

## THE INFLUENCE OF EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF NURSES IN SUBOL HOSPITAL

By

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### ABSTRACT

*The extent of performance in the workplace may be negatively affected by stress due to a lack of effective management. The decline in work performance may appear to be a great threat or even death of patients in the hospitals. It is important that effective management of stress among nurses in Nigeria is paramount in hospital administration and management to ensure effective healthcare delivery. The main aim of this study is to investigate the influence of effective stress management on the performance of nurses in hospitals in Lagos State Nigeria. This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The study is based on the observation that takes place within different groups at one time while the appropriate research strategy adopted is survey strategy. The major findings from this study revealed that the effectiveness of stress management techniques has a strong and significant impact on nurses' performance. This study therefore concluded that the lack of effective stress management techniques in hospitals accounts for the decline in productivity, performance, and commitment among nurses in Lagos Hospitals.*

**Keywords:** Stress, management, nurses, performance, communication, flexibility, vacation, wellness programme

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The extent of performance in the workplace may be negatively affected by stress due to a lack of effective management (McVicar, 2017). The decline in work performance may appear to be a great threat or even death of patients in the hospitals (Odigie,2016). It is important that effective management of stress among nurses in Nigeria is paramount in hospital administration and management to ensure effective healthcare delivery. To promote effective stress management in the organization, hospitals need to adopt various strategies such as open-door policy, flexible hours of work, regular risk assessment, wellness programs, and vacations as strategic actions to effectively manage stress among nurses (Parks,1996)

Healthcare workers are generally exposed and vulnerable to various job stressors within and outside the work nexus (Odigie: 2016), and stress among nursing professionals particularly can be subjective to evaluate while the complexity of nursing practice may cause variations in the stressors (McVicar: 2017). Previous research in this area of academic discipline emphasized that the nursing profession can be categorized as a stressed group such as the studies by Veda & Roy (2020). Abdelrasak, El-Ghabbour,Fahmy & El-Sayed (2017) and Donkour (2013) examine the effect of stress management on the performance of nurses levels (Galinda, Pires,Gracio,& Candeias (2020) in the continuous nursing care profession, while Smith (2020) examine factors that reduce stress among nurses through gamification. Other literature examines the causes of stressors such as the studies by Elegbede, Kolawole & Omotoye (2020), work-related stress such as supervision, unregulated hours of work, and mobility from home to work as experienced in most of the developing areas. Similarly, Nouri, & Soultani (2017) examine the relationship between stress factors and organizational commitment. Similarly, Ali & Nageeb (2017) examine the effect of work stress management programs on nurses' performance.

However, previous studies in this area of knowledge seem to focus attention on the effect of stress management programs on the performance of nurses in the hospital. It's important to note that Previous studies in this area of research failed to determine the impact of the effectiveness of stress management techniques or programs on nurses' performance in the hospital. Therefore, the current study under investigation aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of stress management techniques adopted in hospitals and their impact on the performances of nurses.

Stress is a major concern for managers of business organizations but with some peculiarity in developing countries due to the shortage of medical professionals, especially nurses. Qualified and registered nurses appear to be overworked coupled with some economic and environmental challenges peculiar to developing countries (Chibuzor & Jovita, 2018). However, as noted by Chibuzo & Jovita (2007) clinics and hospitals in most African countries, particularly in Nigeria lack adequate and robust stress management programs. The absence of effective stress management in the nursing profession in Nigeria has over the years appeared to undermine the performance of nurses in Nigeria (Odigie, 2016). Therefore, the study under investigation will examine the influence of effective stress management on nurses' performance in Nigeria. Previous studies in this area have been conducted majorly in Europe and North America while emphasis was on business organization with few empirical studies in the healthcare sector in Nigeria. However, this study will adopt empirical analysis to determine the influence of effective stress management on the performance of nurses in Nigeria (Odigie, 2016, Chibuzo & Jovita, 2007)

