

**ROLE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN
ENHANCING HEALTHCARE WORKERS PERFORMANCE:
EVIDENCE FROM ASABA, DELTA STATE**

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the effect of stress management strategies on the performance of healthcare workers in Asaba Delta State. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study was 211 employees of five selected private hospitals in Asaba, Delta State. Thus, 138 employees of the selected hospitals in Asaba, Delta State, were selected as the sample size. Stratified random sampling was used. The instrument's reliability test was conducted using internal consistency. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The study employed multiple regression to test the stated hypotheses. The study revealed that relaxation techniques, exercise programs, mindfulness, and time management skills have a positive effect on the performance of healthcare workers. In conclusion, the integration of stress management strategies is vital for the well-being and performance of healthcare workers in Asaba, Delta State. The study recommended that hospital management should enhance its time management skills by prioritizing tasks, setting realistic goals, and using tools like planners or digital calendars.

Keywords: Exercise Programs, Stress Management Strategies, Relaxation Techniques, Healthcare Workers

INTRODUCTION

In the rigorous and high-pressure realm of healthcare, stress is a common concern that profoundly impacts the well-being and efficacy of healthcare professionals. Effective stress management solutions are crucial for alleviating these pressures and ensuring that healthcare professionals can execute their responsibilities successfully while preserving their health and job happiness. Occupational stress is a critical contributor to individual stress development (Balaji & Gopal, 2021). Stress substantially impacts the performance and service delivery of employees (Kihara & Mugambi, 2018). Work-related stress is acknowledged globally as a significant barrier to employee health and organisational well-being. Workplace stress is a growing issue in modern society, incurring significant costs for both corporate entities and individual individuals. Nigerian firms are exploring stress management approaches to mitigate employee stress levels and thereby improve company performance (Hoboubi et al., 2017). Relaxation techniques are essential stress management skills that assist healthcare professionals in mitigating the physical and mental strain that builds up during their arduous workdays. Techniques such as deep breathing exercises, gradual muscular relaxation, and guided imagery can elicit a state of tranquillity, alleviating anxiety and enhancing a sense of well-being (Assibey-Ankrah, 2021). Regular practice of these approaches by

healthcare personnel enhances their ability to manage stressful situations, make informed decisions, and deliver superior patient care. Conversely, disregarding relaxation techniques may result in persistent stress, burnout, and diminished job performance.

Regular exercise regimens are an essential element of stress management for healthcare professionals. Engaging in physical activity is recognised to release endorphins, the body's intrinsic mood enhancers, which can markedly alleviate stress and enhance mental health (Piercy et al., 2018). Exercise aids in sustaining physical fitness, which is essential for healthcare professionals frequently engaged in physically demanding tasks (Biddle et al., 2019). Integrating structured exercise regimens into their habits can augment energy levels, resilience, and overall job performance. Without regular exercise, healthcare workers may suffer from weariness, heightened vulnerability to sickness, and deterioration in both physical and mental health. Mindfulness practices, which entail sustaining awareness of the present moment without judgment, are especially advantageous for healthcare professionals. Mindfulness meditation and mindful breathing techniques assist professionals in maintaining focus, regulating emotions, and mitigating stress effects (González-Palau & Medrano, 2022). Through the practice of mindfulness, healthcare professionals can enhance their capacity to maintain composure in high-pressure situations, engage in efficient communication with patients and colleagues, and make deliberate decisions (Motevalli et al., 2023). In the absence of mindfulness techniques, individuals may have increased emotional reactivity, diminished focus, and difficulty in managing work-related stress (Cheng et al., 2023).

Effective time management skills are crucial for healthcare professionals to adeptly manage their myriad duties. Thomas (2020) stated that time management involves efficiently organising one's time to prioritise and achieve intended tasks and essential responsibilities. Regardless of the business, every HR manager evaluates an employee's professionalism, qualifications, stress resistance, and ability to collaborate well within a team. Efficient time management enables individuals to prioritise work, establish attainable objectives, and use their time and resources judiciously. In this highly competitive period, companies and executives concentrate on the investigation of time management strategies to improve performance (Kumar & Aithal, 2019). This skill is essential for mitigating feelings of overload and guaranteeing timely completion of key activities. Ineffective time management can result in missed deadlines, heightened stress, and a continuous feeling of lagging, adversely affecting job performance and patient care.

