



## Job and Financial Stress as Determinants of Nursing Staff Performance: An Exploratory Study of Public Hospital

Dr. Sheeba Zafar<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant professor of Management Sciences, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Islamabad

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<b>Article History:</b> Received: April 24, 2025 Revised: June 05, 2025 Accepted: June 13, 2025 Available Online: July 01, 2025	<p><i>Job stress is a pervasive issue in the healthcare sector, especially among nursing staff at tertiary-level public hospitals such as the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad. Nurses at PIMS operate under immense pressure due to high patient turnover, limited staffing, insufficient resources, and minimal public or institutional recognition of their roles. The critical imbalance in the nurse-to-patient ratio further intensifies occupational and financial stress, adversely affecting nurses' physical and psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall work performance. This study investigates the impact of job-related and financial stress on the performance of female nursing staff at PIMS. A descriptive-analytical research design was adopted, and data were collected through structured questionnaires from a sample of 155 staff nurses at PIMS. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between job stress and job performance. Financial insecurity was also found to be a strong contributor to reduced motivation and increased turnover intentions. The findings highlight the pressing need for PIMS hospital administration to implement evidence-based stress management programs, including emotional resilience training, financial planning education, and equitable workload distribution. These interventions are essential to safeguard nurse well-being, enhance retention, and maintain the quality of healthcare services in Pakistan's public health system.</i></p>
<b>Keywords:</b> <i>Job Stress, Financial Stress, Nursing Performance, PIMS, Public Sector Hospitals, Occupational Stress, Burnout, Pakistan, Health Services Management, Coping Strategies, Nurse well-being.</i>	
<b>Corresponding Author:</b> Dr. Sheeba Zafar <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:sheebazafar.dms@stmu.edu.pk">sheebazafar.dms@stmu.edu.pk</a>	



### Background

Stress is a widely recognized global health issue affecting nearly 90% of the world's population, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). Within the workplace, stress arises when the demands of a job exceed an individual's ability to manage them effectively, especially when the required resources or support systems are lacking. Although the definition of stress may vary by context, the American Institute of Stress (2020) describes it as “the nonspecific response

of the body to any demand for change.” This reaction is often misunderstood as a disease; however, the WHO clarifies that it is instead a psychological and physiological response to external pressures.

In healthcare, job stress is considered one of the most significant occupational hazards, particularly in developing nations (Paul, 2002; Danna & Griffin, 2002). Among all healthcare professionals, nurses are often most vulnerable due to their direct involvement in patient care, long working hours, understaffing, inadequate compensation, and frequent exposure to suffering and death. These stressors negatively influence nurses' physical and emotional wellbeing and contribute to job dissatisfaction, burnout, absenteeism, and diminished quality of patient care (Jahangir, 2011; Siti et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, the situation is even more critical due to the alarmingly low nurse to patient ratio—approximately 1:50—which far exceeds the Pakistan Nursing Council's recommended ratio of 1:10 in intensive care units. This imbalance increases job demands on nursing staff, leading to chronic stress and reduced productivity. Moreover, societal under recognition of nurses, professional disrespect, and unsafe working conditions compound these challenges, further deteriorating morale and performance (Khan & Akhtar, 2020).

Job stress in nursing typically stems from multiple sources, such as heavy workloads, insufficient staffing, lack of managerial support, and emotional labor involved in caring for terminally ill patients. Nurses are often expected to manage not only clinical duties but also provide emotional support to patients and their families, which creates significant role conflict. Female nurses working in critical care units face daily exposure to trauma, grief, and death, increasing their risk of psychological distress. These experiences can manifest physically through symptoms such as insomnia, hypertension, digestive issues, and chronic fatigue, as well as mentally through anxiety, irritability, and emotional exhaustion (ILO, 2001; Siti et al., 2020).

Furthermore, financial instability serves as an additional stressor, particularly in public sector hospitals where salary scales often do not align with job demands. Inadequate financial compensation contributes to decreased job satisfaction and motivation, resulting in higher turnover rates and reduced service quality. Research shows a strong correlation between financial stress and negative job behaviors such as apathy, withdrawal, and resistance to change (Applebaum et al., 2010; Sharma et al., 2021).

The current healthcare climate, marked by increasing patient volumes, limited infrastructure, and rising public expectations, demands urgent attention to nursing staff wellbeing. Addressing job and financial stress is essential not only for improving nurses' work life balance and performance but also for sustaining effective healthcare delivery in public hospitals across Pakistan.

