

Job Security as Perceived by Staff Nurses and Its Relation to Their Work Alienation

Fawzia M. M. Badran ⁽¹⁾, Azza. El. M. Khaled ⁽²⁾

(1) Assistant professor of Nursing Administration

(2) Lecturer of Nursing Administration

Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University – Cairo - Egypt.

Abstract

Background: Recent changes in the labor market have brought increased attention to work alienation and job security among both scholars and professionals. **Aim:** This study aimed to examine job security as perceived by staff nurses and its relation to their work alienation. **Design:** The study utilized a descriptive, correlational design. **Setting:** The research was conducted at the Pediatric Hospital affiliated with Ain Shams University Hospitals. **Subjects:** The sample consisted of 137 randomly selected staff nurses from a total of 210. **Tools of data collection:** Data were collected using two instruments: the Job Security Scale and the Work Alienation Scale. **Results:** The results indicated that over half of the staff nurses had a moderate perception of job security, while less than half experienced a moderate level of work alienation. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between the nurses' perception of job security and their level of work alienation. **Recommendations:** The study recommends creating a supportive work environment to reduce feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness, including leadership training for managers to enhance team support and provide opportunities for nurses to engage in meaningful work.

Keywords: Job Security, Staff Nurses, Work Alienation.

Introduction

Human resource management is essential for effectively managing employees in any organization, as it encompasses a wide range of functions that are crucial for maintaining a productive and harmonious work environment (Tulsi & Ji, 2020). This role includes recruiting, training, and developing employees, as well as addressing their concerns and ensuring their well-being. Humans are a complex element within an organization because their behavior significantly impacts the organization's success (Valikhani & Zamani, 2019).

Most societies have faced significant unemployment issues due to various factors, including the widespread adoption of technology and demographic shifts. As a result, organizations have adopted various measures to downsize their workforce and stay competitive, including restructuring, mergers, and acquisitions. These changes and practices have ultimately intensified workers' feelings of job insecurity (Johnstone, 2019).

Therefore, job security was recognized as one of the greatest significant predictive factors of

work alienation. Job security refers to the assurance that an individual will retain their job without the risk of unemployment. Without job security, employees face a significant risk of job loss. This concept relates to the actual or perceived likelihood of maintaining one's employment. Researchers and practitioners have defined job security as commonly understanding it as the state of being confident that one will not be fired. It also encompasses an employee's confidence in retaining their current position and the assurance of continuous, profitable work throughout their career (Sanyal et al., 2018).

Job security can achieve many crucial benefits for employees including: reenforcing a healthy work environment, enhancing job satisfaction and ensuring organizational commitment. Also, is an important factor in the grit of employees' productivity and motivation to retain them in an organization. Finally, job security is considered significant for social life in which assist in decreasing employee anxiety regarding the future of their work and ensuring social wellbeing and values (Al-Romeedy & Zaki, 2018).

There are numerous factors that significantly

impact an individual's job security and the demand for their services. These factors include employment contracts, collective bargaining agreements, labor legislation, and personal attributes such as education, work experience, job function, and work location. So, the lack of job security would make workers feel ineffective, unconscious and unsafe work environment. Also, influence their effectiveness and trust about the further job. Furthermore, decrease their job performance and accordingly alienation arise (*Sanyal et al., 2018*).

Job insecurity which negatively influences workers' behaviors about their organizations and attitudes concerning their jobs, which forced them to behave according to the culture of the organization. Thus, it can be deemed a chronic pressure in the place of work. In such conditions, workers can be alienated from their organization because their values don't match the values of the organization, they obey the organization's values for the salary only and become alienated. Therefore, researchers advocate that job security has a significant effect on the feeling of work alienation and confirmed that the deficiency of job security is a common cause for work alienation (*Conway et al., 2018*).

Workplace alienation is prevalent in contemporary society (*Dust et al., 2018*). The literature on work alienation highlights the context and working conditions that contribute to this phenomenon, emphasizing its detrimental effects on various employee-related attitudes and behaviors. These effects include diminished motivation, reduced organizational loyalty and commitment, lower job satisfaction, decreased well-being, and impaired work effort and job performance (*Khan et al., 2019*).

