

Perceived Job Demand and Work-Life Balance as Predictors of Mental Health among Practicing Nurses in Government General Hospitals in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates perceived job demand and work-life balance as predictors of mental health among practicing Nurses in government general hospitals in Ibadan metropolis. The population comprises all registered Nurses in Ibadan. Following the estimation by National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives, the number of estimated registered nurses in Ibadan is 1,650. The cross-sectional survey research design is adopted. Data are gathered from 350 Nurses selected randomly in Ibadan. Findings reveal that there exists positive relationship between mental health and work-life balance. There was negative relationship between mental health and job demand. Finally, work-life balance and job demand accounted for about 15% variance in mental health; independent results show that work-life balance and job demand predicated on mental health. It is recommended that Ministry of Health should carry out periodic mental health checks on their Nurses.

Keywords: *Job Demand, Work-Life Balance, Mental Health, Practicing Nurses*

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is generally referred to as a situation where individuals discover their ability, perform normal day-to-day activities in a productive manner, and are able to make positive changes to the communities they live in and their surroundings (World Health Report 2001). World Health Organization (World Health Report, 2014) refers to mental health as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can easily handle the normal

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stresses of life, can work productively, effectively and efficiently, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community significantly (World Health Report 2014). Another definition of mental health refers to the individual's subjective feelings of wellbeing, optimism and mastery, the concepts of 'resilience' or the ability to deal with unwanted adversity, and the ability to be able to form and maintain meaningful relationships (Jansen and Venter, 2015).

Two main issues emerge from the literature in relation to the definition of mental health. Firstly, in contrast with the emphasis of health promotion on health as a positive quality, it remains common in the field of mental health to define health as no more than the absence of illness. Secondly, where more positive definitions are employed these nevertheless pose problems in relation to other health promotion principles. Mental health relates to a person's psychological functioning, life-satisfaction and ability to develop and maintain mutually benefiting relationships (Jansen and Venter, 2015).

It is expected that nursing, as a profession comes along with high level of dedication and love for the job as it is one of the life saving jobs. This poses high level of demand on the Nurses, thereby creating some forms of imbalance between their work and the environment, which subsequently affects their mental health. The study is therefore interested in understanding job demand and work-life balance as predictors of Mental health among practicing Nurses in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Job demands are those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort and are, therefore, associated with physiological and/or psychological costs (Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Janssen and Schaufeli, 2001). Job demands refer to a task's mental workload and the mental alertness or arousal needed to carry out a job under the given circumstances (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). Job demands represent aspects of the job that could potentially cause strain in cases where they exceed the employee's adaptive capability. Another variable that could influence the mental health of Nurses is work-life balance.

Work-life balance is an important topic in both professional business practice and academic research. Work-life balance (WLB) has become a popular research area in different fields such as sociology, psychology, human resource management, organization studies (Kelly, Kossek, Hammer, Durham, Bray, Chermack, Murphy and Kaskubar, 2008). Clarke, Koch and Hill (2004) state that Work-Life Balance (WLB) is an equilibrium or maintaining overall sense of harmony in life. Clark (2000) describes WLB as satisfaction and good functioning

at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict. The focus on the domains of work and family is vital as family and work are regarded as the most important elements of everyone's life, and any competing demands from work and family life cause conflict and negatively affect the wellbeing of workers (Clark, 2000; Frone, 2000). Therefore, good WLB and wellbeing can be achieved when there is no role conflict, and when people are satisfied with their work and family roles (Clark, 2000). The literature shows that common consequences of poor WLB are depression and distress, leading to lower productivity, poorer work quality, higher absenteeism and staff turnover (Hill, 2005; Seligman, 2011).

Gayathiri and Ramakrishnan (2013) conducted a study to examine the concept of quality of work life and to analyze the nature of relationship it has with mental health. The result indicates that the concept of work life quality is multidimensional and it influences employee's use of skills, knowledge, relationship with others and professional interaction and collaboration. Positive relationship exists between mental health and quality of work. Yadav and Dabhade (2013) carried out a research on the relationship that exists between work life balance and mental health of the working women. Sample is collected from education sector and banking sector. Data are collected from 150 women employees 75 women from each sector. Authenticity of data is analyzed through application of standard deviation. The results indicate that work life balance and mental health share significant relationship.

As regards job demand, increased workload manifests as wearing out and other symptoms of burnout, leading to absenteeism, whereas high resources at work manifest as increased motivation, involvement and low turnover (Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli, 2003; Schaufeli, Bakker, and Van Rhenen, 2009). Hakanen, Schaufeli and Ahola (2008) investigated work-related engagement and job demand on psychological outcome such as depression and life satisfaction. It was found that work-related engagement and job demand influence life satisfaction and depressive symptoms. Different job resources may also predict employees' well-being, which, in turn, may further affect occupational health (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). Consequently, this study investigated perceived job demand and work-life balance as predictors of mental health among practicing Nurses in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. However, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H₁: There is significant positive relationship between work-life balance and mental health among Nurses in Ibadan metropolis.

