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WORK-STRESS AS DETERMINANT OF MARITAL HARMONY AMONG MARRIED ADULTS IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN TEACHING HOSPITAL (UITH), ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between work stress and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of correlational type was adopted for this study. The population of this study included all married adults in UITH, Ilorin Nigeria. The sample size was 358 married adults selected using proportionate and randomization sampling techniques. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale, (DAS) and Weimen Occupational Stress Scale, (WOSS) were used for data collection. Regression analysis, PPMC and ANOVA were used for data analysis. Research hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of confidence. Results showed significant relationships between independent variables and dependent variable. Also, independent variables contributed 84% variation to the prediction of dependent variable. Furthermore, Job burnouts made the highest relative contribution ($\beta = 0.65$), this was followed by Work Load ($\beta = 0.39$). There was a negative contribution of Leadership style ($\beta = -0.12$) to the prediction of the dependent variable. Additionally, this relationship was statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Federal Government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Health recruit more staff to reduce the work load of employee in UITH, Ilorin Nigeria, this will promote a healthier marital harmony among married employees.

Keywords: Marital harmony, Work load, Leadership style, Burnout

Introduction

Work-related stress has become a pervasive phenomenon affecting millions of individuals worldwide, with far-reaching consequences extending beyond the workplace. In Nigeria, the health care sector is particularly vulnerable to stress due to inadequate resources, heavy workloads, and high patient expectations. For married adults working at University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UITH), the strains of work stress may reverberate into their personal lives, potentially compromising their marital harmony.

According to Chung et al (2023), Problems associated with work-home interface can have a significant impact on marital harmony. The above assertion is a confirmation to Wazir et al (2020) who posited that marital harmony is built on trust, mutual respect, love and appreciation leading to inclusive decisions on significant matters that affects the marital relationship. Work stress could negate harmonious marital relationship due to inability of the married adults to effectively manage their work stress. In the view of Algbiremhon et al (2019), work challenge has no correlation and neither a predictor of marital satisfaction. On the contrary, a married partner who faced series of physical and emotional burn out as a result of work stress stemming from work over-load, nagging boss, un conducive work environment and lack of job satisfaction will most likely demonstrate a

frustrating behaviour in the home which could have a devastating consequence on the stability of the marriage.

Work-related stress (WRS) is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occurs when the requirement of job does not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker in the work environment (Ibrahim & Lasisi, 2023). Working in a hospital environment such as the UITH is characterized by stressors like as work overload, under staffing, poor promotion, poor managerial relationship with staff, poor working environment, prolonged working hours among other stressors (Etim et al., 2015). A stressful work environment associated with prolonged working hours and poor communication between the subordinate and management is most likely to compound the level of stress with the end receiver likely to be the partner.

Marital harmony may be defined as the presence of atmosphere of peaceful coexistence, marital satisfaction and balanced marital relationship among spouses. Marital harmony is achieved through mutual understanding, healthy communication, effective conflict resolution mechanisms, mutual supports, and constructive criticisms. According to Obiemeka (2021), marital harmony is significantly sustained through effective communication between the two persons. Communication bridge could emanate stress and work-related stress experiences that are transferred to the home environment due to the inability of either or both of the parties involved in the intimate relationship to effectively manage such stress/pressure.

University of Ilorin teaching hospital (UITH) Ilorin, Nigeria is a tertiary healthcare institution providing specialized medical services to patients in Kwara State and beyond. Established on 2nd may, 1980 as a teaching hospital for the University of Ilorin College of health sciences, UITH has grown into a major healthcare provider, offering a range of medical services including emergency care, surgery, pediatrics and psychiatry. As a teaching hospital, UITH face unique challenges which may include high patient volumes, limited resources and the pressure to balance clinical care with medical education and research. Healthcare workers and other categories of employees at UITH could experience high level of stress stemming from job burnout, heavy work load, organization leadership styles among others occupationally related stressors which can impact their personal and family life. In the context of this study, job stressors include Job burnout, work-overload, and organizational managerial leadership styles, and these stressors affects the marital relationship of married adults working at the UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Job burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress, overwork and lack of balance in work life. Marital harmony a cornerstone of family life is vulnerable to the erosive effects of job burnout. When individuals bring home emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced performance, the delicate balance of marital relation could be disrupted. Greenglass (2020) enumerated the source of burnout to include individual's unmet expectations, job conditions, low participation in decision making, high level of role conflict, lack of freedom and autonomy and absence of social support network.