Alienation occurs when workers feel disconnected from the work they produce, perceiving it as foreign or even antagonistic to themselves (*Harley, 2017*). Thus, work alienation is linked to employees experiencing powerlessness, isolation, normlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement and numerous adverse outcomes such as higher intention to leave the job (*Amarat et al., 2019*).

Several factors contributing to work alienation include bureaucratic control, the pervasive use of technology in various roles, organizational justice, and the quality of social interactions between employees and managers (*Al-Romeedy & Zaki, 2018*). So, work alienation can manifest in five ways: helplessness (a sense of

lacking control), meaninglessness (difficulty understanding how one's efforts contribute to a larger purpose), lack of standards (a deficiency in clear expectations), normlessness (when behavioral norms do not effectively align with personal objectives), and self-alienation (when work only serves to meet external needs rather than enabling personal growth) (*Sarro et al., 2017*).

Significance of the study:

Human resources are crucial to any organization's success. Effective employee management is essential to ensure that their attitudes and behaviors contribute to high-quality service delivery. Researchers have made some progress in understanding the effects of job insecurity on behavior but its impact on employee performance is still not fully known. It is crucial to understand this relationship to ensure organizations' success and survival (*Sverke et al., 2019*).

Job security is a pivotal factor influencing the well-being and job satisfaction of staff nurses. Investigating the impact of perceived job security on work alienation is crucial for healthcare organizations striving to create a supportive and stable work environment. Improved job security can enhance mental health and job satisfaction among nurses, while job insecurity can lead to negative organizational outcomes, such as counterproductive work behaviors and non-compliance (*Ma et al., 2019*).

This study aims to address a critical gap in the literature by examining the relationship between perceived job security and work alienation among staff nurses, thereby providing valuable insights for healthcare management practices aimed at enhancing nurse retention and overall organizational performance.

Aim of the study

This study aimed to investigate Job security as perceived by staff nurses and its Relation to their work alienation.

Research question

Is there a relationship between job security as perceived by staff nurses and their work alienation?

Subjects and Methods

Research design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational design.

Setting

This study was conducted at the Pediatric Hospital affiliated with Ain Shams University Hospitals. The hospital provides care for pediatric patients across various medical and surgical specialties and has a total capacity of 229 beds. It involves two buildings, the first one consisting of five floors which includes (Medical intensive care unit 2, neonate intensive care unit 2, oncology intensive care unit, dialysis unit, hematology unit, diabetes unit, immunity unit, neurological unit, medical unit, and chest unit). While the second building consisting of three floors, which includes (Old incubator 1, surgical care unit, intermediate care unit, major operating room, medical intensive care unit 1 and minor operating room).

Subjects:

The subjects for this study included the nursing staff operating within the mentioned study context.

Sample size:

The study sample consisted of 137 staff nurses out of a total of 210. The sample size was calculated using Open Epi, version 3, an open-source calculator, with a standard error of 5%, a 95% confidence level, and 80% power. A simple random sampling method was used. The sample size formula applied was:

$$n = \frac{[DEFF * N * p(1-p)]}{[(d^2/Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 * (N-1) + p*(1-p)]} \text{ (Thompson, 2012)}$$

Where:

- DEFF represents the design effect, adjusting for the impact of the sampling design.
- N is the total population size.
- p is the expected proportion of the population with the characteristic of interest.
- 1-p is the proportion without the characteristic.
- d is the desired margin of error.
- $Z_{1-\alpha/2}$ in which the Z-score corresponding to the confidence level, such as 1.96 for a 95% confidence level.

Tools of data collection

Two instruments were employed for data collection: the Job Security Scale and the Work

Alienation Scale.

1. Job security scale: This scale, designed to assess the perceived job security among staff nurses, was initially developed by (*Taamneh & Gharaibeh, 2015*) and subsequently adapted by the researchers. It is comprised of two sections:

Part 1: This section was designed to collect personal information such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications, years of experience, and participation in training courses.

