

THE IMPACT OF WORK STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY AT AL-HILLA TEACHING HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the relationship between work stress and job performance among employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital, one of the primary healthcare institutions in Babylon Governorate. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach through the distribution of a questionnaire to a sample of physicians, nurses, and administrative staff to measure the dimensions of work stress (workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, and work environment pressures) and their impact on job performance indicators (efficiency, commitment, service quality, and job satisfaction).

The findings revealed that work stress constitutes a significantly negative factor affecting job performance, demonstrating that elevated stress levels lead to decreased performance quality and job satisfaction, whereas role clarity and equitable task distribution contribute to performance improvement. The study recommends adopting managerial strategies to mitigate stress, including improving the work environment, enhancing psychological and social support for employees, and developing training programs for stress management.

This study emphasizes that addressing work stress in healthcare institutions represents a fundamental approach to enhancing performance efficiency and improving the quality of services provided to patients.

Keywords: Work stress, Job performance, Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work stress represents one of the most prominent contemporary challenges facing healthcare organizations at both regional and international levels, due to its direct repercussions on the quality of services provided, the sustainability of employees' productive efficiency, and the achievement of healthcare institutions' objectives. Teaching hospital environments, in particular, are characterized by distinct organizational and professional specificity stemming from the nature of functional overlap among three primary roles: clinical tasks provided to patients, training responsibilities incumbent upon medical and nursing staff toward medical college students, in addition to obligations associated with scientific research. This overlap imposes additional burdens exceeding the boundaries of traditional job descriptions, thereby increasing the likelihood of

employees experiencing elevated stress levels that may negatively reflect upon their performance and professional competence.

Administrative and healthcare literature has devoted increasing attention to the subject of work stress due to its close association with key performance indicators, including productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and rates of absenteeism and turnover. Previous studies confirm that the persistence of high stress levels without corrective interventions leads to the accumulation of negative effects, manifested in professional burnout, diminished healthcare quality, elevated rates of medical errors, erosion of employee morale, and increased personnel turnover rates.

Within the Iraqi context, teaching hospitals face compounded challenges stemming from limited material and human resources, infrastructure gaps, and pressure from increasing demand for healthcare services amid complex demographic and epidemiological conditions. Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital in Babylon Governorate represents a prominent model for studying this phenomenon, as it combines the provision of extensive medical services with the fulfillment of an academic training mission, thereby rendering it an environment rich in indicators demonstrating the relationship between work stress and job performance.

This study originates from a problematic premise that the gap between escalating demand for healthcare services at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital and the available absorptive capacity and resources constitutes chronic stress upon employees, threatening the quality of their performance and potentially impeding the institution's training and therapeutic objectives in the long term. Accordingly, this introduction seeks to frame the research problem academically through reviewing the hospital's reality via quantitative statistical indicators, as a prelude to an in-depth field study examining methods to alleviate these pressures and improve the practical environment within this vital institution.

Overview of Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital

Al-Hilla General Teaching Hospital in Babylon Governorate is a leading government healthcare institution operating around the clock throughout the week, providing extensive medical, surgical, and consultative services to residents of the governorate and surrounding areas. Recent statistical indicators reveal the exceptional pressures faced by employees at this hospital, justifying the conduct of this study. In 2025 alone, consultative clinics received 99,452 visitors, while the emergency department received 80,296 diverse medical cases, recording a daily average of approximately 860 visitors (emergency and consultative) during peak periods. Regarding surgical services, the hospital performed 1,118 surgical operations in September 2025, 1,277 operations in August 2025, and 1,199 operations in May 2025, averaging over one thousand operations monthly. Concerning capacity and specialized services, the intensive care unit received more than 800 visitors during 2025, with the opening of a new building with 32-bed capacity to enhance absorptive capacity. The hospital also recorded over 9,000 patient admissions during the first half of the same year, reflecting consistently high bed occupancy density.

Against the backdrop of these substantial figures reflecting enormous workload, the problematic issue of the impact of multi-source work stress on the performance of medical, nursing, and administrative teams emerges prominently. These pressures—resulting from the vast number of

visitors, frequency of surgical operations, work pressure in critical departments such as intensive care and emergency, and the nature of continuous round-the-clock work—directly affect professional performance quality, nursing safety, job satisfaction, and the psychological well-being of employees.

2. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

First: Research Type and Nature

Descriptive-analytical, quantitative research utilizing the questionnaire as the primary tool, with the potential for support from qualitative case studies, within a survey methodology to achieve correlational and causal relationships between variables.

