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# A study of the job satisfaction of nursing aides: team plan units and case or functional method units.

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A STUDY OF THE JOB SATISFACTION OF NURSING AIDES:  
TEAM PLAN UNITS AND CASE OR FUNCTIONAL METHOD UNITS

By

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to discover if nonprofessional nursing service personnel on medical-surgical units using the nursing team plan of patient assignment express a higher degree of work satisfaction than nonprofessional workers on medical-surgical units using the functional and/or case method of patient assignment.

Justification of the Problem

In recent years there has been a great increase in the use of hospital facilities. Because the increase in the number of patients admitted to hospitals could not be matched by a corresponding increase in the number of professional nurses, hospital administrators introduced new levels of nonprofessional workers into the situation. These workers, mainly nurses aides and practical nurses, were used to augment the professional nurse staff by assuming those nursing tasks which required at most a minimum of technical training. During the period from 1952 to 1956 the number of nonprofessional nursing personnel in hospitals rose from 327,000 to 378,000, an

increase of fifteen per cent.<sup>1</sup> By 1958 the number of nonprofessional nursing personnel in hospitals had increased to 450,000.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, "from 1947 to 1949, according to data collected by medical and nursing groups, ten per cent to thirty-five per cent of the nursing service provided in hospitals was given by nonprofessional nursing personnel."<sup>3</sup>

One of the problems which has been found to accompany the employment of such numbers of nonprofessional personnel is the high rate of turnover of these workers. Besides providing an obstacle to the continuity of nursing care, such turnover also involves a high cost to the hospital when the expense of the training and adjustment periods of these workers is considered. The annual rate of turnover for the nurses aide group at one hospital was found to be 136.5 per cent.<sup>4</sup> At another hospital the turnover of nurses aides in one year was 109.6

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<sup>1</sup>American Nurses Association, Facts About Nursing, 1959 Edition (New York: The Association, 1959), p. 169.

<sup>2</sup>Vernon E. Weckwerth et al., Table 8, "Practical Nurses and Auxiliary Nursing Personnel, 1958," Hospitals, XXXIII, No. 15, Part 2 (August 1, 1959), 430.

<sup>3</sup>Frances L. George and Ruth P. Kuehn, Patterns of Patient Care (New York: Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 56.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

per cent.<sup>5</sup>

Labor turnover such as that displayed by the nonprofessionals in nursing service is frequently related to job dissatisfaction. Many studies of industry have shown that job dissatisfaction is caused by various elements in the work situation. One study of industry discovered that the rewards given by the group to the worker were potent motivational forces affecting worker satisfaction and production, whereas rewards by management seemed to have little immediate effect on production or satisfaction.<sup>6</sup> Since dissatisfaction as reflected in labor turnover is so costly to hospitals an investigation of methods of providing increased satisfaction is warranted.

A further innovation which evolved as a solution to the problem of the nursing shortage was the nursing team method. In this method of assignment professional and nonprofessional nursing service personnel work as a team to give nursing care to a group of assigned patients. Proponents of the team plan have suggested that one of its advantages is a better integration of the nonprofessional in nursing care, with an increased

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<sup>5</sup>Phyllis B. Mason, "A Study of the Rate of Turnover Among Hospital Aides in a Selected Hospital" (unpublished Field study, School of Nursing, Boston University, 1955), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>A. Zalesnik, C. R. Christensen, F. J. Roethlisberger and G. C. Homans, The Motivation, Productivity and Satisfaction of Workers (Boston, Mass.: Harvard University, 1958), p. 341.

sense of belonging and satisfaction for the worker. Because the nursing team method supposedly provides greater work satisfaction it is worthwhile to investigate the extent of work satisfaction of the nonprofessional in the nursing team method as compared to those nonprofessionals in systems other than team nursing.

#### Scope and Limitations

The study was done in two selected metropolitan hospitals which use both the team nursing method and other methods of assignment on their medical-surgical units. Selection was based on two factors. The first requirement was that the hospital did not use the team plan on all units, and therefore both the team plan and other assignment methods were available within the same hospital. The second factor necessary for selection was that nonprofessional workers were employed in both the team nursing units and in the units using other assignment systems.

The primary limitation to the study is the small size of the sample, both in the number of hospitals involved, and in the number of respondents. The number to be studied was kept small because of the pressures of time and because of the number of hospitals which were readily available for study; unfortunately, however, this limits the generalizations which can be made from the results. Because the study obtained data

from such a limited sample, its scope is not broad enough to allow for generalization to institutions other than the two which were studied.

In order to eliminate the limitation that relative satisfaction was a result of general conditions in the hospitals and not to differences in the satisfaction of workers in the various assignment plans, samples were chosen from each type of plan within the same hospital. Nevertheless, the fact that all institutions are different, and that the satisfactions of workers in each institution also differ remains as a limitation.

#### Definition of Terms

Nursing Team - "A nursing service team is a group of professional and nonprofessional nursing service personnel working together in planning, giving and evaluating patient-centered nursing care to a group of patients."<sup>7</sup>

Functional Method of Assignment - A method assigning patient care to personnel, in which there is "emphasis on jobs to be done for the patient. These jobs are grouped in the interest of economy of time and expediency of service. In the functional method of assignment it is common to find one person administering all medications, one taking all temperatures and

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<sup>7</sup>A. Leino, "Organizing the Nursing Team," American Journal of Nursing, LI (November, 1951), 665.

so forth."<sup>8</sup>

Case Method of Assignment - A method of assigning patient care to personnel in which "the total care of the patient is assigned to one member of the nursing service staff."<sup>9</sup>

Nonprofessional Nursing Service Personnel - In this study nonprofessional nursing service personnel is used to designate nursing aides.