The main aim of this study is to investigate the influence of effective stress management on the performance of nurses in hospitals in Lagos State Nigeria.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress can be described as a state of mind or a state of mental or emotional strain tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances within and outside the work nexus (Ibukun & Ibinronke, 2016; Dankor 2013) Stress is a state of mental and emotional imbalance Veda & Roy, 2020) from certain factors from within the work environment (Lazarus , 1986). An open-door policy can be conceptualized as a stress management technique that enables an employee to access and freely communicate with his or her supervisor or manager. The open-door policy ensures that the supervisor responds promptly to an employee's questions, complaints, suggestions, and challenges. Open door policy promotes open communication, feedback, and discussion between workers and supervisors. It is possible to carry them out at a larger scale, regardless of time, place, or group of people (Cohen, Kessler, & Gordon, 1995), which provides feedback for nursing professionals to interact with their supervisors in a friendly manner.

The study by Avgoustaki, & Bessa, (2019) emphasized that flexible work arrangements can be manifested in the form of flextime or flexible working days (Russell, O'Connell, & McGinnity, 2007), to promote the emotional and mental stability of workers within and outside work relations. Rosyadi, Bayudhigantara, & Buana, M. (2021) opined that flexible work arrangements can be expressed through a compressed work week.

Hai-Dong, Ya-Juan, & Lu (2022) identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (Jaber, 2020) Analyzing and evaluating the risk associated with that hazard tends to improve organizational performance (Kaliti, 2014). Hai-Dong, Ya-Juan, & Lu, (2022) revealed in their study that health workers are at the center of any society's sustainable social and economic development at local and national levels. The study by Bloom, Geurts, & Kompier, M. (2013)

revealed that Leisure activities have an important part in promoting health, and (Tripathi and Vishal , 2022) well-being for employees. Faki (2014) Exploiting a linked employer-employee dataset that allows to control for detailed observed demographic, job, and firm characteristics, the study find instead that annual hours of work fall by only 29 hours for each additional week of vacation used.

## **2.1 Transactional Theory of Stress**

The transactional theory emphasizes that stress is the direct product of a transaction between an individual worker and their work environment which may tax their resources and then threaten their wellbeing (Lazarus ,1986). Therefore social survival is of great essence to human being as revealed in the study by Ibukun & Ibinronke (2016) that social securities that are necessities for human survival (Russell, O' Connel & McGinnity, 2007).The transactional theory of stress was derived from the general theory of stress and later eulogized by Lazarus (1986) while Lazarus & Folkman (2001) reviewed the transactional theory to imply that it is the appraisal of this transaction that offers a causal pathway that may better express the nature of the underlying psychological and physiological mechanisms. In support of this argument, Smith (2001) advocated a physiological evaluation that provides a link between stress and illness. In contrast to the study of Smith (2001), Cox and Griffiths (1996) opined that a psychological view in which stress has a particular relationship between the person and the environment. Though, stress can emanate from both administrative and organizational factors (Cronin-Stubbs & Brophy, 1985; Dawkins, Depp, & Seizer, 1985; Jones, 1987) that underpin the overall process and experience of stress (Veda & Roy , 2020). In this regard Messenger (2011) examined the impact of timing and workplaces on workers' performance with increasing levels of work flexibility (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004) workers tends to be stressed by certain environmental factors (Ibukun and Ibinronke, 2016) However, this theory has been critiqued on the ground that it failed to identify factors that cause stress in the organization (Siegrist, 1996). The inability of the transactional theory to identify factors that cause stress necessitated the need for the advancement of a more sophisticated theory generally known as interactional theory (Odigie, 2016)

## 2.2 Interactional Theory

This theoretical model generally known as the Interactional models focuses on the interaction of the environmental factors and stimuli and the associated individual worker responses as the main cause of stress. The interactional theory emphasizes that work effort is involved as an aspect of a psychological contract. This concept is emphasized as an aspect of the social law of reciprocity by which work effort is remunerated with rewards and opportunities. As noted by (Siegrist 1996), the imbalance in the contract usually results in stressful situations. In contrast to transactional theories of stress, this imbalance may not necessarily be subject to any appraisal, as the stressor may be an everyday constant occurrence (Donkor,2013). Another variant of the interactional theory of stress is the person-environmental fit concept popularized by Caplan (1987), French, Caplan & Van Harrison (1982). The person-environmental fit revealed that work-related stress arises due to a lack of fit between the individual's skills, resources, and abilities, and the demands of the work environment (Olofsson, Bengtsson, & Brink,2003). This concept concluded that stress will likely occur when there is imbalance between an individual workers and the work environment.