Workload refers to the amount of work or tasks assigned to or expected of an employee within a specific time frame. Work load may include the volume of the tasks or responsibility the frequency to which such tasks are expected to be performed and the expected duration required to performed the tasks. Workload could be physical, mental and emotionally draining, marital harmony could be influenced by stress resulting from workload which could metamorphose in to physical, mental and emotional burnout which oftentimes may translate into transfer of aggression and exhibition of aggressive behaviour and emotional detachment. Pluut et al (2022) posited that workplace social stressors influence marital behaviours at home.

The organizational leadership style exhibited by managers and supervisors can have far-reaching consequences, extending beyond organizational wall to impact the personal life of the employee. According to Dumas and Stanko (2017), there is a relationship between family structure and employees' leadership competence in the workplace. It is assumed that the ability to manage the home could also transmit into ability to manage individual in the workplace. Emotional distress is a major determinant factor in spousal communication and marital stability (Uye et al., 2023). Leadership style could result in employees' emotional distress with far reaching consequences on couples' patterns of communication which is the bedrock of every harmonious relationship including the marital relationship.

Building on the background to this study, the study carried out empirical literature review to establish the previous findings on the relationship between the identified stressors and the dependent variable. For instance, Fatoye and Bolu-Steve (2025) researched the relationship between work-related stress and marital stability among married lecturers in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The sample size consisted of 100 lecturers selected through multistage procedure across five faculties. A researcher-designed instrument titled "Work Stress and Marital Stability Questionnaire (WSMSQ)" was used for data collection. The result revealed that there is a correlation between work stress and marital stability among married lecturers at the university of Ilorin, Nigeria. Although the study was carried out among lecturers of university of Ilorin, the UITH presents a different work environment hence the need to carry out this study in the particular context of UITH, using a larger sample size.

Also, Arong et al. (2025) investigated the relationship between job progression and marital stability of married women in Cross River State civil service, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive correlational design. The population of the study consisted of 23,346 married women in the civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria. A total of 758 married women were selected as sample from 10 Local Government Areas of the State. The Marital Stability and Job Progression Questionnaire (MSJPQ) was used for data collection. The result revealed a significant negative relationship between job progression and marital stability. The UITH is a unique work environment that is characterized by heightened stress especially among the clinicians due to the persistent increase in numbers of patients and reduced numbers of employees, therefore the result of civil servants in Cross River may not be directly applicable in the geographical and population context of this study necessitating the to further investigate such relationship in the specific context of married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Similarly, Li et al. (2024) studied the nexus between job-related stressors, and perceived marital support, and marital instability. The study adopted a three-wave, cross-lagged approach. The sample size comprised of 268 newlywed Chinese couples. The result showed that there was a bidirectional wave between external stressors (job-related stressors) and marital instability among the newlywed couples. It normal for newlywed couples to feel the impact of work-family balance due to adjustments and adaptations associated to new relationship especially marital relationships, that could account for the level of recorded associations between marital instability and external stressors. Also, the population of this study even though related, are not the same as married adults may include both newlywed and couples that has been in marital relationship for long time. As a result, this finding despite establishing previous efforts, does not represent the actual focus of this study and this account for the need to further explored this gap by researching the relationship between the independent and dependent variable in the specific population context of UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

An analysis of available literature suggests that although various studies have been conducted on the relationship between job stress and marital stability, these studies investigated job stress as a compound variable, few others who focused on specific job-related stressors were never examined the specific stressors especially in the specific geographical and population context of this study, thereby creating a research vacuum, hence, this study is structured to bridge that noticeable gap by investigating the relationship between job stress and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Despite the critical role of marital harmony in promoting overall well-being among couples, studies suggests that work stress can negatively impact the quality of marital relationship, leading to marital disharmony. Work stress has become a permeating issue affecting millions of married adults worldwide, including those in Nigeria. Specifically, in the UITH, Ilorin Nigeria, the demanding nature of health care work coupled with the country's socio-economic challenges, may exacerbate work related stress. This stress can spill over into marital relationships, potentially eroding harmony and straining relationships. The spillover effect of marital harmony can stretch beyond family ties, and escalates into mental instability of employees which can potentially employees' service delivery, thereby endangering the lives of citizen especially patients who rely on the medical facility for medical attention. Therefore, there is a need for continued research aimed at eradicating or reducing the occupational stress associated with employees of this sector to foster harmonious marital relationship of employees for a more effective service delivery.