Nursing Aide - An auxiliary worker who "carries out duties necessary to the support of nursing service, including those duties which involve minor services for patients performed under the direct supervision of professional or practical nurses."<sup>10</sup>

#### Preview of Methodology

Data were obtained from structured interviews containing questions about job satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on a survey of the literature. After a pretest of the

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<sup>8</sup>Eleanor C. Lambertsen, Nursing Team Organization and Functioning (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953), pp. 17-18.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>New York State Nurses Association, Examples of Non-Nursing Duties for Auxiliary Workers in Nursing Service (New York: New York State Nurses Association, 1949), p. 11; quoted in Lambertsen, Nursing Team Organization and Functioning, 41.

interview schedule, interviews were obtained from sixteen selected nonprofessional workers on medical-surgical units of two metropolitan hospitals. Eight workers were chosen from each hospital. In each of the two hospitals one random sample of four nonprofessional workers was chosen from the team nursing units, and another random sample of equal size was chosen from the other assignment plan units. Responses to the interview were categorized and analyzed and from this analysis recommendations were made.

#### Sequence of Presentation

Chapter II - Contains a review of related literature as well as the basis for and statement of the hypothesis.

Chapter III - Contains a description of the sample, as well as an explanation of the selection of the sample. The method and tools used in collection of the data are also described.

Chapter IV - Contains a presentation of and an analysis of the data obtained in the study.

Chapter V - Contains the summary, conclusions and the recommendations made as a result of the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER II  
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Review of the Literature

Worker satisfaction has been a topic of sociological and industrial research for many years. More recently nursing administrators also have become interested in the subject, for job dissatisfaction as manifested in labor turnover is a costly and disorganizing influence on an institution. In general, studies of job satisfaction within the hospital have been concerned with professional nurses, although a few authors have considered nonprofessional personnel as well. Studies done on the professional nurse are included in this review since the work environment is the same for both the professional and non-professional groups in the hospital, and because as humans both groups can be expected to have similar needs and reactions despite their educational differences. As a background for the description of the present study a review of pertinent literature on job satisfaction and on nonprofessional nursing personnel was indicated.

Many authors have pointed out that although workers have relative degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction can never be entirely removed. Satisfaction, according to Bullock, is a particular attitude towards the

job which results when there is a balancing of all the various particular likes and dislikes about the job. Furthermore, he feels that the worker is satisfied when the job contributes to the achievement of the worker's own personal goals and objectives.<sup>1</sup> Satisfaction is subjective and may vary within the same worker from time to time.

Numerous factors influential in worker satisfaction have been uncovered in industrial surveys, of which the prime interest is, of course, job satisfaction as it leads to increased worker productivity. The variety of factors in the nurse's job satisfaction is evident in a study done by Verlie Ziegler on the nurse complement of a 475 bed university hospital. She found that one-third or more of the staff nurses were dissatisfied with the following diverse areas--the orientation program, job descriptions, assignments, personnel policies with regard to salary and medical care plans, physical facilities, personnel shortage, work load, and the method of evaluating performance.<sup>2</sup> Diamond and Fox combined five studies on labor turnover among staff nurses and found that of all nurse resignations one-third are caused by dissatisfaction

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<sup>1</sup>R. P. Bullock, "Position, Function and Job Satisfaction of Nurses in the Social System of a Modern Hospital," Nursing Research, II (June, 1953), 5.

<sup>2</sup>Verlie M. Ziegler, Job Dissatisfaction Among Staff Nurses in One Hospital (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952), p. 39.

with factors related to their job, namely work load, time schedules, personnel policies, job security, supervisory relationships and opportunities for advancement.<sup>3</sup> In an effort to devise categories of more general areas of dissatisfaction Reynolds and Shister have grouped the many specific elements into five "primary factors": 1) the physical characteristics of the job, 2) the degree of independence permitted in doing the job, 3) the adequacy of wages to cover living costs, 4) the fairness of treatment of the worker by the company, and 5) the intrinsically interesting or uninteresting nature of the job itself.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the mention of wages as a primary factor it is generally recognized and suggested that non-economic factors are extremely important in both labor recruitment and the prevention of high rates of labor turnover. Wages alone usually do not determine a person's feeling of job satisfaction. However, when a worker is generally dissatisfied with his job he tends to look upon his wages as the basis of his dissatisfaction. According to Argyris, "dissatisfied workers will tend to decrease the psychological importance of their work and

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<sup>3</sup>L. I. Diamond and D. J. Fox, "Turnover Among Hospital Staff Nurses," New Ideas in Nursing Service (New York: Nursing Outlook, n.d.), pp. 4-7.

<sup>4</sup>Lloyd Reynolds and Joseph Shister, Job Horizons (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. 136.

emphasize the material aspects." Money becomes a symbol to the worker of being paid off by management for having to work under poor conditions. Yet instead of trying to reduce the fundamental causes of dissatisfaction, management, Argyris believes, has increased material benefits thus in effect reinforcing the worker's feeling that he is being paid off for his dissatisfaction.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, job satisfaction is based on many intrinsic factors. Morgan points out that the worker is a human being with a great many needs, most of which must be satisfied in the job situation if he is to be a happy and effective worker.<sup>6</sup> The work group provides the social situation in which some of these needs can be met. One study of industry discovered that the rewards given by the work group to the worker were potent motivational factors affecting worker satisfaction and production even more than the rewards given by management.<sup>7</sup> As Zaleznik points out: "It is well known that the social reality for the worker in industry exists in the setting

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<sup>5</sup>Chris Argyris, Personality and Organization (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 107-110.

