while recognizing that other theories and frameworks might also provide valuable insights but are beyond the scope of this particular research. This narrow focus allows for an in-depth understanding of the relationship between nurses' needs and job satisfaction within the context of MHNT.

Transferability of the Study

In qualitative research, transferability refers to the extent to which findings can apply to contexts or groups outside the study's original setting (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In this study, while the research findings focus on RNs' perceptions of organizational

strategies for job satisfaction within a particular healthcare setting, the principles derived from the data may still be valuable in similar environments. By detailing the specific strategies and needs of nurses as they relate to MHNT, the study may offer insights that are relevant for other healthcare organizations aiming to improve nurse satisfaction and retention.

To enhance transferability, I gathered rich, thick description of the setting, participant characteristics, and context, allowing readers to judge the applicability of the findings to their organizations. For instance, other healthcare facilities with similar staffing levels, patient demographics, or resonate with their nurses' needs.

It is essential to note that differences in organizational culture, leadership styles, and geographic location might limit the direct applicability of the findings. By documenting specific contextual factors and participant characteristics, this study gives future researchers and healthcare administrators a framework to assess whether the findings could apply to their settings (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). While the study may not provide universal solutions, the emphasis on MHNT as a guiding framework could be adaptable to other settings that seek to understand and address hierarchical needs among healthcare staff.

Limitations

Sample Size and Generalizability

The qualitative studies limited sample size may not represent the broader nursing population, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings (Ravitch & Carl,

2021). To overcome the limitation of generalization of the findings, I used multiple data sources and collect data until I reached data saturation (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Subjectivity in Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative research is inherently subjective, relying on participants' personal experiences and the researcher's interpretations. This subjectivity can introduce bias, as individual perspectives may not capture the full scope of the issue (Xiong et al., 2024). To overcome these limitations of subjectivity, I used multiple data sources to cross-verify findings, which enhanced validity. Additionally, I conducted member checks with the participants, which engaged participants in reviewing and confirming the accuracy of transcriptions and interpretations ensures the findings accurately reflect their experiences.

Data Interpretation Challenges

Analyzing qualitative data involves subjective interpretation, which can lead to varying conclusions based on the same data set. I maintained a reflexive journal, which fostered the examination of my biases and how they may have influenced the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Potential Response Bias

Participants might have provided socially desirable responses, especially when discussing their employers' strategies, which could skew the findings (Patton, 2015). To overcome participant bias, I used multiple data sources, recruited online through social media, and posted flyers at my healthcare institution to ensure validity and transability (see Patton, 2015).

Limited Scope of Organizational Strategies

My study may not have encompassed all possible strategies employed across different healthcare settings, potentially omitting relevant factors influencing job satisfaction. To overcome this limitation of scope, I included diversity of organizational practices when interpreting the results (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Significance

The findings of my study have the potential to provide valuable insights into the perspectives of experienced nurses regarding organizational strategies that impact job satisfaction. According to the data from the AHRQ (2021a), nurses are the largest group of healthcare professionals, and retaining them is essential to ensure safe, high-quality healthcare delivery. An adequate nurse-to-patient ratio is crucial for fostering positive patient health outcomes and maintaining safety and quality in care. With the global population aging and life expectancy increasing, the need for effective strategies to recruit and retain nurses has become more critical than ever (Haddad et al., 2023).

AHRQ (2021b) discussed that nurses are central to healthcare systems and are pivotal in delivering safe and effective patient care. My goal is to provide essential data that healthcare leaders can leverage to shape policies and foster work environments that support nurse job satisfaction. The insights gained through nurse interviews can directly inform the implementation of job satisfaction strategies within healthcare organizations, while offering healthcare leaders and administrators information to create opportunities for nursing professional development.

Forde-Johnston and Stoermer (2022) explained that the knowledge generated from exploring nurses' perceptions is vital for enhancing job satisfaction and contributes to broader social change. By understanding the factors that nurses find meaningful and satisfying in their roles, healthcare organizations can devise informed strategies that promote positive work environments, ultimately benefiting both the nurses and the healthcare system (Forde-Johnston & Stoermer, 2022).

The findings of my study may advance knowledge in healthcare administration and nursing by examining nurses' views on organizational strategies aimed at improving job satisfaction. Using MHNT as an analytical framework, and my findings provided a structured understanding of how different strategies address nurses' physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs at each level. The nurses' perspective addresses a critical gap in the literature by focusing on the voices and experiences of nurses rather than relying solely on organizational metrics or outcomes.

My findings may help healthcare leaders develop targeted strategies for enhancing nurse retention and satisfaction, which may result in improved staff morale, reduced turnover, and better patient care. Additionally, by underscoring the hierarchical significance of different needs, my findings may guide healthcare organizations in resource prioritization, ensuring that basic needs are met before addressing higher-level motivational needs.

Furthermore, the study's focus on qualitative insights offers a nuanced view of nurses' satisfaction that complements traditional quantitative measures, providing a comprehensive approach to understanding job satisfaction in nursing. My findings lay the

groundwork for future research, particularly in exploring how various healthcare settings may differ in meeting nurses' needs. Ultimately, the study can inform policy development, organizational transformation, and nursing education, advocating for a more holistic and human-centered approach to healthcare management, which affects positive social change.

Summary

In summary, I addressed a gap in the literature regarding nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, framed within the MHNT. The problem was underscored by the ongoing global nursing shortage and the ineffectiveness of existing job satisfaction strategies. The findings of my study provided healthcare leaders with evidence-based insights directly from nurses to inform policies that improve job satisfaction, retention, and overall care quality. Understanding the factors that nurses value in their roles, healthcare organizations can create strategies that address the needs of nurses, promoting both professional satisfaction and systemic improvements.

In Chapter 2, I present a comprehensive review of existing literature, examining previous studies and theoretical frameworks related to job satisfaction in nursing. This exploration will provide a contextual backdrop for our research, identifying gaps and informing the development of our study's methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There is a critical global nursing shortage that needs effective strategies to recruit and retain nurses (Haddad et al., 2023). With over 4.2 million members, nurses are a significant force in the United States healthcare system, forming 59% of the global medical health workforce (AACN, 2022). Haddad et al. (2023) identified various contributing factors to the nursing shortage, such as an aging faculty, burnout, high turnover, inequitable distribution, workplace violence, an aging population, and healthcare growth. Cline et al. (2019) emphasized that healthcare leaders grapple with retaining nurses, leading to the development of diverse strategies to enhance job satisfaction that can promote nurse retention. Nurses play a crucial role in patient care, and the need for interventions that promote job satisfaction has been the focal point intended to increase retention (Son & Ham, 2020). However, a noticeable gap persists in the literature concerning nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies for job satisfaction that could lead to nurse retention.

The purpose of my study, guided by MHNT, was to explore nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being. Job satisfaction strategies encompass various interventions, including pay incentives, career development, residency programs, and well-being initiatives (Son & Ham, 2020). Rose et al. (2023) emphasized the necessity for healthcare organizations to invest in identifying

nurses' perceptions of job satisfaction strategies that could increase nurse retention and positively influence the broader healthcare community.

In Chapter 2, I present the literature search strategy, a detailed description of the theoretical framework that guides my study, and I include an exhaustive review of the literature.

Literature Search Strategies

I conducted a comprehensive search for peer-reviewed articles on nursing job satisfaction and perceptions. I searched the literature review databases using the Walden University library, including CINAHL, MEDLINE, Science Direct, APA PsycInfo, and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. I also used Google Scholar as a search engine to identify scholarly peer-reviewed articles for this research. The Walden University librarians also assisted by helping to identify literature for this review. Key terms used in this search included "*nursing job satisfaction," "nurse professional development," "nurse retention," "nurses' perception of job satisfaction strategies," "nursing workforce recruitment," "retention," "work satisfaction," "theoretical philosophies," and "Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory in nursing research*."

In conducting the literature review within the Walden University online library, I employed a strategic approach utilizing the databases CINAHL Plus with Full Text, Cochrane Database Reviews, and APA PsycInfo. The initial search strategy involved a Boolean search combining terms such as "*nurse perception*" in the title field, coupled with "*job satisfaction strategies*," and further refined by adding "*nurse retention and turnover*" OR "*Maslow Hierarchy of needs in nursing research*." This method identified

two relevant articles on nurses' perceptions of job satisfaction. The literature search was expanded using the Boolean strategy to include variations like "*nurse or nursing*" AND "*burnout or job satisfaction*" AND "s*trategies or administration or leadership*," which resulted in an extensive retrieval of 5,780 articles. A subsequent modification of the search terms to "*nurse or nursing*" AND "*burnout or job satisfaction"* AND "*perceptions or attitudes* OR *opinions or beliefs*" slightly increased the findings to 3,871 articles.

Moving to the Science Direct database, the search term "*nurses' perceptions of job satisfaction strategies*" was applied for the publication period from 2020 to 2023, yielding 2,889 articles. In the Google Scholar literature review, the search term "*nurses' perceptions of job satisfaction strategies*" was sorted by date with a timeframe of 2020 to 2024, including articles with citations. I refined my literature search strategy to incorporate terms such as "*nurse or nursing perceptions or attitudes or opinions or beliefs*" in conjunction with "*nurses perception or nurses experience or nurses attitudes*" AND "*strategies for job satisfaction*." This adjusted search approach resulted in the identification of 220 articles. Upon thoroughly reviewing these articles, I selected 45 of them have been selected for inclusion in my study.

Theoretical Foundation

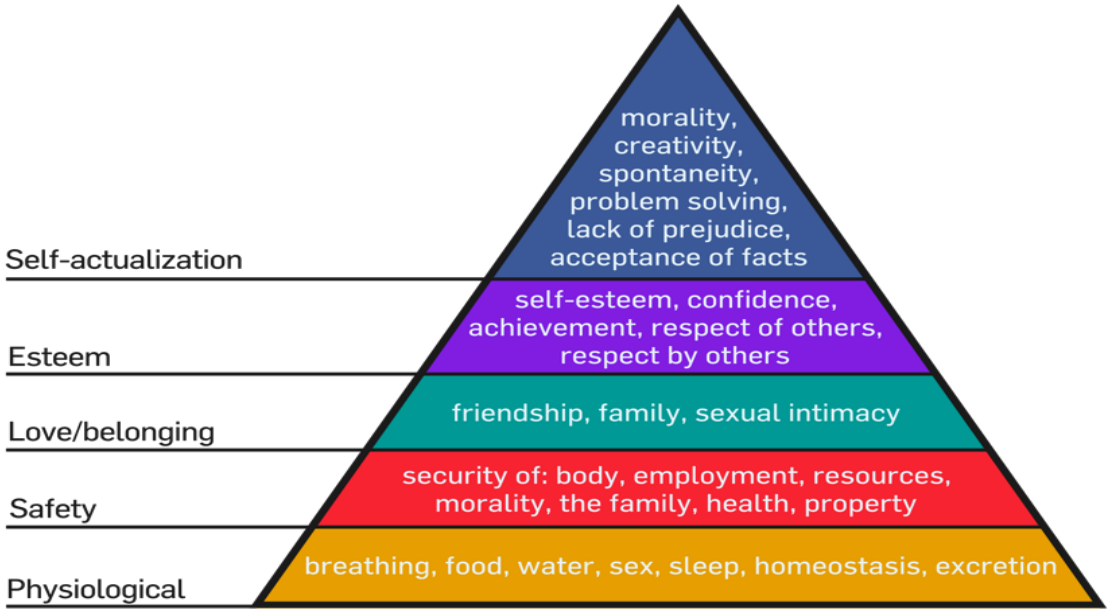
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The theoretical framework of my study is the MHNT, a psychosocial model conceptualized by Maslow that highlights motivation as a key driver in individual growth and development (Logan & Everall, 2019). Maslow (1943) introduced the MHNT a behavioral theory with a pyramid of five levels (see Figure 1) that focuses on the

priorities of human needs, starting with the physiologic or basic needs, then progressing to physical safety, love and belonging, esteem, and the top need is self-actualization where an individual reaches their full potential (Maslow, 1943). This MHNT pyramid suggests that people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced needs. Maslow's model posits that fulfilling basic physiological needs is a prerequisite for achieving self-actualization.

Figure 1

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



(Logan & Everall, 2019)

Maslow (1943) explained that the MHNT pyramid begins with fundamental physiological needs like food, water, breathing, and shelter at its base, which are the basic needs of all individuals. The second level is called security and safety needs, which include financial security, health, and well-being. The third level, which is the social needs related to love, acceptance, and belonging, highlights the importance of family,

friendships, and community. The fourth level is the self-esteem needs driven by respect, appreciation, and recognition. At the pyramid's apex lies self-actualization, where individuals realize their full potential and focus on personal growth (Maslow, 1943).

Logan and Everall (2019) applied the MHNT in the context of service prioritization by categorizing library services and resources by their importance to users based on the service. Service prioritizations suggested that lower-level needs must be met before higher-level needs can be addressed. This approach is particularly relevant to nursing, where fulfilling basic needs like food, water, and safety is crucial for nurses' well-being and effectiveness (Logan & Everall, 2019). Pillay et al. (2022) utilized the MHNT to delve into healthcare strategies recognized by nurses to promote job satisfaction, including enhancing benefits and rewards, increasing staff development, establishing nursing support systems, ensuring adequate resources for optimal functioning, incorporating emerging technology applications, and reinforcing leadership roles. For example, Moultrie's (2023) research employed MHNT to evaluate nursing residency programs, assessing whether such programs meet the nurses' needs for safety and security. Leamon (2023) study further investigated whether professional development strategies can help nurses achieve self-actualization, the highest level in Maslow's pyramid. Wan (2024) utilized the MHNT to investigate if the concept needs of the theory (physiological, safety, social, respect, self-actualization) influenced employee satisfaction in the tourism industry.

I explored the perspective of nurses on how healthcare organizations' strategies for enhancing job satisfaction align with MHNT's framework concept. Through this

study, I examined the positioning and effectiveness of organizational strategies for job satisfaction within the MHNT framework, offering insights into how they meet nurses' varied needs. In MHNT, the belief is based on a pyramid, and the lower needs should be met before the higher needs (Maslow, 1943). Therefore, the individual will not attain their full potential if their basic needs are unmet (Logan & Everall, 2019). Multiple researchers, Leamon (2023), Moultrie (2023), Goktas et al. (2022), and Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) used the MHNT as a framework used in nursing to investigate job satisfaction by identifying motivators.