Second: Research Population and Sample

- **Population:** Healthcare and administrative staff at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital.
- **Sampling Method:** Stratified random sampling proportional to the size of each stratum.
- **Sample Size:** 112 individuals (according to the sample size determination formula for an infinite population).

Third: Research Problem

The research problem is embodied in the following primary question:

"To what extent do work pressures impact the job performance of employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital?"

Several subsidiary questions emanate from this primary question:

1. What are the most prominent sources of work stress faced by hospital employees?
2. What is the level of job performance among employees across various job categories?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between work stress and job performance?
4. Does the impact of work stress vary according to job categories and demographic variables?

Fourth: Research Objectives

1. To identify the most prominent sources of work stress encountered by employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital.
2. To measure the level of job performance among employees across various job categories (physicians, nurses, administrative staff, technicians).
3. To analyze the relationship between work stress and job performance and test its direction and strength.
4. To determine the extent of the impact of work stress across its various dimensions on job performance.
5. To provide practical, applicable recommendations contributing to improving the work environment and enhancing performance.

Fifth: Research Significance

The significance of this research is divided into two aspects:

1. Theoretical Significance

- Contributes to enriching Arabic literature concerning stress management and job performance in the healthcare sector generally, and in Iraqi teaching hospitals specifically.
- Provides an analytical framework that can be relied upon in subsequent studies addressing similar variables or comparable health environments.

- Tests the validity of numerous hypotheses derived from administrative theories within an Arab and Iraqi context.

2. Applied (Practical) Significance

- Provides a realistic diagnosis of stress conditions and performance levels at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital based on field data.
- Equips local and central health administration with accurate indicators regarding points of dysfunction within the work environment.
- Develops a conceptual framework of recommendations that can assist in raising employee efficiency, improving the quality of healthcare services provided to patients, and enhancing job stability.

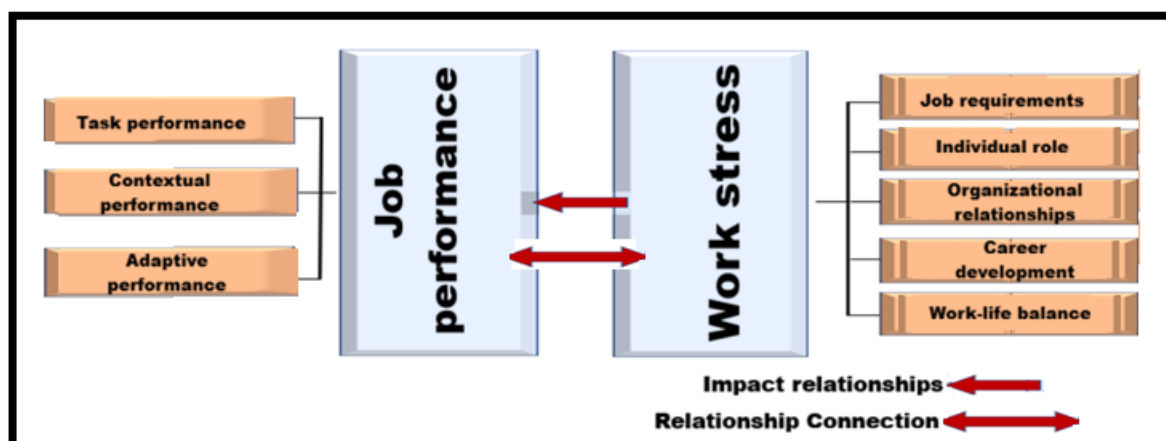
Sixth: Research Hypotheses

1. Primary Hypothesis

- **H₁**: There is a statistically significant inverse relationship between work stress and job performance among employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital.

2. Subsidiary Hypotheses

1. **H_{1a}**: There is a positive relationship between time pressure and elevated levels of work stress among employees.
2. **H_{1p}**: Daily task workload is negatively correlated with employees' level of job performance.
3. **H_{1q}**: Shortage of human and material resources leads to increased work stress and decreased performance.
4. **H_{1s}**: Non-positive functional relationships are associated with elevated stress levels and reduced cooperation in performance.
5. **H_{1e}**: Weak administrative support is negatively correlated with employees' level of job performance.
6. **H_{1p}**: Employees with higher capacity for stress adaptation demonstrate better job performance compared to others.



