

## Assessing the influence of job stress on mental health and work behaviour of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the influence of job stressors on the mental health and work behavior of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu, Nigeria. Two research hypotheses were formulated corresponding to the study's objectives. The research design employed was cross-sectional research design. The study population consisted of 125 nurses. Data collection utilized an adopted questionnaire with a reliability index of .76. Analysis of the collected data was conducted using the Chi-square test. The findings indicated that job stress significantly influences the mental health and work behavior of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu. Consequently, based on these findings and the conclusions drawn from the study, it is recommended that nurses' knowledge and skills be regularly updated through in-service training, workshops, and seminars. Nurses should participate in seminars and workshops focusing on areas such as human behavior, resource management, interpersonal relationships, stress management, and crisis response.

**Keywords:** Job, Mental health, Nurses, Stress, Work behaviour

### 1. Introduction

The main objective of health facilities is to give its patients the outmost medical care available. It is believed that the hospital provides patients with a wide range of thorough medical consultations. The medical practitioners are equipped with the expertise and skills to give effectively and favorably and affordably health care delivery to the fulfillment and satisfaction of the patients. The medical professionals have the expertise and abilities to provide patients with high-quality, reasonably priced healthcare in a way that satisfies and fulfills their needs. Personal assessment of the client's health care services is the definition of patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is all about the process and how he/she is treated in the hospitals which gives the (client) medical care services. Therefore, patient satisfaction is an imperative element to be considered for the excellence of health care service delivery of a hospital.

Asadi-Lari (2003) emphasizes the importance of using patient accounts of their individual hospital experiences to build action plans for bettering the care, services, and safety offered to the wider public is enormous. According to Smith; Chang and Lu cited in Muraina (2015) the most predominant issue in today's life is stress. The term stress is highly comprehensible due to its etymological background. According to Fevre et al. (2003) Selye is the person that coined the word "stress" in 1964 which refers to a collection of physiological and psychological (emotional and social) reactions that explain circumstances or their effects on a person. Dakasku and Musa (2020) sees the word "stress" as a common term used in the field of psychology and psychiatry. In the context of medicine or biology, stress in the body or mind is caused by a physical, mental, or emotional component. Numerous descriptions of stress have been offered over time. Initially, it was believed to be external pressure, and then it was identified as internal tension. According to multiple reports, medical professionals experience significant occupational stress at their place of primary assignment, as such this warrants investigation into this aspect. Occupational stress, Nwadiani (2006) states that a stressor can cause an individual's emotional stability to be disrupted, leading to a condition of inefficiency in personality and conduct. Herbert (1997) and Larson (2004) describe a stressor as any response imposed by an external or internal bodily circumstance which throws someone off balance and calls for regeneration. However, any activity that takes place in the workplace that poses a risk to the employer is considered a job stressor (Brown & Uehara, 2008; Reskin, 2008; Bridger et al., 2007; Dua, 1994). This, in turn, lowers their output and proficiency, which ultimately affects the performance of the organization as a whole.

Furthermore, Muriana (2014) define job stress as situations that are detrimental to an individual's physical and emotional well-being. They arise when job requirements are not commensurate with an employee's needs, resources, or abilities, and can consequently result in poor health or even workplace. When an employee's assigned tasks and responsibilities do not match their available skills and resources, whether provided by the employer or inherent to the employee, stress can arise, potentially jeopardizing their well-being and health. (Employment Relations and Union Services, 2004).

Malta (2004) explained that a person's perception of occupational stress is based on their own experiences, and it is brought on by instances, situations, or examples that are too extreme or frequent to be handled well by their coping mechanisms. The accepted definition as of right now is the interaction between the situation and the individual. A psychological and physical state occurs when a person's resources are inadequate to handle the demands and pressures of their environment. Consequently, certain individuals and situations are more prone to experiencing stress. Stress can hinder goal attainment for both individuals and organizations. When important personnel and a sizable workforce are impacted by workplace stress, it can negatively impact an organization's performance and well-being. Stress is a crucial psychological concept that can be detrimental to one's well-being, capacity for happiness, and productivity at work. (Olaye, 2002; Mojinyinola, 1984). "Stingere" is a Latin word that indicates stress (Arnold et al., 1995).