### **Objective of the Study**

To explore the extent to which job-related and financial stress influence the performance of nursing staff in public hospitals.

### **Methodology**

This exploratory, descriptive-analytical study aimed to examine the impact of job and financial stress on the performance of nursing staff at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Islamabad. A quantitative research approach was adopted using a structured, self-administered

questionnaire designed to collect relevant data from the target population. The study focused exclusively on female nursing staff, including staff nurses, head nurses, and midwives employed in various departments of PIMS.

The population for this study consisted of approximately 350 female nurses currently serving at PIMS. Using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure proportionate representation across nursing categories, a total of 180 questionnaires were distributed. Out of these, 155 valid responses were received and used for final analysis, yielding an effective response rate of 86.1%.

The questionnaire was developed based on existing literature and validated scales related to occupational stress, financial strain, and employee performance. The instrument included items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). To ensure the instrument's reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 15 nurses from a similar healthcare setup, and the internal consistency of the questionnaire was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.84.

### **Result of the Study**

The collected data were analyzed

**Table 1: Stress Factors and Their Impact on Nursing Staff Performance in Public Sector Hospitals (n = 155)**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Stress Factors</b>	<b>No. of Respondents (n=155)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Test Applied</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1	Patient overload	107	69.03%	Descriptive Statistics	A major contributor to job stress, linked to burnout and performance reduction
2	Unhealthy work environment	111	71.61%	Descriptive Statistics	The most commonly reported factor, highlighting environmental stress in hospitals
3	Dangerous working conditions	57	36.77%	Descriptive Statistics	Indicates safety-related stress affecting physical and psychological wellbeing
4	Inadequate pay (Financial stressor)	91	58.71%	Descriptive Statistics	Financial dissatisfaction strongly related to stress and demotivation
5	Lack of promotion opportunities	57	36.77%	Descriptive Statistics	Perceived stagnation in career progression impacts long-term job satisfaction
6	Disrespectful behavior from patients	55	35.48%	Descriptive Statistics	A behavioral stressor undermining emotional stability and work morale
7	Disrespectful behavior from patient	45	29.03%	Descriptive Statistics	External social interaction challenges leading to stress

<b>S.No. Stress Factors</b>	<b>No. of Respondents (n=155)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Test Applied</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
attendants				and frustration

### **Table Description**

Table 1 presents the findings from a descriptive statistical analysis conducted on a sample of 155 female nurses working in one public sector hospitals in the Islamabad region. The data reflect multiple stressors categorized under job-related and financial dimensions. The analysis shows that the most significant stressors were an unhealthy work environment (71.61%) and patient overload (69.03%), followed by financial stress factors such as inadequate pay (58.71%) and limited promotion opportunities (36.77%). Behavioral issues like disrespect from patients and their attendants were also notable, indicating the psychosocial challenges nurses face. These stressors collectively contribute to a decline in job satisfaction and performance, emphasizing the urgent need for institutional reforms and stress management strategies in the healthcare sector.

### **Findings**

The study results revealed that the majority of nurse's perceived stress and these stresses affect their performance negatively. The results also showed that nurses' stress is a multi-factorial construct, and all of these factors are interrelated. It has also been found that stress has a negative effect on the performance of nurses working in government hospitals in Punjab. The researcher has tried to examine the causes of stress in this study and to find out the relationship between job stress and job performance, job stress and job satisfaction of female nurses of Islamabad government hospitals

A co relational research design was used in this study. Questionnaires are used in this research study to collect data on the causes of job stress and the relationship between job stress and job performance, job stress, and job satisfaction. In this study, a demographic questionnaire was used to collect characteristic data on a sample of female nurses from hospitals in Sargodha, Punjab. A job stress questionnaire was used in this study to determine the relationship between job stress and job performance and job stress of female nurses of government hospitals in Islamabad A number of variables were taken into account and tested/analyzed. Data was collected from female nurses of hospitals in Islamabad

A total of 155 questionnaires were selected for data analysis. Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship between the various variables discussed. It has been established that public sector hospitals are stress factories. The consequences of job stress are more chronic and severe for the employees as well as the organization as a whole. There is a negative relationship between job stress and job performance and then job stress.