The MHNT can be applied to nursing to foster individual strengths rather than weaknesses and focus on personal growth and development. Concentrating on individual strength and success can empower nurses to achieve self-actualization at the top of the MHNT pyramid. According to Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022), self-actualization can facilitate nursing satisfaction, happiness, job retention, and recruitment of new nurses in the work environment. The application of MHNT in nursing research is evident in studies by Goktas et al. (2022) and Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022). Goktas et al. (2022) assessed the impact of motivational messages on job satisfaction, compassion fatigue, and communication skills among emergency room nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing MHNT to evaluate how these messages influenced nurses' needs. Similarly, Kiliç Barmanpek et al. explored the correlation between nurses' job satisfaction levels and quality of life, guided by MHNT's principles of needs and self-actualization. Drawing from the experiences and findings of Goktas et al. and Kiliç Barmanpek et al.,

my purpose is to build upon their contributions, exploring nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies for job satisfaction.

Key Concepts of MHNT

Maslow's (1943) key concepts of the MHNT are physiological, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. According to Maslow, these needs are drivers that influence our thoughts, responses, and associations. Figure 2 shows the concepts of MHNT and themes that have emerged from research data during the literature review.

Figure 2

How the MHNT Will Direct Data Collection the Investigation of the Nurses' Perception

Physiological Needs

Hayre-Kwan et al. (2021) identified physiological needs—such as food, water, shelter, sleep, and a comfortable working environment—as basic human necessities. Hayre-Kwan et al. used MHNT to examine how these needs were met for nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing insights into nurses' trust that their organizations would support them during this crisis. Similarly, Giuffrida and Davila (2024) used MHNT to address the nursing shortage caused by the pandemic, focusing on improving job satisfaction and nurses' well-being. Their research emphasized that meeting nurses' basic needs—which includes adequate breaks, proper staffing models, and competitive salaries to cover essential living expenses—directly impacts job satisfaction. By utilizing MHNT as a guiding framework, Giuffrida and Davila (2024) offered healthcare leaders a structured approach to addressing nurses' needs at every level of the hierarchy during the challenging conditions of the pandemic.

Safety Needs

Safety needs encompass nurses feeling secure in their jobs, allowing them to provide for themselves and their families. This sense of security extends to delivering safe, high-quality care to patients and feeling protected in the work environment. Moultrie (2023) explored this in a study on perioperative nurses, examining their perceptions of safety after completing a residency program. Xiong et al. (2024) applied the MHNT framework to investigate factors influencing nurses' job security and workplace safety, finding that when physiological needs are met, nurses are healthier and better equipped to provide high-quality care. Wan (2024) further demonstrated that

meeting basic needs significantly enhances job satisfaction. Xiong et al. (2024) also emphasized the critical role of open communication, particularly between nurses and physicians. In high-pressure environments like night shifts, clear communication is linked to greater job security and a safer workplace, both of which positively impact patient care. Additionally, Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) found a strong correlation between job satisfaction and patient safety, highlighting the connection between job security and quality nursing care.

Belonging and Love Needs

Boston-Leary et al. (2024) explored the significance of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) through the MHNT framework. They examined how fostering inclusive excellence in the nursing environment helps meet nurses' love and belonging needs, ultimately improving workplace dynamics. Similarly, Xiong et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of communicative relationships between nurses and healthcare leaders in addressing belonging needs, noting that strong interpersonal bonds contribute to overall job satisfaction. Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) further linked feelings of acceptance among peers to nurses' well-being and job satisfaction, underscoring the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace.

Esteem Needs

Hayre-Kwan et al. (2021) defined the self-esteem need as an internal reflection of who you are, being confident in your abilities and experiences. Barmanpek et al. (2022) identified the need for self-esteem, which involves nurses feeling accepted, recognized, respected, and valued by their peers, leaders, and physicians in the work environment.

According to Giuffrida and Davila (2024), nurses' sense of self-fulfillment is vital for their self-esteem, which in turn promotes self-actualization. Giuffrida and Davila identified career development opportunities, such as tuition reimbursement, clinical ladders, and leadership training, as key strategies for enhancing self-esteem among nurses. Similarly, Boston-Leary et al. (2024) found that when nurses feel accepted and supported by their peers, their sense of belonging is strengthened, which contributes to higher self-esteem.

Self-Actualization Needs

The concept of self-actualization was examined by Boston-Leary et al. (2024), who found that an inclusive work environment is essential for nurses to achieve their full potential. Boston-Leary et al. emphasized self-actualization, the highest-level need on the pyramid, which promotes individuals to seek their potential, which allows the realization of self-fulfillment and personal and professional growth in their job roles. Giuffrida and Davila (2024) research showed that nurses reach self-actualization through continued professional development, tuition reimbursement, professional clinical ladders, and opportunities for leadership training. Wan (2024) explored how each level of the MHNT influences job satisfaction, demonstrating that fulfilling needs across the hierarchy has a significant positive impact on overall employee satisfaction. Although Wan's study focused on hotel employees, its findings are relevant across industries, including healthcare. Leamon's (2023) research aligns with the findings of Wan, demonstrating that nurses with significant professional growth and development feel self-fulfillment, leading to self-actualization. The MHNT provided the framework for the researchers to identify

the importance of self-actualization in the workplace for employee fulfillment and success.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

In the literature review, I explore key concepts from Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (MHNT), emphasizing recurring themes from previous studies. A prominent focus is on the physiological needs of nurses, particularly salary incentives, which are repeatedly highlighted as a critical factor for job satisfaction. Research by Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022), Giuffrida and Davila (2024), Son and Ham (2020), Pillay et al. (2022), and Rose et al. (2023) underscored that adequate compensation is essential for meeting basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing, forming the foundation for overall job satisfaction. In particular, Giuffrida and Davila (2024) Son and Ham (2020) emphasized that fair compensation plays a crucial role in preventing burnout and enhancing job satisfaction, suggesting that competitive salaries help fulfill nurses' core physiological needs, thereby improving their well-being at work.

Giuffrida and Davila (2024) further extended this argument by exploring how meeting nurses' basic physiological needs creates a pathway for addressing higher needs in Maslow's pyramid, such as safety, love/belonging, and self-esteem. Their study suggests that adequate salary compensation is a prerequisite for meeting all needs; without this foundation, motivation and job satisfaction are hindered. Similarly, Loft and Jensen (2020), in their investigation of job satisfaction and retention, found that meeting nurses' basic needs—such as providing rest breaks, managing workloads, and ensuring appropriate staffing levels—is critical in promoting job satisfaction and reducing

turnover. This research aligns with MHNT's concept that fulfilling physiological needs is essential for creating a secure and motivating work environment.

Pillay et al. (2022) explored nurse managers' perspectives on retention strategies and turnover. Their findings supported the importance of addressing nurses' physiological needs, primarily through salary incentives and an improved work environment. They also noted the detrimental impact of excessive workloads, linking this to increased rates of burnout and staff attrition. Pillay et al.'s study emphasized the interconnectedness of various MHNT levels, suggesting that failing to address basic needs can have a ripple effect on higher-level needs such as safety and belonging.

Moving beyond physiological needs, Giuffrida and Davila (2024) also explored the need for safety, which they linked to the provision of safe and high-quality patient care. Their study highlighted how healthcare organizations can foster a sense of safety by maintaining continuous learning processes, analyzing patient safety event data, and sharing evidence-based best practices with nurses. By ensuring a secure working environment, organizations not only meet nurses' safety needs but also enhance the quality of care provided, reinforcing the mutual benefit of fulfilling these needs.

The concept of safety within the MHNT framework extends beyond physical safety to job security and emotional well-being. Research has shown that when nurses feel secure in their roles and confident in their ability to provide safe care, they are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Rose et al. (2023) also emphasized that organizational support in professional development, mental health resources, and clear safety protocols enhances job satisfaction and retention.

To address love and belonging needs, the research suggested fostering a sense of community and connection within healthcare teams is another key factor in improving job satisfaction. Studies by Loft and Jensen (2020) and Pillay et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of creating a supportive work culture, where nurses feel valued and included. The sense of belonging can mitigate feelings of isolation, especially in high-stress environments, and can enhance teamwork, ultimately improving the quality of patient care. Furthermore, a supportive work culture can encourage loyalty and reduce turnover, as nurses are more likely to stay in environments where they feel they belong.

Recognition and professional development opportunities are critical in addressing nurses' esteem needs. When nurses feel valued and respected by their peers and organizations, it increases motivation and engagement (Son & Ham, 2020), which aligns with Maslow's assertion that recognition and respect from others are key to building self-esteem. Additionally, Giuffrida and Davila (2024) discussed how career advancement opportunities and the chance to take on leadership roles can fulfill nurses' self-esteem needs, enhancing job satisfaction.

Finally, self-actualization—the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy—is less frequently addressed in the literature but remains a significant factor in nurse retention. Self-actualization involves realizing one's potential and achieving personal growth, which can be fostered through continuous education, mentorship, and opportunities for innovation in patient care. Rose et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for nurses to engage in professional development, allowing them to explore areas of interest and achieve personal fulfillment. When nurses feel they are growing and

advancing in their careers, they are more likely to remain motivated and satisfied in their roles.

Ways Researchers Have Addressed the Problem of Nursing Shortage

The global nursing shortage remains a critical concern for healthcare administrators and nursing leaders (Haddad et al., 2023). Due to this persistent staffing deficit, researchers have been actively engaged in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies to identify contributing factors and explore potential solutions. These research efforts have aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the causes of the nursing shortage and propose strategies to mitigate its impact on healthcare systems.

Quantitative Studies

Quantitative surveys have highlighted key factors influencing nurses' job satisfaction and the perceived effectiveness of organizational support. Studies using standardized instruments, such as the Perceived Organizational Support Scale (POSS) by Giray and Sahin, and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), showed consistent links between positive work environments and higher job satisfaction among nurses. Polat and Terzi (2021) found a strong correlation between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction among nurses in an academic hospital setting. Similarly, Forde-Johnston and Stoermer's (2022) findings through the Listen to Staff (L2S) initiative underscored the importance of addressing workplace issues to retain nursing staff.

Alan et al. (2022) demonstrated that high levels of psychological capital, as measured by the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24), correlate with greater

job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions. These studies suggested that organizational strategies to enhance support, address workplace issues, and foster psychological resilience can positively impact nurses' job satisfaction and retention. Although quantitative surveys enable the collection of generalizable and measurable data across large samples, they may not fully capture the depth of nurses' experiences or clarify why specific organizational strategies are effective. Consequently, additional research in varied healthcare settings, including private and smaller organizations, may help to contextualize and expand these findings.

Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups

Qualitative studies provide rich insights into the factors influencing nurses' job satisfaction and work environment perceptions. Carl and Ravitch (2021) highlighted that focus groups enable a collaborative exchange of ideas, fostering more profound understanding and mutual learning. However, some participants may feel less comfortable sharing in group settings (Carl and Ravitch, 2021). Studies by Rose et al. (2023), Seller-Boersma et al. (2023), and Moultrie (2023) each emphasized different factors contributing to job satisfaction and patient care quality. Rose et al. underscored the positive impact of organizational support and resources on job satisfaction, showing that nurses with adequate resources and staffing report higher satisfaction and provide better patient care. In contrast, Seller-Boersma et al. highlighted the influence of leadership styles, finding that supportive, participative leaders improve nurse morale, cohesion, and overall job satisfaction, which translates to better patient outcomes. Moultrie focused on the role of structured residency programs, especially in perioperative

settings, showing that these programs boost nurses' confidence and competence, leading to safer and more effective care.

Xiong et al. (2024) explored nurses' perceptions of job security in clinical settings, noting that maximum diversity sampling strengthened representativeness. Xiong et al. found that job security significantly enhances nurses' commitment to patient care, although some nuances may have been missed due to the semi-structured interview format. Together, the studies by Xiong et al., Rose et al. (2023), Seller-Boersma et al. (2023), and Moultrie (2023) suggested that a combination of robust organizational support, effective leadership, and structured training programs can significantly enhance nurses' job satisfaction and improve the quality of patient care.

Mixed-Methods Approaches

Charette et al. (2023) evaluated the effectiveness of two graduate nurse programs by measuring competency growth at three-month intervals and assessing job satisfaction after a year. The results showed substantial improvements in participants' competence within the first three months, with continued gains over the 12 months, supporting the value of a year-long transitional program for new nurses. By combining quantitative competency data with qualitative insights on job satisfaction, Charette et al. (2023) provided a robust analysis, using triangulation to reinforce the validity of their conclusions and underscore the importance of structured support programs in fostering both skill development and job satisfaction in nursing practice.

Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal studies have proven to be helpful in examining how nurses' job satisfaction evolves and assessing the sustained impact of organizational strategies. Jarden et al. (2023) conducted a mixed-methods longitudinal study to explore well-being among nurses and nursing students, examining factors such as frequency, indicators, barriers, and facilitators of well-being. Their findings indicated that individuals with higher levels of self-determination reported greater well-being, highlighting the importance of fostering autonomy within healthcare settings. One of the strengths of the study by Jarden et al. (2023) was its ability to capture the long-term effects of mental health and well-being on job satisfaction, providing a temporal dimension to understanding these issues. However, the study also faced challenges, such as being resource-intensive and requiring consistent participant follow-ups, which resulted in lower response rates and participant attrition over time.

Cross-Sectional Studies

Leamon et al. (2023) and Ahn and Choi (2023) conducted descriptive cross-sectional studies to evaluate clinical ladder programs, identifying their positive impact on professional development and job satisfaction. Leamon et al. highlighted that such programs foster nurses' fulfillment and self-actualization, aiding in retention efforts. Similarly, Ahn and Choi found that clinical ladder programs improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions, though their study was limited to a single hospital, affecting transferability. Li et al. (2020) used a cross-sectional approach with a hypothetical model to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational

commitment, and nursing turnover. Their study reinforced those cross-sectional designs, while resource-efficient and practical, are valuable for identifying immediate correlations between job satisfaction and organizational practices.

