

Relationship Between Emotional Exhaustion and Job Satisfaction among Nurses

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KEYWORDS

Emotional Exhaustion, Job Satisfaction, Nurses

ABSTRACT

Background: Emotionally exhausted employees tend to have unfavorable relationships with coworkers and the organization. It has been shown that emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction are highly relevant factors for performance in various organizational settings. This study aims to determine the relationship between job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion among nurses working at a psychiatric hospital. Method: A descriptive correlational study is conducted from December 2023 to May 2024. In a non-probability (purposive sample), 190 nurses were selected from hospitals in the Baghdad/Al-Rusafa Health Directorate and the Medical City Directorate. Nurses who work in psychiatric units were selected purposefully for this study. The chosen questionnaire consists of three parts. The first is the patient's socio-demographic characteristics, the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), and the third is the Emotional Exhaustion subscale (EE). Results: This study shows that the average participants' age was 30.25 ± 8.7 years, and the majority (53.7%) were female and held a diploma degree (48.9%) in nursing science. They have moderate levels of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. The job satisfaction survey results indicate that all dimensions of the subscale's items show moderate satisfaction. A statistical analysis reveals a significant inverse correlation between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction among Nurses at a p-value of .0002. Conclusions: There is a significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. These results suggest that emotional exhaustion is a key factor contributing to reduced job satisfaction and its various components, such as fringe benefits and the nature of work promotion. Recommendations: The study recommends effective interventions to address the negative impact of emotional exhaustion in the workplace, especially among new young employees. As such, organizations should prioritize implementing strategies that promote employee wellbeing and reduce burnout. This research contributes to understanding nurse experiences and needs, informing policies and practices that support their growth and well-being.

1. Introduction

The satisfaction of hospital staff, especially nurses, with their jobs, is vital for their optimal performance and delivery of high-quality services. The contentment of nurses with their jobs is associated with increased efficiency and improved care for patients (1). It has been shown that emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction play a significant role in an individual's performance in various organizational environments. Several studies have identified emotional exhaustion as a hindrance to good job performance (2–4), while job satisfaction has been found to promote good job performance (5–7). Experiencing emotional exhaustion means feeling overwhelmed and drained of emotional and physical energy (8). This can result in employees struggling to manage or meet the emotional demands of their work (9,10). Additionally, those who don't feel a strong sense of connection to their colleagues and workplace are more probable to be involved in negative behaviour, such as being hurtful or rude to others (11).

Job satisfaction is a measure of a person's overall evaluation of their work experiences (12,13). It's a complex attitude that takes into account three key factors: beliefs about the job, evaluative judgment, and affective experience at work (14,15). As such, job satisfaction can be influenced by emotional exhaustion, which is seen as a precursor to job satisfaction. When exhausted physically and emotionally, employees tend to be more careful about allocating their limited resources (16). They prioritize resources that will yield a higher return on investment (17,18). Job satisfaction is not just an affective state but also an affective resource that employees can draw upon (12). For instance, Ritter et al. (19) suggest that job satisfaction can help employees manage conflicts between different roles or prevent the loss of resources resulting from such conflicts. Accumulating job satisfaction might

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also enhance employees' perception of role clarity. Exhausted employees tend to have unfavorable relationships within the institution and coworkers. Moreover, they are more likely to exhibit counterproductive behavior in the workplace, as per research studies (20,21). the study aims to determine the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction among nurses.

2. Methodology

2.1 Design of the Study:

For the current study, a descriptive correlational design was employed to determine the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction among psychiatric hospital nurses. The study was conducted from December 2023 to May 2024.

2.2. Settings of the Study

The research encompassed nurses who working in psychiatric units. Participants were sourced from Baghdad Teaching Hospital\ psychiatric ward, Al Rashad Teaching Hospital for mental illness, and Ibn Rushd Psychiatry Hospital.

3.3. Sample of the Study

A non-probability (purposive sample) 190 of nurse was selected from hospitals in the Baghdad/Al-Rusafa Health Directorate (Al Rashad Teaching Hospital for mental illness and Ibn Rushd Psychiatry Hospital) and the Medical City Directorate (Baghdad Teaching Hospital) psychiatric ward.

