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THE EFFECTS OF WORK STRESS ON JOB SATISFACTION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN A PUBLIC SECTOR HOSPITAL IN ALDAKHLIYA, OMAN

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ABSTRACT

The role of healthcare workers is central to the modern healthcare system and was further highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. However, the healthcare workers did face a lot of work pressure during the pandemic which also had some negative consequences. In the present study, we investigated the effects of work stress and its five dimensions including the availability of resources, work environment, reward and incentive, functional relationship, and fear of catching COVID-19 on employee job satisfaction in the context of the public healthcare system in Oman. The sample is selected from a selected healthcare unit and data is collected using the survey-based method. The findings show that there are significant effects of two dimensions including functional relationships and work environments on healthcare job satisfaction. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that healthcare workers facing a lot of stress and this issue need greater managerial attention.

Keywords: Work Stress, Job Satisfaction, Healthcare Workers, COVID-19 Pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

There is no secret that the rapid developments, events and dynamic environment taking place in the world have had an impact on changing the lives of all individuals and societies at various levels. These changes lead to an increase in life stress to which people are exposed in their daily lives, especially employees in general, and health workers in particular. The increased stress is also witnessed among the healthcare workers due to the nature of the work they perform. Continuous work stress may lead to employee fatigue and negatively affect their behavior, health and psychological condition, their attitudes towards their jobs, and their satisfaction. Rather, the impact of these pressures may extend to the level of their performance of their jobs and thus may lead to their abilities to achieve their personal and organizational goals. Keeping in view this context, in the present study, the investigation is made about work stress and its employee outcomes to highlight this issue from an employee perspective.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that it is covering an important issue which is the effects of work stress on job satisfaction among health workers during the Corona pandemic. The theoretical significance of the study is that it clarifies the concepts related to work stress and its impact on job satisfaction among healthcare workers something which is not done in the Gulf context, especially during the pandemic context. The practical significance of the study is that it informs management of healthcare officials about an important issue and thus makes more informed evidence-based decision making.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to measure the effects of stress on employee job satisfaction among the frontline healthcare workers in the selected healthcare unit. Specific objectives are as follows;

- To measure the effects of the work environment on employee job satisfaction
- To measure the effects of availability of resources and capabilities on employee job satisfaction
- To measure the effects of incentives and rewards on employee job satisfaction
- To measure the effects of fear of COVID-19 infection on employee job satisfaction
- To measure the effects of functional relationships on employee job satisfaction

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, we discuss some of the studies related to our topic. The first relevant study is Renaud, Cooper-Bribiesca, Martínez-Pichardo, Puga, Rascón-Martínez, Hurtado, and Garnica (2022) conducted in healthcare context. In this study, they passed the acute stress for frontline health workers in the first two consecutive epidemic waves of the pandemic. The results of the study showed that healthcare workers suffer stress because of repeated epidemic waves of the pandemic. The study explained the importance of identifying individual traits and enabling strategies to be able to cope with successive crises. The results emphasize the importance of

screening mental health to identify mental health problems earlier to be treated before, during, and after an epidemic wave of the pandemic.

Another study is by Croghan, Chesak, Adusumalli, Fischer, Beck, Patel, and Bhagra (2021), conducted in the healthcare context. The study reported that during the worldwide health care crisis, and the increasing patient numbers and deaths, health workers around the world must contend with fears of infection and death for themselves and their families, as well as psychological, physical, mental, and spiritual stress. Healthcare professionals have been put in a very difficult position of having to make life-and-death decisions and work under extreme pressure. The study concluded that there should be the adoption of suitable strategies and tactics to mitigate distress and promote resilience and adaptation among workers.

Another study conducted by Rajkumar, Kumar, and Sudha (2021) investigated stress among healthcare workers. The key findings are that healthcare workers faced physical strain and extreme mental stress that most of them could not handle. Long working hours without any break was one of the basic attributes to stress. The study concludes that such strategies should be implemented to overcome stress like recruiting new staff to reduce work pressure of previous staff, staff rotation, and giving appreciation and rewards to reduce stress among the staff.

