



## Influence of Socio-economic and Demographic Factors on Stress Perception and Attitude towards Self and Job: A Study with Reference to Women Health Care Professionals

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**ABSTRACT** This study was aimed to determine the association between socio-economic status of health care professionals with their stress perception and attitude towards self and job. The concept of socio-economic and demographic factors is infrequently studied but these are very important factors in determining the employee's quality of life. An extensive survey was conducted among 300 nursing professionals working in various hospitals in Central Kerala, India. The nurses were administered with close end questionnaire using convenience sampling method. The simple percentage analysis and chi-square analysis were used in this study. Primarily the simple percentage analysis depicted age group of nurses, academic background, marital status, earning capacity, number of members in family, type of family, and their experience of stress. Chi-square analysis results had found an association between monthly income, marital status, number of earning members, and age with the attitude of nurses towards self and job. The result discloses the existence of significant relationship between, number of dependents, type of family and the number of children with the perception of stress among nurses.

### INTRODUCTION

The term socio-economic and demographic refers to specific population group in an area concerning their economic factors and social circumstances in a society. It is an open term illustrating factors concerning an individual's lifestyle such as age, gender, occupation, income, and education. These factors which are often neglected greatly influence the individual's attitude towards their job and also stress perception in a major way. They affect workers both in organized to unorganized sectors; it is more relevant to a population in organized sector and professionals. Health care professionals especially nurses dealing with pain and suffering along with adverse work conditions are known to suffer moderate stress due to the nature of their job. Researchers are analyzing more per-

sonal factors such as social economic characteristics to bring about a feeling of well-being and contentment, loyalty attitude towards job as a part of organizational behaviour (Deshpande and Raina 2011).

One of the classic example being the 26/11 terrorist attack in 2008 on Hotel Taj in Mumbai India, the employees exhibited extraordinary commitment and valor in saving guests putting their own lives in danger. The Harvard study to analyze their behavior showed their social upbringing as a cause in holding up to traditional Indian values such as humility and honesty. Currently researchers show more interest towards studying employee attitudes and the factors responsible for altering the attitudes of individual (Al-Aameri 2000; Davis 2004; Iqbal 2010). Sarafis et al. (2016) identified that stress among nurses has a harmful effect on the health-related quality of life, and patient outcomes. Teng et al. (2010) stated that as a result of work stress nurses lose their empathy for patients, which would increase incidents of errors and ultimately affect the patient care. Laal and Aliramaie (2010) identified demographic factors such as experience influence nurses ability to cope with

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stress, nurses with 5-9 years of experience are able to cope stress better than their less experienced counterparts. According to Riordan and Shore (1997) individuals' attitude changes with their respective socio-demographic levels. Many research findings have indicated that the socio-economic factors influencing nurse's attitude and perception include: age, marital status, employment, experience, education, monthly income, nature of family, number of dependents and children. Olatunji and Mokuolu (2014) had the view that socio-economic variables must be considered while designing plans and strategies aimed at improving job satisfaction of health care professionals in their workplace environment in order to reduce stress and deliver better patient care.

### Objective of the Study

The study population consisted of female nurses working in central Kerala, only women were considered because of their dominance in this field. Kerala is very unique state among Indian states in achieving highest standards in social sector such as health, literacy rate, female to male sex ratio, higher women employment opportunity. Women in Kerala are drawn towards health sector due to consistent growth and employment opportunity. This fact and a significant population of nurses in the country belong to Kerala state influenced the researchers to take up the study. The less researched socio-economic and demographic factors including age, monthly income, earning members in the family, number of children, dependents job experience and marital status play an important role on nurses stress perception and their attitude towards self and job and record the similarities and dissimilarities with other such studies world over.

### Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between age and nurses' attitude towards self and job.
2. There is no significant relationship between marital status and nurses' attitude towards self and job.
3. There is no significant relationship between monthly income and stress perception of nurses.
4. There is no significant relationship between monthly income and nurses' attitude towards self and job.
5. There is no significant relationship between number of children and stress perception.
6. There is no significant relationship between number of dependents and nurses' attitude towards self and job.

