

## Nurses' social skill related to job satisfaction

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine nurses' social skills related to their job satisfaction. The subjects were 164 nurses working in six public hospitals in Toyama prefecture.

The scales used were the Social Skill Scale and the Japanese version of the Nurses' Job Satisfaction Scale of Stamps. The results were as follows; 1) The start of human relationships as a sub-concept of social skills was positively correlated with organizational requirements and total scores for job satisfaction, 2) The maintenance of relationships as a sub-concept of social skills was positively correlated with their scores for professional status as a sub-concept of job satisfaction, and 3) Self-assertion as a sub-concept of social skills was negatively correlated with their scores for pay as a sub-concepts of job satisfaction.

These findings suggested that the nurses' social skills are related to their job satisfaction.

### Key words

Nurses' job satisfaction, Social skill, Human Relationships

### Introduction

Nurse's stress, which is reported to be related to personal relationships, is amplified by a feeling of powerlessness when there are difficulties in relating to a patient during the care process<sup>1)</sup>. Regarding relationships with co-workers, the relationships that cause the greatest stress for nurses is that between doctors and nurses<sup>2)</sup>. Munakata, along with burnout syndrome of nurses, states that problems in personal relationships affect the degree of psychological satisfaction of nurses<sup>3)</sup>. In addition, Bailey and Claus showed that stress influences job satisfaction of nurses in the workplace<sup>4,5)</sup>. In other words, they suggested

that the relationship between stress and the nurse's job satisfaction is considerable. Both Stamps and Bailey<sup>4,6)</sup> have also carried out studies on nurse's job satisfaction. In Japan, considerable research has been carried out since the job satisfaction scale was successfully translated to Japanese in 1987 by Ozaki<sup>7,8)</sup>. Wada<sup>9)</sup> defined social skills as a set of interpersonal skills composed of three sub-skills: the ability to human relationship, the ability to maintain a relationship, and self-assertion in a human relationship. The skills used in starting of a human relationship involve talking publicly to people we have just met, giving a good impression to the person, and opening ourselves to them. For properly maintaining a relationship,

errors must be admitted frankly, so that both parties can trust each other. Each party must work actively in the relationship. This does not apply when one person holds a completely contrary view on a matter, and expresses that opinion clearly, but without simply and flatly refusing to agree. In other words, personal relationships are related to social skills. As for a nurse's work, importance is attached to personal relations, and these are also influenced by individual self esteem and ability to establish personal relationships. This suggests an association between stress in personal relationships and social skills. As the degree of learned social skills is increase, personal relations may become smoother, and the degree of job satisfaction may also increase. The influence of social skills on job satisfaction was examined by this study as described above.

### Methods

Subjects: A random sample of nurses who worked in six public hospitals in Toyama Prefecture was taken. Out of an investigation targeting 200 people, 164 nurses responded. These were all women. The subjects comprised 21 head nurse managers and 143 nurses. From the nurse groups 106 had more than 5 years of nursing experience, 22 had between 3 and 5 years of experience and 36 had under 3 years experience. There were 89 unmarried and 75 married nurses. There were 151 diploma graduates and 13 graduates from a junior college. Contents of investigation and measurement tools: The correlation was examined between social skill and the nurse's job satisfaction, after setting social skill to dependent variables and the nurse's job satisfaction to independent variables. Ozaki's<sup>7)</sup> Japanese edition of Stamps' Job Satisfaction Scale was used for the measurement of job satisfaction. This

measure is composed of seven sub concepts; "pay", "professional status", "doctor-nurse relationships", "organizational requirements", "autonomy", "task" and "interaction" (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in this study was 0.820). Wada's<sup>9)</sup> social skill measurement (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in this study was 0.879) was used to measure social skills. This measure is composed of three sub concepts; "the start of human relationships", "the maintenance of relationships", and "self-assertion". Study subjects were asked to fill out a questionnaire within one week. The correlation between nurses' social skills and their job satisfaction was analyzed by multiple regression analysis. Furthermore, these relationships were examined, by every group of career ladder, years of experience, educational background and marital status.