A study conducted by Alrawashdeh, Al-Tammemi, Alzawahreh, Al-Tamimi, Elkholy, Al Sarireh, and Ghoul (2021) investigated burnout and its influence on job satisfaction among the physicians during the COVID-19 context. The results showed that the prevalence of fatigue and job stress was high among physicians. The study indicated that several factors helped spread job burnout including shift work and long working hours. The study also highlighted that hospitals that are laden with high pressures and the low rate of salaries, incentives, and psychological and physical pressures negatively affected the job satisfaction curve of healthcare workers.

Another study conducted by Park, Park, Lee, Kim, Lee, Lee, and Shin (2020) investigated the perception of COVID-19 and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Korean healthcare workers. The study aimed to link perceptions of the spread of corona disease and post-traumatic stress disorder among hospital workers. The study showed that during the Corona crisis, individuals tended to be more susceptible to a post-traumatic stress disorder, however, it was found that hospital workers are more susceptible to the disorder than others.

A study by Mo, Deng, Zhang, Lang, Liao, Wang and Huang (2020) investigated the effects of work stress among the Chinese nurses in the Wuhan region during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The study is also significant because the geographical area covered by the study is the same as the origin of COVID-19 i.e. Wuhan. The stress and anxiety of the nurses who supported the treatment of COVID-19 in Wuhan were generally emphasized. The study showed that nurses in the Wuhan region faced greater stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 situation.

A study by Wang, Liu, Hu, Zhang, Du, Huang, and Yue (2020) investigated the stresses of health care workers and the influencing factors when caring for COVID-19 patients from an altruistic perspective. The study reported a lower level of stress among health care workers in this context. The study also highlighted the key source factors of stress including fear of infection, fear of infecting family members, and discomfort caused by protective equipment.

A study by Windarwati, Ati, Paraswati, Ilmy, Supianto, Rizzal, and Supriati (2021) investigated the stressors and coping mechanisms among the healthcare workers related to the COVID-19 in Indonesia. The study reported that family support is the main factor that can motivate

healthcare workers to work during the pandemic COVID-19. Furthermore, it is very important to provide opportunities for workers to gather and contact their families to provide mutual support. The study also reported that effective preventive measures, a collaboration between the professionals, and dealing with the pandemic with a positive attitude play a very important role to reduce stress. Furthermore, the support from hospitals and the availability of adequate information helped in motivating healthcare workers in this study to deal with the pandemic.

A study by Ito, Fujita, Seto, Kitazawa, Matsumoto, and Hasegawa (2014) tested the job stress of workers in the health care field, by comparing the degrees of the job stress questionnaire for both nursing staff, administrative workers, as well as doctors. The result showed that the physicians felt the stress of the quantitative and qualitative job overload, they had support from supervisors and coworkers. The administrative workers did not have this support and showed moderate "Stress Responses". The result showed that stress levels can be different based on the category of health workers.

In the Middle Eastern context, a study conducted by Joshua, Chehab, David, and Salim (2021) tested the effects of work stress on job satisfaction and job performance among the Nurses in critical care units in the UAE. The results of the study indicated that there is a significant effect of stress on job satisfaction and job performance. There are also lower satisfaction rates for those who work long hours and those who provide direct care to patients. Also, the level of stress was high among the workers in the critical care units.

A study by Al-Amoumi (2019) investigated how work stress impacts job satisfaction for health workers in Ajloun Governorate in Jordan. The study identified three factors influencing staff job satisfaction including the availability of resources, rewards, and the work environment. Thus, overall, the literature suggests that healthcare workers face a lot of stress due to various reasons not limited to but include long working hours, lack of protective equipment, work overload, and so on.