<sup>6</sup>Clifford T. Morgan, Introduction to Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), p. 366.

<sup>7</sup>A. Zaleznik, C. R. Christensen, F. J. Roethlisberger and G. C. Homans, The Motivation, Productivity and Satisfaction of Workers (Boston, Mass.: Harvard University, 1958), p. 341.

of his immediate work group. Within this context he achieves satisfaction or experiences frustration of his need for warm social relationships and meaningful job activity."<sup>8</sup>

This concept of the importance of the work group to job satisfaction is applied in the team nursing method. Those who have proposed the team plan have suggested that one of the objectives of this plan is to provide greater work satisfaction for the personnel. It is suggested that the team plan functions to increase the worker's satisfaction by developing within the worker of a sense of belonging, and a sense of the worth of each individual's contribution to the team. This claim is validated somewhat by Bullock although he was not studying the team plan. He found that "those aspects of work group adjustment which are important to job satisfaction appear to reflect a common desire for work situation characterized by comfortable voluntary cooperative effort, opportunity for success in the task, freedom to contribute opinions, and mutual respect among cooperating workers."<sup>9</sup> Also, he concludes that the degree of job satisfaction which a nurse feels is significantly related to the degree of social and personal adjustment which she

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<sup>8</sup>A. Zaleznik, Worker Satisfaction and Development (Boston, Mass.: Harvard University, Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, 1956), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Robert P. Bullock, What Do Nurses Think of Their Profession? (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Research Foundation, 1954), p. 104.

achieves within her work group.<sup>10</sup>

As a test of this increased satisfaction in the team plan Viola Brendenberg, in her study of the functioning nursing team, asked the nursing personnel involved to write their opinions regarding their preference for the case or team method. The seven nursing aides included in her study all stated that they preferred team nursing. Despite the small number of respondents their reasons are pertinent to the present study which expands on these expressions of satisfaction by comparing the satisfaction of the nonprofessional worker in the team plan with that of the nonprofessional in other assignment plans. The aides in Brendenberg's study gave the following reasons:

1. Three felt they were able to show more initiative.
2. Six said that their duties were more definite.
3. Six stated that their work was better organized.
4. Three said that they benefited from the supervision, help, and teaching given them by the professional nurse heading the team.
5. Two stated that they liked the feeling of unity they experienced working in a team.
6. Three stated that their functioning was facilitated by being able to consult the nurse heading the team rather

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

than having to go to the head nurse each time.

7. One said that the patients were better satisfied.

8. Two said that the accomplishment of their work was facilitated, as things in general consistently functioned more smoothly.<sup>11</sup>

A final factor of importance in worker satisfaction hitherto unmentioned is that the job meet the worker's expectation regarding it. As is pointed out by Reynolds and Shister, a worker often has misconceptions about a job which he is considering, therefore he may take the job and then leave it when it proves unsatisfactory and does not meet his expectations.<sup>12</sup> Bullock has suggested that the disillusionment, frustration, dissatisfaction and possible withdrawal from nursing may be the result of a discrepancy between expectations and reality.<sup>13</sup> He further suggests, in a later publication, that those aspects of work group adjustment which are important to job satisfaction reflect certain expectations about the work situation. "Disillusionment in these matters as well as in others occurs as student nurses proceed into active service." For the more severely disillusioned these expectations change to dissatis-

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<sup>11</sup>Viola C. Brendenberg, A Functional Analysis of the Nursing Service Team (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), p. 31.

<sup>12</sup>Reynolds and Shister, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>13</sup>Bullock, Nursing Research, II, 7.

faction and "to the rather dreary anticipation of low paid, hard physical work involving little prestige and requiring much courage and self-sacrifice."<sup>14</sup> In an unpublished Field study, Anna Lee Fauver also found a close relationship between fulfillment of expectations regarding the job and satisfaction with the job. She states "the more the activities inherent in the position fulfilled the expectations of the medical-surgical nursing supervisor in this study, the greater was their degree of job satisfaction."<sup>15</sup>

#### Bases of the Hypothesis

Many authors have suggested that money is not the only factor in the worker's feeling of satisfaction in his job. One important factor is the sense of security and belonging which the worker gets from being a part of a cohesive work group. One objective of the team plan is to provide greater satisfaction for personnel by developing the sense of belonging and individual contribution in a work group. Because the team plan is supposed to offer better utilization and greater work satisfaction for the nonprofessional a comparison of the work satisfaction of the nonprofessional in the team plan with those

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<sup>14</sup>Bullock, What Do Nurses Think of Their Profession?  
p. 104.

<sup>15</sup>Anna Lee Fauver, "A Study of the Relationship Between Role Fulfillment and Job Satisfaction of Medical-Surgical Nursing Supervisors" (unpublished Field study, School of Nursing, Boston University, 1959), p. 41.

in other assignment plans is indicated.

Hypothesis

Nonprofessional nursing service personnel on medical-surgical units using the nursing team plan of patient assignment express a higher degree of work satisfaction than nonprofessional workers on medical-surgical units using the functional or case method of patient assignment.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Selection and Description of the Sample

The two agencies which constitute the sample for this study were selected because they have units on which the team plan is used as well as units on which other assignment methods are used. Both agencies employ nursing aides on all their units. The agencies are 250 bed hospitals located in the greater Boston area. Hospital A is a sectarian, general hospital, and Hospital B is a private general hospital.