## 2.3 Review of Empirical Literature

Shenhar (1993) opined that the open communication policy that existed between management and their employees is a major factor affecting employees' motivation and job performance in the organization. The study by Acqua & Chen (2021) provides empirical findings that supported the claim of Shenhar (1993). The authors adopted a cross-sectional design and used a survey as the research strategy. Acqua & Chen (2021) adopted correlation analysis to determine the relationship between workers' performance and effective stress management. the findings from their study revealed that the absence of effective stress management may result in health-related issues and poor work performance. The study by Weerasekara, Smedberg, & Sandmark (2020) on ICT-supported occupational stress management interviewed ten HR managers in ICT software companies. Their study also shows that Human Resource Managers had limited knowledge and experience of ICT intervention in stress management.

However, in recent times most organizations have adopted flexible working arrangements as an effective strategy for the management of stress in the organization. This was empirically examined in the study by Utami & Gadjah (2013) on the relationship between flexible working arrangements and stress management. The authors adopted a 2x2 between-subject experimental design with participants. The findings from the study revealed that flexible working arrangements enhanced stress management. However, the study by Utami & Gadjah (2013) determines the relationship between flexible working arrangements and stress management. But did not determine the impact of the effectiveness of stress management strategies on employee performance. Aziz-Ur-Rahman & Siddiq (2020) on the relationship between flexible working arrangements and job satisfaction mediated by work-life balance adopted a survey as their research strategy using a structured questionnaire to collect samples from 200 respondents. Previous studies failed to examine the impact of stress management on employee performance and the effectiveness of stress management techniques. A study by Sofiani & Supriansina (2021) examines flexible working arrangements and how they affect workers' perceived stress and productivity. The authors adopted a survey and focused on 126 samples collected through the convenient sampling procedure. The findings from their study show that workers have a high attitude towards flexible working arrangements. Their study revealed that flexible working arrangements can affect subjective well-being and perceived productivity. The study by Supriansina (2021) only examined the impact of flexible working arrangements on the well-being of workers and failed to evaluate the impacts of flexible working arrangements on the performance of workers in the organization. Moreso, the study did not examine the effectiveness of flexible working arrangements as a stress management technique, and its impact on employees' performance. The study by Avgousttaki (2019) employed both primary and secondary data to analyze and determine the link between flexible working

arrangements and employee work reports. The study by Russell, O'Connell & McCinatu (2007) aimed to determine the influence of flexible working arrangements on work-life balance and work pressure. Their findings show that part-time workers and flextime tend to reduce work pressure and work-life conflict, but remote work is associated with a greater level of both work pressure and work-life conflict. Nandani & Doshic (2022) focus attention on the effect of flexible work arrangements. their studies examine workers attitude to flexible working hours and flexible working days annually. The study by Rosyada & Bayuddhiryantara (2021) examines the effect of flexible working arrangements and social support on organizational commitment. The authors adopted work-life balance as a mediation variable. Using a structured equation and partial least square the findings from their study show that flexible working arrangement had no significant effect on organizational commitment. The study by Cahdola, Booker, Kumara, & Benzeval (2019) examines how flexible work arrangements can be associated with lower levels of chronic stress. the findings from their study revealed that reduced hours of work, and flexible work arrangements could enable women who combine work and family roles to reduce the level of chronic stress, Ibukun & Adekunle (2021). Examine the impact of flexible work arrangements on employees' work-life balance in an emerging economy. The authors adopted a survey strategy that sampled organizations in the banking sector. The findings from their study revealed that flexible working arrangement has a significant effect on work-life balance.

