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Quality of Work Life and Job Stress of Nurses in Rivers State

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Abstract: *The study examined the association between quality of work life and job stress of nurses in Rivers State. A cross-sectional survey study to achieve was carried out to achieve the stated objectives. 1218 nurses in Rivers State constitute the study population. The sample size of 291 was drawn, using Krejcie and Morgan's 1970 table. The simple random technique was used. Quality of work-life was operationalized with the work environment and work-life balance. Physiological stress and psychological stress were used to measure the dependent variable (job stress). The e Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used for the analysis. The findings revealed a significant relationship between the dimensions of quality of work life and job stress. The study concluded that a strong positive significant relationship exists between the quality of work life and job stress of nurses in Rivers State. The study recommends that the quality of work life (work environment and work life balance) of workers should be of utmost importance for the reduction of physiological and psychological job stress.*

Keywords: *Quality of Work Life, Work Environment, Work-Life Balance. Job Stress, Physiological Stress, Psychological Stress.*

INTRODUCTION

Stress at work is harmful to one's mental well-being. Lives is full of stress, and this stress affect individual and organisations differently. The heart, lungs, and muscles are activated by stress-related physical, hormonal, and physiological changes in the body (Gazzaniga and Heatherton, 2003). Work pressure is innate pressure that manifests as a result of a mismatch between a person's mental health and their workplace (Henry & Evans, 2008). Workplace pressures can trigger physiological and psychological reactions that affect a person's physical and mental well-being. Stress is a result of a variety of causes, including workplace changes, hazardous settings, and administrative harassment (Colligan and Higgins, 2006).

Lack of innovation, poor working practises, uncertainty, conflict, a lack of autonomy and teamwork, and jobs with high demands can all contribute to workplace stress. Because it exposes workers to dangerous and unsafe working conditions, jeopardises their physical health, restricts their control over their professional and personal lives, and causes psychosocial stress as well as social and economic deprivation, which all have an effect on their general well-being, hazardous work has a negative impact on workers' health and well-being. Workplace stress has been linked to higher healthcare costs for businesses (and society) (Colligan & Higgins, 2006), as well as a negative effect on employees' quality of life at work (Bolhari, Rezaeem, Bolhari & Zare, 2012;

Charu, 2013). Fernandes (1996) claims that QWL addresses the interests of both individuals and companies, resulting in satisfaction and improved

By interfering with healthy behaviours including exercise, a balanced diet, and sleep, chronic stress has an adverse effect on health (Nicole, LeBlanc, & Luana, 2019). Poor work-life balance leads to employee stress, which affects an organization's effectiveness as a whole. Because burnout reduces job productivity, raises absenteeism and job turnover, and promotes conflict among co-workers, stress at work can also be detrimental to enterprises or organisations. A person's personal life disturbance has an impact on their professional life and vice versa, according to the concept of quality of work life (QWL). Employees who have a healthy work-life balance are more motivated to give their best efforts at the office while still making time for their families. A solid time management schedule enables employees to reconcile their professional and personal lives, and as a result, firms have started to place a greater emphasis on an employee's entire development and happiness for motivation and stress reduction (MBA Skool Team, 2021).

Studies have looked at how work stress affects employees' quality of life at work and has related burnout to symptoms of nervousness, sadness, and other psychological health issues (Nicole, LeBlanc & Luana, 2019; Moyosore, 2021; Hong, Tan, & Bujang, 2010; Leonard, 2002). Major depressive disorder and generalised anxiety disorder in employees are more likely to be brought on by excessive workloads and time constraints at work. The motivation behind this study is, however, the paucity of empirical research on the nature of work life and job stress as they pertain to nurses in Rivers State. The research gap will be filled by this study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