Meta-Analyses and Systematic Reviews

Williamson et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis and systematic review that synthesized findings from numerous studies on nurses' job satisfaction and organizational strategies, focusing on effective approaches for recruitment and retention. Williamson et al.'s study provided a comprehensive overview of current literature, revealing general trends and effective strategies while identifying common themes and best practices across various settings. Williamson et al.'s synthesis highlighted gaps in the existing research, helping to guide future studies and offering valuable insights for healthcare organizations. Building on the foundation of the study by Williamson et al., my study aims to address these limitations by providing a focused analysis of nurses' perceptions, contributing to the literature with more context-specific insights.

Rationalization for the Concepts Selections

The rationale for selecting these concepts—physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization—stems from proven relevance of the MHNT concepts utilization in understanding human motivation in the workplace. By using MHNT as a guiding framework, this research aligns with a well-established theoretical model while addressing key issues in contemporary healthcare environments. Each concept selected for this study is grounded in evidence from recent literature, making it critical to explore how healthcare organizations' job satisfaction strategies

impact nurses' professional experiences. This approach ensures that the study is both theoretically sound and practically relevant to addressing real-world challenges in nursing. These concepts provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how job satisfaction strategies impact various dimensions of a nurse's professional life, rooted in both Maslow's theory and contemporary studies.

Physiological Needs

According to Maslow (1943), physiological needs, such as adequate income and sufficient rest, are foundational to an individual's well-being. In the healthcare sector, these needs translate to salary and appropriate staffing levels, which are critical factors in job satisfaction.

Compensation and Salary

Adequate financial compensation is a primary physiological need that significantly influences job satisfaction among nurses. Competitive salaries are crucial for attracting and retaining nursing staff. Fair compensation is also necessary to meet basic living expenses and acknowledge the demanding nature of nursing work (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022). Kiliç Barmanpek et al.'s (2022) research showed that nurses feel they are compensated fairly for their efforts, their job satisfaction increases, leading to improved patient care and lower turnover rates. Similarly, Pillay et al. (2022**)** found that nurses who perceived their salaries as equitable relative to their workload and responsibility level reported higher job satisfaction. Inadequate compensation can lead to feelings of undervaluation, which can decrease motivation and commitment to the organization.

Adequate Staffing Levels

Staffing levels directly impact nurses' ability to meet their physiological needs. Insufficient staffing can lead to increased workloads, affecting physical and mental well-being. Son and Ham (2020) emphasized the importance of appropriate nurse-to-patient ratios in enhancing job satisfaction. When staffing levels are inadequate, nurses may experience increased stress and fatigue, leading to burnout. Burnout affects their physiological needs due to the job's physical demands and hinders their ability to provide quality patient care. Similarly, Rose et al. (2023) found that organizations prioritizing adequate staffing tend to have happier and more productive nursing staff. Organizations can help nurses maintain a better work-life balance, reduce stress, and enhance job satisfaction by ensuring excessive patient loads do not overburden them.

Workload Management

A manageable workload is essential for nurses to fulfill their physiological needs effectively. Pillay et al. (2022) discussed how an overwhelming workload can lead to physical exhaustion and emotional distress. Williamson et al. (2022) stated that when nurses are given an unmanageable number of tasks without adequate support, their job satisfaction diminishes. It becomes increasingly difficult for them to perform their duties effectively, leading to feelings of inadequacy and burnout. Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of workload management strategies that allow nurses to maintain a reasonable work-life balance. Organizations implementing policies to monitor and adjust workloads can create an environment supporting nurses' physiological needs, ultimately leading to higher job satisfaction.

Physical Work Environment

Nurses' physical conditions are also critical to meeting their physiological needs. A safe and well-maintained physical environment contributes significantly to job satisfaction (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). Identified factors such as ergonomic furniture, access to necessary medical equipment, and a clean and organized workspace can enhance nurses' ability to perform their duties comfortably and safely Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). Rose et al. (2023) found that when nurses work in environments designed with their needs in mind, they report higher levels of job satisfaction and well-being. Adequate break rooms, access to healthy food options, and spaces for relaxation during shifts all contribute to meeting the physiological needs of the nurses (Rose et al., 2023).

Health and Wellness Programs

Health and wellness programs within healthcare organizations are vital in addressing nurses' physiological needs. Wellness initiatives include physical fitness programs, stress management workshops, and mental health resources. Wellness programs support nurses' physical health and promote well-being, contributing to job satisfaction (Son & Ham 2020). Organizations that invest in the health and wellness of their nursing staff demonstrate a commitment to meeting their physiological needs. Nurses who participate in wellness programs report improved morale, reduced stress levels, and increased job satisfaction (Pillay et al., 2022).

Safety

Safety and security are foundational aspects of MHNT and crucial for ensuring nurses' job satisfaction. In the healthcare environment, these needs encompass both

physical safety (i.e., protection from harm in the workplace) and emotional or psychological safety (i.e., job security, mental well-being, and support from leadership). Son and Ham (2020) found that nurses' perceptions of workplace safety—both in terms of personal safety from hazards and job security—are strongly tied to their overall job satisfaction. Nurses who feel secure in their positions and supported by leadership in addressing safety concerns are more likely to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their organization.

Son and Ham (2020) emphasized the impact of physical safety measures on job satisfaction in healthcare. Polat and Terzi (2021) found that nurses who feel that their workplace is adequately equipped to protect them from physical dangers—such as needle-stick injuries, exposure to infectious diseases, or violence from patients—report higher levels of job satisfaction. Xiong et al. (20240 suggested that organizations must prioritize safety protocols, provide proper personal protective equipment (PPE), and offer regular training to reduce the risks nurses face daily. Rose et al. (2023) also noted that improving workplace safety through ergonomic adjustments, proper staffing ratios to minimize physical strain, and clear safety protocols directly reduces nurse burnout. Rose et al. further stated that burnout is a critical issue in nursing, and physical safety measures can help reduce fatigue and the likelihood of workplace injuries, making nurses feel more secure in their roles.

Psychological and Emotional Safety

Seller-Boersma et al. (2023) explained that physical and emotional or psychological safety is paramount for nurses to feel secure in their work environment. A

safe work environment includes job stability, mental health support, and a sense of being heard and valued within the organization (Seller-Boersma et al., 2023). Seller-Boersma et al.'s (2023) research revealed that nurses who feel supported by leadership, encouraged to speak up about concerns, and confident that their feedback will lead to change experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Rose et al.'s (2023) study identified that when nurses perceive they can voice concerns without fear of retaliation or judgment, they are more likely to stay engaged and committed to their roles. Psychological safety within teams promotes trust and reduces workplace stress, contributing to overall well-being.

Job Security and Career Stability

Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) found that perceived job security profoundly impacts job satisfaction. In healthcare, where fluctuations in staffing and funding can affect job stability, nurses who feel secure in their positions—knowing that their jobs are not threatened by budget cuts or restructuring—are more satisfied and committed to their roles. Xiong et al. (2024) described how job security reduces anxiety and helps nurses focus more on patient care, enhancing their professional performance.

Support Systems and Mental Health

Emotional security also encompasses the availability of mental health support. Son and Ham (2020) highlighted that nurses often face high-stress situations, which can lead to emotional exhaustion or compassion fatigue. Organizations that offer mental health resources, such as counseling services, peer support groups, and stress management programs, create an environment where nurses feel emotionally secure and

valued. Emotional support helps nurses manage the psychological pressures of their work, improving their overall satisfaction and resilience (Williamson et al., 2022).

Organizational Commitment to Safety

Hayre-Kwan et al. (2021) discussed safety as the responsibility of the individual nurse but of the organization. Giuffrida and Davila (2024) emphasized that leadership's commitment to promoting a safety culture is essential to job satisfaction and retention. Nurses' perception of organizational commitment to safety—such as prioritizing staffing ratios, providing necessary equipment, and fostering a culture that prioritizes safety—directly affects their satisfaction (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). When nurses see leadership proactively addressing safety concerns, they feel more valued and secure in their roles. Transparency in communication from management about safety protocols, regular training sessions, and mechanisms for reporting safety concerns without fear of repercussions (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024).

Job Security in an Evolving Healthcare Landscape

Williamson et al. (2022) stated that healthcare organizations face constant changes due to policy shifts, economic challenges, and evolving patient needs. Job security goes beyond just retaining employment; it also relates to the ability to adapt and grow in a shifting healthcare environment. Pillay et al. (2022) discussed how nurses who are given opportunities for career advancement and professional development feel more secure in their positions. By offering training programs, mentorship, and career development opportunities, organizations can ensure that nurses feel safe in their current

roles and secure in their future career paths, enhancing job satisfaction by fostering professional growth and stability (Pillay et al., 2022).

Moreover, Giuffrida and Davila (2024) emphasized that investing in the continuous education of nurses also contributes to job security. Polat and Terzi (2021) explained that nurses who are given resources to develop new skills and adapt to emerging healthcare technologies or practices feel more confident in their ability to remain competitive in their field, reducing feelings of insecurity about future employment.

Love and Belonging

The love and belonging needs represent the third tier in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, emphasizing the importance of social relationships and a sense of community (Maslow, 1943). In nursing, these needs manifest through relationships with colleagues, support from leadership, and a sense of connection to the workplace. Addressing these needs is crucial for enhancing job satisfaction, reducing turnover, and fostering a positive work environment.

Interpersonal Relationships with Colleagues

Strong interpersonal relationships among nursing staff contribute significantly to their sense of belonging and overall job satisfaction. In the study by Giuffrida and Davila (2024), the researchers recognized that when nurses have positive relationships with their peers, they report higher levels of job satisfaction. The researchers pointed out that colleagues provide emotional support, share experiences, and collaborate on patient care, creating a sense of camaraderie. This social support system helps nurses cope with the

stresses of their roles and fosters a more enjoyable and engaging work environment (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024).

Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) highlighted that teamwork and collaboration are essential elements of nursing practice. Seller-Boersma et al. (2023) also explained that when nurses feel connected to their colleagues and work effectively as a team, they experience increased job satisfaction and a stronger sense of belonging to the organization.

Support From Leadership

Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of belonging and support within healthcare organizations. Rose et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of approachable and supportive leadership in creating a sense of belonging among nursing staff. Rose et al. ascertained that when leaders actively engage with their teams, acknowledge their contributions, and provide opportunities for professional development, nurses feel valued and more connected to the organization. This connection enhances job satisfaction and fosters loyalty. Polat and Terzi (2021) noted that when leadership demonstrates a commitment to staff well-being and professional growth, it positively impacts nurses' feelings of belonging. Son and Ham (2020) discovered that mentorship, recognition, and feedback programs can strengthen the relationship between nurses and their leaders, creating an environment where nurses feel appreciated and supported.

Organizational Culture and Community

The overall culture of an organization significantly influences nurses' feelings of love and belonging. Pillay et al. (2022) argued that a positive organizational culture that

promotes inclusivity, respect, and teamwork is essential for meeting nurses' belonging needs. Organizations that prioritize communication, collaboration, and respect for diverse perspectives foster a sense of community among staff, leading to higher job satisfaction (Pillay et al., 2022). Giuffrida and Davila (2024) emphasized that a sense of belonging is cultivated through shared values and goals within the organization. When nurses feel that their values align with those of the organization, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging, enhancing their overall job satisfaction and commitment to their roles (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024).

Professional Development and Recognition

Opportunities for professional growth and recognition contribute to nurses' sense of belonging within their organizations. Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) found that when organizations invest in the professional development of their nursing staff, it enhances their feelings of belonging. Polat and Terzi's (2021) study showed that programs that support continued education, skills training, and career advancement empower nurses and make them feel more connected to their work and the organization. Recognizing nurses' contributions and achievements is vital for fostering a sense of belonging. When nurses receive acknowledgment for their hard work and accomplishments, it reinforces their connection to the organization and enhances their job satisfaction (Rose et al., 2023**)**.

Peer Support and Team Dynamics

Positive team dynamics and peer support are critical components of love and belonging needs. Strong team relationships can reduce feelings of isolation and stress among nurses (Son & Ham, 2020). When nurses feel they can rely on their peers for

support, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and emotional well-being. Regular team-building activities and collaborative practice can strengthen these relationships (Polat & Terzi, 2021). Supportive peer networks contribute to resilience among nurses. When challenges arise, nurses who feel connected to their colleagues can share experiences and coping strategies, enhancing their sense of belonging and reducing the likelihood of burnout (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024).

Self Esteem

Self-esteem needs represent the fourth tier in MHNT, encompassing the desire for respect, recognition, and personal achievement. In nursing, fulfilling self-esteem needs is essential for enhancing job satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being. When nurses feel valued and recognized for their contributions, their self-esteem improves, leading to increased engagement and commitment to their work.

Recognition of Skills and Competence

Recognition of nurses' skills and competence is crucial for fostering self-esteem in the workplace. Acknowledging nursing skills through formal recognition programs or informal praise from colleagues and supervisors enhances nurses' self-esteem. Providing feedback to nurses on their performance and recognition for their expertise reinforces their sense of competence and professional identity (Pillay et al., 2022). Organizations that celebrate individual and team achievements increase self-esteem among nursing staff. Recognizing nurses validates their hard work and encourages them to strive for excellence in patient care (Rose et al., 2023).

Opportunities for Advancement

Providing opportunities for career advancement significantly impacts nurses' self-esteem. Pathways for career progression, such as promotions or opportunities to take on leadership roles, foster a sense of achievement among nurses. When nurses feel they have the potential to grow within the organization, their self-esteem is bolstered, leading to higher job satisfaction (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). Organizations that support nurses in pursuing advanced degrees or certifications create an environment where nurses feel empowered to enhance their knowledge and skills. In addition, investing in nurses' professional growth reinforces their self-esteem and commitment to their roles (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022).

Supportive Work Environment

A supportive work environment plays a critical role in meeting nurses' self-esteem needs. Son and Ham (2020) emphasized that a culture of respect, collaboration, and support among colleagues fosters a sense of belonging and self-worth among nursing staff. Working in an environment where nurses feel respected and valued by their peers and supervisors, self-esteem improves, leading to increased job satisfaction. Organizations that promote open communication and constructive feedback contribute to a supportive atmosphere. When nurses feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and receiving feedback, it enhances their sense of self-worth and reinforces their contributions to patient care (Pillay et al., 2022).