Seventh: Research Limitations

1. **Spatial Limitations:** The study was confined to employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital in Babylon Governorate, which may limit the generalizability of results to other teaching hospitals with different circumstances.
2. **Human Limitations:** The study was applied to a sample of employees and did not include patients or their families.
3. **Subject Limitations:** The study relied on the variables of work stress and job performance and did not address other mediating or moderating variables that might affect the relationship (such as organizational support or psychological resilience).
4. **Temporal Limitations:** Data were collected during a specific time period in 2025, meaning the results represent an immediate reality that may change with changing circumstances.
5. **Methodological Limitations:** The study relied on the questionnaire as the sole tool, rendering the results contingent upon the honesty of respondents' answers and their degree of objectivity.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

First: Theoretical Framework

Section One: Work Stress: Concept, Significance, and Dimensions

Preliminary

Recent decades have witnessed radical changes in the nature and environment of work, leading to the emergence of numerous psychological and organizational challenges, foremost among which is "work stress." These pressures represent a significant challenge to both individuals and organizations alike, necessitating in-depth scientific study to understand their dimensions and effects.

First: The Concept of Work Stress

Linguistic and Terminological Definition:

The term "stress" in the language is derived from the verb meaning burden, compression, and insistence. Within the organizational context, work stress is defined as "a physiological, psychological, and behavioral response to an imbalance between perceived work demands and the individual's perceived capabilities, in a situation where achieving desired outcomes depends on meeting these requirements" (Al-Arabi, 2020:45).

Scientific Definitions:

- According to the interactive perspective of Lazarus & Folkman (1984), psychological stress is defined as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Mohamed, 2019:32).
- From an organizational perspective: It is defined as "a state of emotional and physical strain resulting from incompatibility between job requirements and the employee's capabilities, motivations, and surrounding work environment" (Al-Saeedi, 2018:17).

Distinction Between Positive and Negative Stress:

Al-Gebaly (2021:61) distinguishes between two types of stress:

- **Eustress:** A moderate level of stress that stimulates performance and creativity, with which the individual experiences challenge and excitement.
- **Distress:** A high and chronic level of stress that exceeds the individual's adaptive capabilities, leading to harmful psychological, physical, and behavioral effects.

Second: The Importance of Studying Work Stress

1. Significance at the Individual Level:

- **Mental Health:** Chronic stress causes disorders such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. A study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) indicated that depression and anxiety cost the global economy an estimated one trillion dollars annually in lost productivity, with a significant proportion of these cases linked to the work environment (Al-Gebaly, 2021:78).
- **Physical Health:** Chronic work stress is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, gastrointestinal disorders, and weakened immunity (Al-Arabi, 2020:102).
- **Quality of Life:** Negatively affects the balance between work and personal life, and reduces overall satisfaction.

2. Significance at the Organizational Level:

- **Performance and Productivity:** High stress leads to decreased efficiency, increased errors, and reduced innovation. According to a study published in the Journal of Occupational Health (2019), employees suffering from high stress have productivity reduced by up to 35% (Al-Saeedi, 2018:89).
- **Financial Costs:** Costs manifest in the form of absenteeism, high job turnover, increased occupational accidents, and elevated healthcare expenditures. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2017) estimates that more than 500 million workdays are lost annually in the United States alone due to stress-related absenteeism (Mohamed, 2019:144).
- **Organizational Climate:** Leads to the spread of negativity, weak morale, and diminished organizational loyalty.

3. Significance at the Societal and Macroeconomic Level:

Work stress constitutes a burden on public healthcare systems, affects family and social stability, and contributes to substantial aggregate economic losses at the national level (Al-Gebaly, 2021:112).

Third: Dimensions and Sources of Work Stress

Contemporary literature classifies sources of work stress into several primary dimensions, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Dimension Related to Job Content and Requirements:

- **Workload:** Whether quantitative (multitude of tasks) or qualitative (task difficulty). "When job demands exceed the individual's capabilities, or when they fall below his capabilities causing boredom, work stress occurs" (Al-Arabi, 2020:123).
- **Time Pressure:** Insufficient time allotted for task completion.
- **Physical Environment:** Such as noise, inappropriate lighting, temperature, and safety (Al-Saeedi, 2018:54).

2. Dimension Related to the Individual's Structure and Role in the Organization:

- **Role Ambiguity:** Lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and authorities.
- **Role Conflict:** Contradiction between role requirements (Al-Saeedi, 2018:67).
- **Weak Participation in Decision-Making:** Feeling of lack of control over work.
- **Job Insecurity:** Fear of job loss.

