



Comprehensive study on job satisfaction of Filipino nursing professionals in Germany reveals extent and influence of experiences of racism

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Recruiting, integrating and retaining international nursing professionals are essential components in dealing with the nursing shortage in Germany. This entire process poses massive challenges for both facilities and the professionals they recruit. A comprehensive study now published by business psychologist Grace Lugert-Jose shows low satisfaction and high levels of experiences of racism among Filipino nursing professionals working here.

The majority of Filipino nursing professionals working here would not recommend working in Germany to friends or colleagues. Almost two-thirds (64%) have experienced racism or other forms of discrimination. These are alarming figures. Nevertheless, satisfaction has already improved significantly compared to the previous year.

That is the result of a study by the business psychologist and intercultural consultant Grace Lugert-Jose, who specializes in the integration of international nursing professionals in Germany. For the study, which was conducted in February 2023, Grace Lugert-Jose surveyed nursing professionals from the Philippines living and working in Germany about their job satisfaction and various aspects of integration.

Last year, an initial study was already conducted on this topic, which attracted a great deal of attention in the media and among experts.

With 224 participants, the current study allows good conclusions to be drawn about the entirety of Filipino nursing professionals in Germany. The majority of the findings of this study are also likely to be transferable to the overall situation of many nursing professionals from other countries of origin.

"A key finding of the first study was that the satisfaction of the Filipino/Filipina nurses was not high," Grace Lugert-Jose said. During the evaluation of the 2022 study, important follow-up questions already arose. Because although it had not been asked, many participants reported experiences with discrimination and racism. It was then clear to Grace Lugert-Jose that this would have to be given greater focus in a new study.



Racism is a fundamental problem in the integration of international nursing professionals

64% of participants in the current study have reported about their experience with discrimination or racism at work. The vast majority of such experiences are subtle forms: condescending behavior, exclusion from group processes, or being ignored. This falls under bullying and is consistent with previous studies that bullying is widespread in nursing. The language barrier and cultural differences in communication often play a role here. "Often, newly arrived nurses come into teams with a rather poor work climate where bullying is already commonplace. Then, of course, as the newcomers with mostly reserved demeanors and uncertainty in the German language, they become victims of bullying," Grace Lugert-Jose said.

However, there were also reports of openly racist remarks, insults and even physical assaults.

The nursing professionals who perceived discrimination and racism are significantly more dissatisfied with their jobs and understandably more likely to change employers.

The results of the study show that there are several places to start to reduce this problem. First, the intercultural competence of managers plays a crucial role. The fact that discrimination and racism were predominantly experienced by colleagues underscores the importance of good managers, who would have to act competently and intervene here. The most frequent suggestion for improvement from those affected was training at all levels on culturally sensitive interaction.

On the other hand, there is a significant correlation with the perception of discrimination and racism and intercultural preparation in the country of origin. The better the participants had been prepared, the less likely the perceived experience of discrimination and racism.

Sometimes cultural misunderstandings lead to perceived discrimination. The very different communication styles, in Germany and the Philippines in particular, quickly lead to misinterpretations. "In many cases, immigrant professionals perceive remarks that pass as not particularly sensitive but acceptable in Germany as bullying," says Grace Lugert-Jose. "These misunderstandings can be significantly reduced through good intercultural training on both sides."

Significant increase in satisfaction compared to last year

A positive finding of this year's study is a significant improvement in satisfaction in all categories surveyed. Grace Lugert-Jose commented, "It is nice to see that the results have already improved within one year. It would be nice, if this were at least partly due to improved framework conditions. But it's also important to remember that during the survey period of the first study, there were still significant limitations from Covid, which very likely explain the current improvement to a good extent."

This year, the eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score) was again calculated from the survey as a widely used benchmark metric. The score of -32 percent calculated in this study, while an improvement from last year (-49 percent), is still a concern.



Great differences in the quality of recruitment agencies

Choosing the right staffing / recruitment agency for the project is an important factor for success. "Good agencies advise facilities throughout the process and take the selection of the right professionals very seriously," says Grace Lugert-Jose. "Unfortunately, however, there are some agencies that don't do a good job. In my study, you can see this clearly in numbers."

It is also encouraging to see that the efforts of the governments of both countries are bearing fruit and are also viewed positively by the recruited professionals. The satisfaction of participants in the Triple-Win program was higher than that of any private recruitment agency.

Prior professional experience is very important

A big key to satisfaction already lies in the selection of professionals in the country of origin. There were two factors that were asked in the study: professional experience in the Philippines before recruitment and previous professional experience outside the Philippines. Here, the finding was that work experience in general has a very large impact on satisfaction. At least five years of relevant work experience leads to significantly greater satisfaction. Where this experience was gained, on the other hand, plays a subordinate role.

Satisfaction in hospitals higher than in nursing homes for the elderly

The daily work routine in geriatric care or nursing homes for the elderly is often described as particularly exhausting and tough. The results of this study confirm this picture. The Filipino nurses surveyed in hospitals were significantly more satisfied than their colleagues in geriatric care.

Hospitals and nursing facilities set the wrong priorities

When analyzing the results, it becomes clear that many employers are setting the wrong priorities with their measures. "They push for the fastest possible on-the-job training and want to fully engage the new employees directly in the schedule. Unfortunately, this leads to the grievances observed in the current study," says Grace Lugert-Jose.

Employers often use the international professionals to fill gaps in the teams. This often leads to the fact that the newly arrived colleagues end up in teams with a dysfunctional atmosphere and have to work in a poor working climate from the beginning. This is, of course, a major problem, especially in the initial phase.

If employees from different cultures are to work together successfully, the facilities must become interculturally competent organizations and they must also make the core workforce fit for the changes. In addition, sufficient time and budget must be planned for the integration of



the new colleagues. Unfortunately, the results of the survey show that this has not been done sufficiently so far.

Recommendations for employers

- Consider the topic of integration as a strategic project and invest accordingly in accompanying measures, such as the building of internal structures for the solid implementation of integration management and timely preparation through intercultural training for both the core workforce and the recruited nurses.
- The intercultural competence of your supervisors and managers is a decisive factor for the success of integration.
- Do not place newly arrived professionals in teams where the work climate is a problem anyway, but in the strongest teams with the fewest problems.
- Avoid false expectations and disappointment among the core workforce through clear and honest communication. The successful integration of nursing professionals from abroad is a long-term process that does not lead to quick relief.
- Prioritize the promotion of German language skills among new colleagues. This is key for job effectiveness, but also for social integration and participation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE STUDY

The study was conducted in connection with Grace Lugert-Jose's work as an intercultural trainer and consultant. With a degree in business psychology, she advises hospitals and care facilities throughout Germany on the successful integration of international professionals. She is the founder of the employer seal "Best Places to Work for International Nurses in Germany". This seal is awarded to employers who do a particularly good job of integrating international specialists.

Grace Lugert-Jose is also the founder of the Facebook group "Network of Pinoy Nurses in Germany", one of the largest exchange platforms for Filipino nursing professionals in Germany. Through this group, the survey was called, which was conducted from Feb. 18 to Feb. 25, 2023. There were 224 completely filled out questionnaires included in the study. The survey was conducted in English, and the phrases mentioned here are translations. The statistical analysis was carried out by the statistician Kristine Leduc from Rennes (France), who specializes in the analysis of satisfaction surveys and has many years of experience in this area, including her work at the Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (GfK).