Part 2: It comprises 20 items distributed across six dimensions: Job Stability is evaluated with 4 items as “I experience a sense of security and stability in my job. Compensation and Benefits includes 4 items as “My job offers all the necessary benefits. Training and Development Opportunities is assessed with 3 items as “I have the opportunity to contribute to setting work objectives”. Job Understanding is captured by 2 items as “I have adequate information about my job responsibilities”. Work Environment and Relationship consists of 4 items as “The supervisor understands both the work-related and personal issues I face,”. Lastly, Fairness and Equity is measured by 3 items: as “The hospital practices fairness, with good actions being rewarded and poor actions being penalized”.

Scoring system:

Responses were measured on a five-point Likert ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The score of the items is summed up and the total scores divided by the number of items, giving an average score for the part. These degrees have been converted into a percentage score. Then the job security perception considered low if the percent score was less than 60%, moderate from 60% - <75% and high if 75% or more (*Taamneh & Gharaibeh, 2015*).

2. Work alienation Scale: This scale aimed to assess work alienation level among staff nurses, created by (*Mottaz, 1981*), and modified by the researchers, comprises 21 items organized into three distinct dimensions. Powerlessness includes 7 items, such as “I often feel that I have little control over what happens in my job”. Meaninglessness consists of 7 items, including “I often feel that my work lacks significance”. Self-Estrangement is covered by 7 items, like “I feel disconnected from the work I am doing”.

Scoring system:

Responses were measured on a five-point

Likert scale ranged from (1- 5). The (1) on the scale indicated "strongly disagree", and (5) "strongly agree". The items were summed up and the total divided by the number of items, giving the average score for the part. These degrees have been converted into a percentage score. the staff nurses' work alienation level is considered low if the percentage score is less than 60%, medium from 60% - <75%, and high if it is 75% or more (*Mottaz, 1981*).

Tools validity:

Study tools were validated by a jury group consisting of seven experts from nursing administration including three professors and four assistant professors from nursing administration specialty. The jury group reviewed the tools to judge its clarity, comprehensiveness and accuracy. Their suggestions were carefully considered to ensure accuracy and to safeguard the integrity of the study.

Tools reliability:

The internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.88 for job security and 0.84 for work alienation. Generally, a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 is considered acceptable, and values above 0.80 are often seen as excellent. Therefore, both scales in the study have strong internal consistency.

Pilot study:

Before conducting the main study, a pilot test was performed with 14 staff nurses, making up 10% of the total sample. This pilot study was intended to assess the feasibility, practicality, and clarity of the survey instruments, as well as to estimate the time needed for completion, which was between 25 and 35 minutes. Nurses who participated in the pilot were not included in the main study.

Ethical Considerations

After obtaining the necessary approval from the Scientific Research and Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University. After obtaining the necessary approval from the Scientific Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, necessary arrangements were made with the officials of the pediatric hospital, which is affiliated with Ain Shams University Hospitals to collect data and solicit their assistance.

Subsequently, the study's objectives were explained to all participating staff nurses, and oral informed consent was obtained for participation in the study. Moreover, the staff nurses were given

assurance that all information obtained would be treated with confidentiality and solely utilized for research objectives. Furthermore, participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork of the study lasted two months, from the beginning of July 2021 to the end of September 2021. The researchers met the head nurse of each unit to explain the aim of the study, determine a suitable time for data collection and gained the acceptance and cooperation of staff nurses to participate in the study.

Then, the researchers met study subjects and explained the purpose of the study, the components of the tools and gave instructions about methods of filling instrument. Forms were distributed to the respondents individually at their workplace during break time and were available during filling for any needed clarification. Filled instruments were revised by the researcher to ensure their completeness. Data collection was done during morning shifts according to a pre -determined schedule, at two days per week and every day collected around 10-12 instruments, were collected from 9 Am to 2 PM.

Statistical Analysis:

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyze data in this study. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables and means and standard deviations for quantitative variables. Pearson's correlation was used to assess the interrelationship between quantitative variables and to assess the relationship between job security and work alienation among staff nurses. P-value: Level of significance $P < 0.05$: Significant (S) - $P < 0.01$: Highly significant (HS).