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between work stress and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria. Other specific purposes included to;

- 1) investigate the relationship between job burnout and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria;
- 2) establish the correlation between work load and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria;
- 3) ascertain the association between workplace leadership styles and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria;
- 4) examined the joint contributions of independent variables to the prediction of dependent variable;
- 5) Explore the relative contributions of independent variables to the prediction of dependent variable.

Five null hypotheses were tested in this study at a 0.05 level of confidence. Thus;

- 1) there is no significant relationship between job burnout and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- 2) there no significant relationship between workload and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- 3) there is no significant relationship between organizational leadership styles and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- 4) there is no significant joint contribution of independent variables to the prediction of dependent variable.
- 5) there is no significant relative contribution of independent variables to the prediction of dependent variable.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design of correlational type to investigate the relationship between work stress and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria. The population consists of all the 4068 staff of the UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria, since the explicit data of married staff could not be generated. The sampling frame included all married employees across the 12 departments (strata) in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select respondents from each of the twelve departments in the UITH, Ilorin Nigeria. The departments were treated as strata and sample size was allocated proportionally to each stratum. Using proportionate random sampling allowed the representation of various sub groups in the study.

A total sample size of 358 respondents participated in the study and was calculated using the Slovin formula for population size determinations. The sample size for each department was determined on the proportion of employees in that department. The population sample was randomly selected from across all the strata to ensure that all departments were represented in the study. The compressive representation and sample size collection and distribution are shown in a table below in the next sub-heading.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and Weimen Occupational Stress Scale (WOSS) were adopted and used for collection of relevant data in this study. The DAS was developed by Spanier, G. B. (1976), a thirty (32) items instrument with a reliability of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80 suggesting that the scale is consistently relevant in the measurement of marital harmony (adjustment). The WOSS was developed by Weiman, (1977), a thirty-one items instrument with a reliability of Cronbach's coefficient of 0.90 and relevant in the measurement of work stress especially among the health workers such as the respondents in this study. Using the proportionate random sampling technique, the participants were randomly selected from across each of the twelve strata (Department) in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Descriptive and inferential statistics such as Regression analysis, and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used to analyze the data, upon which the research hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of confidence. This study was approved by the UITH ethics committee. Information consent was obtained from each respondent, confidentiality of participants was ensured, and data were used for research purpose only.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Department-wise Sample size using Proportionate Sampling Technique

Stratum size	Population	Sample
Nurses	978	86
Doctors	659	58
Lab scientist	65	6
Radiologist	25	2
Dentist	11	1
Optometrist	12	1
Pharmacist	25	2
Lab technician	90	8
Environmental scientist	98	9
Lab technologist	71	6
Physiotherapist	38	3
Others	1996	175
Total	4068	358

Table 2: PPMC Showing the Correlation bet ween Marital Harmony and Work Load

Variables	No	Mean	SD	df	r. cal.	Sig	R
Marital Harmony	358	117.68	32.35	356	0.88	0.00	**
Work Load	358	21.80	6.29				

** (Significant @ 0.05 critical region)

Table 2 presents the results obtained from testing hypothesis one. From the results, it is revealed that r. cal. is 0.89, degrees of freedom is 356 and the significance is 0.00. Since the level of significance is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis one is rejected, hence there is a significant relationship between work load and Marital Harmony among Married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Table 3: PPMC Showing the correlation between Marital Harmony and Burnouts

Variables	No	Mean	SD	df	r. Cal.	Sig	R
Marital Harmony	358	117.68	32.35	356	0.91	0.00	**
Burnout	358	23.12	5.81				

** (Significant @ 0.05 critical region)

Table 3 presents the results obtained from testing hypothesis 2. From the table, it is shown that r. calculated is 0.91, the degrees of freedom is 356 and the significance level is 0.00. Since the level of significance is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis 2 is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between Burnouts and Marital harmony among Married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Table 4: PPMC Showing the Correlation between Marital Harmony and Leadership Styles

Variables	No	Mean	SD	df	r. Cal.	Sig	R
Marital Harmony	358	117.68	32.35	356	0.80	0.00	**
Leadership Style	358	25.29	6.28				

** (Significant @ 0.05 critical region)

Table 4 presents the results obtained from testing hypothesis 3. From the table, it is shown that r. calculated is 0.80, degrees of freedom is 356 and significance is 0.00. Since the significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis 3 is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between Work place leadership styles and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Table 5: ANOVA Showing the Joint Contributions of Independent Variables to the prediction of dependent Variable

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F.ratio	AR ²	St Error Est	Sig
Regression	313381.916	3	104460.639	614.74	0.84	13.05	0.00
Residual	60153.782	354	169.926				
Total	373535.698	357					