### **Conclusions**

The current research paper gave an awareness of problems related to occupational stress among nurses at tertiary care hospitals. The study outcomes established conclusively that an overwhelming portion of the nurse population, setting their demographic characteristic aside faced moderate or severe job stress that may cause a damaging effect on their professional, interpersonal skills, and social accountabilities. The researcher strongly suggests that job stress should be taken

as a serious problem by both employee and employer. It has been shown that as job stress increases, job performance, and job satisfaction decline. Recommendations for future research are growing with increasing job stress in today's dynamic organizations. It is important to equip employees with the necessary skills, techniques, and tools to help reduce their work stress. Job stress can affect the individual, clients, and the organization as a whole. Increased levels of job stress can lead to greater declines in job satisfaction and job performance. Stress results in lower performance and job satisfaction, further affecting the quality of service to customers. The female nursing staff is likely to face physical, emotional and mental stress. Job stress causes employees to experience many different feelings that can turn into resistance, lack of motivation, and feelings of overwork, boredom, and burnout. All of these factors contribute to morale and perceptions of fit between the individual and the work environment and the employee's sense of control over their work environment. The research findings/conclusions presented in this study are to increase their employees' awareness and teach them perceptions about job stress. Additionally, employers can help them understand how job stress can affect other areas of the environment. Integrating workplace feedback can be used as a tool to increase awareness of job stress and its negative effects on job performance and job satisfaction. Female nursing staffs constantly face stress, crisis, and conflict in the work environment which they need to cope with. Organizations can help reduce the overall effects of job stress by developing and implementing prevention and intervention methods to help employees cope with job stress.

Research shows that coping skills, education and training can help reduce job stress. A suggestion that could be used here is to incorporate coping skills training with confidence, approach/avoidance styles, and personal control to measure the effects of job stress among nursing staff.

This combination can be explored in a study to see if this combination can help with job stress and day-to-day interactions with clients in the social work field. Another suggestion for future research involves assessing participants for other factors such as burnout, motivation, problem-solving awareness, and self-efficacy. These variables combined with trust and control reduces job stress (Heppner, Hibel, Neal, Weinstein, & Rabinowitz, 1982; Keoske, Kirk, & Keoske, 1993).

Future research can examine the cause and effect between the variables to determine the effect of job stress, as this study assessed the correlation between the cause of job stress and the aforementioned variables that affect job stress, affect performance, and job satisfaction. Although this study clearly shows that job performance and job satisfaction are related to job stress, this study helps increase awareness and insight into the ongoing concerns of job stress. Finally, it is recommended that this study be further explored to determine whether the findings of this study hold true in other geographic locations and industries. Job stress is a growing concern in organizations today. It is important to try to reduce the amount of job stress in the work environment to facilitate a more productive and satisfying work environment. This study has attempted to enhance the understanding of job stress. The researcher in this research study explores the specific relationship between job stress and job performance, and job satisfaction. Individuals who are aware of their own thoughts are more likely to bring about positive change in the workplace (Peterson & Wilson, 2004).

## **Recommendations**

New spacious and well-equipped wards should be established in hospitals to reduce the effects of stress caused by a rush of patients. Additionally, the new recruitment of nurses is helping reduce the workload of existing nurses, thus helping to alleviate the effects of stress.

A standard policy should be formulated and strictly enforced allowing only one attendant with a patient and through strict security measures. Unnecessary visitors should be stopped in hospitals. This is helping reduce noise pollution and thus check the potent stress factor. Nurses should be offered handsome salary packages, encouraged to work hard, and overcome financial difficulties. This is going a long way in relieving a major stress factor. Moreover, it helps improve the socio-economic fabric of the nurses' families, thus acting as a remedy for the stress factor. Businesses that want to stay competitive and challenging in this current age of dynamism is never stress-free. In most cases, stress has a negative effect. Employers should be part of a stress management program for the well-being of employees as well as for the long-term survival of their organization. The employer and employee must collectively identify the main sources of job stress the job, the physical role, and the interpersonal demands of the job and organizations. Do the demands of the organization match the workers' coping skills and resources and taste for the challenge? If so, the level of job stress may be appropriate for the individual for the job, if not, the employer should try to reduce the existing stress and increase the employees' ability to cope with stress through mutual counseling and employee participation. The employer should train and provide instructions to its employees so that the employees know well how to perform and fulfill their job responsibilities. In this way, the work environment can be made more comfortable and safer.

Certain measures and techniques can be of great help in managing stress. These measures are definitely help people to be happy and healthy. For example, exercise, get enough rest, have plenty of fun and eat a healthy diet regularly. The researcher suggests that the employer should encourage the employee to develop good habits and initiate beneficial programs to reduce job stress and reduce its serious consequences. The employer must provide the following facilities to the employee:

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