Results

Table (1): shows that (48.18 %) of the study participants were less than 30 years, with mean age 34.98 ± 6.72 . Most of them (80.29%) were female and (87.59%) married. As well as (65.59%) of them had diploma of nursing, (64.96%) of them had experience years ranging from 10-15, with mean 14.64 ± 7.65 . In addition, no study participant attending training courses.

According to table 2, staff nurses rate job understanding as the dimension with the highest job security (3.61 ± 1.42), while job stability is perceived as having the lowest job security (1.92 ± 1.92).

Figure (1): shows that (53.8%) of staff nurses had a moderate perception of job security, while just over a quarter (29.3%) had a low perception of job security.

Table (3): demonstrates that the powerlessness dimension had the highest mean score of 2.85 ± 1.43 , followed by meaninglessness with a mean of 2.40 ± 1.28 , and self-estrangement with a mean of 2.32 ± 1.26 .

Figure (2): indicates that less than half (45.8%) of staff nurses had a moderate level of

total work alienation, while just over one-third (34.3%) had a low level of total work alienation.

Table (4) As evident, each dimension of job security negatively correlates with work alienation dimensions.

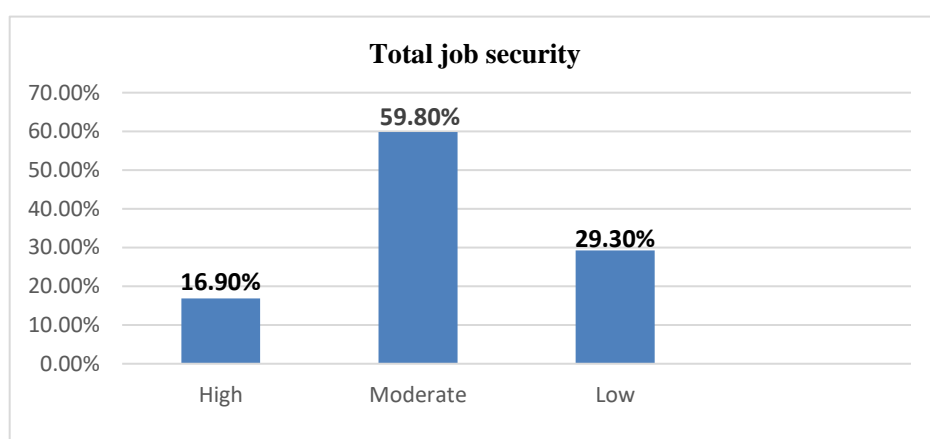
Table (5): indicates a statistically negative correlation between total staff nurses' perception of job security and their total level of work alienation, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.754 and a p-value of 0.000^{**} .

Table(1): Distribution of staff nurses according to their personal characteristics (n=137)

Personal characteristics	No.	%
Age		
≤ 30	66	48.18
> 30 - < 40	44	32.11
≥ 40	27	19.70
Mean ± SD 34.98±6.72		
Range 24-55		
Gender		
Male	27	19.71
Female	110	80.29
Marital Status		
Married	120	87.59
Single	17	12.41
Educational qualification		
Nursing Diploma	90	65.96
Technical institute of nursing	37	27.01
Bachelor of Nursing	10	7.30
Experience years		
≤ 5-10 years	28	20.44
>10- 15 years	89	64.96
≥ 15 years	20	14.60
Mean ± SD 14.64±7.65		
Range 3-31		
Attending training courses about job security		
Yeas	0	0
No	137	100.0
Attending training courses about work alienation		
Yeas	0	0
No	137	100.0

Table 2: Mean score of job security dimensions as perceived by staff nurses (n=137).