** (significant @ 0.05 critical region)

Table 5 revealed the results obtained from testing hypothesis 4. From the table, it is revealed that AR₂ is 0.84, F ration is 614.74 and significant at 0.00. This signifies that the independent variables jointly contributed 84% variation to the prediction of dependent variable which is significant @ a 0.05 significance level. This finding was supported by Olatubi, et al (2022) who revealed that there is a

positive correlation between perceived stress and marital satisfaction among married healthcare workers in Nigeria. However

Table 6: Regression Table showing relative contributions of the Independent Variables to the prediction of the Dependent Variable

Model	unstandardized coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.89	3.11		1.89	0.59
Work load	2.03	0.35	0.39	5.86	0.00
Burnout	3.59	0.32	0.65	11.41	0.00
Leadership Style	-0.61	0.26	-0.12	-2.31	0.02

** (Significant @ 0.05 critical region).

Table 6 presents results obtained from testing hypothesis 5. From the table, it is shown that work burnout made the highest relative contribution ($\beta = 0.65$) and. This was followed by work load ($\beta = 0.39$) and Leadership style making a negative contribution ($\beta = -0.12$) which was still significant at a 0.05 confidence level.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the relationship between work stress and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin Nigeria. It was revealed from the results of the hypotheses tested that there was a significant relationship between work load and marital harmony ($r. cal. = 0.89$, $df = 356$, $p = 0.01$), this is in agreement with earlier findings of Fatoye & Bolu-Steve (2025) which posited that there was a significant relationship between lecturers' workload and marital stability.

Similarly, there was a significant relationship between burnouts and marital harmony ($r. cal. = 0.91$, $df = 356$, $p = 0.01$) this confirmed the previous studies of Sen et al. (2023) which revealed a nexus between spouse burnout and marital satisfaction.

Also, there was a significant relationship between workplace leadership styles and marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria ($r. cal. = 0.80$, $df = 356$, $p = 0.01$), this was supported by previous study of Dumas and Stanko (2017) which revealed a significant positive relationship between workplace leadership styles and family structures among married employees.

Furthermore, independent variables jointly contributed 84% variation to the prediction of the dependent variable. This was in line with Pluut et al. (2022), which revealed a significant relationship between workplace stressors and marital behaviour.

Additionally, Job burnouts made the highest contribution ($\beta = 0.65$), this was followed by Work Load ($\beta = 0.39$). However, Workplace Leadership Styles ($\beta = -0.12$) made the least, and negative contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable indicating a small negative relationship. Additionally, this relationship was statistically significant at a 0.05 level.

Conclusion

The study examined the correlation between job stress and marital harmony of married employees in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria. The results showed that the independent variables were significantly related to the dependent variable. Collectively, these factors explained 84% of the variation in marital harmony. Job burnout was the strongest predictor, this was followed by workload. Meanwhile, workplace leadership styles made the least and a negative prediction which was still statistically significant at a 0.05 level of significance. These findings prove that marital harmony among married

adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria is highly influenced the level of job burnout and workload, whereas, less supportive workplace leadership styles further undermining marital stability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- 1) Address Burnout: Since job burnout was the strongest predictor of marital instability (disharmony) among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria, the management of UITH, and by extension the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Health should prioritize interventions that reduce burnout. Such interventions can include wellness programs and Counselling services for married employees.
- 2) Manage Workload: Workload also made significant positive contribution to the prediction of marital harmony. This suggests that excessive workload negatively affects marital harmony of married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria. The hospital management and other relevant stakeholders should review work schedules and tasks distributions to prevent overburdening of employees.
- 3) Promote Supportive Leadership Styles: The negative beta value for workplace leadership styles ($\beta = -0.12$) shows that unsupportive workplace leadership styles can worsen marital harmony. The management of UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria should train the various supervisors and sectional heads on supportive leadership behaviour to promote a healthier work climate.
- 4) Targeted Interventions for Married Employees: based on the revealed influences of job-related stressor on marital harmony among married adults in UITH, Ilorin, Nigeria, married adults should be given tailored support such as stress management training, counselling and other scientific-based therapies aimed at balancing work and family responsibilities.

Suggestion for further Studies

Future research should explore other job-related variables such as role conflict, shift patterns, work environment among others and personal coping mechanisms to deepen the understanding of the impact of job-related stressors on marital relationships. Other population and geographical contexts can also be explored for in-depth and vast understanding of the influence of work stress on dyadic relationships.

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