Conceptual Framework

There are not many studies that have conducted stress-related studies in the field at present and during the COVID-19 pandemic in Oman in general, so there is a gap in this area and the study will focus on this topic. Based on the previous literature and literature gap, the study put forward the following theoretical framework.

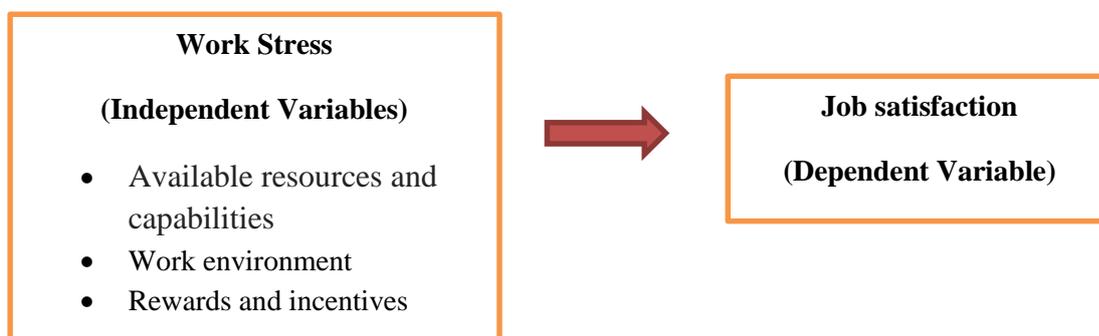


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

Based on the literature and theoretical framework of the study, our specific hypotheses are as follows;

H1: Availability of resources has significant effects on job satisfaction of healthcare workers

- H2: Work environment has significant effects on job satisfaction of healthcare workers
 H3: Reward and incentive has significant effects on the job satisfaction of healthcare workers
 H4: Functional relationship has significant effects on the job satisfaction of healthcare workers
 H5: Fear of COVID-19 has significant effects on job satisfaction of healthcare workers

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of Research

This current study is a quantitative type of study because it is suitable for the topic and objectives of the study. The study is also explanatory since we attempt to explain the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Research Respondents

This study used simple random sampling as a sampling method. The population includes all employees in the selected hospital. Each employee in a selected hospital is considered a sample unit. The sample selected is 101.

Data Collection and Instruments

The study consists of gathering information from the primary source. Primary data was collected by the electronic questionnaire distributed to the targeted people that are selected for the study from the selected hospital. A modified scale-based questionnaire was used to collect data that includes the effects of work stress on the job satisfaction of health sector workers. The questionnaire for job satisfaction is adapted from the study of Grunberg, Anderson-Connolly, and Greenberg (2000) and consists of 4 items. The questionnaire for the availability of resources and capabilities, work environment, incentives and rewards, Fear of COVID-19 infection, and job relationships were adapted from Dr. Al-Moumeni. It included 4 items for the work environment section; 3 items for the availability of resources and capabilities section; 4 items for the incentive and reward section; 2 items for fear of COVID19 infection; and 5 items for a functional relationship.

Tools for Analysis

The analysis includes using frequency analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. The analysis was performed using the SPSS version 22.

RESULTS

Table 1
Demographic Information

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	11	10.9%
Female	90	89.1%
Age		
18 to 25 Years	18	17.8%
25 to 40 Years	74	73.3%
40 to 60 Years	9	8.95%

The above table shows the gender of respondents, out of 101 respondents. 11 (10.9%) are males and 90 (89.1%) are Females. The above table shows the age of respondents, out of 101 respondents 18 are between 18-25 years, 74 respondents their age between 25 to 40, and just 9 respondents are between 40 to 60.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Work Environment	04	.968	1.00	5.00	3.23	1.34
Available Resource and Capabilities	03	.883	2.67	4.00	3.61	.48
Incentive and Reward	04	.711	1.00	5.00	3.45	.66
Fear of COVID Infection	02	.878	1.00	5.00	2.79	1.5
Functional Relationship	05	.735	2.00	5.00	3.95	.63
Job Satisfaction	04	.630	2.00	5.00	3.87	.74