- H₁2: There is significant negative relationship between job demand and mental health among Nurses in Ibadan metropolis.
- H₁3: Job demand and work-life balance are jointly and independently predicated on mental health of Nurses in Ibadan metropolis.

METHOD

The study utilized a cross-sectional research design to investigate job demand and work-life balance as predictors of mental health among Nurses. The research design afforded the researchers the privilege to gather data across different cohorts. The study was conducted in government general hospitals in Ibadan metropolis. These included Adeoyo Hospital, University College Hospital and Oluyoro Hospital. All the hospitals were visited for data gathering. The convenience sampling technique was utilized in this study. Convenience sampling technique is a non-probabilistic sampling where potential participants are selected because of their accessibility and closeness to the researchers. Nurses were conveniently met at all the government owned general hospitals in Ibadan metropolis.

Following the estimation by National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM), the number of estimated registered nurses in Ibadan is 1,650. This formed the population of the study. This study sampled 20% of the estimated population of registered Nurses in Ibadan. Three hundred and fifty (350) copies of questionnaire were distributed; however, three hundred and four (304) were retrieved. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: A, B, C and D. Section A contained information on the socio-demographic parameters of the respondents such as gender, academic qualification, number of children, marital status and religion. Section B consisted of a 7-item scale of work-life balance developed by Hayman, (2005). This scale is adapted to measure work-life balance among Nurses. It is a 5 point rating scale, ranging from “very strongly disagree” 1 to 5 “strongly agree”. It indicates that the higher the score, the higher the work-life balances. Hayman reported adequate internal consistency of $\alpha = .89$. Section C carried information on Job demands, which were measured by an 8-item questionnaire with a 5-point response scale ranging from Strongly Disagree – 1, Disagree- 2, Undecided – 3, Agree – 4, Strongly agree – 5. Job demand scale was developed by De Jonge, Landeweerd and Nijhuis (1993), and consisted of a relatively wide range of both quantitative and qualitative demanding aspects,

like working under pressure of time, working hard, strenuous work, and task complexity'. Results of a pilot study indicated a clear one-factor structure, and reported a coefficient alpha of .90 and a test-retest reliability of .48 (within 8-months interval; De Jonge, Landeweerd and Nijhuis, 1993; Vermaat, 1994). Section D relied on Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). This is a 14-item mental well-being scale developed by Stewart-Brown and Janmohamed in year 2008. The scale was developed to measure the quality of mental health of individuals. The response format for the scale are as follows; none of the time, rarely, some of the time, often and all of the time. The scale developers reported a Cronbach alpha of $\alpha = .79$. In this study, the scale has a Cronbach alpha of $\alpha = .82$, yielding an acceptable level.

The researchers approached the management of the selected hospitals and introduced the instruments and the purpose of the study to them, accompanied by an ethical approval which was gotten from the State Ministry of Health, Ibadan, Oyo State. After the introduction, the management granted the researchers access to meet with the Nurses who were the main participants for the study. The researchers started by establishing rapport with the participants, while introducing the purpose of the study to them individually, assuring them of the confidentiality of all the information they might supply. After which, the researchers administered the copies of the questionnaire to them. Each questionnaire takes over 15 minutes to be completed. Generally, the data collection lasted for a month, after which retrieved copies of questionnaire were coded for data analysis. Although 350 copies were distributed, only 304 were retrieved, yielding 72.3% response index. Socio-demographic variables were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Hypotheses one and two were tested using Pearson correlation, while hypothesis three was tested using multiple regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the frequency statistics of the Nurses who participated in this study. Age distribution revealed that more of the Nurses 108 (35.5%) were between 25 and 29 years old, 76 (25%) were between 30 and 34 years, 33 (10.9%) were between 40 and 44 years, 32 (10.5%) were between 35 and 39 years, 22 (7.2%) were 50 years and above, 17 (5.6%) were less than 25 years, while the other 16 (5.3%) were between 45 and 49 years old. As regards gender distribution, more of the respondents 268 (88.2%) were females, while the other 36 (11.8%) were males. From Table 1 as well, more of the Nurses 163 (53.6%) indicated to have

less than 5 years of working experience, 83 (27.3%) had between 5 and 9 years of work experience, 25 (8.2%) had between 10 and 14 years of experience, while the other 23 (7.6%) had 20 years and above work experience. Finally as regards the educational qualification, more of the respondents 135 (44.4%) indicated to be registered practical nurse/registered nurse, 115 (37.8%) were Higher National Diploma/University degree holders, 63 (17.4%) were Ordinary National Diploma holders, while the other individuals indicated to have higher degree. Hypothesis one states that there is significant positive relationship between work-life balance and mental health among Nurses. This was tested using Pearson r correlation and the result is presented on Table 2.