The sample of sixteen nursing aides is comprised of eight aides from each hospital. They are females of various ages who have been employed as aides from one to eleven years. All have had some sort of on-the-job training at the hospital which employs them. They are employed on segregated medical or surgical units which have mixed private and semi-private accommodations.

Four nursing aides from the team plan units of Hospital A were chosen at random by drawing names from a container into which had been placed the names of all the aides on the team plan units. Since only four nursing aides were employed on the functional units of Hospital A all four were included in the study. Thus the sample of eight aides from Hospital A includes

four aides from the functional units and four aides from the team units.

At Hospital B a total of four nursing aides were employed on the team units; therefore these four aides were all included in the study. To complete the sample of eight aides from Hospital B, four nursing aides from the case method units at the hospital were randomly chosen by drawing names from a container into which had been placed the names of all the aides on the case method units.

#### The Tool Used to Collect the Data

The data for this study were collected by means of a structured interview designed to elicit responses measuring the degree of the aide's satisfaction with various aspects of her job. In the first ten questions the respondent was asked for information about her background and previous experience, while in the remaining twenty-three questions the respondent was asked to rate her satisfaction with particular elements of her job. The respondent was given a choice of five alternative ratings of satisfaction; namely, very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. In addition she was asked to rate the importance of each particular factor to her overall feeling about her job by choosing one of five alternative ratings of importance. In these questions the alternatives were: very important,

important, neither important nor unimportant, unimportant and very unimportant. The value of using this particular type of tool to measure morale is described in a recent article by Glennon et al.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Procurement of the Data

Interviews which lasted twenty to thirty minutes were conducted with each respondent during the respondent's working day. Arrangements for the interviews were made through the cooperation of the Director and Assistant Director of Nursing at each hospital. In order to insure privacy and to remove the respondent from the busy ward situation, the interviews were conducted in a conference room away from the unit. Before the questioning began the respondent was assured that her responses would be confidential and that she would not be identified in any manner. By way of introduction the author explained that she was asking nursing aides how they felt about their jobs as part of a study she was conducting at Boston University. All respondents were very cooperative.

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<sup>1</sup>J. R. Glennon et al., "New Dimension in Measuring Morale," Harvard Business Review, XXXVIII (January/February, 1960), 106-107.

CHAPTER IV  
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In order to obtain the data for the study interviews were held with sixteen aides, of whom eight were from team plan units and eight from case or functional units. The responses to the interview questions were scored as follows as a means of calculating a quantitative measure of satisfaction. The numerical values that were given to each of the five alternative ratings of satisfaction which the respondent was asked to choose were: very satisfied, 5; satisfied, 4; neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 3; dissatisfied, 2; very dissatisfied, 1. The degree of satisfaction was then calculated for each respondent by averaging the ratings which he chose for the various factors included in the interview. The respondents were then divided into team and non-team groups, and by using the figures which had been obtained for the individual aides a mean of satisfaction was calculated for each group. The results show the mean satisfaction for the aides in the team plan to be 4.40. The aides from the case or functional units had a mean satisfaction rating of 4.45.<sup>1</sup> As one can easily see, the slight difference of .05 between

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix B, Table 6.

the group means is negligible.

In order to gain further insight into the respondent's feeling about each of the job satisfaction factors in the schedule the respondent was asked to rate each factor according to its importance for him. Thus the data revealed not only how satisfied the respondent was with a particular factor, but also how strongly he felt about the factor. It can be seen that a factor on which the respondent indicated great dissatisfaction and high importance would be a critical item for the individual. On the other hand, a factor on which he indicated great satisfaction and low importance would have little significance for his overall morale. A relationship between the two ratings can be determined by subtracting the satisfaction rating from the importance rating. Importance minus satisfaction equals the difference score. In such cases as the first listed above in which satisfaction is low and importance is high, the difference score will be positive. Conversely, in instances in which the satisfaction rating is high but the importance rating is low, the difference score will be negative.

In order to arrive at a difference score for the individual respondents each of the five alternative ratings of importance was given a numerical value: very important, 5; important, 4; neither important nor unimportant, 3; unimportant, 2; very unimportant, 1. The respondent's difference score was calculated for each factor, and then from these a

mean difference score was obtained for each individual. Again the individuals were grouped according to team and non-team units. When the mean difference score for each group was calculated, it was found that the difference score for the team plan group was minus .176 (-.176), while the score for the case or functional group was plus .034 (.034).<sup>2</sup>

The negative difference score for the team plan group indicates that in this group the satisfaction rating was generally higher than the importance rating. This means that their feelings of satisfaction with the factors were as great or greater than their feelings about the importance of the factors. On the other hand, the positive difference score for the case or functional group indicates that their satisfaction ratings were generally lower than their importance ratings. They feel strongly and give high importance to items on which their satisfaction is low. This is a critical condition for overall morale. Such a consideration of the difference scores suggests that the negative difference score for the team group, when compared with the positive score for the non-team group, indicates a generally higher degree of job satisfaction for the team group. However, this tendency is not statistically significant when tested by the t test method.

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<sup>2</sup>See Appendix B, Table 7.