Stress management strategies have been widely explored in relation to employee performance across diverse industries. However, there are noticeable gaps in literature addressing the specific experiences of healthcare workers in private hospitals, particularly in Asaba, Delta State. Existing studies have primarily concentrated on broader categories of employees, overlooking the unique stressors faced by healthcare professionals, such as emotional labour, long working hours, and high-stakes decision-making. While numerous studies, such as those by Schmitt and Prasastyoga (2024), Madhu and Singh (2024), Obiora et al. (2023) and Osman and Singaram (2023), have explored stress management and its impact on performance, they often generalize findings across sectors without isolating healthcare workers in private hospital settings. This study fills this gap by examining how stress management practices affect the performance of healthcare workers in this specific context.

Private hospitals were selected for this investigation because they operate under unique constraints, including profit-driven objectives, limited workforce resources, and patient expectations for high-quality care. These institutions also face mounting pressures due to increased competition and the demand for cost-effective, patient-centred services. Unlike public healthcare facilities, private hospitals often lack government support and must independently navigate resource limitations while ensuring employee well-being and optimal performance. This study provides valuable insights into the role of stress management strategies in enhancing employee effectiveness, addressing burnout, and fostering job satisfaction in this critical subset of the healthcare industry. Therefore, the study examined the effect of stress management strategies on the performance of healthcare workers in Asaba Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

The study addresses the critical issue of how neglecting relaxation techniques, exercise programs, mindfulness, and time management skills impacts the performance and well-being of healthcare workers in Asaba, Delta State. Healthcare workers often face high-stress environments, and without proper relaxation techniques, they are prone to chronic stress, burnout, anxiety, and other mental health challenges, which can significantly diminish their job performance. Regular exercise is essential for maintaining physical health and energy levels, and its absence can lead to increased susceptibility to illness and reduced productivity. Mindfulness practices are crucial for maintaining focus and emotional stability, without them, workers may struggle to manage work-related pressures effectively. Poor time management skills can result in missed deadlines and a constant feeling of being overwhelmed, further exacerbating stress and reducing job performance. This study seeks to explore the effects of these factors on the performance of healthcare workers, aiming to provide insights that can enhance their overall well-being and efficiency in their demanding roles.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of stress management strategies on the performance of healthcare workers in Asaba, Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

1. Explore the effect of relaxation techniques on the performance of healthcare workers in Asaba Delta State.
2. Assess the effect of exercise programs on the performance of healthcare workers in Asaba Delta State.
3. Determine the effect of mindfulness on the performance of healthcare workers in Asaba Delta State.
4. Ascertain the effect of time management skills on the performance of healthcare workers in Asaba Delta State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Stress Management Strategies

Stress is characterised as a psychological and physiological response to lengthy internal and/or external conditions that exceed an individual's adaptive capacities. It is an adaptive reaction to perceived threats, whether conscious or unconscious, which can impact an individual's emotional, physical, and social well-being, thereby jeopardising health if not effectively addressed or controlled (Orji, 2017). Stress management refers to interventions designed to alleviate the effects of occupational stressors. The responsibility for stress recovery is with the person. A multitude of treatment interventions exists to mitigate stress. They can achieve this using biofeedback, meditation, and massage therapy. Management is tasked with facilitating therapy for impacted persons. They recognise and favour the most suitable program for the individual in question. Boss et al. (2017) define stress management as the establishment of a psychologically supportive work environment that assists employees in coping with stress. The International Labour Organisation has classified the escalating workplace stress as a 'global epidemic.' Elevated stress levels in the workplace render the setting exceedingly tense. Stress affects entire business performance, as businesses are fundamentally composed of persons who manage operations (Chapman, 2016). Unhealthy organisations fail to maximise employee potential, which can adversely impact their performance in a competitive market and ultimately jeopardise their survival. Strategies at the organisational level for controlling current work-related stress emphasise addressing the root causes (Balaji & Gopal, 2021). Manjunatha and Renukamurthy (2017) assert that workplace stress significantly impacts productivity due to its direct correlation with individual behaviour and the stress encountered. Factors contributing to stress in industries include work demands, excessive workload, prolonged duty hours, financial difficulties, conflicts between professional and personal life, issues with patients and mortality, limited promotion opportunities, bullying, and sexual harassment (Yakubu, 2020).