According to the American Institute of Stress, stress is the root cause of 40% of the economic problem in the workplace and 80% of all job-related grievances (Sveinsdottir, Biering, Ramel, 2006). Because of the complex job requirements and demands, nursing is regarded as a stressful profession, with high expectations, excessive responsibility, and a lack of expertise as the foremost stressors. The stresses of the nursing profession are seen to be challenging, and it negatively affect health and quality of life. Job stress results in job dissatisfaction, health illnesses, low creativity, co-worker conflict, reduced proficiency fulfillment, poor work energy and low timely decisions, inadequacy in knowledge, depression, revulsion, and fatigue, decreased work efficiency, and decreased quality of nursing care (Rezaei & Rezaei,2013; Shareinia, Khuniki, and Bloochi-Blochi, 2013). Depending on their line of work, nurses may experience a variety of emotional and physical problems. Since nurses must care for numerous patients, the burdens encountered may be the root of their stress and prolonged burdens may result in physical and psychological harm that lowers their quality of life.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study examines the quality of work life and job stress of nurses in Rivers State. Specifically, it examines the connection between:
1. Work environment and physiological stress of nurses in Rivers State
2. Work environment and psychological stress of nurses in Rivers State
3. Work-life balance and physiological stress of nurses in Rivers State
4. Work-life balance and psychological stress of nurses in Rivers State

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between work environment and the physiological stress of nurses in Rivers State?
2. What is the connection between work environment and psychological stress of nurses in Rivers State?

3. What is the association between work-life balance competitiveness and physiological stress of nurses in Rivers State?
4. What is the bond between work-life balance competitiveness and psychological stress of nurses in Rivers State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between work environment and physiological stress of nurses in Rivers State.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between the work environment and psychological stress of nurses in Rivers State.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance competitiveness and physiological stress of nurses in Rivers State.

Ho_4: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance competitiveness and psychological stress of nurses in Rivers State.
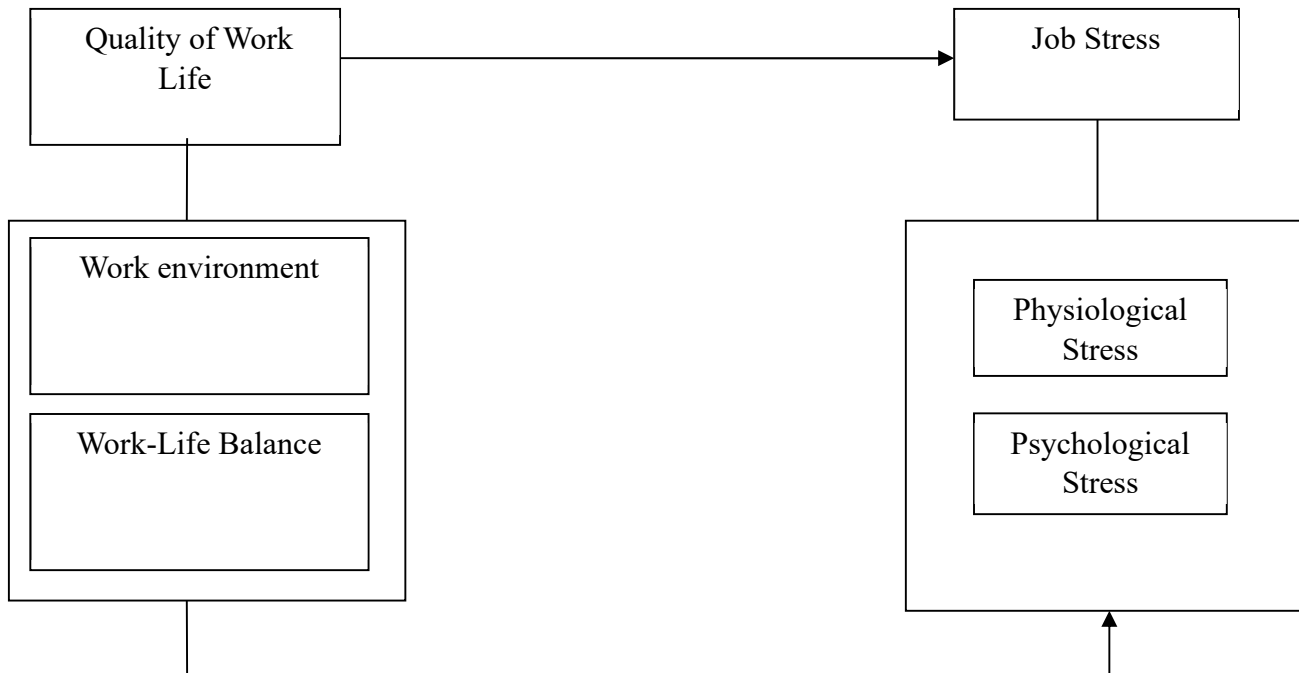
Conceptual Framework

Fig 1: Conceptual framework of quality of work life and job stress of nurses in Rivers State.