Stress is the stage by which natural phenomena represent a threat to a person, as well as how the person perceives and responds to these threats (Baum et al., 1997). Lazarus (1966) was explained that stress is defined as the threat of impending bodily or mental damage, which reduces one's feeling of dignity. It is an emotional and physical reaction to unpleasant environmental stimuli. According to Selye (1976) global adaptation syndrome characterizes the organism's state of stress. In other words, it is the body's general response to a request. It suggests that unreasonable demands undermine social, psychological, and sociological processes (Akinboye et al., 2002).

NIOSH (1998) explained that stress comes in a variety of ways. It might have an impact on one's mental health, emotions, social life, career, or occupation. Employee stress at work is referred to as job stress. A few

examples of unfavorable work environments include risk and danger, an overwhelming workload, shift work, lengthy work hours, role problems, role ambiguity, and strained partnerships with superiors or coworkers. Some behaviors indicate that a person or group is experiencing workplace stress. It can manifest as a headache, sleep problems, focus problems, irritability, stomach problems, work dissatisfaction, and low spirits. Symptoms and indicators of job stress include muscle strain or aches, chest tightness, high blood pressure, heart problems, loss of temper, conflicts with others, impulsive or violent behavior, blaming others or management for stress, absenteeism, and high employee turnover. These symptoms are often evident in hospital nurses, potentially affecting their personal lives, professional behavior, and health. Examining the effects of occupational stress on nurses' physical and mental well-being as well as their conduct both personally and professionally is the main objective of this study. The aforementioned symptoms are exhibited by nursing personnel in hospitals, which may have a detrimental effect on their personal and professional lives as well as their health. Therefore, the aim of this research is to look at how job-related stress affects nurses' physical and mental health, as well as their personal and professional behavior in Yobe State University Teaching Hospital (YSUTH).

The study also explores how government and hospital administrators successfully address, mitigate, or prevent workplace stress to improve nurses' physical and mental health, along with their personal and professional conduct. Increased managerial pressure may have an impact on employee well-being. Managers and supervisors may erroneously or deliberately stress their employees due to their superior position within an hospital. Many supervisors may respond when put under pressure by demonstrating a poor administrative style. Encouragement from management, such as effective communication and comments, is essential for employee mental health. Higher levels of stress and depressive symptoms have been related with poor supervisor support. Hoel et al. (1999) noticed that employee ill-health, such as psychological stress symptoms, muscular complaints, nervousness, and depression, is correlated with harassment at work. According to Repetti (1993), there is solid evidence that employment with high demand and little control increase the risk of hypertension and heart disease, and that stress at work, which affects both physical and mental health, is significantly influenced by the social setting at work.

Moreover, Repetti (1993) found that a poor relationship between supervisors and employees impacts the level of stress experienced by workers. Repetti noted that employees' emotions were more negative on days when they had stressful interactions with their bosses and coworkers. In a study of nurses, Olaleye (2002) discovered that stress and burnout syndrome had a greater effect on workers' health and coping abilities when they were employed in government (state-owned) hospitals. Holt (1993) found that shift employment can cause sleep and gastrointestinal issues in addition to disrupting family life and causing a variety of medical ailments. In Seville, southern Spain, hospital nursing personnel experienced emotional exhaustion and professional stress. Albar Marin and Garcia-Ramirez (2005) investigated how social support affects stress and emotional exhaustion among nurses. They discovered that substantial social support from peers, family, and supervisors significantly reduced nurses' levels of psychological exhaustion and stress at work. Cheng and Kawachi (2002) examined the link between psychosocial factors and the health-related functioning of American registered nurses. They found that poor job control, high job demands, and lack of social support at work were independently associated with worse initial health and faster functional decline over a four-year period. Nurses experiencing low job control, high demands, and minimal support faced the most significant functional impairments. They concluded that adverse psychosocial working conditions are strong predictors of reduced functional status and its progressive decline. Research has shown a negative correlation between workplace stress, job satisfaction, and nursing. Achalu (1995) found that nurses under high stress reported lower job satisfaction, higher absenteeism, and weaker job commitment. Kennedy et al. (1997) provided evidence that a

supportive work environment can help mitigate the stress and burnout experienced by nursing professionals. They concluded that nurses who felt encouraged at work reported higher job satisfaction and greater confidence in their ability to provide high-quality patient care. The study also explores ways to improve patient care quality and support provided by nurses in difficult working conditions. Many studies have linked job stress, characterized by excessive demands and limited control, to heart disease.