Nigerians persistently endure stress due to adverse environmental conditions, political instability, inadequate working conditions, and extreme poverty (Sucharitha & Shaik, 2020). Workplace stress diminishes productivity, heightens managerial demands, and adversely affects health in various ways, with evidence of this phenomenon continuing to grow. Occupational stress impairs cognitive functioning, including work performance, memory, focus, and learning (Chapman, 2016). Stress significantly affects organisations and their personnel, leading to an escalation in workers' compensation claims and diminished productivity. The American Institute of Stress estimates that one million employees skip work daily due to stress, resulting in an approximate cost of \$602 per person annually for firms. In Nigeria, companies implement various stress management strategies, such as timely employee compensation, role modelling, effective communication channels, welfare programs, and training and development. Nevertheless, despite these initiatives, stress-related issues persist, presenting challenges in service delivery (Abonyo, 2020). The emphasised ineffectiveness of stress management measures to reduce labour turnover and consequently improve employee performance persists in deposit money institutions in Enugu State.

Self-Care Practices

Key self-care practices identified in the study include mindfulness and physical activity (Colman et al., 2016). Self-care is characterised as individuals' autonomous involvement in activities that enhance their well-being and health (Lee & Miller, 2013). Self-care refers to individuals' daily actions, emphasising their proactive and self-directed nature about well-being and health (Klug et al., 2022). Self-care encompasses physical, mental, social, and spiritual acts. Examples encompass exercising, participating in calming activities, associating with helpful individuals, maintaining a nutritious diet, pursuing spiritual guidance, and organising the work week (Kaluza et al., 2021). Engaging in self-care is an excellent strategy and internal resource (Kaluza et al., 2021) for mitigating stress and enhancing overall well-being.

Relaxation techniques

Relaxation techniques are strategies intended to alleviate stress and foster a state of tranquillity. Methods including deep breathing exercises, gradual muscle relaxation, and guided visualisation facilitate the reduction of heart rates, lower blood pressure, and alleviate muscle tension. These approaches are invaluable for healthcare professionals who often face high-pressure circumstances. Through consistent participation in relaxation techniques, healthcare practitioners can alleviate the acute stress stemming from serious and emotionally demanding situations. This alleviation of stress boosts their capacity to maintain composure, think clearly, and make judicious decisions, thus boosting patient care and overall job performance. Assibey-Ankrah (2021) asserted that relaxation is essential in alleviating stress. In a condition of profound relaxation, the employee is physiologically at ease and disengaged from the stress-inducing circumstances. Relaxation techniques diminish employees' heart rates, blood pressure, and other stress markers. Another method to alleviate stress personally is to confide in someone. This entails disclosing a personal crisis to a trusted individual. Confiding provides significant relief to the employee. This self-disclosure significantly alleviates stress and fosters a more optimistic perspective on life.

Literature indicates a superior treatment efficacy of relaxation techniques over other psychological interventions, including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), for alleviating anxiety and depression (Bandelow & Michaelis, 2015; Arch et al., 2013). Prior meta-analyses indicate that progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation imagery, and autogenic training are particularly effective in alleviating anxiety and depression in adults (Manzoni et al., 2008; Jorm et al., 2008). The meta-analysis by Manzoni et al. (2008) demonstrated that relaxation techniques have a consistent and significant impact on anxiety among adults within the various subgroups of the sample. Furthermore, these strategies proved to be more efficacious for younger individuals than for older persons. A systematic evaluation by Jorm et al. (2008) determined that relaxation exercises were more efficacious in alleviating self-reported depressed symptoms compared to no treatment or little intervention.