The job satisfaction factors which the respondents were asked to rate can be divided into five general categories: personnel policies, educational program, head nurse and supervisor, work situation, and group feeling. A comparison of the average satisfaction of the team and non-team groups for each of these categories shows the feeling of the groups to be almost identical.<sup>3</sup> This further substantiates the finding that there is no difference in the degree of satisfaction expressed by aides in the team plan and other assignment plans.

Table 1 shows the mean satisfaction ratings of both groups on questions pertaining to personnel policies. In this category the point on which there was the most difference between the groups is the question of time changes. The team group's greater satisfaction on this point may indicate that with the team the work group is more stable, thus allowing for better planning and fewer last minute changes in time. The average ratings for category one as a whole were team group 4.0 and non-team group 3.9.

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<sup>3</sup>For the responses to these questions see Appendix B, Tables 8 and 9.

TABLE 1

SATISFACTION RATINGS IN THE PERSONNEL POLICIES CATEGORY

Question	Mean Satisfaction	Mean Satisfaction
	Team Group	Non-Team Group
How satisfied are you with the wages?	3.6	3.6
How satisfied are you with your time schedule?	4.5	4.7
How satisfied are you with the sick leave policy?	4.3	4.2
How satisfied are you with the way they let you know how you are doing?	4.3	4.6
How satisfied are you with being sent to other units?	3.2	3.0
How satisfied are you with changes in your time?	4.1	3.3

The ratings of the groups in response to questions about their satisfaction with aspects of the educational program are displayed in Table 2. In this category the average rating for the team group was 4.4 while that for the

non-team group was 4.6. The ratings for the groups on each question show almost no difference.

TABLE 2

SATISFACTION RATINGS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CATEGORY

Question	Mean Satisfaction	Mean Satisfaction
	Team Group	Non-Team Group
How satisfied are you with the amount of instruction?	4.2	4.5
How satisfied are you with the opportunity to learn new things?	4.6	4.6
How satisfied are you with the supervision when doing something new?	4.6	4.8

The responses of the groups to the third category, satisfaction with the head nurse and supervisor, again reveal the similarity of opinion between the two groups. Table 3 shows the responses to each question in this category. On these questions the average rating for the team group was 4.6 while the average rating for the non-team group was 4.7.

TABLE 3

SATISFACTION RATINGS IN THE HEAD NURSE AND SUPERVISOR CATEGORY

Question	Mean Satisfaction	Mean Satisfaction
	Team Group	Non-Team Group
How satisfied are you with the way the head nurse treats you?	4.8	5.0
How satisfied are you with the way the supervisor treats you?	4.8	4.7
How satisfied are you with the way the head nurse treats your suggestions?	4.6	4.8
How satisfied are you with the interest those in authority show towards you?	4.6	4.7
How satisfied are you that you may say what you feel about your job?	4.5	4.6

The next group of questions dealt with the work situation. The average of the ratings given to these questions by the team group was 4.0, while the non-team group's average was slightly higher at 4.4. The rating for each of these questions

is shown in Table 4. As is evidenced by the group means, the team group was less satisfied than the non-team group with the amount of information they are told about their patients. This is contrary to what one would expect when one considers that with the team plan all members of the group are supposed to be involved in planning nursing care, and thus are supposedly well-informed about each patient.

TABLE 4

SATISFACTION RATINGS IN THE WORK SITUATION CATEGORY

Question	Mean Satisfaction	Mean Satisfaction
	Team Group	Non-Team Group
How satisfied are you with the amount of work?	4.2	4.5
How satisfied are you with the kind of work?	4.5	4.5
How satisfied are you that there are enough workers on your unit?	3.5	4.1
How satisfied are you with the amount of information you are told?	4.0	4.6

The average ratings of the final category of questions, group feeling, are displayed in Table 5. In this series the mean for the team group was 4.7 and the mean for the non-team group was 4.4. The higher satisfaction of the team group on almost all of the questions in this category suggests that a group feeling and a sense of belongingness for the nursing aides may be developed more strongly in the team plan. This was one of the justifications for the hypothesis of the study. However, the means show that both groups gave high ratings to these questions, and thus it is suggested that a high degree of belongingness and group feeling also is developed by nursing aides on non-team units as well as by those on team units.

An analysis of the data obtained by the ten questions about background information also shows the team and non-team groups to be strikingly similar. All the aides had worked on their unit for at least one year. Furthermore, none of the aides had ever worked at another hospital. The aides from each type of assignment plan were asked if they had ever worked on a unit which used a different assignment method. Five of the team plan aides had worked on a case or functional method unit; however, all five said that they liked to work in the team plan better than the other plans. On the other hand, the two aides of the non-team group who had worked in the team plan said they liked the case or functional method better.

TABLE 5

SATISFACTION RATINGS IN THE GROUP FEELING CATEGORY

Question	Mean Satisfaction	Mean Satisfaction
	Team Group	Non-Team Group
How satisfied are you with the kind of people on your unit?	4.8	4.6
How satisfied are you that everyone is given equal consideration?	4.8	4.5
How satisfied are you that others give you help when you need it?	4.6	4.7
How satisfied are you that everybody does his share?	4.5	4.3
How satisfied are you with the way the practical nurses treat you?	5.0	4.2
How satisfied are you with the way the staff nurses treat you?	4.8	4.6
How satisfied are you that you are an important member of your unit?	4.7	4.3

Of the sixteen aides studied, fourteen had been trained in some sort of formal training program at the hospital which employed them. The remaining two aides had learned through experience on their units. When they were asked who helped them most in learning their job, four aides of each group answered that the instructor of the aide training program had. The remainder felt they had been helped most by the head nurse or by various staff members. In response to a question about to whom they go when they have a problem on their job, seven aides in each group said that they went to the head nurse. Only one of the team plan aides said she would go to the team leader. This may indicate that the teams are not functioning ideally in the hospitals used in this study, for in a properly functioning team the aide would be expected to consult the team leader if she had a problem. On the other hand, it may indicate that the aides misinterpreted the question and thought it meant a personal problem rather than a problem with the job itself. In the case of a personal problem, for example a time request, it is reasonable to expect that the aide would feel that the head nurse rather than the team leader would be better able to help her.