Dimensions of job security	Mean	SD
Job stability	1.92	±1.29
Compensation and benefits	2.24	±1.21
Training and development opportunities	2.32	±1.26
Job understanding	3.61	±1.42
Work environment and relationship	2.61	±1.52
Fairness and equity	2.49	±1.74

**Figure (1): Total job security perception level among staff nurses of (n=137)****Table (3): Mean score of work alienation dimensions among staff nurses (n=137).**

Dimensions of work alienation	Mean	SD
Powerlessness	2.85	±1.43
Meaninglessness	2.40	±1.28
Self-estrangement	2.32	±1.26

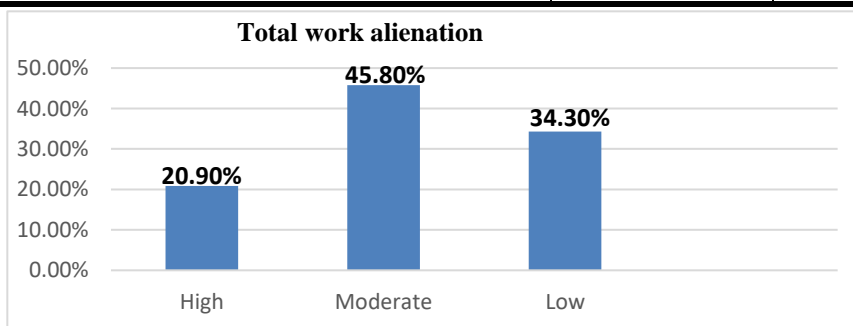
**Figure (2): Total work alienation level among staff nurses of (n=137)**

Table (4): Correlation Matrix between job security dimensions and work alienation dimensions.

Items Job Security dimensions	Dimensions of work alienation					
	Powerlessness		Meaninglessness		Self-Estrangement	
	R	P value	r	P value	r	P value
Job stability	-0.754	p = 0.000**	-0.691	p = 0.000**	-0.667	p = 0.000**
Compensation and benefits	-0.620	p = 0.000**	-0.590	p = 0.000**	-0.570	p = 0.000**
Training and development opportunities	-0.650	p = 0.000**	-0.620	p = 0.000**	-0.600	p = 0.000**
Job understanding	- 0.630	p = 0.000**	-0.600	p = 0.000**	-0.580	p = 0.000**
Work environment and relationship	-0.670	p = 0.000**	-0.640	= 0.000**	-0.620	p = 0.000**
Fairness and equity	-0.560	p = 0.000**	-0.680	= 0.000**	-0.530	p = 0.000**

Table (5): Correlation between total staff nurses job security and their total work alienation.

	Pearson Correlation coefficient	P-value
Job security	-0.754	0.000**
Work alienation		

(**) high statistically significant at $p < 0.001$

0.001 Discussion

The perception of job insecurity has increasingly troubled workers due to economic, technological, and social changes in recent decades (*Chirumbolo et al., 2020*). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue by triggering a global economic crisis, leading to restructuring, job suspensions, and extensive layoffs, which have heightened feelings of job uncertainty. Consequently, job insecurity has become a significant concern in the labor market, with various negative impacts on both employees and organizations (*Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020*).

Regarding the first variable investigated job security. In relation to dimensions of job security, the result of present study demonstrates that staff nurses rate job understanding as the dimension with the highest job security, while job stability is perceived as having the lowest job security. From researchers' perspectives', Staff nurses typically view "job understanding" as offering the highest job security because a well-defined grasp of their duties enhances their confidence and effectiveness.

Conversely, "job stability" is often seen as

less secure due to factors like organizational changes, financial instability, and fluctuations in staffing, which are beyond individual control. While job understanding can be directly improved through training and clear communication, job stability is more susceptible to external and organizational factors, impacting nurses' perceptions of their long-term job security.

This result was on the contrary, the result reported by *Taamneh & Gharaibeh, (2015)* were found that the highest factors of job security was regarding There is fair play at organization and good deeds are rewarded and bad ones are penalized) and the lowest was regarding (supervisor understands the problems at work and my personal ones as well).

Regarding total job security perception level among staff nurses, the results of the present study revealed that more than half of staff nurses had a moderate perception level of job security, slightly more than one quarter of them had a low perception level of job security and minority of them had high job security.

From the investigators' point of view, these results can be rationalized by considering several factors. A moderate perception of job security suggests that while nurses may feel

reasonably confident in their roles and responsibilities, external factors such as financial instability, and staffing policies create uncertainty about long-term job stability. The significant proportion of nurses with a low perception level may reflect recent or ongoing challenges within the healthcare environment, such as budget cuts, layoffs, or restructuring, which can undermine confidence in job stability.

