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The Influence of Sex, Marital Status, and Tenure of Service on Job Stress, and Job Satisfaction of Health Workers in a Nigerian Federal Health Institution

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Abstract

The study examined some demographic factors that interact to influencing the satisfaction that nurses and doctors derive from their jobs. One hundred and ninety one (191) professionals, comprising of one hundred and two (102) nurses and 89 doctors were drawn from Federal Medical Centre, Ido Ekiti in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Perceived

Stress Scale developed by Cohen (1983) and Minnesota satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) developed by Weise, Davis, Lofquist and England (1967) were employed to assess job stress and satisfaction respectively. Analysis of data was done using Independent t-test and one way ANOVA. Three hypotheses were tested to show the effects of the demographic factors on job satisfaction. The result shows that job satisfaction is influenced by marital status [$t(189) = 10.17, p < .05$]; sex [$t(189) = 5.61, p < .05$] and tenure of service ($F(2, 188) = 115.6, p < .05$). Also, job stress has a significant effect on the job satisfaction among nurses and doctors. Findings were discussed in relation to the existing literature on the influence of demographic variables on job satisfaction.

Key words – Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Psychology, Health

Introduction

Effective health care delivery is absolutely hinged on the satisfaction of health care providers, especially nurses and doctors. They occupy important positions in all health care organization that seeks to reduced mortality and morbidity rate, therefore high premium is placed on job satisfaction of its entire workforce. Therefore, job satisfaction has become a critical challenge to all health care organizations. Fajana (2002) referred to job satisfaction as the general job attitude of employees. Job satisfaction should be of concern to health care organizations because it is related to important aspects of employees' job behaviour. It is therefore pertinent for workers to be happy or satisfied with their work, given the amount of time they give to it through their working lives. Health care organization should hold the belief that if their employees are satisfied with their jobs, they will translate that satisfaction into high productivity.

For workers to be satisfied with their jobs there are factors that must come into play. Various researchers have shown the effects of demographic variables on job satisfaction of employees. The study of Tyler Ellison (1994) illustrated the effect of marital status on job satisfaction. They found out that married individuals experience less

stress and job satisfaction than their single counterparts. In the same vein, Clark, Oswald and Warr (1997) asserted that women are more satisfied with their jobs than men. Richardson and Burke (1993) in their findings revealed significant sex differences in demographic and situational variables. Cherniss (1980) in a research carried out on young professionals that are new on the job (1-10 years) found that most of them expressed frustration, tiredness, apathy and job dissatisfaction. The findings are in line with the belief that demographic variables have significant roles to play in the job satisfaction of nurses and doctors in our various health care settings.

Specific objectives of the research

The aim of this paper is to

1. find out whether there will be a significant difference between married and single respondents in the level of stress experienced on their job and the satisfaction derived from the job.
2. Determine whether there will be a significant difference between male and female respondents in their level of job stress and job satisfaction.
3. Ascertain whether tenure of service will have significant effect on job satisfaction and the stress experienced by the respondents.

An individual naturally adapts as occasion changes, but most psychologists would maintain that there is a core of consistency which defines the nature of the individual which can be discussed as the personality, which is simply described as actions, attitudes and behaviour one possesses. Though Mischel (1998) argued that personality often changes according to the situation, thus an individual may behave differently at a party, a library or hospital. One of the important views on the development of personality across adulthood is the life events approach, which emphasizes how life events influence the individual's development depending not only on life events, but

also on mediating factors (for example, physical health, marital status and family support), the individual's adaptation to life event (appraisal of the threat, coping strategies), the life stage context and the socio historical context (Cu & Vallient, 1996) Hultsch & P lemon 1979, Mcleon 1996.

This study seeks to assess the level of stress experienced by the health workers in a tertiary health institution and also if the live events like marital status, tenure of service affect their level of job satisfaction.

Materials and methods

The study is a survey research which involved 191 health workers which include 95 married and 96 single, 102 nurses and 89 doctors, 98 male and 93 female health workers, all drawn from Federal Medical Centre in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was employed so as to cover the different specialties in the hospital.

The variables measured in the study are demographic variables which include: marital status, sex, and tenure of service (independent variables) while job satisfaction and job stress served as the dependent variables.

The instrument employed to measure job stress is the Perceived Stress Scale by Cohen (1983) which contains 10 self-report items with a five point Scale. While job Satisfaction was measured using Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weis & Davis, England Lofquist (1967). It has a reported test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.94 for general satisfaction and reliability of 0.50 for Nigerian sample (Mogaji 1997). High score indicates job satisfaction. Marital Status and other demographic variables were measured with one item each, asking the respondents to indicate their marital status, sex and how long they have been on the job. It is a self administered questionnaire, which the respondents responded to and was collected back after a stipulated time depending on their schedule of work.