### Review of Literature

Socio-economic and demography greatly influences an individual's thought process and forms the base for his character building and the development of discipline, responsible attitude towards society and job, these are the factors that help an individual to inculcate values and respect towards organization. Especially these factors play a major role in industry where human interaction and empathizing attitude are in great demand such as health care sector. Nurses who form a large part of the workforce in health care delivery have important implications in determining their attitude and stress perception. Stacciarini and Troccoli (2004) found the existence of the relationship among demographic variables such as, age religion, marital status, salary, job grade, gender and education and job stress. Sharma et al. (2012) in their study found that the demographic factors like age and income level of the respondents play a vital role in combating role stress, respondents in the age group of 30 felt less stress than other age group and presence of elevated stress in high income group.

Yildirim and Çam (2012) said that organization related attitude of nurses are influenced by their socio-economic status, experience, and personal characteristics. As per Mosadeghrad (2013), inadequate pay, inequality, too much work, staff shortage, lack of promotion, job insecurity and lack of management support were the stressors among nurses. A significant relationship was found between the nurses' stress and income level and their work (Olatunji and Mokuolu 2014). The study concluded that sex, marital status and tenure of service have significant influence on the job satisfaction and the level of stress reported by the respondents. Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014) studied demographic factors such as age, marital status, educational qualification, job tenure and gender and

identified a moderate positive correlation between these demographic variables and job performance of individuals. According to Atefi et al. (2015) significant difference was found between demographic factors and work interaction, income, work environment, professional advancement, supportive management, decision making, professional status and job satisfaction. Young females and married nurses showed a strong association with a higher level of job satisfaction. Guo et al. (2018) identified that demographic factors like exercise, use of alcohol, marital status and work characteristics such as income per month, ratio of patients to nurses, shift work and professional rank were found to be the predators of nurses' burnout.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study the exploratory research approach was followed and the research design used in this study is of descriptive in nature. A well-structured close end questionnaire was framed using Likert's 5 point scale and administered to 300 nurses working in selected hospitals in central Kerala using convenient sampling method. The questionnaire consisted of three major parts which includes questions firstly regarding demographic profile, secondly questions regarding the nurse's attitude towards self and job and finally questions related to the stress perception of nurses. Simple percentage analysis and chi-square analysis was used in the study to identify the influence of socio-economic and demographic profile of nurses and their stress perception and attitude towards self and job. The data analysis was done using SPSS software.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The simple percentage analysis (Table 1) shows us that majority that is, thirty-three percent of nurses belong to the age group of 20-25 years. Majority that is, forty-four percent of the nurses have undergraduate level of education, 44.3 percent of nurses earn between Rs10, 000 - Rs20, 000, 52.6 percent of them are single, thirty-six percent of nurses have 1 children, sixty-five percent of them live in nuclear family setup, 54.7 percent of them have only one earning member in the family, forty-one percent of them have two dependent to be taken care of, and majority

**Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the respondents**

<i>Demographic profile</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Age Group</i>		
Below 20 years	97	32.3
20-25 years	99	33.0
25-30 years	80	26.7
35 and above years	24	8.0
Total	300	100
<i>Educational Qualification</i>		
Diploma	29	9.7
UG	132	44.0
PG	102	34.0
Others	37	12.3
Total	300	100.0
<i>Monthly Income</i>		
Below Rs.10,000	68	22.7
Rs.10,000-20,000	133	44.3
Rs.20,000-30,000	71	23.7
Rs.30,000-40,000	21	7.0
Rs.40,000 and above	7	2.3
Total	300	100.0
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	158	52.6
Married	112	37.3
Divorced	11	3.7
Widow	17	5.7
Separated	2	0.7
Total	300	100.0
<i>Number of Children</i>		
0 children	40	13.3
1 children	108	36.0
2 children	20	6.7
3 children	27	9.0
4 children and above	5	1.7
Total	300	100.0
<i>Nature of Family</i>		
Joint	105	35.0
Nuclear	195	65.0
Total	300	100
<i>Number of Earning Members in Family</i>		
1	164	54.7
2	100	33.3
3	30	10.0
4	6	2.0
5 and above	-	-
Total	300	100
<i>Number of Dependents in Family</i>		
1	85	28.3
2	123	41.0
3	59	19.7
4	24	8.0
5 and above	6	2.0
Total	300	100
<i>Experience of Stress</i>		
Yes	160	53.3
No	140	46.7
Total	300	100

