

# The Role of Perceived Workload in Enhancing Job Satisfaction Among Hospital Nurses

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## Abstract

Workload perception refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of job demands and available resources. Nurses with the same actual workload may have different perceptions of their workload. This study involved 51 active nurses in the hospital who had worked for more than three months. The data collection method used a Google Form questionnaire containing the workload perception scale and a job satisfaction scale. Data analysis used a Pearson correlation test. The results of the correlation test indicated a positive relationship between perceived workload and job satisfaction among hospital nurses. This indicates that workload perception does not always negatively affect nurses' job satisfaction; it can also be a positive factor in increasing it. Workload management is needed to help nurses perceive these demands as challenges and as meaningful work by providing support, empowerment, and recognition of their contributions.

## Abstrak

Persepsi beban kerja mengacu kepada evaluasi subjektif individu mengenai tuntutan pekerjaan dan tersedianya sumber daya. Perawat yang memiliki beban kerja aktual yang sama dapat memiliki persepsi beban kerja yang berbeda antarperawat. Penelitian ini melibatkan 51 perawat aktif di rumah sakit dan bekerja lebih dari 3 bulan. Metode pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner Google Form yang berisi skala persepsi beban kerja dan skala kepuasan kerja. Analisis data menggunakan uji korelasi Pearson. Hasil uji korelasi menunjukkan hubungan yang positif antara persepsi beban kerja dan kepuasan kerja pada perawat di rumah sakit. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa persepsi beban kerja tidak hanya berdampak negatif kepada kepuasan kerja perawat, tetapi juga dapat menjadi faktor yang positif dalam meningkatkan kepuasan kerja pada perawat. Pengelolaan beban kerja diperlukan agar perawat mempersepsikan bahwa tuntutan tersebut sebagai tantangan maupun pekerjaan yang bermakna dengan pemberian dukungan, pemberdayaan, dan pengakuan terhadap kontribusi perawat.



## INTRODUCTION

The quality of healthcare services in hospitals is influenced by the availability and performance of healthcare personnel, especially nurses, in providing care to patients (Adhikari & Smith, 2023). The

need for nursing staff is increasing globally as the population grows, chronic diseases increase, and healthcare services become more complex. It is projected that there will be a nursing staff shortage by 2030, leading to increased workloads for existing nursing staff (World Health Organization, 2025). Therefore, nurses face a workload that can affect the provision of health services, patient safety, and security (Aiken et al., 2012).

The health of nursing staff is a key factor in the success of health service delivery. Nurses are among the professions with high levels of fatigue and stress due to heavy, complex workloads (Al Maqbali, 2015). High workloads not only contribute to physical fatigue but also reduce job satisfaction (Garrosa et al., 2008). Although most studies examine actual workloads quantitatively, such as the number of patients treated and hours worked, perceptions of workload have not been studied in depth (Gurses et al., 2009). Perceived workload influences how nurses assess job demands and the resources they receive, ultimately affecting their job satisfaction (Cox et al., 2007).

The performance and well-being of nursing staff are not only based on the workload borne by each nursing staff member. However, it also depends on how nursing staff assess their workload, or, as van den Berg et al. (2008) note, on what is known as workload perception. This refers to a subjective evaluation by individuals of the work they undertake and must face, as well as the availability of resources to meet its demands (Cabrita et al., 2022). According to Cox et al. (2007), perceived workload is an individual's assessment of job demands in relation to their abilities and available resources. Nurses with the same actual workload may have different perceptions of workload due to several factors, such as psychological factors, managerial support, organizational conditions, and cooperation among nurses in a team (van den Tooren & de Jong, 2008). Perceived workload was chosen as the main predictor because research shows that it is not only the quantitative workload that affects nurses' well-being, but also how nurses perceive their workload (van den Tooren & de Jong, 2014).

Job satisfaction is an emotional state or positive feeling that an individual has about their job, based on an evaluation of its characteristics (Robbins & Judge, 2012). According to Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a positive emotional state of an individual based on their assessment of their work experience. Especially in the nursing profession, job satisfaction among nurses is related to their salary, relationships with colleagues, opportunities for career development, the supervision they receive, and their working conditions (Lu et al., 2019). Higher job satisfaction among nurses increases motivation and commitment to the institution, whereas low job satisfaction is associated with burnout, the urge to quit, and reduced patient care (Heinen et al., 2013).

Several studies have examined the negative relationship between perceived workload and job satisfaction among hospital nurses. According to Yang and Kim (2016), high perceived workload can increase employee turnover and decrease job satisfaction among nurses. This also supports the findings of a study conducted by Zhang et al. (2021), which showed that high perceived workload is associated with low work engagement and job satisfaction among nurses. Work stress that comes from excessive workload can reduce job satisfaction and quality of life among nurses (Babapour et al., 2022).