Source: Conceptualized by the researcher.

PERSON-JOB FIT THEORY

Person-Job Fit Theory is a form of organizational psychology that postulates that an individual's personality traits will reveal insight into their adaptability within an organization. The degree of confluence between a person and the organization is expressed as their Person-Organization (P-O) fit. Person-job fit, or P-J fit, refers to the compatibility between a person's characteristics and those of a specific job. The closer the correspondence of an individual's abilities with the requirements of the job role or organization, the higher the likelihood the individual will perform the job better12. The theory was propounded by John Holland in 1959. Person-job fit theory is a form of organizational psychology that postulates that an individual's personality traits will reveal insight into their adaptability within an organization. The degree of confluence between a person and the organization is expressed as their Person-Organization (P-O) fit. Person-job fit (P-J fit), refers to the compatibility between a person's characteristics and those of a specific job. The closer the correspondence of an individual's abilities with the requirements of the job role or organization, the higher the likelihood the individual will perform the job better.

A good P-J fit can lead to higher job satisfaction, better performance, and lower levels of stress1. A poor P-J fit can lead to lower job satisfaction, lower performance, and higher levels of stress1. Quality of work life is a term used to describe how well an individual is able to balance their work and personal life. A good P-J fit can lead to a better quality of work life by reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction.

Quality of work life

Workforces have specific expectations (needs) from management while striving to work harder to achieve the organization's goal. These needs are known as quality of work life. The concept of quality work-life balance embraces treating people with respect and decency at all times for improved workplace success (Chand, 2019). The level of productivity, work passion, and quality of life work together in achieving performance and reducing workplace stress (Joseph, 2009). QWL is a thorough programme with the goal of raising employee happiness. Quality of work life is a strategic method of executing work, dealing with people, increasing work passion, bringing fulfilment, helping to promote productivity, enhancing job happiness and better organisational performance. QWL has been interpreted in several ways by academics. Enjoyable task execution and healthy well-being is the primary focus of quality of work life. Quality of Work Life (QWL) changes the corporate culture through humanizing work, individualising organisations, and changing structural and management procedures (MBA Knowledge Base, 2018). The pleasant working environment, benefits, employee welfare, and the management's attitude towards them are all factors that affect how enjoyable working life is. QWL account for the sociopsychological needs of the employee. Focusing on employee QWL may give organisations a competitive edge in attracting and retaining talented workers who are enthusiastic about their careers.

Work Environment

The phrase "work environment" describes the elements that have an impact on productivity (Malik, Ahmad, Gomez, & Ali, 2011). The human element and the organisation are essential in comprehending the crucial significance of the working environment (McGuire, 2009). Work environments can impede, discourage, guide, support, or improve human behaviour (Gutnick, 2007). For performance to increase and, consequently, outcomes to be sustained, a favourable work environment is necessary (Abdulla, 2010). Akintayo (2012) defined the organisational environment as the immediate task and national environment in which an organisation receives inputs, processes them, and creates outputs (goods or services) for consumption by the general public. Supplier influence, customer role, stakeholders, sociocultural effects, the national economy, technology, law, management practises, and ideology are just a few of the many variables that affect the job and the environment and have a significant effect on people's mental health and attitudes towards their jobs.

According to Govindarajulu (2004), firms are adopting a more strategic approach to environmental management in the twenty-first century to boost productivity through management and employee development. The physical workplace is characterised by technology, beautiful infrastructure, equipment and befitting decorations that impact employees' intelligence and health at the workplace (Stoessel, 2001). Organisations must make sure that their physical layout satisfies all of their employees' needs, including those for cross-disciplinary collaboration, formality and informality, communication and privacy, and usefulness (White, 2001).

