



Quality of Nursing Work Life and Nursing Job Performance in Medan, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Nursing Quality of Work Life (QNWL) and nursing job performance are important variables for nurses in functioning within nursing organizations. However, empirical evidence examining the relationship between these variables remains scarce in North Sumatra Province, particularly in Medan. This study aimed to assess the relationship between QNWL and nursing job performance at Chairuddin Panusunan Lubis Hospital, Indonesia. This correlational study design involved a total sample of 62 nurses working in inpatient units. The instruments used were the QNWL and nursing work performance questionnaire. The frequency distribution, percentage, and Pearson correlation test were used for data analysis. The findings showed that QNWL and nursing job performance were predominantly in the moderate category. There was a significant and positive relationship between QNWL and nursing job performance ($p < 0.001$ and $r = 0.670$), indicating that higher QNWL is associated with better nursing performance. Therefore, maintaining and improving QNWL is essential to enhance nursing job performance, enabling nurses in hospital settings to deliver high-quality care and achieve optimal and safe patient outcomes.

Keyword: Nursing Work Life, Job Performance, Work Environment, Hospital



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1. Introduction

QNWL refers to nurses' ability to fulfill their personal needs, including physical, psychological, and social aspects, while consistently maintaining their professional roles in achieving organizational goals effectively and sustainably (Salahat & Al-Hamdan, 2022). A high level of QNWL is associated with increased productivity, improved healthcare system efficiency, enhanced job performance, greater empowerment, and lower nurse turnover rates (Salahat & Al-Hamdan, 2022). Conversely, poor QNWL may increase turnover intentions, work-related stress, workflow disruptions, decreased quality of care, and challenges in nursing workforce recruitment (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2023). Studies conducted in Bangladesh and Jordan have shown that QNWL tends to be at a moderate level, which is strongly influenced by workload, night shifts, conflicts with physicians and colleagues, as well as difficulties in maintaining regular meal times and work-life balance (Abbas & Thamima, 2024; Salahat & Al-Hamdan, 2022).

A high level of QNWL contributes to improved nursing job performance, increased work efficiency, and higher patient satisfaction (Lucas et al., 2023). Work engagement is enhanced when supported by engaging leadership and adequate job resources (Kohnen et al., 2024; Szilvassy & Širok, 2022; Yuan et al., 2024). Conversely, poor QNWL is associated with burnout and stress (Alzoubi et al., 2024; Reddy et al., 2022). In addition, decreases quality of care across various healthcare settings, including hospitals and primary care (Lucas et al., 2023).

Job performance refers to a set of activities and behaviors carried out by members of an organization to achieve its goals. In nursing, these goals include delivering quality nursing care and patient outcomes (Mehralian et al., 2025; Pourteimour et al., 2021). Nursing job performance encompasses both task performance including clinical competence, decision-making, procedural implementation (Mrayyan et al., 2023; Yamamoto et al., 2021)—and contextual performance, such as verbal and written communication, teamwork, discipline, effort, leadership, support for colleagues, and professional attitudes (Song et al., 2024).

Nursing job performance scales often assess work coordination, enthusiasm, and engagement, including willingness to collaborate and to manage critically ill patients beyond routine duties (Huang et al., 2025). A high level of nursing job performance improves the quality of nursing care, thereby reducing undesirable outcomes such as medical errors, infection rates, and adverse effects (Dall'Ora et al., 2020; Henriksen et al., 2021; Vleminckx et al., 2024). Furthermore, high performance contributes to greater organizational efficiency, increased patient satisfaction, and enhanced hospital reputation (Mehralian et al., 2025).

Various studies indicated that high QNWL improved nursing job performance. However, the strength of this relationship varies across hospitals and cultural contexts, including in Indonesia (Al Faisal et al., 2024; Diana et al., 2022; Maryani et al., 2026; Simatupang & Saryatmo, 2025; Sormin & Oscar Jayanagara, 2024). A scoping review conducted in Indonesia found that QNWL is generally at a moderate level, and nursing job performance is one of the significant factors associated with QNWL (Agusto et al., 2024). Similarly, a study in Saudi Arabia found a correlation between QNWL, work performance, and organizational loyalty (Al-Dossary, 2022). However, in a type B hospital in Jakarta, quality of work life did not have a direct significant effect on job performance, although it had a strong influence on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and psychological empowerment (Diana et al., 2022).