Risk assessment is an essential factor and approach to effective stress management. In the study by Ghani, Hassin, & Muhammad (2019) examines employees' understanding of risk management. The authors adopted a case study approach of a non-profit organization. Using a survey strategy and a sample of 80 employees at different levels in the organization. The findings from the study show that most employees have poor knowledge of risk management. Jabar (2020) examines the

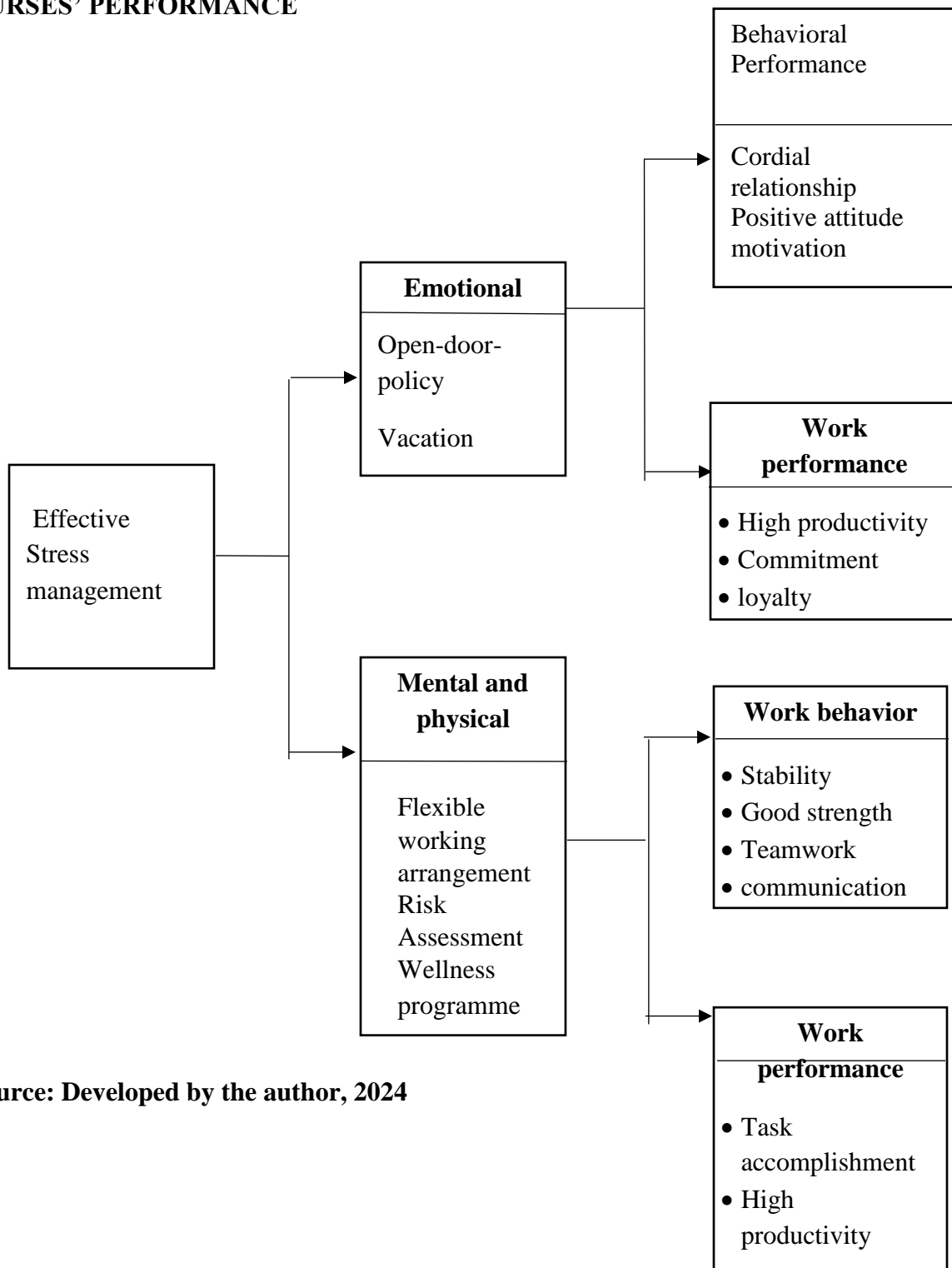


impact of risk assessment practices on the performance of workers. The findings from his study show that risk assessment has a significant effect on organizational performance. Kaliti (2015) in his study of the impact of risk assessment on work performance in the hospitality industry. The findings from his study revealed that risk assessment has a positive significant effect on the financial performance of an organization.