According to Vitaliano et al. (1990), doctors who work in environments where there is an unfavorable mix of high expectations and poor control feel greater stress than those whose jobs require both high demands and high levels of control. In their study, Alterman et al. (1994) found that males had more flexibility in their employment choices when the rate of coronary heart disease-related deaths was lower. Additionally, they discovered that the risk of dying from heart disease was higher for individuals in high-demand, low-decision jobs and that white-collar workers faced a greater risk compared to blue-collar workers.

### **1.2. Problem statement**

Individuals react to stressors in various ways; some manage stress more effectively than others and experience fewer negative effects on their behavior and overall health. The impact of stress varies among individuals and depends on their job field. Naturally, some professions are more demanding than others. The relationship between stress, strain, and health significantly affects both companies and industries. Occupational stress is becoming a global issue, affecting all countries, professions, worker categories, families, and society at large. Job stress has severely diminished workers' ability to provide quality services, prompting many wealthy individuals with high socioeconomic status to relocate their families abroad. This migration contributes to increased maternal mortality and infant deaths in the country, which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to reduce. Workplace management significantly impacts employees' physical and emotional health. Greater influence at work is linked to better mental health, while extreme lack of control is psychologically harmful. How effectively an individual uses their control over their work to manage stress is crucial in determining their well-being. Rijik et al. (1998) found that nurses who employed proactive coping strategies and had high job control could mitigate the emotional exhaustion caused by job demands. Job control is often associated with employee well-being, but high control levels can also be stressful for nurses with low active coping, leading to reduced well-being. This study aims to investigate the influence of job stress on the mental health and work behavior of nurses in YSUTH.

### **1.3. Aims of the Study**

- Determine the influence between job stress and the mental health of nurses in Yobe state teaching hospital Damaturu.

### **1.4. Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of job stress on the mental health of nurses in Yobe state teaching hospital Damaturu

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of job stress on work behaviour of nurses in Yobe state teaching hospital Damaturu

## **2. Research method**

The study utilized a cross-sectional survey research design. Because the design makes it possible for the researcher to reach a greater percentage of the target audience, it is consistent with the nature of the topic under

investigation. This study design's benefit is that it provides vivid information about the circumstances, events, or conditions of the present (Adefila, 2008). Using this method, it is possible to look into how workplace stress affects the mental health and behavior of the nurses at YSUTH Damaturu.

The study's population consists of all nurses at YSUTH. The sample for this study consists of 125 nurses from various departments around the hospital. The instrument utilized for the study was an adapted questionnaire originally developed by Muraina (Muraina, 2015). This questionnaire comprises items that measure occupational stress, mental health, and work behavior, with a total of thirty (30) items assessing symptoms of occupational stress, mental health, and work behavior evidence. The questionnaire has demonstrated reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.78 for the Stress Scale, 0.82 for the Mental Health Scale, and 0.80 for the Work Behavior Scale, as reported by the original author. Additionally, the instrument was pilot tested for this study, resulting in a combined reliability index of 0.76.

The instrument was distributed to the nurses on the day arranged by the management. Qualified research assistants helped the researchers administer and collect the instruments. For the first three days before administration, the research assistants were trained on the contents, purpose, and procedures for administering and collecting the instruments. In each selected department, the administration and collection were completed on the same day. The researchers, with the help of trained research assistants, administered the instrument to the subjects in their respective wards at the hospital. Chi-square tests were used to test the hypotheses at a 95% confidence level, utilizing SPSS version 16.