The Chairuddin Panusunan Lubis General Hospital in Medan represents a typical public healthcare facility in Indonesia, where nurses encounter substantial workloads and organizational pressures. This hospital is located in the densely populated city of Medan and is frequently the first choice for healthcare services among the surrounding community. In addition, it serves as a teaching hospital and a clinical learning site for nursing students from educational institutions in Medan and North Sumatra. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between QNWL and nursing job performance in this setting.

2. Methods

This study employed a correlational design. The study population comprised all nurses working in the inpatient unit. A total of 62 nurses were recruited as the study sample using a total sampling technique. The inclusion criteria were nurses who had worked as staff nurses for at least one year, to ensure that participants had sufficient work experience to meaningfully evaluate their work environment and performance, and were willing to participate as respondents. This study used the QNWL questionnaire developed by Brooks and Anderson (2005). The instrument consists of 42 items with six response options on a Likert scale (Brooks et al., 2007). The instrument was translated into Indonesian with permission obtained from the original developer. The results of the QNWL reliability test conducted on 30 nurses at the hospital, using Cronbach's alpha, yielded a value of 0.98. These results indicate that the questionnaire is highly reliable. Furthermore, a questionnaire developed by Ko et al. (2007), comprising 19 items used to measure nursing job performance. The instrument uses a five-point Likert scale (Ko et al., 2007). The instrument was translated into Indonesian after submitting a requesting permission to the original developer. The reliability test of the nursing job performance instrument, conducted among 30 hospital nurses using Cronbach's alpha, produced a coefficient of 0.95, indicating that the questionnaire has high reliability.

Data collection was carried out from August to October 2025. Before data collection, respondents were informed about the study objectives and procedures and provided written informed consent. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the frequencies and percentages of QNWL and nursing job performance. In addition, the total scores of QNWL and nursing job performance were further categorized into three distinct levels low, moderate, and high to facilitate a clearer interpretation of the data and to support more meaningful comparisons across respondents. Inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation test) were used to assess the

relationship between the two variables. Ethical approval (No. 1210/KEPK/USU/2025) was obtained from the institutional ethics committee of the Universitas Sumatera Utara.

3. Results

The majority of respondents were female (82.3%), while male nurses accounted for only 17.7%. Most respondents were aged ≥ 30 years (61.3%), indicating a relatively mature workforce. In terms of marital status, the majority were married (80.6%). Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (67.7%), followed by diploma (29.0%) and master's degree (3.2%). Work experience of at least one year (100%), suggesting adequate clinical experience among respondents (Table 1).

Table 1 Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Male	11	17.7
Female	51	82.3
Age (year)		
< 30	24	38.7
≥ 30	38	61.3
Marital Status		
Unmarried	12	19.4
Married	50	80.6
Academic Degree		
Diploma	18	29.0
Bachelor	42	67.7
Master	2	3.2
Work Experience		
< 1 year	0	0.0
≥ 1 year	62	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of QNWL and nursing job performance by category. Majority had a moderate level of QNWL (64.5%), followed by high (19.4%) and low (16.1%) categories. A similar pattern was observed for nursing job performance, where most respondents were also categorized as moderate (64.5%), followed by high (22.6%) and low (12.9%). These findings indicate that both QNWL and nursing job performance are generally at a moderate level, suggesting room for improvement in both aspects.

Table 2 Distribution of QNWL and nursing job performance by category

Quality of Nursing Work Life f (%)			Nursing Job Performance f (%)		
High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low
12	40	10	14	40	8
(19.4)	(64.5)	(16.1)	(22.6)	(64.5)	(12.9)

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of QNWL and nursing job performance. The mean score of QNWL was 147.98 (SD = 4.664), with an actual score range of 73–232 within the theoretical range of 42–252. Meanwhile, the mean score of nursing job performance was 50.40 (SD = 1.412), with an actual range of 28–74 within the theoretical range of 19–76. These results indicate that, on average, both QNWL and nursing job performance fall within the moderate category.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of QNWL and nursing job performance

Variable	Possible scores	Actual scores	Mean	SD
Quality of Nursing Work Life	42 – 252	73 – 232	147.98	4.664
Nursing Job Performance	19 – 76	28 – 74	50.40	1.412

As shown in Table 4, there was a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between QNWL and nursing job performance ($r = 0.670$; $p < 0.001$). The strength of this correlation indicates a substantial relationship, implying that improvements in QNWL may contribute significantly to enhancing nursing performance.