Kawugaba , Adamu, & Mubi (2020) examine the effect of risk assessment on the efficiency of an organization. The authors adopted a survey as the research strategy and employed the use of chi-square to analyze the impact of risk assessment on workers' performance. The findings from their study revealed that the incorporation of risk assessment with corporate policy will enhance the efficiency of the organization.

Sewu, Gyabaeng, Dadzie, & Nkruma (2019) examine the effect of occupational health and safety management on organizational performance. Their findings suggested that there is a slightly moderate positive correlation between occupational health and safety management and organizational performance. The study by Hai-Dong, Ya-Juan & Lu (2022) examines workers' risk perception on work arrangements during the era of COVID-19. The findings from their study show that workers' risk perception has a positive impact on work engagement. Also, the study by Josef, Alison, Robert, & Muhammed (2022) examines the effect of risk management on the performance of new product development programs. The findings from their study revealed that risk assessment is associated with product development program performance.

**FIGURE 2.1 CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT AND NURSES' PERFORMANCE**



Source: Developed by the author, 2024

The literature review shows that there is a need to examine the effectiveness of stress management techniques in the organization and how they impact the performance of nurses in the hospital. Some previous researchers in this area such as Acquah & Chen (2021), Kumar, & Bhalla, (2019), and McVicar, (2003) identified causes of stress among nurses while others such as Abdelrazek, El-Ghabbour, Fahmy, & El-Sayed (2017), Ali , Nageeb, & Alshammar (2017), and Acquah, & Chen, (2021) examine the impact of stress management techniques on the performance of nurses in the hospital. The current study under investigation intends to examine the effectiveness of stress management techniques on nurses' performance in the hospital.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **3.1 Research Philosophy**

Mishra & Alok (2017) opined that most discussions on Positivism can be attributed to foundationalism and empiricism; Dawson (2007) stressed that positivists value objectivity and proving or disproving hypotheses. The study under investigation will adopt positivism as the underlying research philosophy. The reason for the adoption of positivism is that stress management is a factor that influences the activities of workers in an organization. Greener (2008) opined that the chief strength and advantage of a positivist approach is the vigorous process of setting hypotheses, of empirical experimentation to test these hypotheses, of deep analysis to measure the results, and then the ability to codify the results in a set of laws and predictions (Mishra & Alok,2017; Dawson,2007)

#### **3.3 Research Setting**

Babbie (2007) posits that the research setting describes the physical, social, and cultural site in which the researcher conducts the study, and the research setting is the location where the research

takes place (Mishra & Alok,2017; Dawson,2007). Therefore the location of the study under investigation is Subol Hospital in Lagos State, Nigeria. The choice of Lagos State was because Lagos State is the commercial capital o and the commercial hub of Nigeria.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The study is based on the observation that takes place within different groups at one time (Mishra & Alok,2017; Dawson,2007) while the appropriate research strategy is survey research (Babbie,2007), and they are usually inexpensive and easy to conduct (Greener, 2008). In addition, survey strategies are useful for establishing preliminary evidence in planning a future advanced study (Babbie,2007).

### 3.3 Population of the Study

#### Population of the Study

The study will collect primary data from the five departments at Sumbol Hospital among the nurses

**Table I : Sample Frame showing the Distribution of Nurses in Sumbol Hospital**

SN	Department	Number of Registered Medical Professionals		
1	Pediatrics	15		
2	Physiotherapy	10		
3	Ophthalmology and Optometry	10		
4	Gynecology	15		
5	Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery	10		
	Total	60		

**Source:** HRM UNITS, SUMBOL HOSPITAL

### 3.4 Sample Size Determination

The sample size will be determined from the population of the study using the Yamane (1967) formular a as stated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
 Where n=sample size, N=total or grand population, e=95 % confidence level, and p-value of 0.05 is assumed

However, according to Babbie (2007) in the determination of sample size critical elements or components must be considered, which are to; define the population, design the margin of error, determine the confidence level, and predict expected variance (Mishra & Alok ,2017; Dawson ,2007) The Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula will be used to minimize sampling error and ensure the quality of data collected. Miaoulis and Michener (1976) revealed in their study that in the determination of sample size appropriateness, level of precision, level of confidence or risk, and degree of variability in attributes to be measured are critical factors to be considered