3. Dimension Related to Organizational Relationships:

- **Relationship with Superiors:** Such as authoritarian or unfair supervisory style.
- **Relationship with Colleagues:** Presence of conflicts or absence of social support.
- **Bullying and Harassment at Work.**

4. Dimension Related to Career Development:

- **Career Plateauing:** Absence of opportunities for promotion or development.
- **Instability:** Rapid, unplanned organizational changes, such as mergers and downsizing (Al-Arabi, 2020:156).

5. Dimension Related to the Interaction Between Work and Personal Life:

- **Conflict Between Work and Family Demands:** Inflexibility in working hours.
- **Technological Intrusion:** Expectation of constant availability via modern communication means outside official working hours (Mohamed, 2019:98).

Section Summary

It becomes evident from the foregoing that work stress is a complex, multidimensional concept resulting from a dynamic interaction between individual characteristics and the work environment. Its importance emerges through its far-reaching effects on individual health, organizational efficiency, and societal capabilities as a whole. Understanding these interconnected dimensions constitutes the essential first step toward designing effective strategies for preventing and managing these pressures.

Section Two: Job Performance: Concept, Significance, and Dimensions

Preliminary

Job performance represents the fundamental axis around which all organizational activities revolve, serving as the true criterion for the success of individuals and organizations. Amidst contemporary competitive challenges, improving and elevating performance has become a strategic objective, necessitating a profound understanding of its components and determinants.

First: The Concept of Job Performance

From a Behavioral Perspective:

Performance is "the sum of actual behaviors and activities exerted by an individual during work, which can be observed and measured and are linked to job and organizational objectives" (Al-Rifai, 2022:31). It encompasses tangible behaviors and not merely outcomes, thereby permitting the evaluation of factors contributing to success or failure. It is "what employees do or do not do" (Meister, 2018:72).

From an Outcome-Oriented Perspective:

Performance focuses on outputs and achieved results. Campbell (1990) defines it as "a set of actions or behaviors performed by an individual that contribute to achieving organizational objectives, measurable in terms of efficiency and effectiveness" (Al-Shammari, 2020:45).

Operational Definition:

Accordingly, performance can be defined as "the value of behaviors and results achieved by the employee in performing assigned tasks, according to specific criteria within a given time period" (Al-Ghamdi, 2021:58).

Second: The Importance of Job Performance

Significance at the Organizational Level:

- **Achieving Competitive Advantage:** High performance of human resources constitutes the most difficult source for competitors to imitate and is the cornerstone for building unique organizational capabilities (Al-Shammari, 2020:88).
- **Sustainability and Growth:** High performance levels ensure operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and profit achievement, thereby supporting institutional survival and growth.
- **Organizational Reputation:** High-performance organizations contribute to building a positive image in the labor market, attracting distinguished competencies.
- **Decision-Making:** The performance evaluation system provides data necessary for making strategic decisions regarding promotions, development, and succession planning.

Significance at the Individual Level:

- **Career Development:** Distinguished performance is associated with better opportunities for promotion, training, and material and moral rewards (Al-Ghamdi, 2021:105).
- **Self-Satisfaction:** The employee experiences a sense of accomplishment and value upon achieving job objectives, enhancing self-esteem and motivation.
- **Job Security:** Good performance increases opportunities for job stability and reduces risks of termination.

Third: Dimensions and Components of Job Performance

Job performance encompasses multiple dimensions extending beyond mere completion of routine tasks. The model proposed by Borman & Motowidlo (1993) presents the most widely accepted classification in contemporary literature, dividing performance into:

1. Task Performance:

Includes fundamental activities listed in the formal job description that directly contribute to the organization's technical or service transformation, such as: operating machinery, providing service to customers, preparing technical reports, analyzing data. This dimension is often amenable to direct quantitative and qualitative measurement (David, 2018, p. 115).

2. Contextual Performance:

Also known as "discretionary organizational behavior" or "organizational citizenship." It refers to voluntary behavior not directly related to formal tasks but supporting the psychological and social environment in which tasks are performed (Al-Rifai, 2022:145). It includes:

- **Initiative:** Exerting extra effort not formally required.
- **Cooperative Spirit:** Assisting colleagues and promoting teamwork.
- **Organizational Loyalty:** Defending the institution and adhering to its rules.
- **Conscientiousness:** Strict adherence to schedules and order.
- **Self-Development:** Seeking to learn new skills.

3. Adaptive Performance:

This dimension has been added recently to reflect the individual's ability to adapt to changes and new demands in the dynamic work environment. It encompasses dealing with unfamiliar situations, creative problem-solving, learning new technologies, and adapting to organizational

change (Al-Shammari, 2020:134).