Results

The influence of demographic variables on job satisfaction and job stress among nurses and doctors

The result in table I showed that there is a significant difference between married and single nurses [$t(189) = 1.17, p < .05$]. Married enjoyed higher level of job satisfaction ($x = 66.32$) than single ($x = 39.81$). Also singles reported higher level of job stress than married. Hence, the hypothesis which stated that there will be significant difference in the job satisfaction and job stress between married and single respondents was confirmed.

The results in table II showed that there is a significant differences between male and female nurses and doctors on $t(189) = 5.6, p < .05$. Males enjoyed higher level of job satisfaction ($\chi = 61.19$) than females ($\chi = 44.35$). Also job stress is significantly higher among females ($\chi = 26.07$) than male workers ($\chi = 19.53$). Hence, the hypothesis that there will be a significant difference in the job satisfaction and job stress between male and female respondents was confirmed.

Table III shows that there is a significant effect of tenure of service on job satisfaction of nurses and doctors [$F(2,190) = 115.6, p < .01$] and the experience of job stress too [$F(2,190) = 163.71, p < .01$]. Hence, the hypothesis which stated that tenure of service will have a significant effect on job satisfaction of nurses and doctors was confirmed.

Discussion

The three hypotheses tested were confirmed by the study, showing that sex, marital status and tenure of service have significant influence on the job satisfaction and the level of stress reported by nurses and doctors. Singles reporting a higher level of job stress than the married and invariably a lower level of job satisfaction than their married counterparts. This can be viewed from the societal value that is peculiar to culture which frowns at late marriage. It is believed that

once an individual has reached the stage of independence and is economically viable [makes possible by the job either as a nurse or doctor], it is expected that such an individual should get married. And the fact that a married worker derives emotional support from the spouse may reduce the job tension after the day's work which may not be available to single workers. A study of the psychological well-being of single ladies by Omolayo & Mokuolu (2004) found that singlehood has a significant effect on the well-being of ladies. This can culminate into job dissatisfaction as the study further reported a significantly higher level of job stress among female than the male health workers and that men are more satisfied with their jobs than women.

This research found out that job satisfaction increases with tenure of service. Nurses and doctors who have spent 5-10 years in service enjoyed more satisfaction than those with less than five years. In the same vein, those who have served for more than 10 years were more satisfied than those with 5-10 years tenure of office. It can then be deduced that experience on a job reduces the level of stress, and then enhances the satisfaction that is derived from the job. This is in line with the findings of Cherniss (1980) in a research carried out on young professionals that are new on the job (between 1-10 years) found out that most of them expressed extreme frustration, apathy, worries, tiredness and job dissatisfaction.

All the demographic variables (marital status, sex, and tenure of service) measured have significant effect on job satisfaction of the respondent. The roles which demographic characteristics play in job satisfaction cannot be overemphasized. It therefore implies that variables must be taken into consideration while designing plans and strategies aimed at improving job satisfaction of workers in their workplace environment.

Recommendations

- In designing policies to improve upon job satisfaction of workers, single workers should be targeted because they enjoy less satisfaction than married counterparts.
- Female workers should also be focused when considering who are more prone to job dissatisfaction.
- Workshops and seminars should also be organized for inexperienced workers on job assertiveness and job satisfaction.

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Table I: Independent t-test table showing the effect of marital status on job satisfaction and job stress among nurses and doctors.

Variables		N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t	P
Job satisfaction	Married	95	66.32	23.04	2.36	189	10.17	<.05
	Single	96	39.81	10.94	1.12			
Job stress	Married	95	16.06	10.49	1.07	189	10.16	<.05
	Single	96	29.30	7.22	0.73			

Table II: Independent t-test showing the effect of sex on job satisfaction and job stress among nurses and doctors.

Variables		N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t	P
Job satisfaction	Male	98	61.19	23.32	2.36	189	5.61	<.05
	Female	93	44.35	17.57	1.83			
Job stress	Male	98	19.53	12.45	1.25	189	4.22	<.05
	Female	93	26.07	8.47	0.87			

Table III: One way ANOVA summary table showing the effect of tenure of service on job satisfaction and job stress among nurses and doctors.

Variables	<5 Years n= 115		5-10 Years n= 51		>10 Years n= 25		Group effect	P
	χ	SD	χ	SD	χ	SD		
Job satisfaction	40.01	10.56	67.84	74	82.44	16.02	F(2,190)=115.61	<.01
Job stress	29.64	6.01	15.00	9.02	6.60	4.27	F(2,190)=163.71	<.01