Conversely, the small group of nurses who feel highly secure in their jobs likely experience clear communication, robust organizational support, and stable working conditions, which bolster their confidence in long-term employment. These differing perceptions underscore the intricate relationship between individual role clarity and broader organizational factors that affect job security.

The result was consistent with the result of, *Al-Romeedy & Zaki, (2018)* who exploring the influence of job security on employees' feeling work alienation in the Egyptian travel agencies and who found that the level of job security among studies subjects were moderate. Meanwhile, the present study on contrary with the result reported by *Bt Daud, (2017)* was examine the relationship between job security and well-being of workers and who showed that employees have a high level of job security even the country is in a desperate state.

Regarding the second variable researched which was work alienation. The current study result found that the powerlessness dimension had the highest mean score, followed by meaninglessness and self-estrangement. This finding aligns with *Abd-Elrhaman et al., (2020)*, who also reported that nursing staff experienced significant work alienation, with powerlessness scoring the highest and normlessness the lowest. Similarly, *Özer et al., (2017)* discovered that both physicians and nurses experienced workplace alienation, particularly with high levels of powerlessness and self-estrangement factors.

Regarding total work alienation level among staff nurses, the results of the present study revealed a moderate alienation, from the investigators' viewpoint this result might be due to individual or systemic stressors, while lower levels of alienation could be a result of effective support practices, personal coping strategies,

and a positive work environment. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing the factors contributing to moderate alienation and using successful approaches from those experiencing lower alienation to improve overall job satisfaction among nursing staff.

In contrast to *Abd-Elrhaman (2020)*, who found that approximately three fifths of staff nurses experienced work alienation, our study shows a lower level of alienation among staff nurses. This suggests potential differences in job satisfaction, support systems, or work environment factors. While *Durrah, (2020)* concluded that the level of work alienation was found to be at moderate.

Regarding correlation among job security dimensions and work alienation dimensions, the present study demonstrated that there was a negative and significant relationship between job security and work alienation dimensions. The results of *Al-Romeedy & Zaki, (2018)* were congruent with the current study exploring the influence of job security on employees' feeling work alienation who found that the job security correlated negatively with work alienation dimensions.

Finally, as regards the correlation between total job security and total work alienation, the present study showed that there was a negative and significant correlation between total job security as perceived by staff nurses and their total work alienation level. From the investigators' perspective this result might be due to high job understanding among nurses, associated with adequate information and clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities. This understanding can decrease anxiety and stress related to potential job loss, and foster a more positive attitude towards work, thereby reducing feelings of alienation among staff nurses.

The results of this study matched with previous research, such as the study by *Abouelenien et al., (2020)* reinforcing the critical role of job security in shaping work alienation. Similarly, the results were aligned with the findings of *Al-Romeedy and Zaki (2018)*, who concluded that job security accounted for more variance in employees' feelings of work alienation.

Conclusion

The results indicated that more than half of the staff nurses perceived their job security

at a moderate level, while less than half experienced a moderate level of work alienation. A significant negative correlation was found between overall job security and work alienation as perceived by the staff nurses. This negative relationship suggests that greater job security is associated with lower levels of work alienation among staff nurses. These findings highlight the crucial role of job security in mitigating feelings of alienation in the workplace. This addresses the research question: Is there a relationship between job security as perceived by staff nurses and their work alienation?

Recommendations

- Foster a supportive work environment that reduces feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness. This could include leadership training for managers to better support their teams and provide opportunities for nurses to engage in meaningful work.
- Implement regular feedback mechanisms to gauge nurses' perceptions of job security and alienation and make necessary adjustments based on their input.
- Assess and redesign job roles and responsibilities to ensure they are aligned with staff capabilities and interests, making work more meaningful and less alienating.
- Encourage practices that support work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling and wellness programs.

Further research is suggested:

- Assess factors affecting job security.
- Find the relationship between job security and loyalty among staff nurses.
- Investigate the relationship between work alienation and organizational performance.
- Study Job Security and its effect on Job Satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis".

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