Professional Identity and Autonomy

A strong professional identity and autonomy in practice are crucial for nurses' self-esteem. Rose et al. (2023) explained that when nurses have the autonomy to make decisions regarding patient care and are empowered to advocate for their patients, their self-esteem grows. A sense of control over their practice reinforces their professional identity and encourages them to take pride in their work (Rose et al., 2023). Organizations that promote nurse-led initiatives and value the input of nursing staff empower nurses to develop their professional identities. Nursing empowerment enhances self-esteem and fosters a sense of ownership in their roles (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022).

Peer Support and Mentorship

Peer support and mentorship are essential for enhancing self-esteem among nurses. Mentoring relationships can significantly impact nurses' self-esteem. When experienced nurses provide guidance and support to their less experienced colleagues, it not only builds the mentees' confidence but also reinforces the self-esteem of the mentors through their role in developing others (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). It is important to foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork. Nurses support one another and share their knowledge and experiences, enhancing the collective self-esteem of the nursing staff and promoting a positive work environment (Son & Ham, 2020).

Self-Actualization

Self-actualization represents the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, encompassing personal growth, fulfillment of potential, and pursuing goals that align with one's values and aspirations (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). In nursing, self-

actualization is a crucial factor in job satisfaction, as it empowers nurses to realize their full potential, contribute meaningfully to patient care, and find purpose in their work. Addressing self-actualization needs can enhance job satisfaction, professional development, and improved patient outcomes (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024).

Professional Development and Continuous Learning

Opportunities for professional development and lifelong learning are vital for nurses seeking self-actualization. Organizations that provide access to continuing education, training programs, and certification opportunities enable nurses to enhance their skills and knowledge (Pillay et al., 2022). Nurses having a sense of competence and confidence is essential for self-actualization. Nurses who feel that they are continuously learning and evolving in their practice are more likely to experience job satisfaction (Pillay et al., 2022). Organizations that support nurses in pursuing advanced degrees or specialized training create an environment where nurses can reach their full potential (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). Investing in nurses' professional growth satisfies their self-actualization needs and contributes to higher-quality patient care (Loft & Jensen, 2020).

Autonomy and Empowerment

A sense of autonomy and empowerment in decision-making contributes significantly to nurses' self-actualization. When nurses are given the authority to make decisions regarding patient care, they feel more fulfilled in their roles (Williamson et al., 2022). Wan (2024) found that empowerment fosters a sense of ownership over their work and encourages them to pursue innovative approaches to patient care, leading to enhanced job satisfaction. Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022) found that organizations that

promote shared governance and involve nurses in decision-making empower them to take on leadership roles. This sense of ownership and influence enhances their self-actualization and commitment to the organization.

Finding Purpose and Meaning in Work

Nurses often seek to find purpose and meaning in their work, which is a core aspect of self-actualization. When nurses perceive their work as meaningful and aligned with their values, they experience greater job satisfaction. Engaging in patient-centered care and having opportunities to positively impact patients' lives fosters a sense of purpose (Rose et al., 2023). Giuffrida and Davila (2024) found that nurses who can connect their daily tasks to broader goals, such as improving patient outcomes or contributing to community health, are more likely to feel fulfilled and satisfied. Organizations that encourage nurses to reflect on the meaning of their work can help facilitate this sense of purpose.

Creative Expression and Innovation

Opportunities for creative expression and innovation in nursing practice are essential for self-actualization. When nurses feel more satisfied and engaged when encouraged to think critically and creatively about patient care. New protocols, improve processes, and implement evidence-based practices aligning with nurses' professional values (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022**)**. The importance of fostering an environment that supports innovation. Organizations that value and reward creative problem-solving enable nurses to express themselves and contribute to the advancement of their profession, fulfilling their self-actualization needs (Son & Ham, 2020).

Recognition and Accomplishment

Recognition of achievements and accomplishments plays a significant role in facilitating self-actualization among nurses. Acknowledging nurses' contributions to patient care and the organization enhances their sense of competence and fulfillment (Rose et al., 2023). Nurses who receive recognition for their hard work and achievements, reinforcing their commitment to their roles and encouraging them to strive for excellence (Xiong et al., 2024). Organizations implementing recognition programs, such as awards or commendations, can boost nurses' self-esteem and motivation. Recognition helps nurses feel valued and appreciated, further promoting their self-actualization (Pillay et al., 2022**)**.

Despite all the research on achievement and accomplishments, there is a gap in the literature on nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction.

Summary and Conclusions

By grounding my research in key themes from MHNT and previous studies, this literature review provided a strong foundation for exploring nurses' perceptions of healthcare organizations' strategies to improve job satisfaction. Addressing needs at every level of Maslow's hierarchy—from physiological needs like salary and working conditions, safety and security, to belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization—will offer deeper insights into how organizations can create more supportive and satisfying work environments for nurses. Physiological needs are foundational to nurses' job satisfaction and overall well-being. By addressing compensation, staffing levels,

workload management, physical work environments, and health and wellness programs, healthcare organizations can create a supportive environment that meets nurses' essential needs. Safety and security are integral to nurses' job satisfaction. Organizations that create a safe, supportive, and stable environment allow nurses to focus on delivering quality patient care, experience less stress, and are more likely to remain committed to their roles. Self-esteem needs are integral to nurses' job satisfaction and overall well-being. Nurses actualize self-esteem when they are recognized for their skills and competence and provided opportunities for advancement. Self-actualization is a vital aspect of nurses' job satisfaction and overall well-being. The research shows that healthcare organizations can create an environment that meets nurses' self-actualization needs by fostering professional development, autonomy, purposeful work, creativity, and recognition.

In Chapter 3, I detail the research methodology employed in this study, outlining the qualitative approach, data collection methods, participant selection criteria, and analytical techniques utilized to explore nurses' experiences and perceptions in depth.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of my study, guided by MHNT, was to explore nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being. The MHNT was the framework to guide this research, which enabled me to understand how organizational strategies address various levels of needs, including physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Basic inquiry was the approach I used, utilizing semi-structured interview questions designed to directly align with the research questions, ensuring they capture detailed insights into nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies impacting job satisfaction.

The central research question was: What perceptions do nurses have of their healthcare organization's strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being?

In Chapter 3, I outline the methodology in detail to provide a clear understanding of the research approach, participant selection, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques. I describe the research design, including the rationale for selecting a qualitative approach and the specific design tradition employed. Next, I address the participant recruitment and sampling methods, detailing the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the sampling strategy used to ensure a representative selection of experienced

nurses. I also explain the process of data collection section emphasizing how these interviews were structured to capture in-depth insights into nurses' perspectives on job satisfaction strategies. In the data analysis section, I describe the procedures for coding and identifying themes. I present the ethical considerations and conclude with a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question was: What perceptions do nurses have of their healthcare organization's strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being?

The central concept of this study was job satisfaction among nurses, particularly as influenced by organizational strategies aimed at improving their work experiences. Job satisfaction refers to a positive emotional state that results from an individual's appraisal of their job and work environment (Montuori et al., 2022). Job satisfaction encompasses factors such as pay, workload, workplace culture, career development opportunities, and overall job stability. I examined job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct, influenced by specific organizational interventions, including pay incentives, career advancement opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives aimed at supporting nurses' physical and mental well-being (Montuori et al., 2022).

The central phenomenon investigated was nurses' perceptions of these organizational strategies. Perception, in this context, involves how nurses interpret, understand, and evaluate the various measures their employers put in place to enhance

job satisfaction and retention (Forde-Johnston & Stoermer, 2022). The study focused on understanding these perceptions from the nurses' viewpoint, aiming to uncover which strategies they believe have the most significant impact on their satisfaction and well-being and, ultimately, the quality of care they deliver.

Research Tradition

The research tradition I used was qualitative inquiry, specifically following a basic qualitative approach. The qualitative inquiry was grounded in exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations, allowing for a deep understanding of the meanings nurses attached to organizational strategies that enhanced job satisfaction. The qualitative approach was suitable because it provided a rich, detailed examination of the participants' viewpoints, offering insights into the complexities and nuances of their experiences within healthcare organizations (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). By focusing on qualitative inquiry, this study aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasized understanding the subjective perspectives of individuals within their specific social and professional contexts.

My rationale for choosing a basic qualitative approach was based on the study's objective to explore and understand nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies aimed at enhancing job satisfaction. The focus of my research was to capture nurses' lived experiences, interpretations, and insights, so a qualitative tradition is ideal, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of subjective experiences that cannot be adequately measured or quantified (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). This basic qualitative approach was particularly relevant because it allowed me to prioritize understanding of how individuals

make sense of their work environment and the factors influencing their satisfaction, retention, and professional well-being (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

In addition, a qualitative approach aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, which values the participants' unique perspectives and allowed me, as the researcher, to capture the complexity of human experiences in specific contexts. By using open-ended interviews and inductive analysis, my study provided nuanced insights that may be overlooked in quantitative methodologies. The basic qualitative approach thus supported the study's aim of contributing to organizational knowledge by identifying themes, patterns, and strategies that healthcare leaders can use to enhance job satisfaction and retention among nurses.

Role of the Researcher

Role as Observer-Participant

My role was that of an observer-participant, which means I engaged with participants during interviews while maintaining a degree of detachment necessary for objective data collection and analysis. As an observer-participant, I conducted in-depth interviews to gather nurses' perspectives on organizational strategies for job satisfaction, listening actively, and responding to participants in a way that fosters open communication and trust (Carl & Ravitch, 2021).

I was involved in the data collection process by interacting directly with participants, I did not engage in their work environment or daily routines. My goal was to observe and record their experiences and insights as they describe them without influencing their responses or the context in which they work. This approach ensured I

captured authentic narratives while minimizing potential biases associated with being too deeply embedded in the participants' experiences (Carl & Ravitch, 2021).

Maintaining the observer-participant role allowed me to gather valuable qualitative data, contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors that affect nurses' job satisfaction while upholding the integrity of the research process (Carl & Ravitch, 2021).

Personal Relationships

I disclosed that I have no direct personal or professional relationships with the participants that could influence their responses or create potential conflicts of interest. I was not in a supervisory, managerial, or instructional role with any of the nurses involved. I had no authority or power over them in their workplace or professional environment.

Neutrality helped me maintain the integrity of the research by ensuring that participants felt free to share their honest perspectives without concern for professional repercussions or biases. Establishing a clear boundary between the researcher and participants was essential to foster an environment where participants felt safe and respected, and to support the credibility and objectivity of the study's findings.

Management of Researcher Biases and Relationships

I managed potential researcher biases and avoided any influence over participants. First, I practiced reflexivity by regularly reflecting on my perspectives, assumptions, and potential biases and documenting these reflections in a research journal. Practicing reflexivity helped me recognize and minimize any unintentional influence my own

experiences or beliefs may have on the research process and interpretation of data (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Additionally, I used open-ended interview questions to encourage participants to express their genuine perspectives without being guided or influenced by my views. To further ensure impartiality, I avoided leading questions and instead employ neutral prompts that allowed participants to elaborate on their thoughts and experiences freely (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

To maintain transparency, I employed member checking, where participants can review their transcribed responses and clarify or modify any statements. Being transparent with participants helped to ensure that their perspectives were accurately captured and reduced the influence of my interpretation of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Lastly, I incorporated peer debriefing by discussing my findings and interpretations with colleagues who are not involved in the study. This external feedback helped me to identify and address any potential biases in my analysis and interpretation of the data, contributing to the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. These strategies helped me to manage biases and maintain an objective stance, ensuring the findings are authentic and grounded in the participants' perspectives.

Other Ethical Issues

Conducting research within one's own work environment can raise ethical challenges, such as conflict of interest, power differentials, and confidentiality risks. I

took several measures to maintain ethical integrity and uphold participants rights to address these.

Conducting Research in a Familiar Setting

Since the study involved participants within a shared professional setting, potential conflicts of interest or biases are addressed by ensuring that participants were fully informed of their rights, including their right to decline or withdraw from the study without repercussions. Before data collection, all participants were given clear, written explanations of the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature.

Managing Power Differentials

Power differentials, especially if participants are colleagues, can create undue influence or perceived obligations. To mitigate the issues of power differentials, the study recruitment emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, assuring participants that their decision will not affect their professional standing. Additionally, if any hierarchical or supervisory relationships exist, I avoided directly recruiting those individuals, opting for indirect, broad recruitment to avoid any perceived or actual pressure.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Given the shared work environment, maintaining participant anonymity is critical. Participant responses will be anonymized, with identifiable information removed or modified during transcription and data analysis. I have stored the data securely with access restricted to only myself.

Incentives

I provided a $10 dollar thank-you gift card for coffee, which is modest and aligned with ethical guidelines to avoid coercion. The gift card incentive was given as an appreciation of time, ensuring it did not exert undue influence over participants' decisions to join the study.

Methodology

I conducted a qualitative study to capture the depth and complexity of nurses' experiences and insights, focusing on how different strategies meet their job satisfaction needs at various hierarchical levels (physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization).

Participant Selection Logic

The target population included RNs with at least 1 year of professional experience in the inpatient and ambulatory healthcare settings, which provides sufficient exposure to organizational practices aimed at job satisfaction. I used purposive sampling strategy to select participants based on specific criteria: professional experience, current employment status, and willingness to participate. I recruited 10 participants and achieved data saturation, when no new themes emerged during analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Data Collection Procedures

Recruitment

I sent flyers by email to Walden University participant pool, and on social networking site. I provided a formal invitation letter outlining the study purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures to each participant. I applied for institutional

review board (IRB) approval (No. 03-28-25-0514066) from my college so that I could send out the invitation to participate.

If the individual was interested in participating, they emailed me to indicate their interest to arrange an interview. I contacted them by email or phone and arrange a convenient time to have the interview.

When I talked to the individual, I asked them the following screening questions:

1. Are you currently a licensed Registered Nurse (RN)?
2. Do you have at least 1 year of experience working as an RN?
3. Are you currently employed in a healthcare organization?
4. Are you 18 years of age or older and able to provide informed consent?