Exercise Programs

Consistent exercise regimens are essential for stress management and the preservation of physical health. Physical activity stimulates the secretion of endorphins, which are intrinsic mood

enhancers, and diminishes the concentrations of the body's stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. Various activities qualify as physical exercise if they fulfil the criterion of being voluntary. This study encompassed activities such as running, walking, and cycling. Physical movement is universally recognised as beneficial for individual health and well-being (Biddle et al., 2019; Piercy et al., 2018). Physical fitness is crucial for healthcare personnel since their roles frequently involve physically demanding tasks, such as prolonged periods of standing and aiding in patient mobility. Engagement in organised exercise regimens can enhance physical endurance, augment immunological efficacy, and elevate overall well-being. These advantages result in elevated energy levels, improved stress resilience, and higher overall job performance, enabling healthcare professionals to execute their responsibilities more efficiently and with reduced weariness. Prolonged physical activity yields numerous physiological advantages, including enhancements in cardiorespiratory performance and a consequently reduced risk of cardiovascular disorders (Despres, 2016).

Mindfulness

Mindfulness entails sustaining an acute awareness of the current moment devoid of judgement. This technique can markedly enhance cognitive clarity and emotional control. Effective mindfulness programs encompass breathing exercises, body scans, stress reduction techniques, and self-compassion practices, among others (Coo & Salanova, 2018). Various research studies demonstrate that cultivating mindfulness fosters positive affect and cognition, which are essential components of well-being. Mindfulness is essential for attaining favourable outcomes associated with well-being (Depner et al., 2020; Garland et al., 2017). Initial clinical studies indicated that it may reduce stress (Chin et al., 2019) and improve well-being (Auty et al., 2017). Mindfulness is seen to confer numerous advantages. Mindfulness influences psychological functions that enable an individual to actualise by disconnecting from their thoughts and emotions (Grecucci et al., 2015). Mindfulness in brain imaging studies enhances emotional flexibility and supports amygdala function, thereby improving the capacity to regulate emotional responses (Creswell, Eisenberger, & Lieberman, 2008) and emotional regulation (Carroll et al., 2022). It is also associated with prosocial behaviour (Condon, 2017). Additionally, it facilitates cognitive flexibility (Zheng et al., 2023). Mindful awareness allows individuals to deliberately examine and influence their ideas, enhancing cognitive flexibility in reaction to those thoughts (Motevalli et al., 2023). Currently, mindfulness is acknowledged for its beneficial correlations with task performance (Cheng et al., 2023) and problem-solving abilities (Forjan et al., 2020). Furthermore, mindfulness can enhance workplace social resources by improving social connections (Adair et al., 2018) and mitigate stress associated with job expectations (González-Palau & Medrano, 2022). Mindfulness is proposed as a crucial method to enhance workplace engagement (Liu et al., 2020). Mindfulness techniques, including meditation and mindful breathing, might be particularly advantageous for healthcare professionals. These methods mitigate emotional reactivity and augment focus, enabling healthcare personnel to maintain composure and attentiveness in high-stress scenarios. Mindfulness can enhance communication with patients and coworkers, promoting a more empathetic and efficient healthcare setting. Integrating mindfulness into daily routines enables healthcare professionals to effectively manage occupational stress, resulting in enhanced job satisfaction and superior patient care quality.

Time Management Skills

Proficient time management abilities are crucial for healthcare professionals to adeptly manage their diverse and frequently intricate duties. In this highly competitive period, companies and executives concentrate the investigation of time management strategies to improve performance (Kumar & Aithal, 2019). These competencies encompass the capacity to prioritise work, establish attainable objectives, and allocate time effectively. For healthcare professionals, proficient time management can mitigate feelings of overwhelm and guarantee the timely completion of essential assignments and patient care activities. Inadequate time management may result in missed deadlines, heightened stress, and a disordered work environment, all of which can adversely affect patient outcomes and job performance. By mastering time management, healthcare professionals can alleviate stress, enhance productivity, and elevate the overall quality of care delivered. Time management encompasses several approaches and abilities that enable an individual to utilise available time efficiently and achieve goals, tasks, and projects within a specified timeframe (Nwankwo & Okoye, 2022). Time is an essential and valuable resource that should be judiciously distributed across work activities (Bozbayindir, 2019). Time management encompasses a collection of ideas, practices, skills, methods, and systems that facilitate the effective utilisation of time to achieve desired objectives (Cross & Jiya, 2020).