As further indication of the high level of satisfaction of both groups of aides, six of the team plan group and five of the non-team group said that there was nothing that they would look for in a new job that they did not find in

their present job. The five aides who said there was something else which they would like in a new job gave varied answers as to what the "something" was. These responses were less tension, more cooperation, greater variation, more patient care, and more instruction.

The final question asked of the aide in the background information section of the schedule dealt with the expectations which the aide had about the job, before she was employed. Five of the team plan aides and six of the non-team aides felt that the job was not in any way different from what they expected it to be. As was pointed out in Chapter 2, an important aspect of job satisfaction is that the job fulfill the worker's expectations. Therefore this study's finding of a high fulfillment of expectations and a high degree of satisfaction in both the team and non-team group is not unusual.

The data thus substantiates a total impression of almost equal satisfaction in both groups, rather than the hypothesized greater satisfaction in the team plan group. One possible reason for this result is that there are elements of a team spirit on the non-team units. That is, a sense of group identity and belongingness is developed by the aides on both types of units, rather than on the team plan units alone.

On the other hand, another possible explanation for the result is that the instrument used to collect the data was

not discriminatory enough. If this is the case the differences which might exist between the groups would not have been brought out by the responses.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

Because the increased use of hospital facilities and the increased numbers of patients could not be met by corresponding increases in the numbers of professional nurses, it has been necessary in recent years for hospital administrators to augment their nursing service staff with nonprofessional workers. These workers are costly to the hospitals in that they require training and in that they have a high turnover rate. The team plan of nursing assignment is one course of action which evolved as a means of coping with the problem of the nursing shortage, as well as with the problem of utilizing the nonprofessional to best advantage. This plan makes practical application of job satisfaction studies which have shown that much of the worker's satisfaction is dependent upon the sense of security and belongingness which he gets from being a member of a cohesive work group.

Proponents of the team plan have suggested that this plan better integrates the nonprofessional into the work group and thereby provides the worker with a greater sense of belongingness and work satisfaction than do the other methods of patient assignment. Because this suggestion has been gener-

ally accepted but has not been investigated, it was decided that a comparison of the work satisfaction of nonprofessionals in the various assignment methods would be valuable. Therefore it was hypothesized that nonprofessional nursing service personnel on medical-surgical units using the nursing team plan of assignment express a higher degree of work satisfaction than nonprofessional workers on medical-surgical units using the functional or case method of patient assignment.

In order to obtain data pertinent to the hypothesis sixteen nursing aides from two hospitals in the Metropolitan Boston area were interviewed. Eight aides, of whom four were from the team plan units and four were from the case or functional method units, were chosen at each hospital. The tool which was used to collect the data was a structured interview containing thirty-three questions designed to measure the degree of the aide's satisfaction with various aspects of her work. For each element of job satisfaction the respondent was asked to choose one of five alternative ratings of satisfaction ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. In addition she was asked to rate the importance of each element to her overall feeling about her job by choosing from five alternatives ranging from very important to very unimportant. The ratings were then scored and the data analyzed.

A score of satisfaction was determined for each respondent by averaging the ratings which he chose for each

job satisfaction factor. The individuals were then divided into team and non-team groups, and a mean of satisfaction was calculated for each group. The mean satisfaction for the aides in the team plan group was 4.40, while the mean for the aides in the non-team group was slightly higher at 4.45.

The rating for each respondent was then calculated on those questions dealing with the importance of each factor. A relationship between the two ratings was determined by subtracting the satisfaction rating from the importance rating. The score thus obtained is called the difference score. In instances in which the satisfaction rating is high but the importance rating is low, the difference score will be negative. Conversely, in instances in which the satisfaction is low and the importance rating is high, the difference score will be positive. The latter is a critical condition of morale, for it indicates that those items about which the respondent feels most strongly are those items with which he is least satisfied. When the difference score was calculated for the two groups of aides it was found that the mean difference score for the team plan group was minus .176 (-.176), while the score for the case or functional group was plus .034 (.034). The negative difference score for the team group, when compared with the positive score for the non-team group, indicates a generally higher degree of job satisfaction for the team group. However, this tendency is not statistically

significant when tested by the t test method.

The finding that there was no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction expressed by the two groups was further substantiated by comparing the ratings of each group on various factors of satisfaction. The job satisfaction factors were divided into the following categories: personnel policies, educational program, head nurse and supervisor, work situation and group feeling. Both groups gave similar ratings for all five categories.

In the category dealing with personnel policies the team group had a mean satisfaction rating of 4.0 while the non-team group's mean was 3.9. The responses in the second category, the educational program, show the team group to have a mean satisfaction of 4.4 and the non-team group to have a mean satisfaction of 4.6. Satisfaction with the head nurse and supervisor was high in both groups: team group 4.6, non-team group 4.7. In the next category, the work situation, the non-team group with a mean satisfaction of 4.4 was slightly higher than the team group whose satisfaction rating averaged to 4.0. However, in the final category, group feeling, the team plan group was shown to have a higher rating on almost all of the questions. For group feeling, the mean of the team plan group was 4.7 and the mean of the non-team group was 4.4.