If the individual answered "yes" to all questions, I proceeded to discuss the consent process of verbal consent at the start of the interview. If the individual answered "no" to any of the questions, I thanked them for their interest.

The consent form stated that if they understand the study and wish to participate, the individual can reply to the researcher's email with "I consent." Individual participants were given the option to give verbal consent at the start of the interview if they did not want to sign the consent form, all 10 participants chose the verbal consent process.

Data Collection

I arranged the interview time and place online via the Zoom online meeting platform and by phone. At the interview, I had each of the participants complete the demographic data sheet by asking them the questions (see Appendix C). After they

completed the demographics form, I obtained verbal consent before beginning the interview.

I interviewed each participant via online video conferencing system or telephone (depending on participant's preference and audio recording each interview to allow for verbatim transcription and subsequent data analysis. Interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. The interview questions are in Appendix B.

If needed, I contacted the participants by email for the member checking twice. First, after transcription and initial coding to verify transcription accuracy and ask additional clarifying questions. Second, after coding and theme development to verify that I have captured the participant's experience accurately. The participants needed approximately 15-20 minutes for member checking. After all data was collected, I provided a thank you of a $10.00 e-gift card for online participants or $10 gift card for in-person interviews. Recruitment of potential participants were identified through professional networks, healthcare organizations, and nursing associations. A formal invitation letter outlining the study purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures were provided to each participant.

Data Analysis

All interview recordings were recorded and transcribed verbatim using Speechnotes, an online transcription platform, to ensure accurate representation of participants' responses. To maintain quality control, I reviewed each transcript alongside the recordings. Using thematic analysis, I coded the data systematically to identify

recurring patterns and themes. I used NVivo software to assist in organizing and coding the data. The codes were grouped into themes aligned with the MHNT, reflecting participants' perspectives. I used multiple coding cycles to ensure the refinement and consistency of the identified themes (Saldana, 2021).

Instrumentation

The individual interviews served as the primary instrument for data collection, using a semi-structured interview guide. I developed the interview guide (see Appendix A) based on the research questions, the MHNT framework, and a review of relevant literature. Rose et al. (2023) stated interviews are an effective qualitative method for exploring participants' perceptions, making this approach suitable for understanding RNs' views on strategies to improve job satisfaction. The use of interviews for the instrumentation ensured alignment between the instrument and the study's objectives, enabling the collection of rich, detailed data about nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies aimed at improving job satisfaction.

Instrument Development

I developed an interview guide (see Appendix A) which included physiological, safety, love, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions to encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives in depth.

Physiological Needs

Questions in this category assessed how basic needs are met within the organizational context; for example, “Can you describe how your workplace environment supports your basic needs, such as adequate breaks and access to necessary resources?”

Safety Needs

These questions on the safety needs were designed to explore perceptions of physical and job security. A sample question was “How does your organization ensure a safe working environment, and how does this impact your sense of job security?”

Love and Belonging

I examined the love and belonging need, which included the interpersonal relationships and sense of community at work. A sample question was “In what ways do you feel a sense of belonging or camaraderie with your colleagues?”

Esteem Needs

Questions on the self-esteem needs focused on recognition, respect, and self-esteem within the workplace. A sample question was “Can you provide examples of how your contributions are recognized and how that affects your self-esteem?”

Self-Actualization

Questions on the need for self-actualization were designed to delve into opportunities for personal and professional growth. A sample question was “How does your role enable you to achieve your full potential, and what opportunities for growth are available to you?”

By structuring the interview guide around these concepts, I gained comprehensive insights into how various levels of needs influence the nurses' job satisfaction.

Probes and follow-up questions were included to clarify responses and explore underlying factors contributing to their views. The sufficiency of the data collection instrument is ensured through alignment with the research questions and the MHNT.

Interviews as a data collection method have been widely applied in healthcare research to explore perceptions and experiences. Patton (2015) developed the foundation for qualitative research methods, including the design and implementation of instruments like semi-structured interviews. Patton emphasized the flexibility and depth of semi-structured interviews for exploring participants' perspectives. For example, Rose et al. (2023) conducted interviews with healthcare professionals, including nurses, to investigate job satisfaction and organizational support in clinical settings.

Similarly, Pillay et al. (2022) used interviews to study RNs' perspectives on workplace dynamics and strategies to improve retention. Forde-Johnston and Stoermer (2022), and Seller-Boersma et al. (2023) also used semi-structured interviews effectively. These studies demonstrated how the instrument helps uncover participants' experiences and perceptions, making it a sufficient tool for answering qualitative research questions. These studies demonstrate that interviews are a proven method for capturing the nuanced experiences of nurses, making them an appropriate choice for this research focused on RNs with a minimum of 1 year of experience.

Appropriateness of the Instrument

Interviews were highly appropriate for my study, given their effectiveness in exploring detailed perceptions and experiences within a specific professional context. Rose et al. (2023) emphasized that interviews allow researchers to gather rich, contextual data directly from participants, making them particularly suitable for understanding RNs' perspectives on job satisfaction strategies. Using interviews as the instrumentation aligned with the study's focus on the MHNT to explore physiological needs, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization within nursing.

The protocols and instrumentation are culturally specific, targeting RNs working in healthcare organizations. In this environment, job satisfaction is deeply influenced by organizational strategies and cultural factors, as noted by Pillay et al. (2022). While the general structure of interviews used in similar studies (e.g., Giuffrida & Davila, 2024) serves as a foundation, slight modifications may be required to tailor questions to this study's framework and context. These adjustments ensured alignment with the theoretical lens of Maslow's hierarchy and accounted for differences in organizational practices and participant demographics.

Establishing Content Validity

Patton (2015) explained that content validity ensures that the interview questions adequately capture the constructs under investigation—in this case, the components of job satisfaction based on MHNT. The interview guide was developed based on an extensive review of the literature, including studies by Pillay et al. (2022), Son and Ham

(2020), and Giuffrida and Davila (2024), which identified key factors influencing nurses' job satisfaction.

Expert review was conducted with my dissertation committee members knowledgeable in qualitative research and healthcare management to ensure the questions are aligned with the study's objectives and theoretical framework. I included suggestions to refine question clarity, relevance, and alignment with MHNT dimensions (e.g., physiological needs, safety, belonging). For example, Rose et al. (2023) identified specific themes around safety and workplace support, which informed the development of questions targeting these areas.

Addressing Context- and Culture-Specific Issues

I developed the interview questions (see Appendix B) for this study using a systematic approach to ensure they effectively explored nurses' perceptions of organizational job satisfaction strategies (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The process included the following steps:

- ***Literature Review:*** I conducted an extensive literature review on nursing job satisfaction and organization strategies for retention to identify key factors influencing these areas. This review helped me to create the foundation for formulating questions that address relevant themes and gaps in the literature.
- ***Conceptual Framework Alignment:*** I designed the interview questions to align with the MHNT conceptual framework, ensuring each question targeted specific constructs related to job satisfaction and organizational strategies.

- ***Expert Consultation:*** I used the feedback from my committee chair, an expert in qualitative research, to refine the questions. The feedback from my dissertation committee chair helped me enhance the interview guide's clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness.
- ***Cultural Sensitivity Consideration:*** Recognizing the multicultural nature of the nursing workforce, I was mindful of how I structured the questions to ensure the questions were culturally sensitive and inclusive. I was careful to avoid culturally biased language and consider diverse perspectives on job satisfaction factors.

Open-Ended Question Design

The interview questions (see Appendix B) predominantly open-ended, which allowed the participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely. This approach facilitated the collection of rich, detailed data, capturing the complexities of nurses' perceptions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Using the outlined structured development process allowed me to create an interview guide capable of eliciting in-depth insights into nurses' views on organizational job satisfaction strategies, thereby contributing valuable information to the field.

The instrument was also influenced by prior qualitative research methodologies, particularly those utilizing structured and semi-structured interviews to explore perceptions in nursing contexts. Studies such as Charette et al. (2023), Seller-Boersma et al. (2023), and Forde-Johnston and Stoermer (2022) served as foundational references for designing open-ended questions that encourage participants to provide rich, detailed

responses. Studies by Forde-Johnston and Stoermer (2022) and Seller-Boersma et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research to explore participants' experiences while allowing flexibility for deeper insights.

Additionally, my decision to focus on specific organizational strategies, such as career development initiatives and nurse residency programs, was informed by research conducted by Giuffrida and Davila (2024) and Boston-Leary et al. (2024). These studies highlighted the relevance of these strategies in addressing various levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy. Drawing from these robust sources and incorporating feedback through pilot testing, the instrument was tailored to elicit meaningful data while maintaining validity and reliability.

Content Validity

Content validity was established by ensuring the interview guide aligns closely with the research questions and the study's conceptual framework MHNT (Patton, 2015). Alignment of the research question with the MHNT was achieved by systematically reviewing relevant literature and expert feedback. I derived the interview questions from themes in the literature, such as job satisfaction factors, organizational strategies, and nurse retention, as discussed in studies by Kiliç Barmanpek et al. (2022), Jarden et al. (2023) and Charette et al. (2023).

The interview guide (see Appendix A) was reviewed by my dissertation committee member, who is an expert in qualitative research methodologies to ensure it covered all relevant aspects of the research questions. My dissertation committee chair assessed the guide for clarity, comprehensiveness, and relevance, confirming that it

effectively addressed the study's objectives without introducing bias. The iterative feedback process allowed for the refinement of the guide to ensure that each question corresponded to a specific element of the research purpose.

To establish the sufficiency of the data collection instruments in my research, the semi-structured interview questions were designed to directly align with the research questions, ensuring they captured detailed insights into nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies impacting job satisfaction. Semi-structured interviews are a well-documented qualitative tool (Patton, 2015), allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate while providing structure to address key themes.

Sufficiency of Data Collection Instruments

Rose et al. (2023), Seller-Boersma et al. (2023) and Pillay et al. (2022) deemed the data collection instrument sufficient to answer the research questions due to their design, which ensured a comprehensive exploration of nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies for job satisfaction. The semi-structured nature of the interview guide allows for flexibility, enabling participants to share in-depth insights while ensuring that all key topics are addressed.

Each question in the guide was directly linked to the research questions and theoretical framework. For example, questions exploring how participants perceive strategies such as salary adjustments, professional development, and workplace safety are directly tied to the physiological, safety, and esteem levels in MHNT. This alignment ensured that the data collected would provide insights into how organizational strategies fulfill nurses' hierarchical needs.

The iterative process of expert review further supported the instrument's adequacy by ensuring that the questions are clear, non-leading, and capable of eliciting detailed, relevant responses. This approach ensured that the data collected would be valid and sufficient to answer the research questions comprehensively.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility was ensured through member checking, allowing participants to review and confirm interpretations of their responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Detailed descriptions of context, participant demographics, and themes will enable other researchers to determine transferability to similar settings. To ensure dependability and confirmability, a clear audit trail was documented on all methodological decisions, supporting transparency and replicability (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I designed the study with enough detail to allow other researchers to replicate the study, ensuring reliability and validity in exploring nurses' perspectives on organizational strategies for job satisfaction.

In qualitative research, saturation and sample size are closely related concepts. Saturation is achieved when no new themes, insights, or information emerge from additional data collection, suggesting that the research questions have been thoroughly explored. This point is essential because it indicates that enough data has been gathered to comprehensively understand the studied phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

The relationship between saturation and sample size in qualitative research is dynamic rather than fixed. Unlike quantitative research, which often requires a predetermined sample size for statistical power, qualitative research sample size is

generally flexible. Researchers may start with an estimated range but will adjust based on when saturation is reached (Patton, 2015). As data collection proceeds, researchers assess for saturation. Data collection was stopped once I noted that interviews or observations yield repetitive themes and no new patterns. More participants may be added if new themes continue to emerge (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Studies with a broad or complex phenomenon often need larger samples before saturation is reached. Simpler, focused studies may reach saturation more quickly and require fewer participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

The researcher's experience plays a role in determining saturation. Experienced qualitative researchers are skilled at recognizing when additional data collection no longer adds substantial new information (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Although sample size in qualitative studies can vary, the concept of saturation guides when enough data has been collected. This balance ensured the study's rigor, helping researchers avoid under- and over-sampling while capturing the essence of the research question (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Ethical Procedures

To conduct my research, a formal agreement and permission was obtained to ensure legal and ethical access to participants and relevant data. The following steps and documents were included in the IRB application:

Recruitment and Institutional Permissions

I obtained IRB approval from Walden University, the administrative body and leadership teams. I recruited participants from the Walden University participant pool and online platform.

In addition to institutional permissions, each participant had the option of giving verbal consent or signing the consent form before the start of the interview. This form outlined the voluntary nature of participation, the procedures involved, the potential risks, and the measures taken to protect their privacy and confidentiality. Participants were given the following documents for their review:

1. Copy of the informed consent form participants will sign before engaging in the interviews.
2. The script used for explaining the informed consent to participants (including the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw at any time).

Data Use and Access Agreements

To ensure that the data collected was used appropriately and securely, I included a data management plan in the IRB application.

1. Data storage and access plan, including how participant data will be protected and stored securely.
2. Agreement outlining, I was to be the only person with access to the data.
3. A description of the data analysis software, which was NVivo to analyze the data.

Ethical agreements regarding the use of the data were outlined in the IRB application. Participants were informed of their rights regarding their data, including the option to withdraw data at any point during the study. Consent was obtained for audio recordings of interviews, with the understanding that recordings would be transcribed and stored securely. Participants were provided the following:

1. Explanation of how the audio recording will be used, stored, and destroyed after transcription.
2. Transcription and storage agreements ensuring data protection and confidentiality.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was crucial in this study. Participant identities were kept confidential, and all personal identifiers were removed from the data and participants initials were used and for participants with same initials additions of numbers after their initials based on the sequence of their interview. To further ensure privacy, data are stored securely, and access will be restricted only to myself. The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and all identifying information was removed. Participants were assured that their responses will be used for research purposes and kept confidential.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. They were informed that they can skip any question during the interview that they do not wish to answer.

The potential risks to participants were minimal. There are no known physical risks associated with participation. Participants were reminded of their right to skip questions or withdraw from the interview if they experience any distress.