Fourth: Determinants and Factors Influencing Job Performance

Performance is affected by several interacting factors, which can be classified within the traditional model:

Performance Model = Ability × Motivation × Opportunity (P = A × M × O).

1. Individual Factors:

- **Abilities and Skills:** Cognitive, professional, and social.
- **Knowledge:** Information necessary for job performance.
- **Motivation:** Internal desire to exert effort.
- **Personality Traits:** Such as conscientiousness and emotional stability.
- **Psychological and Physical State:** Including level of work stress; studies confirm that a moderate level (eustress) may stimulate performance, while chronic and severe stress leads to marked deterioration in all performance dimensions, increased errors, and absenteeism (Al-Ghamdi, 2021:176).

2. Organizational and Environmental Factors:

- **Job Design:** Clarity, variety, degree of autonomy.
- **Leadership and Supervision:** Leadership style, support, feedback.
- **Organizational Culture:** Prevailing values, justice, trust.
- **Resources and Tools:** Availability of necessary equipment and information.
- **Reward and Recognition System:** Extent of its linkage to actual performance.
- **Physical Work Environment:** Safety, comfort, facilities (David, 2018, p. 189).

Section Summary

It becomes apparent that job performance is a multi-layered, multidimensional concept extending beyond the completion of routine tasks to encompass supportive discretionary behaviors, social context, and adaptive capacity. Understanding these integrated dimensions—task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance—enables management to develop comprehensive and fair evaluation systems and formulate policies to stimulate and enhance all aspects contributing to organizational success.

Second: Previous Studies

The researcher reviewed a range of previous Arabic and foreign studies related to the research topic, with the aim of establishing the problem academically, determining the position of this study relative to prior scientific efforts, and benefiting from their methodologies, tools, and findings.

1. **Study by Alike & Ejechi (2023):** Aimed to review the literature on work stress and job performance. The findings indicated that organizational pressures, primarily workload and resource scarcity, lead to decreased productivity and performance quality. The study attributed this to stress depleting the individual's psychological resources and impairing their capacity to adapt to work environment demands.
2. **Study by Ari (2025):** A cross-sectional study conducted on a sample of healthcare sector workers in Turkey. The results revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between

work stress and job performance, with employees suffering from high stress levels demonstrating marked decline in productive efficiency and job satisfaction.

3. **Study by Sivaprakash & Elantheraiyan (2024):** A multi-center study encompassing five teaching hospitals. The findings demonstrated that the most common sources of stress among employees were time pressure and multiplicity of daily tasks, and that these pressures directly reflected upon performance, particularly among nurses and physicians working in emergency departments.

Position of the Current Study Relative to Previous Studies:

This study agrees with previous studies in confirming the inverse relationship between stress and performance, but differs from them in that it:

- Is conducted in the Iraqi environment, specifically in Babylon Governorate, a context that has not received sufficient studies in this field.
- Relies on recent statistical indicators (2025) to describe the magnitude of pressures.
- Focuses on a specific teaching hospital (Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital) with all its organizational and demographic particularities.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

First: Research Methodology

This research adopted the descriptive-analytical methodology due to its suitability for the nature of the study, which seeks to describe the phenomenon (work stress) and analyze the relationship between its variables and their impact on the dependent variable (job performance).

Second: Research Population

The research population consists of all employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital in Babylon Governorate, encompassing the following job categories: physicians, nurses, administrative staff, and technicians. This population was selected for its diversity and representation of various specializations within the teaching hospital environment.

Third: Research Sample

A sample comprising (112) employees was selected from the original research population using stratified random sampling, whereby the population was divided into strata according to job title, followed by random sampling from each stratum proportionate to its size within the total population. This method ensures balanced representation of different categories and enhances the accuracy of results and their generalizability to the original population.

Fourth: Data Collection Tool

The research relied on the questionnaire as the primary data collection tool, designed based on a review of previous literature and adapted to the context of Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital. The questionnaire comprised three main sections:

1. **Demographic Data:** Including (gender, age, educational qualification, years of experience, job category).
2. **Work Stress Axis:** Consisting of (8) items measuring sources of stress represented by (time pressure, task workload, resource scarcity, functional relationships, administrative support).
3. **Job Performance Axis:** Consisting of (8) items measuring key performance aspects (discipline, service quality, productivity, cooperation, adherence to professional standards).