In general, characteristics, training and past experiences of all the nursing aides studied were very similar. Job satisfaction was displayed by both groups in that six of the team plan aides and five of the non-team aides said that there was nothing they would look for in a new job that they did not find in their present job. Also, since an important aspect of job satisfaction is that the job fulfill the worker's expectations about it, the fact that eleven of the sixteen aides said that their job was not in any way different from what they had expected it to be is further evidence of their high level of satisfaction.

#### Conclusions

1. In general the data show that in the two hospitals studied there is no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction expressed by nursing aides in the team plan compared to that expressed by nursing aides in the case or functional units. Therefore, the hypothesis was not substantiated.
2. It may be stated that generally in both hospitals the nursing aides on the team units and those on the case or functional units were satisfied with their jobs.
3. The analysis using the difference score as the measure of satisfaction showed the team plan aides to have a slight tendency towards a greater degree of job satisfac-

tion than the non-team aides. This tendency is not statistically significant by the t test method.

4. The high level of satisfaction expressed by both groups of aides on the questions about group feeling indicates that a high degree of belongingness and identity with the group is developed by nursing aides on non-team units as well as by those on team units.
5. Two findings suggest that the team plan may not be functioning ideally in the two hospitals which were studied. First, seven of the team group aides stated they would go to the head nurse if they had a problem with their job, while only one mentioned that she would go to the team leader. Secondly, contrary to what would be expected with a well-functioning team plan, the non-team group had a higher satisfaction rating than the team group on the question of how satisfied they were with the amount of information they are told about their patients.
6. The small size of the sample limits the significance of the results.

#### Recommendations

The recommendations which can be made as a consequence of this study fall logically into two categories: recommendations for further investigations, and recommendations for the nursing service of the institutions studied. In view of the

small number of respondents, and because only two institutions were used the results of the study are limited to the institutions which were actually studied. The results will be more generally applicable only if similar findings are obtained by further research on a larger group of aides from randomly selected hospitals. If this is the case, the findings of the study might well become a guide to nursing service administrators in their decisions regarding nursing aides and patient assignment methods.

Recommendations for further study

Further research, using greater numbers of aides and a wider selection of institutions, is necessary to verify the findings of this study. For such research the present investigation could best be used as a pilot study and guide. Also, it is recommended that further studies place greater emphasis on the group feeling area of satisfaction, because it was in this area that some tendency toward a difference in the degree of satisfaction was expressed by the groups. Increasing the emphasis on this area could probably best be accomplished by revising the interview questions dealing with group feelings to make them more probing and subjective, and by including more questions in this section of the schedule. Further evidence corroborating this study's findings on the satisfaction of the two groups might be obtained by calculating the

turnover rate for aides in the team plan with the turnover rate for aides in other plans, since it can be assumed that the turnover rate is related to the degree of satisfaction of the worker.

#### Recommendations for the institutions studied

It is recommended that the nursing service administrators of the two hospitals included in the study recognize that the aides are in general satisfied with their jobs. They should recognize that a sense of group feeling is developed on the case or functional units as well as on the team units, and should foster the development of cohesive work groups on all types of units.

Since two of the findings suggest that the team plan may not be functioning very well in the hospitals studied (see conclusion 5 above) it is recommended that the nursing service administrators at these hospitals evaluate the team plan in their institutions. Special consideration should be given to the functions of the team leader, and also to the team planning conferences with respect to the degree to which the aide is included in planning patient care, for these were the two areas of least satisfaction.

#### Further recommendations

If further research verifies this study's finding that aides in all types of assignment plans show similar

degrees of satisfaction, it is recommended that nursing service administrators when considering the introduction of the team plan to a unit or to the hospital should not expect that the aides, although perhaps better utilized, will have a greater sense of belonging or be better satisfied.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment Plan Used: \_\_\_\_\_

Cooperation:

1. Job Classification \_\_\_\_\_

2. How long have you worked in your present unit? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you work in any other units before this one? \_\_\_\_\_

3a. Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Have you ever worked in another hospital? \_\_\_\_\_

5A. (For those NOT assigned to team unit:) Did you ever work where they used the team plan? \_\_\_\_\_

(If yes:) Did you like to work in the team plan better than the plan here? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

B. (For those assigned to team unit:) Did you ever work where they did not use the team plan? \_\_\_\_\_

(If yes:) Did you like that plan better than the plan they use here? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How did you find out what you are supposed to do in your present job? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Who helped you most in learning your job? \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you have a problem with your job to whom do you go for help? \_\_\_\_\_

9. If you were going to change jobs what things would you look for in your new job that you don't find in your

present job? \_\_\_\_\_

10. In what ways is your job different from what you expected it to be? \_\_\_\_\_

11. (In the following questions circle the letters which symbolize the answer given by the respondent. Hand respondent the cards listing the possible responses.)