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 4.1: Multiple Regression Predicting Nurses' Performance**

SN	Variables	F	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	B	P-Value
1	open-door-policy	16.435	21.9	4.8	4.5	21.9	0.000
2	flexible work	29.565	28.8	8.3	8.0	28.8	0.000
3	wellness Programme	36.993	31.9	10.2	9.9	31.9	0.000
4	Vacation	44.316	34.5	11.9	11.7	34.5	0.000

Table 4.1 shows the result of the Multiple Regression Analysis on the four hypotheses. The result for all the hypotheses tested indicates that effective stress management methods significantly predict nurses.

However, the findings from the regression analysis above supported the findings from the studies by Shenhar (1993) opined that the open communication policy that exists between management and their employees is a major factor affecting employees' motivation and job performance in the organization. The study by Acqua & Chen (2021) provides empirical findings that supported the claim of Shenhar (1993).

Also, the study by Aziz-Ur-Rahman & Siddiq (2020) on the relationship between flexible working arrangements and job satisfaction mediated by work-life balance adopted a survey as their research strategy using a structured questionnaire to collect samples from 200 respondents.

Kaliti (2015) in his study of the impact of risk assessment on work performance in the hospitality industry. The findings from his study revealed that risk assessment has a positive significant effect on the financial performance of an organization.

Kawugaba , Adamu, & Mubi (2020) examine the effect of risk assessment on the efficiency of an organization. The authors adopted a survey as the research strategy and employed the use of chi-square to analyze the impact of risk assessment on workers' performance.

#### **4.2 Limitations of the Study**

This study currently under investigation examines the effectiveness of stress management strategies on nurses' performances using quantitative analysis. This is a major limitation of the adopted methodology of this study as the study does not consider qualitative analysis due to the time constraint to complete this study. The researcher focused mainly on a collection of primary data and analyzed those data using empirical analysis while little attention was given to the subjective reasoning of the respondents.

#### 4.1 Discussion of Findings

This study tested five hypotheses to determine the impact of stress management techniques on the performance of nurses. The first hypothesis using Pearson correlation shows that there is a significant relationship between open-door policy and nurses' performance. This finding supported the finding by Shenhar (1993), Acqua & Chen (2021), and the study by Weerasekara, Smedberg., & Sandmark (2020) that open communication policy that exists between management and their employees is a major factor affecting employees' motivation and job performance in the organization. The result second hypothesis tested shows that there is a significant relationship between flexible work arrangements and nurses' performance. The outcomes from the study under investigation also reinforce the findings from the studies by Utami & Gadjah (2013) on flexible working arrangements enhanced stress management, Aziz-Ur-Rahman & Siddiq (2020) on the effectiveness of stress management strategies, Sofiani & Supriansina (2021) flexible working arrangement can affect subjective wellbeing and perceived productivity. While the finding from the third hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between risk assessment and nurses' performance. This finding is in agreement with the findings from the study of Ghani, Hassin, & Muhammad (2019) on knowledge of risk management, Jabar (2020) risk assessment has a significant effect on organizational performance, and Kaliti (2015) risk assessment has a positive significant effect on the financial performance of an organization. The fourth hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between wellness Programmes and nurses' performance. The last hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between the Vacation Programme and nurses' performance. This finding is consistent with findings from the studies by Bloom, Geurts, & Kompier, M. (2013) Leisure activities play an important part in promoting health, and (Tripathi and Vishal, 2022) well-being for employees.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major findings from this study revealed that the effectiveness of stress management techniques has a strong and significant impact on nurses' performance. This study therefore concluded that the lack of effective stress management techniques in the hospitals accounts decline in productivity, performance, and commitment among nurses in Lagos Hospitals. An open-door policy and open communication between nurses and their supervisors encourage open discussion on stressors and adequate measures to manage them. A flexible working arrangement is effective in eliminating major stress factors caused by mental and physical stressors while risk assessment enables hospital management to mitigate again factors of physical stress. Wellness programs and vacations help to manage behavioral stresses.

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