

**HOSPITAL NURSES' ATTITUDES TO WORK:
A CASE STUDY OF A CHINESE HOSPITAL**

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore what the relevant factors of nurses' attitudes to and at work are. These include the separate but related hypotheses – the nature of the profession and changes in terms of management and training; the nature of the work situation including contracts and pay determination; and the nature of work relations as they impinge on nurse status including relations with co-workers and patients. All of which can be understood and compared with other workers in terms of both labour process and industrial relations as Goldthorpe (1968) did in the study of car workers. In the context of the contemporary Chinese social and political economy, the research also evaluates the roles of the government and how it affects nurses' attitudes to the profession. It is grounded in a case study of 330 nurses in a Chinese public sector hospital, using questionnaires, interviews, and documentary evidence on government policies and hospital practices. The findings suggest that nurses at the case study hospital are frequently put under pressure due to the high number of patients they are expected to care for. This was caused by insufficient government funding for public sector hospitals, and the pressure to improve overall efficiency within the health service. The use of different types of employment contracts for nurses has caused strong resentment among nurses because it fails to award 'equal pay for equal work'. In addition, the current system used in many Chinese hospitals for nurse education, recruitment, training and development, and pay have not helped establish realistic expectations of nursing or rewarded nurses for the work they do effectively.