How satisfied are you with your job here? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

12. How satisfied are you with your wages here? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

12a. How important are wages in your overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

13. How satisfied are you with your time schedule? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

13a. How important is your time schedule in your overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

14. How satisfied are you with the fact that your time sometimes is changed after it has already been made out? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

14a. How important are changes in your time to your overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

15. How satisfied are you with the sick leave policy here?

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

15a. How important is the sick leave policy to your overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

16. How satisfied are you with the fact that you sometimes get sent to other units when they are short of help? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

16a. How important to your overall feeling about your job is being sent to other units? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

17. How satisfied are you that there are enough people working on your unit? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

17a. How important is this to your overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

18. How satisfied are you that everyone is doing his share of the work on your unit? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

18a. How important is this to your overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

19. How satisfied are you with the amount of help others on

your unit give you if you need it? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

19a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is getting help when you need it? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

20. How satisfied are you with the amount of work given to you  
to do? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

20a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the amount of work given to you to do? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

21. How satisfied are you with the kind of work you are given  
to do? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

21a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the kind of work you are given to do? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

22. How satisfied are you with the amount of information you  
are told about your patients? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

22a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the amount of information which you are given?  
\_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

23. How satisfied are you with the amount of instruction that

you receive on your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

23a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the amount of instruction which you receive? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

24. How satisfied are you with the kind of people with whom  
you work? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

24a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
are the people with whom you work? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

25. How satisfied are you that all workers on your unit are  
given equal consideration? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

25a. How important is getting equal consideration to your  
overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

26. How satisfied are you with the way the following people  
treat you? \_\_\_\_\_

Practical Nurses:

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

Staff Nurses:

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

Head Nurse:

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

Supervisor:

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

26a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the way the practical nurses treat you? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

26b. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the way the staff nurses treat you? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

26c. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the way the head nurse treats you? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

26d. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the way the supervisor treats you? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

27. How satisfied are you with the way the head nurse treats  
any suggestions you make? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

27a. How important to your overall feeling about your job  
is the treatment given your suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

28. How satisfied are you that you may say what you feel about  
your work? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

28a. How important is being free to say what you feel  
about your job to your overall feeling about your  
job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI I NINU U VU

29. How satisfied are you with the amount of interest those in authority show in you? \_\_\_\_\_

VS S NSND D VD

29a. How important to your overall feeling about your job is the interest they show in you? \_\_\_\_\_

VI I NINU U VU

30. How satisfied are you with the opportunity you have to learn new things? \_\_\_\_\_

VS S NSND D VD

30a. How important to your overall feeling about your job is the opportunity to learn new things? \_\_\_\_\_

VI I NINU U VU

31. How satisfied are you with the feeling that you are an important member in your unit? \_\_\_\_\_

VS S NSND D VD

31a. How important is a feeling of being an important member in your unit to your overall feeling about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

VI I NINU U VU

32. How satisfied are you with the way they let you know how you are doing? \_\_\_\_\_

VS S NSND D VD

32a. How important to your overall feeling about your job is knowing how your are doing? \_\_\_\_\_

VI I NINU U VU

33. How satisfied are you with the amount of supervision you are given when you do a job you are unsure of? \_\_\_\_\_

VS            S            NSND            D            VD

33a. How important to your overall feeling about your job is being able to get supervision? \_\_\_\_\_

VI            I            NINU            U            VU

APPENDIX B  
TABLES OF DATA

TABLE 6

INDIVIDUAL MEAN SATISFACTION SCORES ACCORDING  
TO ASSIGNMENT PLAN AND HOSPITAL

Respondent	Hospital A		Hospital B	
	Team Group	Non-Team Group	Team Group	Non-Team Group
1	4.88	4.60	4.20	4.57
2	4.48	4.60	4.15	4.45
3	4.91	4.56	4.64	4.16
4	3.96	4.96	4.12	3.84

TABLE 7

INDIVIDUAL MEAN DIFFERENCE SCORES ACCORDING  
TO ASSIGNMENT PLAN AND HOSPITAL

Respondent	Hospital A		Hospital B	
	Team Group	Non-Team Group	Team Group	Non-Team Group
1	-.434	-.166	/.166	/.280
2	-.583	-.458	/.640	/.043
3	-.166	0	/.166	/.250
4	-1.53	0	/.333	/.320

TABLE 8

RESPONSES OF NON-TEAM GROUP TO QUESTIONS 11 THROUGH 33

Question Number	Number Rating VS	Number Rating S	Number Rating NSND	Number Rating D	Number Rating VD
11	7		1		
12	2	2	3	1	
13	6	2			
14		4	3	1	
15	2	6			
16	1	1	3	3	
17	3	3	2		
18	4	3	1		
19	6	2			
20	4	4			
21	4	4			
22	6	1	1		
23	5	2	1		
24	5	3			
25	5	2	1		
26 (1)	2	6			
26 (2)	6	1	1		
26 (3)	8				
26 (4)	7		1		
27	7	1			
28	6	1	1		
29	6	2			
30	6	1	1		
31	3	5			
32	6	1	1		
33	7	1			

TABLE 9

RESPONSES OF TEAM GROUP TO QUESTIONS 11 THROUGH 33

Question Number	Number Rating VS	Number Rating S	Number Rating NSND	Number Rating D	Number Rating VD
11	3	4			1
12	2	3	1	2	
13	4	4			
14	3	3	2		
15	3	5			
16	2	2	2		2
17	2	3		3	
18	6	1		1	
19	5	3			
20	2	6			
21	5	2	1		
22	3	3	1	1	
23	4	3		1	
24	7	1			
25	7	1			
26 (1)	8				
26 (2)	7	1			
26 (3)	7	1			
26 (4)	7	1			
27	5	3			
28	5	2	1		
29	5	3			
30	5	3			
31	6	2			
32	4	3	1		
33	5	3			