Employee Job Performance

Assibey-Ankrah (2021) asserted that employee performance constitutes the actions undertaken by employees in executing the company's tasks. The execution of its functions is interdependent, consistently linked to employee job satisfaction and the extent of rewards provided, while also being shaped by individual talents, abilities, and characteristics. Employee job performance refers to the actual work output or accomplishments attained by an employee. Employee job performance refers to the quality and quantity of work produced by an employee in executing their assigned obligations. Employee job performance denotes the extent of an employee's objective attainment and encompasses many metrics of workplace efficiency. Employee performance is generally represented by data reflecting effectiveness, including productivity, goal attainment, customer satisfaction metrics, and engagement (Orji & Makubu, 2020). Kihara and Mugambi (2018) assert that employee performance directly pertains to productivity, evaluated by the quantity of acceptable quality units generated by an employee within a designated timeframe. The success of a firm or organisation is contingent upon employee performance.

Theoretical Review

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, formulated by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman in 1984, asserts that stress arises from an individual's perception and evaluation of a stressor, together with their coping capabilities. This model underscores the significance of cognitive appraisal in assessing the stressfulness of an event and accentuates the function of coping strategies in stress management. This approach is particularly pertinent for healthcare workers as it emphasises the necessity of appropriate stress management tools, including relaxation

techniques and mindfulness practices, to improve their coping mechanisms. This methodology can alleviate stress and enhance job performance by promoting a constructive evaluation of stressors and providing healthcare workers with adequate coping mechanisms, resulting in improved patient care and job satisfaction.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, formulated by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti in 2001, posits that job demands (physical, psychological, social, or organisational factors necessitating sustained effort) and job resources (elements that facilitate the attainment of work objectives, mitigate job demands, or promote personal development) interact to affect employee stress and motivation. This paradigm posits that elevated workplace demands may result in burnout, whereas adequate job resources might mitigate these pressures and improve work engagement. This model emphasises the necessity of supplying healthcare workers with sufficient resources, including fitness programs and time management skills, to meet the substantial demands of their profession. By providing healthcare workers with access to stress management services, healthcare institutions can mitigate burnout, promote job performance, and improve the overall well-being of their personnel.

Review Empirical Studies

Schmitt and Prasastyoga (2024) investigated self-care habits and their associations with vitality and health issues among self-employed individuals in the Netherlands. A study involving 290 self-employed individuals, utilising a two-wave design with a one-month interval, revealed that regular self-care practice was positively correlated with worker vitality, negatively correlated with mental health issues, and showed no correlation with somatic health complaints. Among the diverse forms of self-care, physical exercise was most reliably linked to well-being results. Self-care intentions were important predictors of engagement in self-care practices. Entrepreneurial pressures did not impede the use of self-care activities.

Kriengkrai and Suriyankietkaew (2024) examined the various processes via which the development of organisational mindfulness may influence well-being and engagement across several levels. This research utilised a qualitative case study methodology and employed NVivo 12 software for data processing. The job demand-resource (JD-R) model was utilised as a theoretical foundation. Comprehensive interview data were gathered from various multi-stakeholders, including management and staff, within a Thai manufacturing firm. The findings reveal that the organisational mindfulness program can enhance employees' psychological capital, emotional intelligence, and perceived resources while reducing perceived pressures. The outcome underscores the significance of mindfulness practice, as it fosters well-being and engagement at many levels, particularly within individual tasks and collaborative teams, ultimately contributing to improved organisational performance.

Madhu and Singh (2024) examined the impact of stress management strategies on employee performance. A sample size of 270 respondents was selected from a population of 300 employees at Satguru Overseas, a prominent global travel management organisation that enhances travel

experiences. Satguru Travel is a provider of business and leisure travel, along with destination management services, worldwide. To distinguish ourselves from rival travel businesses, we present our value indicators for the customer. The data were examined utilising mean scores and standard deviations. The proposed hypotheses were evaluated by chi-square test analysis. The findings indicated that the relaxation strategy significantly impacts staff effectiveness at Satguru Overseas in India. Relaxation and meditation techniques significantly impact employee job satisfaction.