Table 2 presents results of the relationship between mental health and work-life balance among Nurses in Ibadan metropolis. It is shown that there exists significant positive relationship between mental health and work-life balance ($r = .31$; $P < .01$). This implies that the higher the effective balance of work with life, the higher the mental health of Nurses. The hypothesis is therefore confirmed and upheld. Hypothesis two states that there is significant negative relationship between job demand and mental health among Nurses in Ibadan. This was tested using Pearson r correlation and the result is presented on Table 3.

From table 3, it is shown that there exists significant negative relationship between mental health and job demand. This implies that the higher the job demand, the lower the mental health of Nurses. The hypothesis is therefore confirmed and upheld. Hypothesis three states that job demand and work-life balance are jointly and independently predicated on mental health of Nurses in Ibadan metropolis. This was tested using multiple regression analysis and the result is presented on Table 4.

Table 4 shows that work-life balance and job demand jointly predicted mental health. Collectively, work-life balance and job demand accounted for about 15% variance in mental health of Nurses. Independent result showed that work-life balance and job demand predicted mental health. Observation of the beta value revealed that higher work-life balance and lower job demand leads to higher mental health. This confirms the stated hypothesis.

This study found that higher level of work-life balance leads to increased level of mental health. In corroboration of the findings, Gayathiri and Ramakrishnan (2013) carried out a study to investigate the concept of quality of work life and to analyze nature of relationship it has with mental health. Findings reveal that the concept of work life quality is multidimensional and it influence employee's use of skills, knowledge, relationship with other and professional

interaction and collaboration. Positive relationship exists between mental health and quality of work. Also, it was discovered that increased job demand leads to lower level of mental health among Nurses. In relation to the findings, Hakanen and Schaufeli (2012) investigated work-related engagement and job demand on psychological outcome such as depression and life satisfaction. It was found that work-related engagement and job demand influence life satisfaction and depressive symptoms.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Information of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
Less than 25 years	17	5.6
25-29 years	108	35.5
30-34 years	76	25
35-39 years	32	10.5
40-44 years	33	10.9
45-49 years	16	5.3
50 years and above	22	7.2
Gender		
Female	268	88.2
Male	36	11.8
Years of work experience		
Less than 5 years	163	53.6
5-9 years	83	27.3
10-14 years	25	8.2
15-19 years	10	3.3
20 years and above	23	7.6
Educational qualification		
National Diploma	53	17.4
RPN/RON	135	44.4
Higher National Diploma/University	115	37.8
Higher Degrees	1	0.3
Total	304	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Table 2: Pearson *r* Summary Table Showing Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Mental Health

Variables	Mean	SD	r	df	P
Mental Health	59.03	7.34	.31**	300	<.01
Work-Life Balance	30.92	4.45			

****Significant at 0.01**

Source: Fieldwork, 2017



Table 3: Pearson *r* Summary Table Showing Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Mental Health

Variables	Mean	SD	r	df	P
Mental Health	59.03	7.34	-.25**	300	<.01
Job Demand	30.06	7.56			

**Significant at 0.01

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Table 4: Multiple Regression Summary Table Showing Job Demand and Work-Life Balance as Predictors of Mental Health

Criterion	Predictors	β	t	P	R	R ²	F	P
Mental Health	Work-Life Balance	.30	5.59	<.01	.39	.15	26.53	<.01
	Job Demand	-.24	-4.50	<.01				

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated perceived job demand and work-life balance as predictors of mental health among practicing Nurses in Ibadan, Nigeria. It was carried out in Adeoyo Hospital, University College Hospital and Oluyoro Hospital. They are government general hospitals located within Ibadan metropolis. This study discovers that higher level of work-life balance leads to increased level of mental health. The findings reveal that the concept of work life quality is multidimensional and it influences employee's use of skills, knowledge, relationship with other and professional interaction and collaboration. It also discovered that increased job demand leads to lower level of mental health among Nurses.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that efforts should be made to balance the work demands as well as schedules of nurses, especially the female nurses in order to reduce the level of stress being experienced due to the nature of their job. Ministry of Health should come up with a scheme that requires more employees in the sectors, especially in hospitals in order to provide flexible work time and role expectations. This will go a long way in ensuring higher quality of mental health. Therefore, it is recommended that Ministry of Health should carry out periodic mental health checks on their Nurses. With this, policies that guide the mental health of Nurses could be instituted. It is important to note that a healthy Nurse, will work effectively and ensure patient satisfaction with health care services.

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