After the interviews, participants were debriefed about the study's goals and their contributions. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions about the research process. Any questions or concerns about the study were addressed promptly, ensuring that participants fully understand the scope and purpose of the research.

Participants provided verbal consent by reviewing an informed consent form, which will outline the purpose of the study, procedures, potential risks, benefits, and their rights as participants. The form included details about confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the option to withdraw at any time without penalty. Participants was required to give their verbal consent before participating in the study.

Ethical concerns related to data collection included ensuring participant privacy and confidentiality, as well as addressing any power imbalances between the researcher and participants. To protect privacy, all data was protected, and participants' identities remained confidential. Power dynamics were mitigated by creating a safe, non-coercive environment where participants felt comfortable expressing their views. To address potential risks, participants were fully informed about their rights, including their ability to withdraw at any time without consequences. Ethical considerations was reviewed and monitored by the IRB.

The treatment of data in this study involved ensuring the confidentiality and security of all data collected. Data are stored securely and accessible only to the

researcher. Any archival data used was protected to prevent identification of individuals. In terms of data analysis, interview recordings were transcribed verbatim via Speechnotes, and thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo software to organize and identify recurring themes. All data were treated with the utmost care, following ethical guidelines and best practices for data protection.

The data I collected were confidential rather than anonymous. Participant identities were kept private, and identifying information was removed or replaced with initials in all data analysis and reporting. However, while the data were kept confidential, there is a risk of inadvertent identification due to the detailed nature of the interviews. To address this, precautions were taken to securely store data, limiting access, and ensuring that participants' consent clearly acknowledges these privacy measures.

The data were not shared with any external parties. I will store the data for 5 years to ensure privacy and comply with institutional guidelines. Participant consent included a clear statement regarding the storage, access, and destruction of their data.

Other ethical issues in this study included conducting research within participants' or researcher work environment, which could have created potential conflicts of interest or power differentials. Depending on participant preferences, the interviews were conducted in a private and neutral setting, either in person or via a secure online platform. Participants was assigned initials to protect their identity. I iterated to participants that their participation is entirely voluntary and did not impact their professional standing or job security. Additionally, I took steps to mitigate any perceived power imbalance by ensuring confidentiality. I offered participants thank-you gift cards of $10 towards coffee,

which I clearly outlined to prevent undue influence or coercion, ensuring participants would not be swayed by external rewards.

Summary

I conducted a qualitative research design, to examine RNs perceptions of healthcare organization strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary method of data collection, targeting RNs with at least 1 year of professional experience. I recruited participants through an online flyer via Walden University participant pool and online platform. To ensure an accurate representation of participants' views, the interview data was transcribed verbatim using Speechnotes. I used thematic analysis to systematically code the data, identifying recurring patterns and themes aided by NVivo software to organize and code the data. I used the identify codes to categorized into themes based on MHNT, reflecting the participants' perspectives. I obtained informed consent and ensured confidentiality to protect participant identities. I have stored data securely for protection of participants identity. As the researcher, I practiced reflexivity by continuously reflecting on my own perspectives, assumptions, and potential biases, thereby enhancing the validity of the study.

In Chapter 4, I present the findings derived from my data analysis. Chapter 4 offers an in-depth examination of the themes and patterns that emerged, providing insights into the experiences and perspectives of the nursing professionals who participated in our study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore nurses' perceptions of their healthcare organizations' strategies aimed at enhancing job satisfaction. Guided by MHNT, I sought to understand how organizational strategies addressed the five levels of needs: physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.

The central research question was: What perceptions do nurses have of their healthcare organization's strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, particularly in relation to interventions such as pay incentives, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and well-being initiatives?

In this chapter, I present the findings from semi-structured interviews with 10 RNs. The results are organized into key themes that emerged through rigorous data analysis.

Setting

Various organizational and personal factors may have shaped participants' perceptions and experiences. At the organizational level, ongoing nurse shortages, high workloads, and staffing challenges were prevalent, consistent with recent research in the healthcare industry (Charette et al., 2023; Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). Changes in healthcare policies, budgetary constraints, and leadership transitions also likely influenced participants' views (Pillay et al., 2022; Seller-Boersma et al., 2023). On a personal level, nurses reported experiencing fatigue, stress, and burnout, common conditions in the post-pandemic era (Jarden et al., 2023; Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022).

These contextual factors provide an important background for interpreting the themes identified in the data.

Demographics

Participants in this study were all RNs with a minimum of 1 year of professional nursing experience, recruited through Walden University's participant pool. The sample included nurses from diverse healthcare sectors, levels of experience, and geographic regions, which added valuable breadth and depth to the data. While demographic characteristics such as age, gender, or ethnicity were not central to the study, the professional diversity of the sample strengthened the study's transferability by reflecting a range of real-world organizational experiences and settings. The participants included both early-career and seasoned nurses, with years of experience ranging from 2 to over 20 years. They represented a spectrum of practice environments including acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, ambulatory clinics, and international healthcare settings. Each participant contributed unique insights shaped by their work environment, organizational structure, and personal perceptions of strategies aimed at enhancing job satisfaction. Table 1 below summarizes the professional background of each participant.

Table 1

Summary of Participant Characteristics

Participant ID	Years of RN experience	Work setting	Location	Notes on role and context
P1	5	Local acute care hospital	U.S. (Local)	Works on a busy med-surg unit; highlighted workload issues.
P2	12	Long-term care facility	U.S. (Local)	Manages a dementia care unit; emphasized staffing gaps.
P3	20+	Ambulatory clinic	U.S. (Local)	Senior nurse in outpatient oncology; values recognition.
P4	7	Acute care hospital	U.S. (Out-of-state)	Focused on post-COVID safety protocols and morale.
P5	3	International hospital	Europe	Works in ER; discussed cultural gaps and support systems.
P6	15	Long-term care facility	U.S. (Local)	Specializes in geriatric rehab; values team collaboration.
P7	8	Ambulatory clinic	U.S. (Local)	Works in same-day surgery; praised professional growth.
P8	2	Acute care hospital	U.S. (Local)	Early-career nurse; desires mentorship and learning.
P9	18	Long-term care facility	U.S. (Local)	Senior nurse; focused on burnout and policy consistency.
P10	10	Acute care hospital	U.S. (Local)	Charge nurse in ICU; emphasized need for recognition.

Individual Voices and Perspectives

To provide deeper insight into the lived experiences of the participants, direct quotes and themes from the interviews are included throughout the analysis. For example, P1, a nurse working in a local acute care hospital, shared, “Without fair pay and proper staffing, you constantly feel like you’re drowning—it’s exhausting.” This highlights the pressing concern of physiological needs, a key tenet in Maslow’s Hierarchy. Similarly, P4, who works at an out-of-state hospital, emphasized the lingering impact of the pandemic, stating, “It’s hard to focus on patients when you’re always worried about your

own safety." This supports the theme of workplace safety. Meanwhile, P7, working in an ambulatory surgical setting, noted the importance of development opportunities: "My supervisor encouraged me to get certified, and that made me feel like the organization was investing in me." International perspectives also enriched the data. P5, an ER nurse in Europe, shared, "Resources are stretched thin, and support is limited, but when managers take time to acknowledge your effort, it makes a difference." These diverse professional environments and personal narratives helped reveal how nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies are shaped by their individual roles and settings, reinforcing the multi-faceted nature of job satisfaction in nursing.

Data Collection

Number of Participants

Ten RNs participated in semi-structured interviews. Each met the inclusion criteria of at least 1 year of professional nursing experience (see Boston-Leary et al., 2024; Jarden et al., 2023).

Location, Frequency, and Duration

All interviews were conducted via phone to ensure flexibility and accessibility, accommodating participants' varying schedules, geographic locations, and comfort levels. Conducting interviews by phone also allowed for privacy, particularly since participants were in their home environments, which helped foster open and honest communication without workplace distractions or perceived oversight.

Each interview was scheduled at a time convenient for the participant and lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. Participants were interviewed only once, which aligns with the

nature of qualitative inquiry that seeks in-depth insights through a single, focused session (Pillay et al., 2022; Seller-Boersma et al., 2023). While follow-up interviews were not required, participants were informed they could be contacted for clarification or member-checking purposes, although none opted for additional sessions.

This approach ensured a respectful use of participants' time while still yielding rich, descriptive data that reflected their lived experiences and perceptions related to organizational strategies and job satisfaction. The single-interview format was sufficient to achieve data saturation, as recurring themes began to emerge consistently across participants.

Data Recording

Interviews were digitally recorded using a secure, encrypted smartphone application. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim, with a voice recorder on my cellphone, then reviewed for accuracy. Voice recordings were uploaded to Speechnotes for transcription. The transcripts were then uploaded into NVivo software for analysis. All interviews were digitally recorded using a secure and encrypted smartphone voice recording application to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the data. Prior to each interview, participants provided verbal consent to be recorded. Each session was conducted while participants were in their home environment, which allowed for comfort, privacy, and minimized workplace-related distractions. This setting was chosen to promote openness and facilitate authentic responses.

The interviews were recorded using the native voice recorder on a password-protected cellphone. Immediately following each session, the audio recordings were

uploaded to Speechnotes, a secure and reputable transcription platform, for automated transcription. Each transcript was then thoroughly reviewed and manually edited while replaying the audio recordings to ensure verbatim accuracy and completeness.

Once verified, the finalized transcripts were uploaded into NVivo 14 qualitative analysis software. NVivo was used to manage, code, and analyze the data systematically through a thematic analysis approach. All digital materials—including audio files, transcripts, and NVivo project data—were securely stored on an encrypted external hard drive, accessible only to the researcher. These procedures aligned with the approved IRB protocols to uphold participant confidentiality and data security.

Unexpected Challenges

Two challenges occurred during data collection. One interview recording was accidentally deleted during upload to the transcription platform. Additionally, several participants encountered technical issues, causing delays or requiring rescheduling. Some participants expressed initial discomfort with being recorded, but concerns were mitigated through reassurances about confidentiality and data security. These challenges were managed without compromising the integrity of the study.

Data Analysis

I used an inductive thematic analysis approach. I imported my transcribed interviews into NVivo software for coding. Initial codes were generated based on meaningful units of data and were then grouped into broader categories. These categories were synthesized into overarching themes, aligned with the constructs of MHNT (Boston-Leary et al., 2024).

Thematic Analysis and Coding Process

I used thematic analysis to interpret and analyze the qualitative data collected from participant interviews. This approach, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. The goal was to uncover how nurses perceived their organizations' strategies for enhancing job satisfaction.

Step 1: Familiarization With the Data

The process began with reading and re-reading the verbatim transcripts generated through Speechnotes. Listening to the recorded interviews while reading the transcripts allowed for immersion in the data and helped ensure transcription accuracy. I took initial notes during this phase to capture preliminary impressions and meaningful statements (Rose et al., 2023).

Step 2: Generating Initial Codes

I coded the data manually and used NVivo software. This step involved line-by-line coding to identify significant statements that related to the research question and MHNT. A total of 58 initial codes emerged from these data. These included repeated phrases and ideas related to compensation, support, teamwork, burnout, professional growth, and recognition.

Step 3: Searching for Themes

Codes were grouped into potential categories based on shared meaning. These were then clustered under broader, preliminary themes that aligned with the five levels of Maslow's hierarchy. For example, codes such as "short staffing," "overworked," and

"low pay" were grouped under the theme Compensation and Staffing (physiological needs). Other categories included Workplace Safety (safety needs), Team Collaboration (love and belonging), Recognition (esteem needs), and Professional Growth (self-actualization).

Step 4: Reviewing Themes

Themes were reviewed for coherence and relevance to the research question. This involved checking whether the coded data within each theme formed a consistent pattern and whether the themes accurately represented the meanings across participants' responses (Ham & Son, 2020).

Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes

The finalized themes were defined clearly, and subthemes were identified to capture nuance. For instance, team collaboration included subthemes such as "peer support" and "lack of communication." Descriptions of each theme were developed with illustrative participant quotes to strengthen credibility

Step 6: Producing the Report

In the final step, the thematic findings were written up and organized according to the theoretical framework. Each theme was discussed with supporting evidence from participant narratives. Table 2 is a visual summary of themes, corresponding Maslow levels, and example codes. The structured approach ensured transparency, rigor, and alignment with qualitative research standards, enhancing the study's overall credibility and trustworthiness (Patton, 2015; Pillay et al., 2022).

Table 2

Thematic Analysis: From Codes to Themes and Maslow's Hierarchy

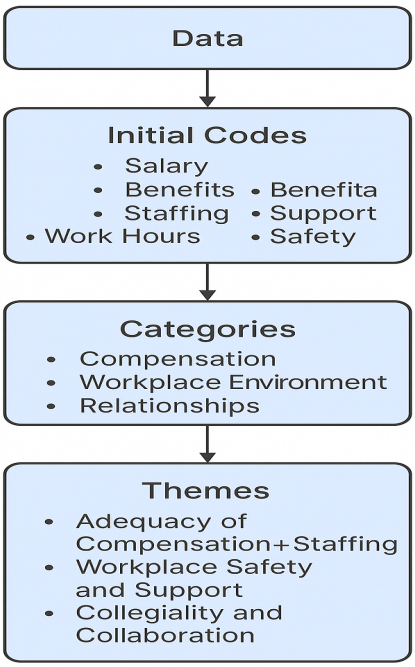
Codes	Subthemes	Major themes	Maslow's hierarchy level
1. "Underpaid for the workload" 2. "Short-staffed every day" 3. "Underpaid for the workload" 4. Too many patients"	• Inadequate staffing • Fair pay concerns	Compensation and staffing	Physiological needs
1. "No PPE at the start of the pandemic" 2. "Fear of exposure" 3. "Unsafe at night"	• Pandemic safety • Workplace environment	Workplace safety	Safety needs
1. "Teamwork makes a difference" 2. "Some coworkers don't help" 3. "No unity"	• Peer support • Communication	Team collaboration	Love and belonging
1. "Lack of appreciation" 2. "No recognition from leaders" 3. "Simple 'thank you' helps"	• Manager acknowledgment • Validation	Recognition	Esteem needs
1. "No training opportunities" 2. "Want to go back to school" 3. "I want to grow"	• Career advancement • Continuous learning	Professional growth	Self-actualization

The concept map presented in Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the thematic analysis process used to explore nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies that influence job satisfaction. The concept map illustrates how initial codes derived from interview transcripts were grouped into meaningful categories, which were then synthesized into overarching themes. These themes were aligned with MHNT, which served as the guiding framework for the study. The concept map in Figure 3 visually enhances and clarifies the coding process by showing the progression from raw data

(codes) to structured insights (themes), highlighting the connections between participants' narratives and the core concepts that emerged during analysis.