2.5. Study Instrument:

- **3.5.1 Part I:** This part is about getting demographic information from the nurses, which includes the age, sex, and the nurse's social status; level of education; nurse who study different specialty; financial situation; work experience they spent in psychiatric unit and duration of working experience.
- **2.5.2. Part II:** The "Maslach Burnout Inventory: Human Service Scale (MBI-HSS)" was used to measure emotional exhaustion, specifically using the 9-item Emotional Exhaustion subscale (22). The total level of emotional exhaustion was calculated by estimating the range score for the scale's total score, which is rated into three levels: low = 9-27, moderate = 28-45, and high = 46-63. The level of emotional exhaustion for each item is estimated by calculating the cut-off points for the mean score and divided into three levels: low=1-3, moderate=4-5, and high=6-7.
- **2.5.2. Part III:** job satisfaction was measured using the Arabic version of the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), which was developed by (23). The JSS consisted of 36 items rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Completely disagree) to 5 (Completely agree), with a potential score range of 36-180. The total level of Job Satisfaction was calculated by estimating the range score for the scale's total score, which is rated into three levels: low = 36-84, moderate =85-132, and high =133-180.

2.6. Data Collection and Analysis:

During the period spanning from January 2 to February 28, 2024, a study was conducted with the approval of both the Rusafa and Medical City health departments, along with their respective hospitals. Data were collected through a self-report method and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was utilized for data analysis (SPSS, version 26). The evaluation of the data involved



descriptive and inferential statistical

methods. The correlation coefficient was used to establish the questionnaire's reliability, and the level of statistical significance was chosen at 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

Table (3-1): Distribution of Nurses according to their Socio-demographic Characteristics (N=190)

List	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	
	Age M±SD= 30.25 ± 8.7	20- less than 30	119	62.6
		30= less than 40	34	17.9
1		40- less than 50	29	15.3
		50 and more	8	4.2
		Total	190	100.0
	Sex	Male	88	46.3
2		female	102	53.7
		Total	190	100.0
3	Marital status	Single	63	33.2
		Married	127	66.8
		Divorced	0	0.0
		Total	190	100.0
4		Not enough	87	45.8
	The monthly income	Barely enough	92	48.4
		It is enough	11	5.8
		Total	190	100.0

M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

The descriptive analysis in table 3-1 shows that nurse' average age is 30.25 ± 8.7 years and 62.6% of nurses are seen with the group of "20-less than 30 years". The gender variable refers to males among 53.7% of nurses while female nurses 46.3%. The marital status of nurses refers that the majority of them are Married as seen among 66.8% and only 33.3% of nurses are single. Regarding monthly income, 48.4% of nurses reported a monthly income is Barely enough and 45.8% reported not enough indicates to low socioeconomic status.

Table (3-2): Overall Assessment of Emotional Exhaustion scale (N=190)

Scale	Frequenc y	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
low	86	45.3		
Moderate	94	49.5	28.8316	8.99518
High	10	5.3		



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Low = 9-27, Moderate = 28-45, High= 46-63

This table indicates that most nurses are associated with moderate level of emotional exhaustion, as seen at 49.5% (M±SD= 28.83 ± 8.99).

Table (3-3): Overall Assessment of Job Satisfaction among Nurses (N=190)

Job Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation	Assessment
Low	0	0			
Moderate	188	98.9			
High	2	1.1	108.0368	7.67830	Moderate
Total	190	100.0			

Low= 36 -84, Moderate= 85-132, High= 133 -180

This table indicates that nurses perceive moderate level of job satisfaction as reported among 98.9% of them (M \pm SD= 108.03 \pm 7.67) and 1.1% of them perceive high level of Satisfaction.

Table (3-4): Correlation between Emotional Exhaustion and Job Satisfaction. among Nurses (N=190)

Scales	Spearman	p-value	significance
	correlation	1-tailed	
Emotional Exhaustion			
Job Satisfaction	<u>261</u>	<u>.0002</u>	H.S

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N.S: Not significant, S: Significant, H.S: High significant

This table reveals a significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction at p-value= .0002. which indicates that emotional exhaustion increases with decreased nurse job satisfaction.

Table (3-5) Comparisons between Emotional Exhaustion and Demographic characteristics among Nurses Working at A Psychiatric Hospital



The Emotional Exhaustion		Level of Emotional Exhaustion		To t	Analyses	Sig.	
Sociodemographic characteristics		Low	Moderat e	Hig h	a l		
	20- less than 30	56	58	5	119	Fisher's Exact	
Age	30= less than 40	16	18	0	34	Test	.026
	40- less than 50	8	17	4	29	<u>13.194</u>	
	50 and more	6	1	1	8		
	Total	86	94	10	190		
Sex	Male	42	45	1	88	Independe nt t test	.153
Sex	female	44	49	9	102	-1.436	.133
	Total	86	94	10	190		
Marital	single	28	31	4	63	Pearson Chi- Square	.893
status	married	58	63	6	127	.227	
	Total	86	94	10	190		
Economic	not enough	43	37	7	87	Fisher's	
status	Barely enough	36	53	3	92	Exact Test	.161
	it is enough	7	4	0	11	6.155	
	Total	86	94	10	190		

mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

This table reveals that there is significance of differences in proportions between emotional exhaustion and nurses regarding nurse's age at p-values= .026

Discussions

According to the data analysis presented in Table 3-1, our study sample consisted of 190 participants aged within range of 20 to 60 years old. On average, the participants' age was 30.25 ± 8.7 years. Majority of them were female and married. Almost half of them (48.4%) perceive their income as barely sufficient, which highlights the financial challenges they face. These findings are in line with previous local studies (7,24,25).