Sakpaide (2024) investigated the correlation between stress management strategies and the performance of academic personnel at Delta State University, Abraka. The research aimed for a sample size of 260 participants. The acquired data were analysed using descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix. The hypotheses were evaluated by multiple regression analysis. The results indicated that CS, FLTP, and MT strongly linked with ASP; however, RT does not have a significant relationship with ASP.

Tojue et al., (2023) investigated the impact of stress management strategies on the job performance of employees in Nigerian manufacturing organisations. The research design included descriptive survey methodologies. A sample of 378 respondents was selected from a population of 657 employees across four manufacturing enterprises. Hypotheses were evaluated by regression analysis. The results indicated that meditation techniques significantly impact employee performance in manufacturing enterprises in Nigeria, while relaxation techniques significantly influence employee job happiness in the same sector.

Osman and Singaram (2023) investigated the influence of an online Mindfulness-Based Intervention (MBI) on healthcare professionals' self-care behaviours and assessed if personality factors served as a moderating variable. A quantitative study design incorporated pre-assessment and post-assessment components, facilitating paired comparison and regression analysis to establish associations. Data were gathered using two validated instruments: the Mindful Self-Care Scale-2018 and the Big Five Personality Test. Forty-nine healthcare professionals participated in the study. Substantial enhancements were observed on all primary self-care subscales following the intervention. No substantial correlations were seen between personality traits and self-care, with the exception of neuroticism, which emerged as a critical moderating component. An online MBI substantially influenced health workers' capacity for self-care, irrespective of their personality traits.

Sriram et al. (2023) investigated the impact of relaxation techniques on alleviating stress and anxiety among industrial workers in certain industries of Dadar and Nagar Haveli. A descriptive evaluatory approach was employed, utilising a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test post-test framework. The sampling strategy applied was non-probability convenience sampling, with a calculated sample size of 500, including industrial workers. The findings indicated that relaxation techniques effectively reduced stress and anxiety among industrial workers.

Obiora et al. (2023) investigated the impact of stress management practices on the performance of employees in deposit money institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria. The research design included descriptive survey methodologies. A sample size of 394 was extracted from a population of 25,275

employees across 25 banks that met the recapitalisation requirement as of December 2021. The study's research issues were addressed through the use of mean scores and standard deviations. The hypotheses were evaluated by regression analysis. The results indicated that the counselling services approach significantly impacts employee efficiency in deposit money banks, while the flextime programs strategy significantly affects the quality of service delivery by employees.

Bolm et al. (2022) examined the impact of a mindfulness intervention on occupational stress and job satisfaction among hospitality and service workers in the Netherlands. Fourteen experts participated in the study. They incorporated a 15- to 30-minute audio mindfulness session into their daily work regimen for a duration of fifteen days. A quasi-experimental design involving pretest, intervention, and posttest was employed. A paired samples t-test was performed to assess the effects during the intervention period. When data were not normally distributed, the Wilcoxon rank-sum test was conducted to evaluate changes. Post-intervention, individuals exhibited markedly elevated levels of general mindfulness and job satisfaction, alongside significantly reduced scores in occupational stress. The current study demonstrates that even inexpensive, self-guided mindfulness training yields a positive effect with considerable implications for work and health.

Dysart and Harden (2022) examined mindfulness and self-care comprehension among extension leaders: Enhancing Well-Being for Health Educators and Their Clients. United States of America. Cooperative Extension agents from two states were solicited to engage in MUSCLE through statewide listservs. Participants were solicited to attend sessions and fulfil competency assessments and intersession assignments weekly. The research was executed via Zoom. Surveys conducted before and after the program used proven metrics for flourishing and physical activity levels. In response to the increased demand for mindfulness programming during the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic, 30-minute experiential "Mindful Meet-up" workshops were conducted via Zoom. The dissemination and execution of the two distinct interventions (i.e., MUSCLE and Mindful Meet-ups) were analysed. MUSCLE, a more intensive program featuring assignments and competency assessments, had lower reach and did not demonstrate statistically significant improvements in flourishing or physical activity. Mindful Meet-ups experienced increased attendance and proportional reach during the onset of the pandemic; nevertheless, there was no tangible assessment of flourishing or physical activity behaviours. The unsolicited qualitative response was positive, indicating that the interventions were well-received and participants perceived an increase in mindfulness. Although agents claimed personal enhancements anecdotally, it was difficult to collect statistics on results. Augmenting outcome data with implementation and dissemination results provided a more comprehensive understanding to guide intervention decision-making.