Table 4 Pearson correlation coefficients between QNWL and nursing job performance

Variable	Quality of Nursing Work Life	Nursing Job Performance
Quality of Nursing Work Life	1	0.670**
Nursing Job Performance	0.670**	1

** $p < 0.001$ (2-tailed).

4. Discussion

This study demonstrates a strong positive relationship between QNWL and nursing job performance. This result confirms that the QNWL plays a critical role in determining nursing performance. The strength of this correlation indicates that improvements in QNWL are likely to be accompanied by corresponding increases in nursing job performance. These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted in Indonesia. A study at Kasih Herlina Hospital, Sorong, demonstrated that QNWL dimensions—such as work–home life balance, job design, and external work conditions—have a significant positive effect on nursing job performance, contributing to increased motivation, reduced burnout, and improved efficiency and quality of care (Simatupang & Saryatmo, 2025). Similarly, research conducted at General Ahmad Yani Hospital, Metro, found a strong and positive relationship between QNWL and nursing performance, with regression analysis further confirming that QNWL has a significant effect on job performance (Herleni et al., 2025).

An implementation of a caring-based QNWL model across eight hospitals in East Java provides compelling evidence of the critical role of work life quality in shaping nursing performance. The study demonstrated that QNWL significantly influences nurses' ability to deliver care, highlighting that performance is not solely determined by technical competence but also by the broader work environment and psychosocial context. The model emphasizes a holistic perspective in which caring values are embedded within organizational practices, fostering a supportive and human-centered work environment (Nursalam et al., 2020). Furthermore, the relationship between QNWL and nursing performance is not only direct but also operates through important mediating mechanisms. QWL enhances nursing performance indirectly by fostering organizational citizenship behavior and increasing job satisfaction (Al Faisal et al., 2024; Sormin & Oscar Jayanagara, 2024).

A higher level of QNWL has been consistently associated with increased job satisfaction, which in turn enhances motivation and professional commitment. Nurses who experience satisfaction in their work environment tend to show greater enthusiasm, resilience, and dedication in performing clinical tasks. This positive psychological state enables them to provide more attentive, accurate, and compassionate care, ultimately leading to more optimal performance outcomes. In contrast, poor QNWL may lead to dissatisfaction, burnout, and decreased performance, which can negatively affect both patient safety and service quality (Salahat & Al-Hamdan, 2022).

Several studies have consistently demonstrated that better QNWL is directly associated with higher nursing job performance, particularly in the implementation of nursing care and adherence to professional standards (Damanik et al., 2021; Dharma Pratiwi & Putri, 2025; Herleni et al., 2025). This relationship highlights that nurses' performance is not solely determined by clinical knowledge and technical skills, but is also strongly influenced by the quality of their work environment. When nurses experience supportive working conditions—such as manageable workloads, clear role expectations, and adequate resources—they are more capable of delivering care that is accurate, timely, and aligned with established clinical guidelines. As a result, adherence to nursing standards becomes more consistent and reliable.

Evidence from hospital-based studies indicates that nurses who experience a high level of QNWL tend to demonstrate “good” performance in the majority of cases, with a statistically significant relationship

consistently identified between QNWL and nursing job performance (Damanik et al., 2021; Herleni et al., 2025). This finding reinforces the idea that the quality of nurses' work environments plays a decisive role in shaping their ability to perform effectively. A favorable QNWL reflects not only adequate physical and organizational conditions but also psychological well-being and professional fulfillment, all of which contribute to improved clinical performance and consistency in care delivery.

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between QNWL and nursing job performance. Second, the study was conducted in a single hospital with a relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Third, the use of self-reported questionnaires may introduce response bias. Finally, potential confounding variables such as leadership, workload, and organizational culture were not included in the analysis.

Conclusion

This study found that both the QNWL (147.98 ± 4.664) and nursing job performance (50.40 ± 1.412) were predominantly at a moderate level. A strong and significant positive relationship was identified between QNWL and nursing job performance ($r = 0.670$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that better work life quality is associated with improved performance among nurses. These findings highlight the critical role of QNWL in enhancing nursing performance and ensuring the quality and safety of healthcare services. Therefore, efforts to improve nursing work life—particularly in terms of work environment, leadership support, and resource adequacy—are essential to optimize performance and sustain high-quality patient care.

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