The five-point Likert scale was adopted to measure sample members' responses, with weights distributed as follows: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

Fifth: Validity and Reliability of the Tool

1. Content Validity:

The questionnaire was presented to a panel of arbitrators specializing in health administration and statistics to verify linguistic formulation accuracy, item clarity, and the extent to which they represented the measured variables. Necessary modifications were made based on their observations.

2. Reliability:

The internal consistency coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, with the coefficient value reaching (0.83) for the work stress axis and (0.81) for the job performance axis. These values exceed the acceptable threshold (0.70), indicating a high degree of reliability permitting conduct of the study.

Sixth: Statistical Methods

Following data collection, the data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher employed the following statistical methods:

1. **Frequencies and Percentages:** To describe the characteristics of the research sample.
2. **Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations:** To measure response levels and rank items.
3. **Pearson Correlation Coefficient:** To test the strength and direction of the relationship between stress and performance variables.
4. **T-test and One-Way ANOVA:** To compare differences between mean responses of different job categories.
5. **Simple Regression Analysis:** To determine the magnitude of the direct effect of work stress on job performance.
6. **Multiple Regression Analysis:** To test the combined effect of a set of independent variables (work stress, age, experience, job department) on job performance.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

First: Description of Demographic Characteristics of the Research Sample

Table (1): Distribution of the Research Sample by Demographic Variables (N = 112)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	59	52.7%
	Female	53	47.3%
Total		112	100%
Age	Less than 30 years	38	34.3%
	30 - 40 years	48	42.9%
	More than 40 years	26	22.8%
Total		112	100%
Educational Qualification	Diploma	22	19.6%
	Bachelor's Degree	67	59.8%
	Postgraduate Studies	23	20.6%
Total		112	100%
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	35	31.3%
	5 - 10 years	45	40.2%
	More than 10 years	32	28.5%
Total		112	100%

Analysis of Table (1) Results:

The table demonstrates that the research sample is balanced between genders, with males comprising (52.7%) and females (47.3%). The vast majority of participants fall within the age category (30-40 years) at (42.9%), reflecting that the sample includes a workforce in the midst of their professional careers. Bachelor's degree holders constituted (59.8%), indicating a good educational level among sample members. Years of experience were distributed relatively evenly, with the largest percentage concentrated in the category (5-10 years) at (40.2%), ensuring diversity of perspectives.

Second: Results of the Work Stress Axis

Table (2): Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, Response Level, and Relative Importance for the Work Stress Variable

No.	Item	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Relative Importance
1	I feel time pressure to complete my daily tasks	4.10	0.75	High	82%
2	The workload assigned to me is very substantial	4.05	0.80	High	81%
3	I suffer from shortage of human resources in my department	3.95	0.85	High	79%
4	I suffer from shortage of material resources and equipment	3.90	0.82	High	78%
5	There are conflicts and non-positive relationships with colleagues	3.50	0.70	High	70%
6	I do not receive adequate support from direct management	3.85	0.78	High	77%
7	I feel job insecurity	3.60	0.65	High	72%

8	I find difficulty reconciling work and personal life	3.55	0.60	High	71%
Overall Axis Mean		3.80	-	High	76%

Interpretation of Results Related to the Work Stress Axis:

Data presented in the table indicate that work stress means ranged between (3.50 – 4.10), reflecting a high stress level among sample members. The relative importance of items ranged between (70% – 82%), indicating that all items represent significant sources of stress. Standard deviations were relatively low (0.60 – 0.85), reflecting a high degree of homogeneity in participants' responses. It is notable that items related to "time pressure" and "task workload" exceeded (80%), indicating they represent the most prominent manifestations of work stress warranting special attention. The overall axis mean reached (3.80) at (76%), placing work stress at a high level and confirming that employees suffer from clear pressures affecting their performance.

Third: Results of the Job Performance Axis

Table (3): Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, Response Level, and Relative Importance for the Job Performance Variable

No.	Item	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	I adhere to official working hours	4.20	0.65	High
2	I provide services to patients with high quality	4.15	0.70	High
3	I accomplish assigned tasks efficiently	4.00	0.60	High
4	I cooperate with my colleagues at work	4.10	0.55	High
5	I receive positive feedback regarding my performance	3.80	0.75	High
6	I adhere to professional standards in my work	4.05	0.62	High
7	I exert extra effort when needed	4.25	0.50	Very High
8	I continuously seek to develop my professional skills	3.95	0.58	High
Overall Axis Mean		4.04	-	High

Interpretation of Results Related to the Job Performance Axis:

The table results indicate that job performance means ranged between (3.80 – 4.25), reflecting a high level of job performance among sample members. The relative importance of items ranged between (76% – 85%), indicating that all items represent important elements in performance evaluation. It is notable that the highest mean was achieved in item seven, "I exert extra effort when needed" (4.25 at 85%), reflecting strong professional motivation among employees, while the lowest mean appeared in item five, "I receive positive feedback regarding my performance" (3.80 at 76%), indicating room for improvement in feedback and recognition systems. Standard deviations ranged between (0.50 – 0.75), which are relatively low, reflecting a high degree of homogeneity in participants' responses. The overall axis mean reached (4.04) at (81%), placing job performance at a high level and confirming that employees possess a good performance level reflecting their competence and ability to accomplish tasks effectively.

Fourth: Testing the Relationship Between Work Stress and Job Performance

Table (4): Pearson Correlation Coefficient Between Work Stress and Job Performance

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level (Sig)	Strength	Direction
Work Stress → Job Performance	-0.42	0.001	Medium	Inverse

Interpretation of Relationship Results:

The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient test revealed a medium-strength inverse relationship between work stress and job performance, with the correlation coefficient value reaching (-0.42) at a significance level (Sig = 0.001), which is statistically significant. This result indicates that elevated work stress is associated with notably decreased job performance, and vice versa. The high statistical significance of the relationship confirms the importance of addressing work stress within institutional environments to ensure maintenance of high performance levels.

Fifth: Regression Analysis Results

First: Simple Regression Model

Table (5): Results of Simple Regression Analysis for the Effect of Work Stress on Job Performance

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient (B)	t-value	Significance Level (Sig)	Coefficient of Determination (R ²)
Work Stress	-0.38	-4.25	0.000	0.18

Interpretation of Simple Regression Results:

The results of the simple regression analysis demonstrated that the regression coefficient (B) between work stress and job performance reached (-0.38), indicating a direct negative effect of work stress on job performance; that is, an increase of one unit in work stress leads to a decrease in job performance by (0.38). The t-value (t = -4.25) at a statistical significance level (Sig = 0.000) confirms that this effect is highly statistically significant. The coefficient of determination (R² = 0.18) illustrates that work stress explains (18%) of the variance in job performance, while the larger proportion (82%) remains associated with other factors not included in the model.

Second: Multiple Regression Model

Table (6): Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Effect of Independent Variables on Job Performance

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient (B)	t-value	Significance Level (Sig)
Work Stress	-0.32	-3.90	0.000
Age	0.15	2.10	0.037
Years of Experience	0.22	2.85	0.005
Job Department	0.10	1.45	0.150
Coefficient of Determination (R²)	0.28		

Interpretation of Multiple Regression Results:

The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that:

- **Work stress** had a clear negative effect on job performance (B = -0.32, Sig = 0.000), confirming that work stress represents a significantly negative influencing factor.
- **Age** has a weak positive effect that is statistically significant (B = 0.15, Sig = 0.037).

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- **Years of experience** have a medium positive effect that is statistically significant ($B = 0.22$, $Sig = 0.005$).
 - **Job department** demonstrated a non-statistically significant effect ($B = 0.10$, $Sig = 0.150$), indicating that affiliation with a particular department does not constitute an influencing factor on performance within this sample.
 - The coefficient of determination reached ($R^2 = 0.28$), indicating that the independent variables collectively explain (28%) of the variance in job performance, while the larger proportion (72%) remains associated with other factors not included in the model.

Sixth: Discussion of Results

First: Discussion of Demographic Characteristics Results:

The results demonstrated that the research sample was relatively balanced in terms of gender, age, educational qualification, and years of experience, with notable concentration in the middle age category (30–40 years) and bachelor's degree holders, in addition to practical experience predominantly ranging between (5–10 years). This distribution reflects the reality of the workforce at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital and lends credibility to the extracted results.

Second: Discussion of Work Stress Results:

The level of work stress among employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital was found to be relatively high with an overall mean of (3.80). This result can be interpreted in light of the statistical indicators reviewed in the hospital overview, which reflect an exceptional workload manifested in receiving thousands of visitors monthly, performing over one thousand surgical operations monthly, and high bed occupancy density. This elevated stress level aligns with the findings of the study by Sivaprakash & Elantheraiyan (2024) that time pressure and multiplicity of tasks are the most common sources of stress in teaching hospitals.