Based on the above explanation, this study aims to analyze the effect of perceived workload on job satisfaction among nurses. This study is expected to contribute theoretically to understanding the psychological factors influencing job satisfaction and to offer practical implications for hospital management in creating a productive work environment.

## METHODS

### Research Design

The study used a quantitative, correlational design to examine the relationship and influence between the variables workload perception (X) and job satisfaction (Y). The quantitative research design was chosen because it could provide an objective description through systematic, structured statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### Research Subject

Participants in this study were active nurses at a hospital in Surabaya. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with purposive sampling. According to Creswell (2009), purposive sampling is an approach that selects participants who have in-depth knowledge and information relevant to the research topic.

The criteria for participants in this study included: (1) active nursing staff; (2) a minimum of 3 months of work experience; and (3) willingness to participate. The sample population in this study consisted of 200 people. The sample was determined using the formula by Hair et al. (2006), with a sample ratio of five times the number of aspects analyzed to determine the minimum sample to be taken. The instrument comprised seven aspects, so the minimum sample size was 35 participants.

### Research Ethics

This study has taken into account research ethical considerations, including: (1) obtaining approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the hospital concerned; (2) providing all the participants with consent forms before giving them the consent forms; (3) the researchers explaining the purpose of the study to the participants; (4) researchers maintained the privacy of participant data by anonymizing it; and (5) the researchers ensured that the information given by participants was secure and used only for research purposes.

### Data Collection Method

Data were collected via an online questionnaire in Google Forms from nursing participants. Data collection used an adapted scale on the variable of the Individual Workload Perception Scale-Revised (IWPS-R) from Lin et al. (2011) with 21 items covering 5 aspects, namely: (1) manager support, (2) peer support, (3) intent to stay, (4) workload, (5) unit support. The original scale was developed by Cox et al. (2010), with each item rated on a 4-point Likert scale (from *very irrelevant* to *very relevant*). The adapted job satisfaction scale developed by Çalışkan and Köroğlu (2024) has 13 items with 2 aspects, namely: (1) internal satisfaction, (2) external satisfaction. Each item uses a 5-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). All scales in this study were adapted using Brislin's (1970) adaptation process, in accordance with applicable regulations. The adaptation process followed the translation and back-translation procedure, involving two professional translators. Next, content validity was assessed by a psychologist using Aiken's  $V$  coefficient, yielding .91, indicating high validity (Aiken, 1985). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha with 30 test participants, yielding a value of .98, indicating very high reliability.

### Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. This includes the normality test using the Kolmogorov test, the linearity test, and the simple linear regression test. A total of 51 participants were sampled. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software.

## RESULTS

### Characteristics of the Research Subjects

Based on the data that has been collected, in this study, a diverse age distribution was obtained between the ages of 23–56 years, with the majority of ages in the range of 25–30 years, with the highest percentage of 27 years (11.8%) and 29 years (11.8%). By gender, the distribution shows a majority of 35 women (68.6%) and 16 men (31.4%).

### Results of Descriptive Analysis

The following is a statistical description of the workload perception scale for nurses at a hospital in Surabaya, based on 51 participants, presented in the table below.

Table 1.  
Description of Workload Perception Statistics

Variable (X)	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Perceived workload	51	21	84	52.50	10

Based on Table 1, on the perceived workload scale, 51 participants were included, with a minimum of 21, a maximum of 84, a mean of 52.50, and a standard deviation of 10.

Table 2.  
Categorization of Workload Perception

Category	Norms	Frequency	Percentage
Low category	$X < M - 1SD$	-	-
Medium category	$M - 1SD < X < M + 1SD$	2	3.9%
High category	$M + 1SD < X$	49	96.1%

Based on Table 2, most participants perceived their workload as high, with 49 participants (96.1% of the total). The following data are descriptive statistics on job satisfaction, presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3.  
Job Satisfaction Statistics Description

Variable (Y)	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Job Satisfaction	51	13	65	39	8.60

According to Table 3, the job satisfaction scale results show a minimum of 13, a maximum of 65, a mean of 39, and a standard deviation of 8.60. The categorization found on the job satisfaction scale is illustrated in Table 4 as follows.

Table 4.  
Job Satisfaction Score Categorization

Category	Norms	Frequency	Percentage
Low	$X < M - 1SD$	-	-
Medium	$M - 1SD < X < M + 1SD$	5	9.8%
High	$M + 1SD < X$	46	90.2%

According to Table 4, most participants had high job satisfaction, with 46 participants (90.2% of the total).