53.3 percent of nurses said that they have experienced stress at least once.

**Table 2: Analysis depicting the relationship between socio-economic factors and nurses' attitude towards self and work**

	<i>Nurses attitude towards self and work</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Monthly Income</i>				
Below Rs.10,000	21	21	26	68
Rs.10,000-20,000	39	39	55	133
Rs.20,000-30,000	33	20	18	71
Rs.30,000-40,000	15	4	2	21
Rs.40,000 and above	2	2	3	7
Total	110	86	104	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Income	15.535	12.59	6	Sig at 5%

The significant Chi-square indicates that there is association between monthly income and nurses attitude towards self and work

	<i>Nurses attitude towards self and work</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Single	47	49	62	158
Married	54	30	28	112
Divorced	2	4	5	11
Widow	5	3	9	17
Separated	2	0	0	2
Total	110	86	104	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Marital status	12.458	9.49	4	Sig at 5%

The significant Chi-square indicates that there is association between marital status and nurses attitude towards self and work

	<i>Nurses attitude towards self and work</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>No. of Dependents</i>				
1	22	38	25	85
2	35	43	48	126
3	16	27	16	59
4	10	8	6	24
5 and above	5	1	0	6
Total	88	117	95	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Dependents	11.163	12.59	6	NS at 5 %

The non-significant Chi-square indicates that there is no association between number of dependents in the family and nurses attitude towards self and work

	<i>Nurses attitude towards self and work</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Number of Earning Members in the Family</i>				
1	37	59	68	164
2	51	21	28	100
3	17	6	7	30
4	5	0	1	6
5 and above	110	86	104	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Earning members	32.360	13.28	4	Sig at 1%

The significant Chi-square indicates that there is association between earning members in a family and nurses attitude towards self and work

**Table 2: Contd...**

	<i>Nurses attitude towards self and work</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Age</i>				
Below 20 years	31	24	42	97
20-25 years	36	27	36	99
25-30 years	32	32	16	80
35 and above years	11	3	10	24
Total	110	86	104	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Age	15.213	12.59	6	Sig at 5%

The significant Chi-square indicates that there is association between the age group of nurses and nurses' attitude towards self and work

The questions under the heading 'attitude towards self and job' consisted questions such as, my life has meaning and purpose, using leisure time creatively, taking care of health, wishing to take up more challenging jobs, welcoming change, finding job to be more interesting and satisfying, building rapport with colleagues, feeling of accomplishment. The mean scores of all the individual variables are calculated and chi-square test was performed to understand the significance of each demographic variable on the nurses' attitude. The results of the chi-square from Table 2 shows that there is an association between monthly income ( $\chi^2=15.5$ , significant at 5%), which shows a similar outcome as Sarath and Raju (2013) where their study identified that income of a person influences his job satisfaction, commitment and life quality. Our study outcome indicates that Marital status ( $\chi^2= 12.4$ , significant at 5%), age ( $\chi^2= 15.2$ , significant at 5%) and number of earning members ( $\chi^2= 32.3$ , at 1%), has a significant influence on individuals attitude and perception which is similar to the study of researcher Salami (2008) where the demographic variables such as age, marital status, job tenure, earning members and education level significantly predicted organizational commitment. There is no significant association between number of dependents ( $\chi^2= 11.1$ , non-significant at 5%) and the nurses attitude towards self and job. The above results are also in consistence with the studies of Yildirim and Çam (2012) and Atefi et al. (2015).