Third: Discussion of Job Performance Results:

The job performance axis recorded an overall mean of (4.04) at (81%), reflecting a good and high level of job performance despite the presence of work stress. This result indicates that employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital possess strong professional motivation and high ethical commitment toward their profession and patients, enabling them to maintain a distinguished performance level. This result also reflects the competence of the hospital's human cadres and their capacity to adapt to difficult circumstances. This aligns with what literature has indicated regarding moderate positive stress potentially stimulating performance (Al-Gebaly, 2021).

Fourth: Discussion of the Relationship Between Work Stress and Job Performance:

The study results confirmed the existence of a medium-strength inverse relationship between work stress and job performance ($r = -0.42$), and the simple regression model confirmed the existence of a direct negative effect of stress on performance ($B = -0.38$). This result agrees with previous studies (Alika & Ejechi, 2023; Ari, 2025) that confirmed organizational pressures lead to decreased productivity and performance quality. This result reinforces the primary research hypothesis and confirms that work stress represents a primary factor negatively affecting job performance at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital.

Fifth: Discussion of Multiple Regression Results:

The multiple regression model demonstrated that the introduction of age and years of experience variables raised the explanatory power of the model from (18% to 28%), revealing that age and years of experience have a positive and statistically significant effect on job performance. This

result indicates that accumulated experience assists employees in developing more effective coping mechanisms for work stress, thereby enabling them to maintain a good performance level. This confirms the importance of investing in developing employee expertise and enhancing continuous training programs. Furthermore, the non-significance of the job department effect suggests that the problem of work stress affects all hospital departments in a relatively similar manner.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

First: Conclusions

In light of the findings reached, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Elevated Level of Work Stress:** Employees at Al-Hilla Teaching Hospital suffer from a high level of work stress, particularly in aspects of time pressure, task workload, and shortage of human and material resources. The hospital's statistical indicators confirm the reality of these pressures.
2. **Distinguished Level of Job Performance:** Despite high stress levels, employees possess a high level of job performance, reflecting strong professional motivation, high ethical commitment, and competence in adapting to difficult circumstances.
3. **Negative Effect of Stress on Performance:** There is a statistically significant inverse relationship between work stress and job performance, whereby elevated stress leads to notable decline in performance.
4. **Role of Experience in Mitigating Stress Effects:** Years of experience and advancing age contribute to enhancing job performance, indicating the importance of accumulated experience as a facilitating factor in confronting work stress.
5. **Multiplicity of Factors Affecting Performance:** Work stress explains (18%) of the variance in job performance, while demographic variables and stress collectively explain (28%), indicating there are other factors affecting performance not addressed by the study.
6. **Universality of Stress Effect:** Job department did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect, indicating that work stress represents a comprehensive institutional challenge affecting all hospital departments.

Second: Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned results and conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

First: Recommendations for Hospital Senior Management and the Health Directorate:

1. **Increase Human Resources:** Work toward attracting additional medical, nursing, and technical cadres, particularly in high-pressure departments (emergency, intensive care, operating rooms), to alleviate daily task workload.
2. **Provide Material Resources and Equipment:** Update infrastructure and medical equipment, and ensure continuous availability of supplies to reduce frustration resulting from resource scarcity.
3. **Improve Administrative Support Systems:** Develop supervisory style to be more supportive and encouraging, and foster a culture of positive feedback and recognition of achievements.

Second: Recommendations for Human Resources Management:

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4. **Implement Flexible Shift System:** Restructure work schedules to reduce mandatory overtime hours and introduce flexible shift systems to alleviate time pressure.
 5. **Activate Mental Health Programs:** Establish a psychological support unit within the hospital providing counseling and guidance services for employees, and conduct periodic workshops on work stress management and coping strategies.
 6. **Invest in Training and Development:** Design training programs focusing on developing technical and administrative skills, with priority given to less experienced categories to enhance their competence and self-confidence.

Third: Recommendations for Employees:

7. **Encourage Teamwork:** Promote a one-team culture and support experience exchange among colleagues, particularly between those with extensive experience and newcomers.
8. **Develop Adaptive Skills:** Encourage employee participation in self-development and time management programs, and adoption of healthy strategies for dealing with stress outside the work environment.

Fourth: Recommendations for Future Research:

9. Conduct similar studies on a broader sample encompassing multiple teaching hospitals in different Iraqi governorates to generalize results.
10. Examine the effect of other mediating variables such as organizational support, psychological resilience, and transformational leadership on the relationship between stress and performance.
11. Adopt mixed methods approaches (quantitative and qualitative) to deepen understanding of employees' experiences with stress from a qualitative perspective.

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