### Results

The relationship between the nurse's social skills and job satisfaction is shown in Table 1. A positive correlation between the ability to successful start human relationships and total job satisfaction was found ( $r=.179$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). In addition, positive correlations of  $r=.181$ ,  $r=.189$  were shown between the ability to start human relationships, the ability to maintain these relationships and "organizational requirements" measure of satisfaction, respectively. Furthermore, there was a positive correlation between the maintenance of the relationships and "job status" ( $r=.240$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). However, a negative correlation was found between the maintenance of relationships and "task" and also between self-assertion and "pay" ( $r=.164$  and  $.211$ ,  $p<0.05$  and  $<0.05$  respectively). The relationship between social skills and job satisfaction based on the career ladder of managers and nurses is shown in Table 2. In the survey of nurses groups, both "the start of human relation-

Table 1 Relationship between social skills and job satisfaction

n=164

Components of Job satisfaction	Social skill		
	The start of human Relationships	The maintenance of Relationships	Self-assertion
Pay	0.093	0.013	- 0.211*
Job Status	0.027	0.240**	0.054
Doctor-Nurse Relationships	0.149	0.083	- 0.096
Organizational Requirements	0.181*	0.189*	- 0.090
Autonomy	0.134	- 0.017	- 0.144
Task	0.119	- 0.164*	- 0.085
Interaction	0.115	0.109	- 0.094
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.179*</b>	<b>0.109</b>	<b>- 0.151</b>

Partial correlation coefficient \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

The start of human Relationships, The maintenance of Relationships and Self-assertion are Sub-concepts of Social Skill. Pay, Job, Doctor-Nurse Relationships, Organizational Requirements, Autonomy, Task and Interaction are Sub-concepts of Job satisfaction.

ships" and "the maintenance of relationships" were positively correlated with "organizational requirements", "task" and "job status", respectively (r = .214, .195, .320 and .234, p<0.05, 0.05, <0.01 and <0.01). Furthermore, negative correlations were found between the maintenance of relationships and "task" and also between self-assertion and "pay" (r = -.237 and -.189, p <0.01 and <0.05 respectively). However, in the survey of nurses in managerial positions, a negative correlation was found between self-assertion and "doctor-nurse relationship". r = -.471, p<0.05). The relationship between social skills and job satisfaction based on the number years of nursing experience is shown in Table 3. In the group with 3 to 5 years of experience, a positive correlation between the start of

human relationships and "task" was shown (r = .484, p<0.05).

A close correlation between the maintenance of relationships and "job status" was observed in the group with greater than five years' experience (r = .275, p<0.01). However a negative correlation was shown between self-assertion and "pay" and "autonomy" (r = -.197, -.254, p <0.05 and <0.01 respectively). Table 4 shows the relationship between social skills and job satisfaction based on educational background. In the group of diploma graduates, the start of human relationships was positively correlated with "doctor-nurse relationships" and "organizational requirements", and between the maintenance of relationships and "job status", too (r = .185, .231 and .213, p<0.05, <0.01 and <0.01

Table 2 Relationship between social skill and job satisfaction based on a position on the career ladder n=164

Components of Job satisfaction	Group	Social skill		
		The start of human Relationships	The maintenance of Relationships	Self-assertion
Pay	Manager	0.127	- 0.122	- 0.382
	Nurse	0.101	0.030	- 0.189*
Job Status	Manager	- 0.194	- 0.167	0.189
	Nurse	0.036	0.320**	0.026
Doctor-nurse Relationships	Manager	0.266	- 0.032	- 0.471*
	Nurse	0.148	0.092	- 0.041
Organizational Requirements	Manager	- 0.077	- 0.126	- 0.117
	Nurse	0.214*	0.234**	- 0.089
Autonomy	Manager	0.222	0.155	- 0.302
	Nurse	0.158	- 0.056	- 0.134
Task	Manager	- 0.202	0.052	- 0.177
	Nurse	0.195*	- 0.237**	- 0.032
Interaction	Manager	0.372	- 0.049	- 0.224
	Nurse	0.087	0.148	- 0.114