Figure 3

Concept Map of the Thematic Analysis Process of Codes, Categories, and Themes



Emergent Themes

Analysis of the interview data revealed five major themes that align with MHNT: (a) compensation and staffing, (b) workplace safety, (c) team collaboration, (d) recognition and valuation, and (e) professional growth. These themes are summarized in Table 2 and are presented in the sections below with supporting quotations from participants.

Theme 1: Compensation and Staffing (Physiological Needs)

Participants highlighted the importance of fair compensation and appropriate staffing levels to reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of fair compensation and adequate staffing. Many expressed feeling undervalued when their pay did not reflect their workload or expertise. For example, Participant 3 stated, "We are often short-staffed, and it's exhausting. It makes me feel like management doesn't care." Participant 4 shared that "The pay is not competitive, especially considering the risks and workload we take on every day." These quotes illustrate how unmet physiological needs can impact job satisfaction and retention.

Theme 2: Workplace Safety (Safety Needs)

Nurses emphasized the value of a safe and supportive work environment, including psychological safety and access to resources. Concerns about safety—especially during the COVID-19 pandemic—were frequently mentioned. Participants described how safety issues created stress and decreased their motivation. Participant 5 said, "It's hard to focus on patient care when you don't even feel safe yourself." Participant 1 stated, "We didn't always have PPE, and that made me anxious every time I came to work." The lack of perceived safety highlighted a significant gap in fulfilling nurses' basic psychological needs.

Theme 3: Team Collaboration and Support Theme (Love and Belonging)

Positive teamwork and collegial support emerged as critical to feeling valued and respected. Nurses described a strong desire for supportive, collaborative team environments. A sense of community among coworkers contributed to increased job

satisfaction. For example, according to Participant 9, “When we work together, it’s like a family. That’s what keeps me going.” Participant 6 said, “If you don’t feel like your team has your back, it becomes really draining.” These responses show the importance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Theme 4: Recognition and Valuation of Nurses’ Contributions (Esteem Needs)

Participants expressed that feeling appreciated by leadership and peers significantly influenced their satisfaction. Participants expressed that being acknowledged for their work—even through small gestures—significantly influenced their sense of worth. For example, Participant 2 said, “A simple thank-you from a supervisor makes a world of difference.” Participant 8 shared, “Sometimes I feel invisible. We do so much, and it often goes unnoticed.” Recognition reinforced self-esteem and professional identity among nurses.

Theme 5: Professional Growth (Self-Actualization)

Access to continuing education, mentorship, and career advancement were seen as essential for self-actualization and long-term engagement. Nurses valued opportunities for learning and advancement. Many saw professional development as essential to feeling fulfilled and remaining engaged in their careers. For example, Participant 4 stated, “I love attending workshops and getting new certifications. It makes me feel like I’m growing.” Participant 10 explained, “Without development opportunities, the job just becomes repetitive.” (Participant 10)

These quotes reinforce the idea that self-actualization plays a vital role in long-term job satisfaction.

Table 3 is a thematic analysis table that outlines the flow from codes to subthemes to major themes and maps them to MHNT levels.

Table 3

Identified Themes, Supporting Quotes, and Connections to MHNT

Themes	Supporting quote	Maslow's need
Adequacy of compensation	"Without fair pay, you feel undervalued."	Physiological
Workplace safety	"It's hard to focus on patients when you don't feel safe yourself."	Safety
Team collaboration and support	"When my team collaborates and supports one another, it feels like a family."	Love & belonging
Recognition	"A simple 'thank you' makes all the difference."	Self esteem
Professional growth opportunities	"Opportunities for learning kept me engaged in my work."	Self-actualization

Figures 4 shows the concept maps of the identified themes and how they are linked to the MHNT. The concept map underscores the importance of addressing each of these themes to fulfill the respective needs, thereby enhancing overall job satisfaction and well-being. The circle charts in Figure 4 help reinforce the data presented visually, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the study's findings.

Figure 4

Concept Map: Linking Themes to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant responses were incorporated into the analysis to provide a balanced perspective. For instance, while most participants praised mentoring programs, one nurse described them as "ineffective due to poor execution." These contrasting views refined and validated the themes, increasing the study's credibility (Pillay et al., 2022).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was established through multiple validation strategies. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to verify the accuracy and resonance of the interpretations, thereby ensuring the findings genuinely reflected their experiences (Patton, 2015). Additionally, reflexive journaling was employed throughout the research process to document the researcher's thoughts, decisions, and potential biases. This practice enhanced transparency and allowed for a more critical examination of how the researcher's perspectives may have influenced the data collection and analysis (Rose et al., 2023). Together, these strategies bolstered the trustworthiness of the study and contributed to the overall rigor of the qualitative inquiry.

Transferability

To enhance transferability, I employed thick descriptions by offering rich, detailed accounts of the research setting, participant characteristics, and contextual factors. Thick descriptions involved presenting sufficient detail so that readers can determine the extent to which the findings are applicable to other contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I used detailed narratives to described the participants' work environments—including hospitals, ambulatory clinics, and long-term care facilities—and their diverse geographical locations, which ranged from local to international settings. Additionally, participants' levels of experience and the organizational contexts they operated within were clearly outlined. By situating the findings within these nuanced settings and incorporating direct quotes and contextualized insights from participants, the study

supports readers in evaluating the potential relevance and applicability of the results to their own settings or populations of interest.

Dependability

To ensure dependability I maintained an audit trail throughout data collection and analysis, including notes on decisions made. NVivo software was used to ensure consistent coding (Seller-Boersma et al., 2023).

Confirmability

Confirmability was achieved through documentation of the analytic process and reflective journaling. Findings were triangulated with existing literature to enhance objectivity (Boston-Leary et al., 2024; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings from interviews with 10 RNs regarding their perceptions of organizational strategies to improve job satisfaction. Five themes emerged, each aligned with MHNT, offering insights into how healthcare organizations can better meet nurses' needs.

In Chapter 5, I interpret these findings, discuss their implications for healthcare leadership, and offer recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore nurses' perceptions of healthcare organizations' strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction. Understanding these perceptions is crucial, as job satisfaction among nurses significantly influences patient care quality, staff retention, and overall healthcare outcomes. their job satisfaction.

The primary objective of this qualitative study was to delve into nurses' perceptions of organizational strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction. These strategies encompass various interventions employed by organizations to retain their nursing staff, including pay incentives, career development, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being.

The theoretical foundation of this study was MHNT. This hierarchical perspective posits that individuals can't achieve their full potential unless their basic needs are met. In the context of nursing, MHNT is particularly relevant, aligning with the intrinsic needs of nurses and emphasizing the foundational importance of meeting basic physiological requirements, such as food, water, and oxygen, for their survival.

The research question: What perceptions do nurses have of their healthcare organization's strategies designed to enhance job satisfaction, with a particular focus on interventions such as pay incentives, workplace safety, career development opportunities, nurse residency programs, and initiatives promoting well-being?

I conducted a basic qualitative study. Thematic analysis revealed five key themes: (a) compensation and staffing, (b) workplace safety, (c) team collaboration, (d) recognition, and (e) professional growth.

Interpretation of Findings

The major themes identified in this study—compensation and staffing, workplace safety, team collaboration, recognition, and professional growth—are strongly aligned (see Figure 5). These themes were previously identified as influential to nurse job satisfaction (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024; Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022; Son & Ham, 2020).

Adequate compensation and sufficient staffing are foundational to meeting nurses' physiological needs and are crucial for reducing burnout and turnover (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024; Son & Ham, 2020). Workplace safety, heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the nurses' sense of physical and emotional security, influencing their willingness to remain in their roles (Rose et al., 2023).

Team collaboration supports belonging and emotional well-being by fostering mutual respect and effective communication among colleagues (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022). Recognition, both formal and informal, contributes to nurses feeling valued, directly supporting their esteem needs (Pillay et al., 2022).

Finally, professional growth opportunities not only promote engagement and satisfaction but also support long-term retention and self-actualization (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024). These findings, situated within the MHNT, emphasize the layered nature of job satisfaction and the importance of addressing both basic and psychological needs to support a resilient nursing workforce.

Adequacy of Compensation and Staffing

Consistent with Maslow's physiological needs, participants emphasized that fair compensation and sufficient staffing were essential for their job satisfaction. A participant stated, "Without fair pay, you feel undervalued," echoing findings from Giuffrida and Davila (2024) and Son and Ham (2020). These findings align with Xiong et al. (2024), who emphasized that fulfilling basic needs like salary and workload directly influences nurses' well-being and performance.

Workplace Safety and Support

Aligned with Maslow's safety needs, participants voiced concerns about inadequate protective measures, particularly during high-risk periods like the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant 5 noted, "It's hard to focus on patients when you don't feel safe yourself." This concern was found in studies by de Lucas Ancillo et al. (2020), Jarden et al. (2023), and Hayre-Kwan et al. (2022), underscoring the need for safe working environments to maintain satisfaction and performance.

Team Collaboration and Support

Participants valued supportive work relationships, highlighting the need for cohesive teamwork, open communication, and mutual respect. These perceptions reflect Maslow's level of love and belonging. Valuing supportive work relationships, highlighting the need for cohesive teamwork, open communication, and mutual respect is supported by Polat and Terzi (2021), Boston-Leary et al. (2024), and Kim et al. (2022), indicating that effective interdisciplinary collaboration positively influences satisfaction.

Recognition and Valuation of Nurses' Contributions

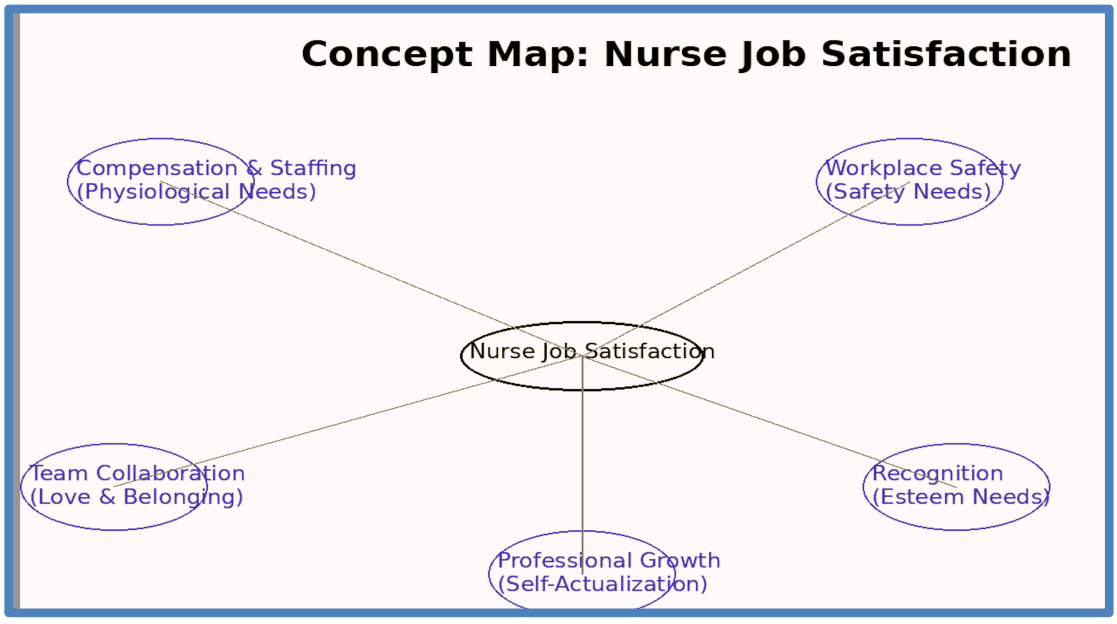
Esteem needs were evident in participants' desire for recognition. As one participant expressed, "A simple 'thank you' makes all the difference" (Polat & Terzi, 2021). Similarly, Wan (2024) and Giuffrida and Davila (2024) found that appreciation and acknowledgment significantly enhance morale and satisfaction.

Opportunities for Professional Growth

The self-actualization level of Maslow's theory was reflected in participants' appreciation for professional development opportunities. Nurses reported that access to training and advanced certifications kept them engaged, as supported by Leamon et al. (2023) and Boston-Leary et al. (2024). Opportunities for professional growth fostered not only retention but also personal and professional growth.

Figure 5

Concept Map Linking Nurse Job Satisfaction to the MHNT Concepts



Extension of Knowledge

My findings contribute to the existing literature by providing updated insights into the factors influencing nurse job satisfaction, particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. My findings reinforce existing knowledge while adding a contemporary perspective on safety concerns and resilience (Son & Ham, 2020). Understanding of job satisfaction within a modern healthcare landscape, helps leaders design better strategies to support nurses (Giuffrida & Davila, 2024, Son & Ham, 2020, Xiong et al., 2024).

Relevance of Concept Map to Study Results

The concept map in Figure 6 visually represents the alignment between the major themes identified in the study and MHNT, which served as the theoretical framework. Each theme derived from the interviews—compensation and staffing, workplace safety, team collaboration, recognition, and professional growth—corresponds to a specific level of Maslow's hierarchy, illustrating how nurses' job satisfaction is influenced by the fulfillment of both basic and higher-level needs.