Work-Life Balance

The interaction of various aspects of an employee's working life constitutes work-life balance. According to Smith (2010), people who have a healthy work-life balance devote the right amount of time to their employment while also making time for their friends, family, and hobbies. Work-life balance emphasises the necessity for all workers to strike a balance between their personal and

professional lives, regardless of whether they have regular family responsibilities (Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1996). Work-life balance is defined differently by different studies (Clark, 2001). Work-life balance is defined as "satisfaction and effective functioning at work and home with a minimum of role conflict" (Clark, 2001), whereas Weitzman, Ferris, Hawkins & Hill (2002) defines it as "the degree to which an individual is able to balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioural demands of paid and family responsibilities concurrently". Employees who are unable to reconcile their personal and professional life may jeopardise both themselves and their employers (Allan, Loudoun, & Peetz, 2007).

Tausig and Fenwick (2001) assessed perceived work-life balance using the degree to which people feel successful in juggling work and personal life, and the amount of conflict they experience when doing so. A growing number of banks are now offering comprehensive work-life benefits to their workers in order to solve this problem. Flexible hours and part-time jobs are widely used in efforts to balance work and life. Work-life balance is significantly influenced by emotional intelligence, which is defined as the capacity to perceive emotions, access and generate emotions to aid in thought, comprehend emotions and emotional knowledge, and regulate emotions in a thoughtful manner to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence is essential for women working in the workforce who want to strike a healthy work-life balance (Ramanithilagam & Ramanigopal, 2012). and having emotional intelligence is essential for professionals to achieve work-life balance (Kumarasamy, Pangil, & Isa 2016).

Job Stress
Stress. is an interaction, worrying situations and pressure faced from time to time with a boss at the workplace or pressure from friends and family (Lindberg, 2019). Job stress can cause physical conditions, psychological and emotional strains, including confusion, anxiety, and depression. For some of us, these events happen sporadically. For others, daily stress is a regular part of life. According to Richardson and Rothstein (2008), job stress is an interaction between the working environment and the individual that alters a person's psychological and physiological state and impacts performance.

Researchers have found that job stress is a physical-psychological syndrome that is accompanied by fatigue, which results in undesirable conduct and attitudes towards work, self, family, and patients, as well as ineffective activity and absenteeism, depravity, and job unhappiness. These behaviours are caused by nurses' mental stress and lack of concentration (Roh, Lee, & Kim, 2014) and the psychological health of nurses is harmed by excessive job-related stress, which also lowers productivity. In this regard, job stress among healthcare workers is associated with low job satisfaction, a negative attitude towards one's own job, and a negative impact on the quality of caregiving (Visser, Smets, Oort, & De Haes, 2003; Begat, Ellefsen, & Severinsson, 2005).

According to Mohajan (2012), situations where job expectations exceed worker capacities result in workplace stress, which is defined as dangerous bodily and emotional reactions. It describes a worker's response to employment demands and pressures that are excessive compared to their resources, needs, skills, and knowledge and overwhelm the capacity for adjustment or management (Khudaniya & Kaji, 2014). Ornek and Sevim (2018) assert that workplace stress arises when workers' responsibilities and demands are not in line with their skills or when there is not enough time to complete tasks which thus has negative organisational effects and makes employees exhibit unhealthy behaviours.

Physiological Stress
According to Kollack-Walker et al. (2000), physiological stress is defined as a disruption in an individual's internal environment that causes the activation of regulatory mechanisms intended to restore homeostasis. Stress can negatively affect our lives. Physical symptoms like headaches, gastrointestinal issues, and disturbed sleep may occur from it. Additionally, it may result in psychological and emotional issues like confusion, concern, and despair. Physiologic stress causes catabolism as well as a reduction in protein synthesis. As a result, lower circulation levels of proteins like albumin and transferrin (or total iron binding capacity) are expected as a result of severe illness. Physiological stress symptoms include exhaustion, poor sleep, headache, heart palpitations, abdominal pain, muscle soreness, and a reduced immune system (Blain, 2022). On the job, nurses may experience severe psychological stress. The American Nurses Association claims that stress in nurses is a prevalent and serious issue that negatively impacts their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Complex job requirements, time restraints, disagreement, and a lack of control are a few factors of stress. Burnout, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, and decreased productivity are all consequences of stress.