Partial correlation coefficient \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

respectively). However there was a negative correlation between "self-assertion" and "pay" ( $r = -.193$   $p < 0.05$ ). However, a positive correlation was found between "the start of human relationship" and "autonomy" in the junior college graduate group ( $r = .781$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). "The maintenance of the relationships" was also correlated positively with "organizational requirements", "autonomy" and "interaction" ( $r = .747$ ,  $.635$  and  $.691$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $< 0.01$  and  $< 0.05$  respectively). Table 5 shows the relationship between social skills and job satisfaction based on marital status. In the unmarried group "the start of human relationships" and "the maintenance of relationships" was positively correlated with "organizational requirements" ( $r = .228$  and  $.293$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and  $< 0.01$  respec-

tively). A positive correlation between the maintenance of relationships and "job status" were found in both the unmarried and the married group ( $r = .252$  and  $.246$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and  $< 0.05$  respectively).

## Discussion

There was nothing to examined about the relations between social skill and job satisfaction of nurses until now. But Minami<sup>10)</sup> saide with burnout, the relation between psychological satisfaction and human relation of nurses. And Argyle et al., a group of social psycholgists, defined social skills as effective social interaction capable of realizing a purpose in group situations. In other words, for people who do

Table 3 Relationship between social skill and job satisfaction based on years of experience n=164

Components of Job satisfaction	Group	Social skill		
		The start of human Relationships	The maintenance of Relationships	Self-assertion
Pay	0 ~ 3	- 0.050	- 0.233	- 0.123
	3 ~ 5	- 0.006	- 0.104	- 0.138
	5 ~	0.055	0.005	- 0.197*
Job Status	0 ~ 3	0.137	0.064	0.101
	3 ~ 5	- 0.328	- 0.021	0.332
	5 ~	0.030	0.275**	0.043
Doctor-nurse Relationships	0 ~ 3	- 0.034	0.225	0.118
	3 ~ 5	- 0.061	- 0.034	0.015
	5 ~	0.155	0.045	- 0.131
Organizational Requirements	0 ~ 3	0.119	0.140	0.237
	3 ~ 5	0.181	0.288	- 0.063
	5 ~	0.136	0.161	- 0.121
Autonomy	0 ~ 3	0.210	- 0.239	- 0.004
	3 ~ 5	0.142	0.134	0.242
	5 ~	0.110	0.016	- 0.254**
Task	0 ~ 3	0.042	- 0.244	0.114
	3 ~ 5	0.484*	- 0.377	- 0.430
	5 ~	0.058	- 0.146	- 0.064
Interaction	0 ~ 3	- 0.012	- 0.112	- 0.043
	3 ~ 5	- 0.029	0.150	- 0.036
	5 ~	0.173	0.136	- 0.111

Partial correlation coefficient \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

not have good social skills, it is difficult to build and maintain personal relationships. In short, the associated between the personal relationships of ability with job satisfaction.

#### *Relationship between social skills and job satisfaction*

Skills in starting human relationships are talking publicly to people we have just met,

giving a good impression to them, and opening ourselves up to them. In other words, the degree of skill in successfully starting human relations is being observed and evaluated by the other person. Support from colleagues can be easily attained by a person who has good self-esteem and who actively works to build good relationships with others in the workplace. The findings of this study suggest

Table 4 Relationship between social skills and job satisfaction based on educational background n=164

Components of Job satisfaction	Group	Social skill		
		The start of human relationships	The maintenance of relationships	Self-assertion
Pay	Diploma	0.099	0.005	- 0.193*
	Junior college	- 0.179	0.180	- 0.508
Job Status	Diploma	0.037	0.213**	- 0.051
	Junior college	0.080	0.568	- 0.042
Doctor-nurse relationships	Diploma	0.185*	0.035	- 0.145
	Junior college	0.217	0.429	- 0.318
Organizational Requirements	Diploma	0.231**	0.136	- 0.097
	Junior college	- 0.568	0.747**	- 0.319
Autonomy	Diploma	0.120	- 0.050	- 0.139
	Junior college	0.748**	0.635*	- 0.542
Task	Diploma	0.118	- 0.156	- 0.055
	Junior college	- 0.159	- 0.216	- 0.502
Interaction	Diploma	0.116	0.075	- 0.071
	Junior college	0.093	0.691*	- 0.581