Emotional exhaustion level among nurses working at a psychiatric hospital was moderate as indicated by (M±SD= 28.83±8.99) in which (%=49.5, n=94) of nurses showed a moderate exhaustion, that is present in the table (3-2). In line with our results, in a previous Brazil study conducted on mental health professionals, participants showed most workers in these mental health services (%=48.12, n=141) had moderate levels of emotional exhaustion (26). This finding corroborates the outcomes of a systematic review of research studies on the prevalence of burnout in mental health nurses. The review indicates that the studies generally report moderate levels of emotional exhaustion (27).

Job satisfaction level among nurses working at a psychiatric hospital was moderate as indicated by (M±SD= 108.03±7.67) in which (%=98.9, n=188) of nurses showed a moderate satisfaction, that is present in the table (3-3). In line with our results, a study conducted by Giannoula et al, which involved 100 nursing staff and used the Job Satisfaction Survey, the overall average for job satisfaction was 108.5, indicating neutrality (28). while Hajibabaee et al's study found that most nurses were less satisfied with their jobs, as majority of them reported low or moderate levels of job satisfaction (29).

Table (3-4) presented a statistical analysis that reveals a significant inverse correlation between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. The p-value of .0002 confirms this conclusion. This finding is supported by a studies conducted by Allam et al, Ren et al, and Theofilou et al, which also identifies a clear association between these variables (30–33). Moreover, research published in the Advances in Management & Applied Economics journal indicates that emotional exhaustion has a considerable negative impact on job satisfaction in different industries and organizations (34). A recent study found that nurses experience higher levels of burnout and job dissatisfaction compared to other healthcare professionals (35). The level of job satisfaction experienced by nurses serves as a crucial determinant of their productivity, which in turn, impacts the quality of healthcare provided. Job satisfaction refers to the state of favorable emotions and well-being that workers experience in their workspace (36,37). Nursing professionals typically invest a considerable amount of time in their work. If they encounter certain aspects of their job that they are unhappy with, they may start to experience adverse emotions that can impact their job concentration and lead them to develop a pessimistic outlook toward their job. This negative mindset may result in them experiencing psychological or mental health issues (31).

The result of this study indicated that there is significance of differences in proportions between emotional exhaustion and nurses regarding nurse's age at p-values= .026. as shown by table (3-5), it has been observed that nurses aged 20-30 have a higher frequency of emotional exhaustion (moderate to high 58 and 5 respectively) compared to those who are 50 years and older, who have a lower frequency (moderate to high 1, 1 respectively), study conducted in Erbil, Iraq in 2023 by

Hajibabaee et al found a strong link between age and emotional exhaustion. The study shows that age plays a critical role in determining the levels of exhaustion experienced by individuals (29). The previous meta-analytic study examined the correlation between age and burnout syndrome risk in nursing professionals. The study indicates that younger age is a significant contributing factor to the emotional exhaustion experienced by nurses (38). This analysis highlights the significance of age as a variable that affects the level of emotional exhaustion and provides statistical evidence to support this relationship. This finding suggests that age may be an important consideration in the development of interventions and policies aimed at reducing burnout in the nursing workforce.



Conclusions

It seems that nurses have moderate job satisfaction and experience emotional exhaustion. It can be negatively and significantly impacted by social integration within the work organization, the social importance given to work-life, as well as the duration of work and life (39). Collectively, these results suggest that emotional exhaustion is a key factor that contributes to reduced job satisfaction and its various components. This underscores the importance of addressing emotional exhaustion to enhance employee well-being and promote job satisfaction. This analysis highlights the significance of age as a variable that affects the level of emotional exhaustion and provides statistical evidence to support this relationship. This finding suggests that age may be an important consideration in the development of policies and interventions aimed at reducing exhaustion in the nursing workforce.

Recommendations

- 1. Emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction significantly affect employee performance. Negative feelings toward the job harm performance, while a satisfied workforce performs well. Management should prioritize employee satisfaction for better performance.
- 2. This research contributes to understanding nurse experiences and needs, informing policies and practices that support their growth and well-being.
- 3. This finding underscores the need for effective interventions to address the adverse influence of emotional exhaustion in the workplace, especially among new young employees. As such, organizations should prioritize implementing strategies that promote employee well-being and reduce burnout.

Further studies are required to explore the link between job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and mediating factors in this relationship.

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