Psychological Stress
Psychological stress has the ability to negatively impact our lives. Psychological, such as persistent worry about losing a job can trigger a cascade of stress hormones that produce well-orchestrated physiological changes. According to the American Psychological Association, untreated chronic stress, or stress that's constant and lasts over an extended period of time, can result in high blood pressure or a weakened immune system and it can also contribute to the development of obesity and heart disease (Lindberg, 2019; Babapour, Gahassab-Mozaffari, & Fathnezhad-Kazemi, 2022). The psychological strain of the workplace can have a significant impact on nurses. According to the American Nurses Association, stress among nurses is a common and dangerous disorder that has an impact on their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Stress elements include difficult work requirements, deadlines, discord, and a lack of control. Stress can lead to burnout, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and decreased productivity, among other things.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW
Ahmad, Maon, & Aziz (2018) study the links between job stress and workers' quality of life. A total of 400 authenticated questionnaires were sent to respondents in Meru and Klang. According to the data, there is a considerable association between job stress and employee quality of life. Job-related stress, lack of reward and acknowledgment, organisational, interpersonal, perceived stress, and work environment are all related to the quality of wok life.

In order to better understand the character traits that can lessen the negative effects of work stress, Mensahand Amponsah-Tawiah (2014) used a cross-sectional survey design to investigate work stress and quality of work life (QWL), with the mediating role of psychological capital among 290 SSNIT employees. The findings of this study show that work stress is negatively related to QWL but positively related to psychological capital using correlational and hierarchical regression analysis. Additionally, a positive correlation between psychological stress and QWL was found.

The study by Aderibigbe, Nwokolo, & Solomon (2020) investigated graduate employees' perceptions of job stress in Nigeria. The study employed a positivist explanatory cross-sectional (survey) research methodology with a standardised and verified questionnaire to systematically sample the opinions of 1,532 male and female graduate employees from all sectors of the nation's economy. Additionally, the T-test for Independent Groups and One-way ANOVA were used to create and assess hypotheses. The statistical investigation revealed that graduate employees who

had more work experience than their peers who had less work experience reported significantly higher levels of workplace stress, which affect their lifestyle and performance.

Babapour, Gahassab-Mozaffari, & Fathnezhad-Kazemi (2022) explore the connection between job stress and nurses' quality of life and patient-care behaviours. This cross-sectional survey design study included 115 nurses from two hospitals. The nurses were chosen based on their availability, and information about their characteristics, job stress, and quality of life was acquired using demonstration graphics. The statistics show a statistically significant, negative relationship between work stress and quality of life. Employed nurses revealed greater levels of work stress, which may be detrimental to their well-being and compassionate tendencies.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted in the study to achieve the stated objectives. 1218 nurses in Rivers State constitute the study population. The sample size of 291 was drawn, using Krejcie and Morgan's 1970 table. The simple random technique was used. The sample elements were given a structured questionnaire. Quality of work life was operationalized with work environment and work-life balance. Physiological stress and psychological stress were used to measure the dependent variable (job stress). Each concept was assessed using six items.   The Cronbach alpha was used to determine the variable's dependability. The questionnaire items were graded on a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating severe disagreement, 2 indicating disagreement, 3 indicating agreement, and 4 indicating strong agreement. The earlier state hypotheses were examined using the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient.

RESULT

291-questionnaire were distributed, but only 282(96. %) copies were returned. The hypotheses test is undertaken at a 95% confidence interval and the decision rule is stated below.
Where $P < 0.05$ = Reject the null hypotheses

Where $P > 0.05$ = Accept the null hypotheses

Table 1:   Correlations between work environment and dimensions of job stress

			Work environment	Physiological Stress	Psychological Stress
Spearman's rho	Work environment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.892**	.855**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	282	282	282
	Physiological Stress	Correlation Coefficient	.892**	1.000	.815**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	282	282	282
	Psychological Stress	Correlation Coefficient	.855**	.815**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	282	282	282

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output, 2023.

Work environment and Physiological Stress: In column five of Table 1, the rho value of 0.892** at a significance level of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis (Ho$_1$) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (Ha$_1$) is accepted. This implies that work environment and physiological Stress have a substantial positive link.

Work environment and Psychological Stress: The rho value in column six of Table 1 above is 0.855** at a significance level of 0.000, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05 used for work environment and psychological stress. The null hypothesis (Ho$_2$), which states that there is no significant association between work environment and psychological stress, is rejected because the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that there is a strong positive relationship between work environment and psychological stress.