Partial correlation coefficient \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

that the feeling of satisfaction in performing work duties increases as a result. Positive correlations were shown for "the start of human relationships", and "the maintenance of relationships" and "organizational requirements", and between "the maintenance of relationships" and "professional status". "The maintenance of relationships" is the skill in maintaining human relationships by supporting an important matter a companion is considering and building trust between individuals. If personal relationships can be maintained, mutual trust is established. Kemper<sup>12)</sup> described a feeling of satisfaction that develops when we consider our present efforts and status to be appropriate. This feeling is a pleasant feeling of relief that assures us that this personal

relationship is enjoyable. Therefore, nurses who actively open themselves to others usually have obtained understanding of their colleagues, and established mutual trust, and therefore are satisfied with the present control system, considering their position to be appropriate. However, "self-assertion" is a positive skill where one can present one's opinion properly in a relationship and speak to one's companion as an equal. In other words, the person who is assertive can protect his position and his rights in the workplace. Yoshida<sup>13)</sup> et al. indicated that appropriate "self-presentation" under various circumstances involved in personal relationships allows the smooth interaction between us and the object of self-presentation. It also allows the acquisi-

Table 5 Relationship between social skills and job satisfaction based on marriage status  
n=164

Components of Job satisfaction	Group	Social skill		
		The start of human relationships	The maintenance of relationships	Self-assertion
Pay	Unmarried	0.072	0.051	- 0.200
	Married	-0.060	- 0.029	- 0.221
Job Status	Unmarried	0.001	0.252*	0.031
	Married	0.082	0.246*	0.059
Doctor-nurse Relationships	Unmarried	0.080	0.190	- 0.073
	Married	0.185	0.000	- 0.137
Organizational Requirements	Unmarried	0.228*	0.293**	- 0.118
	Married	0.094	0.137	- 0.073
Autonomy	Unmarried	0.186	0.053	- 0.097
	Married	0.120	- 0.040	- 0.209
Task	Unmarried	0.141	- 0.209	- 0.080
	Married	0.051	- 0.154	- 0.064
Interaction	Unmarried	0.083	0.119	- 0.183
	Married	0.176	0.115	- 0.007

Partial correlation coefficient \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

tion of high recognition and maintenance of stable self-respect. Self-presentation is an attempt to make others understand the kind of person we are. The negative correlation between self-assertion and "pay" observed in this study suggests that people with a lower degree of satisfaction are more self-assertive in terms of "pay", which is one's valuation, trying to obtain satisfaction with "pay".

#### *The career ladder and social skills - job satisfaction relationship*

In the present study "the maintenance of relationships" was correlated with "organizational requirements" and "job status" and "the start of human relationships" was also correlated with "organizational requirements" in the nurse group. Smooth nursing management

is possible only when there are complementary relationships between nurses and the head nurse<sup>8)</sup>. Therefore, trust between nurses and the head nurse is maintained by appropriate discrimination between the two positions by each nurse. If trust is sufficient, the degree of satisfaction rises in the nurse's organizational requirements. However, a nurse could show a negative correlation between "the maintenance of relationships" and "task requirement", even though she showed a positive correlation between "the start of human relationships" and "task requirement". This may be explained as follows. Since nursing work can not be performed alone, nurses first try to improve relationships. However, since the nursing ideal in individual nurses may be inconsistent with reality, the relationships are difficult to

maintain, which may decrease the degree of satisfaction. The head nurse group showed a negative correlation between the degree of satisfaction toward self-assertion and the "doctor-nurse relationship". Indeed, the doctor can't understand nurses' work. A head nurse does not appear to obtain satisfaction from the doctor-nurse relationship alone, because she often speaks up for the patient in her attempts to be a good nurse and tries to gain understanding and cooperation from the patient.