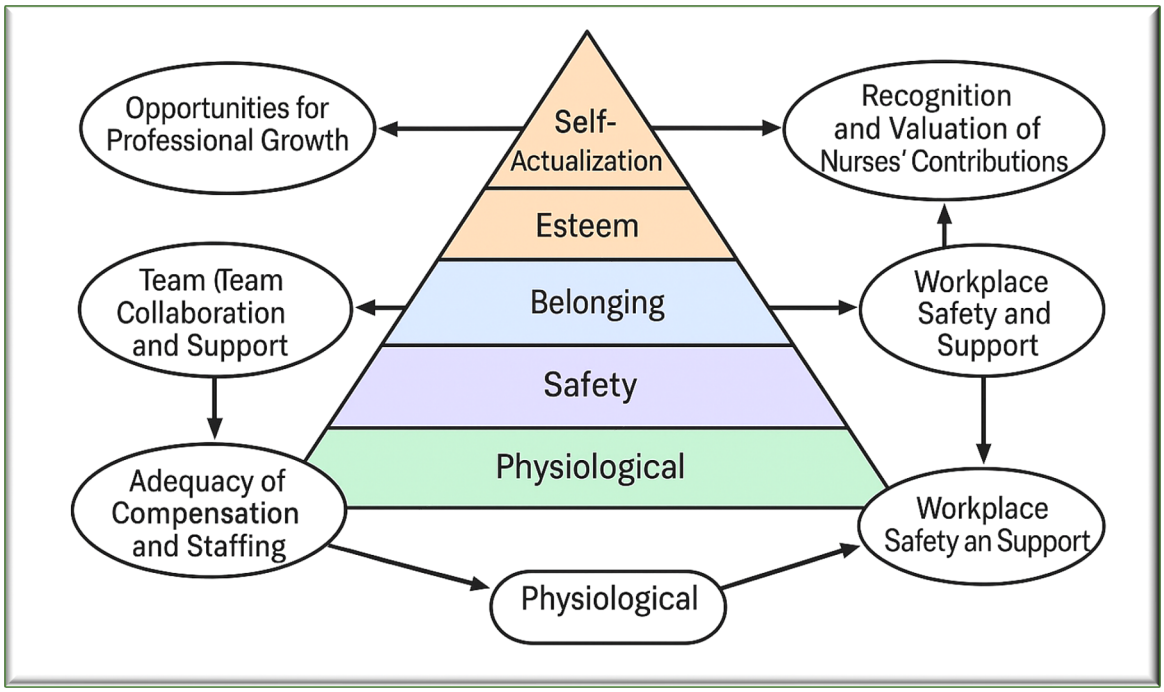
At the base, compensation and staffing reflects physiological needs, emphasizing that adequate pay and sufficient staffing are foundational for job satisfaction. Workplace safety aligns with safety needs, as participants expressed that feeling physically and emotionally secure was critical. Team collaboration corresponds with the love and belonging level, highlighting the importance of supportive workplace relationships. Recognition supports esteem needs, where appreciation and respect significantly impacted morale. Finally, professional growth relates to self-actualization, as

opportunities for learning and advancement were viewed as essential for personal and professional fulfillment.

Figure 6 represents the synthesizes the study's results into a hierarchical structure that emphasizes how addressing nurses' needs at each level contributes to overall satisfaction and retention. Figure 6 serves as a practical visual tool for healthcare leaders aiming to implement targeted strategies based on the hierarchy of needs.

Figure 6

Concept Map of How MHNT Linked Nurse Job Satisfaction to Organizational Strategies to Designed to Enhance Job Satisfaction



Limitations of the Study

Credibility

There is a risk that participants may have provided socially desirable responses, especially regarding sensitive topics such as safety and compensation. Use of member checking in this study helped to validate interpretations (Patton, 2015).

Dependability

The flexible, iterative nature of this qualitative research may have introduced inconsistencies. Adjustments made during data collection through documentation could affect the study's reliability (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Confirmability

Researcher bias may have influenced interpretation, I used detailed reflexivity practices through audit trails or researcher journal was used to ensure confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Recommendations for Future Research

My recommendations for future research include an investigation into how structured advancement opportunities affect job satisfaction and turnover (Ahn & Choi, 2023). Additional research is needed to explore several critical areas to deepen understanding of factors influencing nurse job satisfaction. One promising direction is examining the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on nurse satisfaction and retention, as the pandemic has significantly reshaped healthcare environments and stress levels (de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2020; Jarden et al., 2023).

Another vital area is psychological capital, including hope, resilience, and optimism, which may serve as buffers against workplace stress and enhance job satisfaction (Alan et al., 2022). Research should also assess the effectiveness of new graduate transition programs in fostering long-term satisfaction and workforce stability (Charette et al., 2023). Building psychological resilience through targeted interventions remains essential to mitigate burnout, particularly in high-acuity settings (Kim & Chang, 2022). Moreover, studies should investigate how quality of life interacts with job satisfaction to affect nurses' performance and retention (Kiliç Barmanpek et al., 2022). The concept of organizational commitment also deserves attention, especially its potential to counteract high turnover rates in stressful work environments (Li et al., 2020).

Research on the retention of experienced nurses could uncover specific motivators that influence seasoned professionals to remain in practice (Loft & Jensen, 2020). Lastly, examining the relationship between burnout, care rationing, and job satisfaction may reveal critical insights into maintaining care quality while supporting nurse well-being (Uchmanowicz et al., 2020). Together, these areas can guide evidence-based strategies to build a resilient and satisfied nursing workforce.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Individual Level (Maslow's Physiological, Safety, and Esteem Needs)

At the individual level, this study underscores the impact of addressing nurses' basic and psychological needs—such as fair wages, adequate staffing, workplace safety, recognition, and opportunities for advancement. When organizations meet these needs,

nurses experience greater job satisfaction, improved mental and emotional well-being, and increased motivation. According to Maslow's theory, satisfying physiological and safety needs establishes the foundation for individuals to pursue higher-level needs, including esteem and self-actualization. Nurses who feel safe, valued, and respected are more likely to deliver compassionate, high-quality patient care. This positive shift not only enhances their professional fulfillment but also contributes to improved patient outcomes.

Family Level (Maslow's Belongingness and Love Needs)

Improved job satisfaction also supports nurses' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance, positively influencing their familial relationships. When nurses' psychological needs—such as belonging, respect, and emotional support—are met in the workplace, they are less likely to bring job-related stress home. This results in better communication, deeper connection, and stronger bonds within their families. As highlighted by Son and Ham (2020) and Giuffrida and Davila (2024), reduced stress and increased emotional availability enhance family stability and well-being. Nurses who are emotionally supported at work are more likely to extend that support within their households, promoting a healthier family dynamic.

Organizational Level (Maslow's Safety, Esteem, and Self-Actualization Needs)

At the organizational level, findings from this study suggest that when healthcare organizations implement strategies aligned with Maslow's higher-level needs—such as recognition programs, leadership development, autonomy, and continuing education—they foster an environment where nurses can achieve self-esteem and eventually self-

actualization. These improvements directly influence staff retention, interprofessional collaboration, and workplace morale. As Williamson et al. (2022) noted, supportive work environments contribute to better organizational performance, enhanced patient safety, and consistent delivery of high-quality care. Organizations that address their nurses' needs are not only more efficient but are also more likely to cultivate long-term employee loyalty and attract new talent.

Community and Societal Level (Holistic Self-Actualization)

Although not initially addressed in the core study levels, the ripple effect of these organizational changes can extend to the community and societal level. Nurses who are fulfilled, empowered, and functioning at their highest potential often engage in broader public health efforts, advocacy, and policy influence. Their ability to thrive professionally and personally positions them to become role models, educators, and leaders who contribute to shaping equitable, responsive, and patient-centered health systems. As more organizations respond to the needs of their nursing workforce, the entire healthcare infrastructure stands to benefit—enhancing public trust, access, and health outcomes across populations (Rose et al., 2023).

Societal and Policy Level (Maslow's Broader Applications to Systemic Needs)

At the societal and policy level, the findings of this study offer valuable insights for shaping healthcare policies that prioritize equity, workforce sustainability, and crisis preparedness. When nurses' needs are recognized and addressed through evidence-based strategies, systemic change becomes possible. These findings can guide policymakers in developing legislation and institutional policies that reduce disparities across healthcare

systems, ensure equitable working conditions, and promote nurse well-being—especially during crises such as pandemics or natural disasters (Montuori et al., 2022; Rose et al., 2023). By incorporating nurses' voices into workforce policy design, leaders can better support the frontline workforce and improve resilience in the healthcare system. This aligns with Maslow's emphasis on societal structures facilitating individuals' ability to reach their full potential, contributing to a healthier and more equitable society.

Recommendations for Practice

To enhance nurses' job satisfaction and overall organizational effectiveness, several key practice-oriented strategies are recommended. First, fostering meaningful and engaging work environments can significantly improve both employee morale and the quality of patient care. By creating spaces where nurses feel valued and connected to their work, healthcare organizations can reduce turnover and increase commitment (Son & Ham, 2020; Wan, 2024). Supporting specialty certification is another essential step, as encouraging professional development through credentialing programs empowers nurses to expand their expertise and take pride in their roles, which in turn boosts job satisfaction (Leamon et al., 2023). Strengthening nurse leadership is equally important; developing the leadership competencies of nurse managers—particularly in areas such as change management and resource allocation—can foster a more supportive and organized work environment (Pillay et al., 2022).

Additionally, implementing robust Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) that offer access to mental health and wellness services is vital in mitigating stress and preventing burnout among nursing staff (Williamson et al., 2022).

Finally, ensuring policy fairness by enforcing transparent, equitable, and consistently applied organizational policies plays a crucial role in maintaining staff trust and morale (Forde-Johnston & Stoermer, 2022). Together, these strategies provide a comprehensive approach to improving nurse satisfaction, resilience, and retention in today's challenging healthcare environment.

Conclusion

My findings in this study reinforced the importance of meeting nurses' fundamental needs of physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization—to foster job satisfaction and reduce turnover. A supportive environment not only improves nurse retention but also leads to better patient outcomes and healthcare quality. By addressing these intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, healthcare leaders can create effective strategies that sustain a motivated and resilient nursing workforce.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Interview Guide for Nurses' Perceptions of Organizational Strategies for Job Satisfaction

Introduction

1. **Warm-up:** Thank the participant for their time. Briefly introduce the purpose of the study and the confidentiality measures.
2. **Permission to Record:** Ask if the participant is comfortable with the interview being recorded.
3. **Informed Consent Confirmation:** Confirm they have read and signed the informed consent form and understand their rights.

Main Questions

1. Opening Background Questions

- Can you tell me about your experience and role as a nurse?
- How long have you been working in this profession, and what types of units have you worked in?

2. Physiological Needs (Basic Needs)

- How do you feel about the adequacy of the pay and benefits provided by your organization?
- In what ways does your organization address work-life balance and support your physical and mental well-being?

3. Safety Needs

- Do you feel safe in your work environment? Why or why not?

- What measures does your organization take to ensure your physical and emotional safety on the job?

4. Social Needs (Belongingness)

- How would you describe the relationships and team dynamics within your unit?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging or community within your organization? What helps or hinders that?

5. Esteem Needs

- In what ways does your organization recognize and appreciate your contributions?
- How often do you receive feedback on your work, and how does that impact your job satisfaction?

6. Self-Actualization Needs

- What opportunities for professional growth and development are available to you?
- How important is career development to you in terms of feeling fulfilled in your role?

7. Overall Job Satisfaction

- Overall, what aspects of your job are most satisfying? What would you change if you could?
- How do you feel the organization's strategies impact your job satisfaction and sense of fulfillment?

8. Retention and Turnover

- What factors would influence your decision to stay with or leave your current employer?
- Are there specific strategies your organization could implement that would encourage you to stay longer?

Closing

1. **Reflection and Final Thoughts**
    - Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or perspectives regarding job satisfaction as a nurse?

2. **Thank You and Next Steps**
    - Thank the participant again for their valuable insights and time, and briefly explain the next steps in the research.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Could you share a bit about your current role and nursing experience?
2. How long have you worked in your current organization, and have you worked in similar roles elsewhere?

3. How satisfied are you with the compensation and benefits offered by your organization?
4. What resources or support does the organization provide to help you maintain a healthy work-life balance?

5. Can you describe how safe you feel in your work environment?
6. In what ways does the organization address your physical safety and security? Are there any areas you feel could be improved?

7. How would you describe the working relationships and team dynamics with your colleagues?
8. Do you feel supported by your supervisor and coworkers? What has influenced that feeling?

9. How does your organization recognize or reward your contributions?
10. Do you feel valued and respected within your team? What aspects contribute to or hinder that feeling?

11. What opportunities does your organization provide for your professional growth

and career development?

12. How important is professional development to your sense of job satisfaction, and is it something your current organization supports?

13. Overall, what aspects of your job are most satisfying, and what would you like to see improved?
14. In your view, how effectively does your organization's strategy address the needs of its nursing staff?

15. What factors would influence your decision to stay with or leave your current organization?
16. Are there any specific organizational strategies that would encourage you to stay in your current role?

17. Is there anything else you would like to share about your job satisfaction or how your organization supports you as a nurse?

Appendix C: Demographic Data Form

Participant Demographic Information Sheet

Please complete the following information. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for research purposes.

1. Age:
    - 21-30
    - 31-40
    - 41-50
    - 51-60
    - 61 and above
2. Gender:
    - Female
    - Male
    - Non-binary/Third gender
    - Prefer not to say
3. Ethnicity:
    - Hispanic or Latino
    - Black or African American
    - White
    - American Indian or Alaska Native
    - Asian
    - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    - Two or more races
    - Other (please specify): _____
    - Prefer not to say
4. Highest Level of Education Completed:
    - Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)
    - Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
    - Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)
    - Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
    - PhD in Nursing
    - Other (please specify): _____
5. Years of Nursing Experience:
    - 0-5 years
    - 6-10 years
    - 11-15 years
    - 16-20 years
    - 21 years and above

6. Current Employment Status:
    - Full-time
    - Part-time
    - Per diem
    - Unemployed
    - Other (please specify): _____
7. Primary Work Setting:
    - Hospital
    - Clinic
    - Long-term care facility
    - Home health care
    - Academic/Educational institution
    - Other (please specify): _____
8. Current Position/Title:
    - Staff Nurse
    - Charge Nurse
    - Nurse Manager
    - Nurse Educator
    - Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)
    - Other (please specify): _____
9. Shift Typically Worked:
    - Day shift
    - Night shift
    - Rotating shifts
    - Other (please specify): _____
10. Employment Duration at Current Organization:
    - Less than 1 year
    - 1-3 years
    - 4-6 years
    - 7-10 years
    - More than 10 years