**Assumption Test**

In the assumptions test, stages such as normality and linearity tests will be carried out before conducting hypothesis testing. The normality test for the perceived workload and job satisfaction scales yielded  $p = .200$ , which is greater than  $.05$ . Based on these results, it can be concluded that both scales are normally distributed.

The linearity test results for the workload perception and job satisfaction scales showed no deviation from linearity ( $p = .950, > .05$ ). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the two scales have a linear relationship.

**Hypothesis Test**

The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between perceived workload and job satisfaction is  $.578$ , which is greater than  $.266$  ( $r$ -table). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive, direct relationship between perceived workload and job satisfaction. When the perceived workload increases, job satisfaction also increases. The results of the hypothesis test in Table 4 are shown below.

Table 4.  
Results of the Correlation Test between Perceived Workload and Job Satisfaction

Variable	$r$	$r$ -table	Description
Perceived Workload	.578	> 266	Significant Positive relationship
Job Satisfaction			

Table 5.  
Results of the Regression Test between Workload Perception and Job Satisfaction

Variable	$F$	$R^2$	$p$
Perceived Workload	24.632	.578	< .001
Job Satisfaction			

Table 5 shows that perceived workload affects job satisfaction ( $F = 24.632, R^2 = .578, p < .001$ ), and the perceived workload variable accounts for 57.8% of the variance in job satisfaction, with the remaining 42.2% explained by factors such as organizational support and work environment.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of the study indicate that perceived workload has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction among hospital nurses. This means that the more positive the perception of workload, the higher the job satisfaction among hospital nurses. This result contradicts several previous studies that found a negative relationship between the variables (Hellín Gil et al., 2022). This can be explained by the concept of challenge demand in work stress theory, whereby high work demands are perceived as meaningful challenges and can increase job satisfaction (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). This theory explains that job demands can be perceived as two types of stressors: challenge stressors (where demands are seen as meaningful challenges) and hindrance stressors (where demands are seen as obstacles). When nurses view their workload as a challenge, it can increase their motivation, enthusiasm, and satisfaction with their work because they feel competent and contribute to patient care.

This finding is consistent with research by LePine et al. (2005) showing that perceived workload as a challenge can encourage personal growth and job satisfaction. Conversely, if it is perceived as an obstacle, such as a lack of organizational support, it causes stress that negatively impacts job satisfaction. Thus, how an individual assesses or interprets workload plays an important role in determining the impact on the psychological aspects of work.

Based on previous studies by Lu et al. (2019), the nursing profession has high intrinsic value because it relates to patient safety and holds social significance. Therefore, despite perceiving a high workload, nurses remain satisfied because they see their profession as beneficial. This supports the concept introduced by Rosso et al. (2010) regarding meaningful work as a protective factor against work stress.

The high categorization between the two variables indicates that the hospitals in this research have good job resources, such as support from teams and supervisors, opportunities to develop careers or competencies, and adequate facilities to support their work. This statement aligns with the job demands-resources model proposed by Bakker & Demerouti (2017). These resources can change the negative impact of workloads into a positive one. With organizational support, nurses can not only manage high workloads but also experience high job satisfaction. This is consistent with research by Podsakoff et al. (2007), which found that high workload is associated with job satisfaction when the challenges are perceived as such.

Theoretically, the research results show that perceived workload does not always negatively affect nurses' job satisfaction. but also become a positive factor in increasing job satisfaction among nurses in hospitals when support is provided, and adequate resources are available to support their work, and when workload management is necessary, so that nurses perceive these demands as challenges or meaningful work with the provision of support, empowerment, and recognition of nurses' contributions in providing health services to patients.

Psychologically, these dynamics show that workload is not always negative. In the context of nursing, a high workload can be a source of satisfaction when accompanied by a sense of meaning and purpose. This finding is also consistent with the notion that perceptions of job meaning can mediate the relationship between job demands and psychological well-being (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

The results show that nurses' perceptions of workload and job satisfaction in hospitals are high, with 96.1% of participants reporting a high workload and 90.2% reporting high job satisfaction. There is a significant positive relationship between perceived workload and job satisfaction: the higher the workload nurses perceive, the higher their job satisfaction. This supports the concept of challenge demand and job resources, whereby high workloads can increase motivation and job satisfaction when supported by organizational resources and a positive perception of the meaningfulness of work. Therefore, high workloads do not always negatively affect nurses, provided that hospitals manage them well through supervisor support, effective team communication, recognition of contributions, opportunities for self-development, such as training, and fair distribution of workloads across units.

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