### 3. Data analysis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of job stress on the mental health of nurses in Yobe state university teaching hospital Damaturu

**Table 1:** Summary of Chi-square on influence of job stress on the mental health of nurses

Variable	N	Df	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Calculated</sub>	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>table</sub>	P-value	Remark
influence of job stress on the mental health of nurses	125	119	40.33	23.28	.05	Reject H <sub>01</sub>

Table 1 results indicated that job stress had significant influence on the mental health of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital, as the calculated value of 40.33 was greater than the table value of 23.28 at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis, stating that occupational stress does not significantly influence the mental health of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu, was rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that occupational stress affect the mental health of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of job stress on work behaviour of nurses in Yobe state university teaching hospital Damaturu

**Table 2:** Summary of Chi-square on significant influence of job stress on work behaviour of nurses

Variable	N	Df	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>Calculated</sub>	X <sup>2</sup> <sub>table</sub>	P-value	Remark
influence of job stress on work behaviour of nurses	125	119	19.22	11.01	0.05	Reject H <sub>02</sub>

The findings from Table 2 reveal that job stress have a significant Influence on the work behavior of nurses, as the calculated value of 19.22 is greater than the table value of 11.01 at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Thus, hypothesis two, which posited that there is no significant influence of job stress on the work behavior of nurses

in Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu, was rejected. Consequently, the study concludes that job stress have a significant influence on the work behavior of nurses in Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu.

#### **4. Findings and discussion**

The initial research hypothesis posited that work stress significantly affect the mental health of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu. This finding affirmed a prior study by Muraina (2015), which identified a strong correlation between the mental health of hospital nurses and occupational stress. Furthermore, these results align the earlier research by Rijik et al. (1998), which found a positive correlation between overall job stress and job satisfaction; however, it noted that high job control mitigated the increase in mental fatigue caused by job demands for nurses who employed active or regulatory coping strategies. Conversely, nurses with high job control and poor active coping exhibited lower job satisfaction when confronted with demanding work; for them, maintaining high levels of authority was a source of stress.

According to the findings of the second research hypothesis, the mental health of nurses at Yobe State University Teaching Hospital Damaturu, significantly influenced by work stress. This outcome agrees with Repetti's (1993) earlier study, which demonstrated that an employee's stress level is impacted by their relationship with their supervisor. Repetti also observed that employees experienced lower moods on days when they had unpleasant interactions with colleagues and superiors. Additionally, Holt (1993) suggests that shift work can disrupt family life and lead to various health issues, including digestive and sleep problems.

In a study conducted by Albar Marin and Garcia-Ramirez (2005) in Serrville, Spain, they examined the levels of professional stress and emotional exhaustion among hospital nursing staff. They found that social support significantly influenced the nurses' levels of stress and mental exhaustion at work. Nurses who received high levels of support from their families, coworkers, and supervisors experienced lower levels of occupational stress and emotional exhaustion compared to those who did not. Furthermore, Muraina (2015) discovered a strong correlation between hospital nurses' work behaviors and workplace stress.

#### **5. Recommendations**

In light of the study's results, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ministry of Health or hospital management boards should work to lessen the sources of stress for nurses, and the state government should ensure that patients receive quality nursing care.
2. Ministry of Health should pay nurses a wage commensurate with the demands of their professions will help to improve their working circumstances. In order to boost their morale, their promotion should also happen as quickly as feasible.
3. Medical associations of nurses should also be involved in important decisions affecting their profession and patients.
4. Government should provide enabling environment for workshops, seminars, and in-service training to keep nurses' knowledge and abilities current. Human behavior, resource management, interpersonal interactions, stress management, and crisis response are among the subjects they ought to be taking.

#### **6. Conclusion**

The enduring influence of occupational stress on the mental health and behavior of nurses cannot be underestimated. With the significant evidence linking job stress to mental health in this study, it's crucial to recognize the potential influence of job stress on the mental well-being of nurses at Yobe State University

Teaching Hospital Damaturu. Given the significant reliance on their services by the population, it becomes imperative to consider the working conditions of nurses.

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