Table 2 provide descriptive statistics. The Cronbach alpha for all variables is above 0.60 so it is an indication of satisfactory reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The mean value of work environment is 3.23, which means respondents had a moderate level of work environment on average. The mean value of available resources and capabilities is 3.61, which means respondents had an adequate level of available resources and capabilities. The mean value of incentive and reward is 3.45, which means respondents had a moderate level of incentive and reward. The mean value of fear of COVID infection is 2.79, which means respondents had a less adequate level of fear of COVID infection. Besides, the job satisfaction means the value is 3.87.

Table 3
Regression Results- Hypotheses Testing

	Unstandardized Coefficient (β)	S.E.	t-Stat	Sig	Remarks
(Constant)	3.340	.851	3.927	.000	
Work Environment	-.284	.063	-4.518	.000	H1 Supported
Available Resource and Capabilities	.059	.157	.379	.705	H2 Not Supported
Incentive and Reward	.016	.087	.182	.856	H3 Not Supported
Fear of COVID Infection	-.032	.052	-.612	.542	H4 Not Supported
Functional Relationship	.321	.091	3.540	.001	H5 Supported

R= .702
Rsquare= .493
Fstat= 18.50 (.000)

The R-value indicates that all variables in the model have a 70.2% association. The R square value indicates that the independent variables including functional relationship, available resources, and capabilities, incentive and reward, fear of COVID-19 infection, and work environment explain 49.3% explanation in the dependent variable. The ANOVA table indicates that the F-value is high than the critical value of 4 so it is an indication that the model used is fit and significant (Fstat=18.50, $P < .05$). The above coefficient table indicates that the work environment has negative significant effects on job satisfaction with ($\beta = -0.284$, $P < 0.05$), and the fear of COVID-19 infection has a negative insignificant effect on job satisfaction with ($\beta = -0.032$, $P > 0.05$). Moreover, there is an indication that functional relationship has positive significant effects on job satisfaction with ($\beta = 0.321$, $P < 0.05$). On the other hand, the remaining independent variables exert a positive and insignificant effect on job satisfaction including available resources and capabilities ($\beta = 0.059$, $P > 0.05$) & incentives and reward ($\beta = 0.016$, $P > 0.05$)

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to shedding light on some of the problems that organizations in general and health institutions, in particular, suffer from, which are work pressures and job satisfaction for their human resources, especially during the recent years in which the COVID-19 virus attacked the world, so health workers were the front lines of defense in the battle, which doubled the work pressure. It can be concluded that there is a relationship between work stress and job satisfaction. Furthermore, there is a close relationship between the work environment and job relations at the level of job satisfaction. Whereas, there is no statistically significant correlation between rewards and incentives, availability of resources and capabilities, and fear of contracting COVID-19 on job satisfaction. Additional research exploring specific stress management strategies may improve the rate of job satisfaction for health workers. This can be achieved through evidence-based policies that aim to create better work environments and improve functional relationships where health care providers feel more interested and involved, which is positively reflected in achieving high satisfaction rates among health competencies and thus ensuring good results from the quality of service provided and gaining patient satisfaction.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that healthcare workers take regular breaks to relax, make regular contact with family and friends, and work in teams or form partnerships.
- The employer must encourage supportive care in an environment free of stigmas, compulsions, and fear of negative consequences.
- The work environment should be constantly improved. There should be efforts to improve, renew and update policies and procedures in line with environmental changes
- As it is found in the results of this research, functional relationships positively affect job satisfaction, which means they should be given more importance. Workplace relationships should be strengthened.
- The management must facilitate the participation of employees in decision-making to improve the total industrial relations in the workplace.
- The hospitals must provide the basic resources and capabilities required by healthcare workers.
- The management should implement a mandatory training program that emphasizes effective communication because employees who have not been taught how to communicate effectively will have difficulty in communicating effectively.

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