The questions asked to respondents under the category of stress perception were, low salary, high work load, poor relationship with their colleagues, poor stress management technique, personal health, unattainable targets, and lack

of experience, improper planning, family issues, personal characteristics. The mean score was calculated and evaluated with each demographic variable such as age, marital status, number of dependants, number of children and income level through chi-square test to identify their significance. The results from Table 3 states that there exists a significant relationship between number of dependents ( $\chi^2= 12.9$ , significant at 5%) and stress perception. Pearlin et al. (2005) stated that family with single earning member and many dependents may experience financial issues, which have been found to interfere with the work role, type of family ( $\chi^2= 10.7$ , significant at 1%) and number of children ( $\chi^2= 25.6$ , significant at 1%). Cestari et al. (2017) found out that nursing students having at least one child reported an elevated stress. Gottlieb et al.'s (1996) study on female nurses identified that nurses are being interfered with family factors than their job and majority of the nurses were in their mid-40s, and largely interfered with demands of child care and elders at home.

The result of this study shows that stress perception does not have a significant association between monthly income ( $\chi^2= 9.6$ , non-significant at 5%) in contrary to the studies of Guo et al. (2018), Sharma et al. (2012) and Stacciarini and Tro'ccoli (2004) where the income level was a strong determinant of stress perception. This finding of insignificant association between income and stress perception is a very unique feature of this particular study group of nurses.

## CONCLUSION

The outcome of the study gives a clear notion that nurses attitude towards self and job

**Table 3: Chi-square analysis depicting the relationship between socio-economic factors and stress perception**

	<i>Perception of organizational stress</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Monthly Income</i>				
Below Rs.10,000	28	16	24	68
Rs.10,000-20,000	36	49	78	133
Rs.20,000-30,000	31	23	17	71
Rs.30,000-40,000	8	10	3	21
Rs.40,000 and above	2	0	5	7
Total	105	98	97	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Income	9.62	12.59	6	NS at 5 %

The non-significant Chi-square indicates that there is no association between monthly income and perception of stress

	<i>Perception of stress</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Type of Family</i>				
Joint	48	34	23	105
Nuclear	57	64	74	195
Total	105	98	97	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Type of family	10.736	9.21	2	Sig at 1 %

The significant Chi-square indicates that there is association between type of family and perception of stress factors.

	<i>Perception of stress factors</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>No. of Dependents</i>				
1	27	36	22	85
2	39	36	51	126
3	24	16	19	59
4	10	10	4	24
5 and above	5	0	1	6
Total	105	98	97	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
No. of dependents	12.92	12.59	6	Sig at 5 %

The significant Chi-square indicates that there is association between number of dependents and perception of stress

	<i>Perception of stress</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Number of Children</i>				
0 children	21	13	17	51
1 children	26	9	14	49
2 children	14	28	11	53
3 children	28	36	34	98
4 children and above	9	23	17	49
Total	98	109	93	300
Factor	Calculated $\chi^2$	Table value	DF	Remarks
Number of children	25.693	20.09	8	Sig at 1 %

The significant Chi-square indicates that there is association between number of children and their stress perception

and their stress perception are having a significant association with majority of socio-economic factors except for number of dependents and monthly income respectively.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Its very important for the hospital administrations and nursing administrators to frame better and conducive policies wherein the socio-economic factors are given due consideration. Since these factors invariably affect the patients and society at large as they are the beneficiaries of the nursing services.

### LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

In this paper, data collection was conducted through self-assessment questionnaire that permit bias. In addition, this study was limited to nurses working in selected hospitals in central Kerala.

### FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Future studies in this field can be aimed to compare the attitudes and stress perceptions of nurses who hail from different demographic conditions. This study can also be extended to other professionals so as to frame competent policy guidelines for individual and organizational betterment which would ultimately benefit the society in general.

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