#### *Years of experience and social skills - job satisfaction relationship*

In the group with 3 to 5 years of experience a positive correlation between "the start of human relationship" and "task" was shown. This suggests that nurses at this experience level become accustomed to their job, and gain a feeling of satisfaction from enriching relationships with colleagues in the ward. The personal relationships that were built up during this time period were maintained. In the group with 5 years or more of experience, a positive correlation was observed between maintenance of human relationships and "professional status". This suggests that they realize the appropriateness of their recognition in the personal relations they have maintained, have established mutual trust, and are satisfied with their roles and professional recognition. However, the negative correlation observed between self-assertion and "pay" or "autonomy" indicates that nurses who do not consider their "pay" to be appropriate are self-assertive to protect their rights and position, and to obtain satisfactory "pay". "Autonomy" indicates self-control according one's own standard. A person who has good self-control can control her emotions, and is quite capable of basing her actions on intelligence and can gratify desire

realistically<sup>14)</sup>. Therefore, a negative correlation may have been observed between self-assertion and "autonomy".

#### *Educational background and social skills - job satisfaction Relationship*

"A start of human relationships", the diploma graduate showed a positive correlation between "organizational requirements" and the "doctor-nurse relationship". Furthermore, a positive correlation was observed between the maintenance of the relationship and "professional status". A previous study showed that more diploma graduates than junior college graduates regard nursing as their lifework<sup>15)</sup>. Therefore, the former may be more satisfied with their roles as nurses, their relationships with doctors, and control by the head nurse, while experiencing fewer doubts, thus establishing good relationships of mutual trust in the workplace. However, there was a positive correlation between maintenance of relationships and "organizational requirements", "autonomy" and "interaction" and also between "the start of human relationships" and "degree of autonomy" of nurses who graduated junior college. Locksley<sup>16)</sup> asserted that a person with a higher educational background copes better with complications. In other words, highly educated persons can express their opinions and feelings well by words and behavior, and can cope with conflicts at work by themselves, and as a result, may be satisfied with autonomy as specialists. Hawkins et al<sup>17)</sup> considered that highly educated persons are gentle and do not control others, and express esteem for others' feelings. Therefore, they may maintain complementary relationships and are satisfied with organization requirements and are in harmony with their colleagues.



### *Marriage status and social skills - job satisfaction relationship*

"Organizational requirements" showed a positive correlation between social skills and job satisfaction in the unmarried group for "the start of human relationships", and "the maintenance of the relationships". Since a study that showed "unmarried females spend more time with friends than married females"<sup>18)</sup>, the unmarried group appears to have established and maintained closer relationships with friends. They may treasure human relationships at the workplace and try to build up trust and complementary relations, because their work time is irregular. Thus, they may be satisfied with organizational requirements. In addition, there was a correlation between maintenance of the relationships and "professional status" in both the unmarried group and the married group. This may be because the unmarried group understood the professional status of married nurses, which is their future status, while the married group does not want to trouble the other nurses.

### **Conclusion**

This study, the association between social skills and job satisfaction in nurses, speculates that the degree of job satisfaction may be affected by communication ability as a means of understanding others, which is the basis of the personal relations. The results were as follows: 1) "The start of human relationships" was positively correlated with scores for job satisfaction, 2) "The maintenance of the relationships" was positively correlated with scores for "professional status" as a sub-concept of job satisfaction, and 3) Self-assertion was negatively correlated with scores for "pay" as a sub-concept of job satisfaction.

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## 看護婦の社会的スキルの職務満足度への影響

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### 要 旨

本研究では看護婦の社会的スキルの職務満足度への影響を明らかにする目的で調査を行った。調査対象は富山県下の6つの公的病院に就業する看護婦で、有効回答の得られた164名を母集団とした。測定用具は、StampsのJob Satisfaction日本語版、および和田の社会的スキル測定尺度（関係開始、関係維持、自己主張）を使用した。その結果以下のことが明らかになった。

1. 社会的スキルの関係開始能力と、職務満足度合計とは正の相関があった。
2. 社会的スキルの関係維持能力と、職務満足度の看護管理、地位とは正の相関があった。
3. 社会的スキルの自己主張能力と、職務満足度の給与との負の相関があった。

以上の結果から、看護婦の職務満足度には個人の社会的スキルが影響していることが示唆された。

### キーワード

看護婦の職務満足度, 社会的スキル, 人間関係