Table 2:   Correlations between work life balance and the dimension of job stress

			Work life balance	Physiological Stress	Psychological Stress
Spearman's rho	Work life balance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.885**	.862**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	282	282	282
	Physiological Stress	Correlation Coefficient	.885**	1.000	.825**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	282	282	282
	Psychological Stress	Correlation Coefficient	.862**	.825**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	282	282	282

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output, 2023.

Work life balance and Physiological Stress: The rho value in Column 5 of Table 2 is 0.885** at a significance level of 0.000, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. The null hypothesis (Ho$_3$) is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis (Ha$_3$) is accepted. This suggests that work life balance has a high positive relationship with physiological stress.

Work life balance   and Psychological Stress: The rho value of 0.862** at a significance level of 0.000 in column six of Table 2 above is less than the alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to work life balance and Psychological Stress.   The null hypothesis (Ho$_4$), which claims that there is no significant association between work life balance and psychological stress, is rejected because the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that work life balance and psychological stress have a highly substantial positive relationship.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to the data analysis above, quality of work life in terms of work environment and work life balance has a relationship with job stress. Each hypothesis is discussed in detail below.

Work environment and Physiological Stress
The results of the data analysis in Table 1 showed a strong relationship between work environment and physiological Stress. The P-value of 0.000 demonstrates a strong positive relationship existence between work environment and physiological stress, and the rho value of 0.892 demonstrates a strong positive connection between the variables. The results of this study support that of Babapour, Gahassab-Mozaffari, & Fathnezhad-Kazemi (2022) whose findings show a relationship between job stress and quality of life, as employed nurses revealed greater levels of work stress, which may be detrimental to their well-being and compassionate tendencies. It also agrees with Ahmad, Maon, & Aziz (2018) whose findings review that work environment is related to the quality of wok life.

Work Environment and Psychological Stress
The hypothesis 2 analysis in Table 1 showed a positive strong significant correlation between work environment and Psychological Stress. The P-value of 0.000, and the rho value of 0.855 demonstrates a strong positive link between work environment and psychological stress. The findings agree with Mensah, and Amponsah-Tawiah, (2014) who examined work stress and quality of work life (QWL), and the findings of this study show that work stress is positively related to psychological stress

Work-Life Balance and Physiological Stress
The results in Table 2 revealed that work-life balance relates significantly to physiological stress. The P-value of 0.000 shows that work-life balance relates to physiological stress, while the rho value of 0.885 shows a strong positive correlational value among the variables. The correlation among the variables signifies that work-life balance relates to the physiological stress of the nurses in Rivers State. This result is consistent with the study of Ahmad et al., (2018) whose findings show a considerable association between job stress and employee quality of life. Job-related stress, lack of reward and acknowledgment, organisational, interpersonal, perceived stress, and work environment are all related to the quality of wok life.

Work Life Balance and Psychological Stress
The analysis presented in Table 2 revealed that work life balance relates significantly to Psychological Stress. The P-value of 0.000 shows that work life balance relates to Psychological Stress, while the rho value of 0.862 shows a high positive correlational value among the variables. This finding agrees with Aderibigbe, Nwokolo, & Solomon (2020) study, which the findings revealed that workplace stress affect quality of life style and performance

CONCLUSION
The study examines the quality of work life and job stress of nurses in Rivers State, Nigeria. The dimensions of quality of work life which are work environment and work life balance has a strong positive relationship with job stress. Hence, the study found a strong correlation between quality of work life and the job stress of nurses in Rivers State. The study therefore concludes that a relationship exists between quality of work life and job stress of the nurses in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The hospital management should regularly organise stress management programmes to reduce stress at the workplace and improve the quality of work life
2. The quality of work life of nurses should be of utmost importance for reduction of physiological and psychological job stress.
3. The hospital management should provide a favourable work environment that will lessen stress and increase efficiency.
4. The nurses should have a work-life balance to reduce the psychological and physiological stress.
5. Hospital administrators should enhance nurses' quality of life and compassionate behaviours by offering cognitive-behavioral intervention programmes aimed at identifying sources of stress in the workplace
6. The hospital management should provide soft skill programmes such as teamwork, behavioural and communication skills, a conducive environment, and teaching efficient coping mechanisms to reduce stressors.

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