Gomez-Borges et al. (2022) examined the correlation between self-care practices (mindfulness and physical activity) and the utilisation of personal and professional resources in connection to well-being. The sample comprised 294 people sourced from 20 organisations across various socioeconomic categories in Spain. The findings indicated that mindfulness is positively correlated with well-being, mediated by job and personal resources. Nonetheless, whereas personal resources exhibited a complete mediating effect in the proposed model, job resources did not demonstrate a significant correlation with mindfulness. The results indicated positive and substantial correlations

between the interaction of mindfulness and physical exercise with all dependent variables, as well as a significant impact of the interaction between physical exercise and mindfulness on each of the three dependent variables.

Monroe et al. (2021) assessed the efficacy of deliberate self-care activities on nurse burnout and working conditions by evaluating job satisfaction and collaboration among nurses. Comparisons between inpatient units based on data from the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI) and the Practice Environment Scale (PES), focusing on job satisfaction and collaboration, were conducted using ANOVA. The findings indicate that nurses in an inpatient unit that adopted Project 7 exhibit markedly greater job satisfaction than those in units that did not adopt Project 7. This indicates that this tool offers an efficient and accessible mindfulness framework for managers and directors to enhance job satisfaction, foster teamwork, and thereby mitigate burnout, ultimately cultivating healthier work environments.

Obi (2020) examined the impact of stress on employee productivity in South-East Nigeria through the use of a questionnaire. The analysed data indicated that work-family interaction has considerable negative consequences on employee productivity and organisational atmosphere. Conversely, role ambiguity exerted a large and favourable influence on staff productivity.

Tran et al. (2020) investigated the correlation among individual, organisational, and financial impacts of stress. This study identifies and categorises the prevalent causes, indicators, manifestations, and repercussions of employee stress, based on the systematic analysis of prior research and interviews with five seasoned executives and managers of Vietnamese organisations. The categorisation of workplace stress into three types (acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress) serves as a foundation for pinpointing the sources of stress arising from factors that deviate from the worker's typical experiences, considering both external and internal characteristics.

Marshall (2020) analysed the effects of a comprehensive wellness program on job satisfaction in the American workplace. The study's population comprised personnel from a contract food service organisation that offers facility services to higher education institutions, namely from their northeastern regional office, which included roughly 200 employees. The organisation's personnel spanned from entry-level employment to senior-level management. The findings revealed a considerable disparity in extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction levels between employees who participated in the wellness program and those who did not. Hospitality organisations persist in dedicating resources to establish and enhance current workplace wellness programs.

The reviewed empirical studies highlight the significant role of self-care, mindfulness, and stress management in promoting employee well-being and performance across various sectors. Schmitt and Prasastyoga (2024) found that self-care practices, particularly physical exercise, enhance vitality and mental health among self-employed individuals, while entrepreneurial pressures do not hinder these practices. Similarly, mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), as explored by Osman and Singaram (2023) and Bolm et al. (2022), effectively reduce occupational stress, improve job satisfaction, and enhance self-care behaviors. Other studies, such as those by Kriengkrai and Suriyankietkaew (2024), underscore how organizational mindfulness fosters

psychological capital and engagement, thereby improving organizational outcomes. Stress management strategies like relaxation and meditation techniques, examined by Madhu and Singh (2024), Sriram et al. (2023), and Obiora et al. (2023), were consistently shown to alleviate stress, enhance job satisfaction, and boost employee performance. While these studies provide valuable insights, they exhibit limitations such as small sample sizes, lack of longitudinal data, and over-reliance on self-reported measures, which may not fully capture the complexity of workplace dynamics. Furthermore, studies like Dysart and Harden (2022) lacked robust statistical evidence to substantiate claims of mindfulness interventions' efficacy. Research on the mediating effects of personality traits (e.g., Osman and Singaram, 2023) is limited to specific contexts and traits, leaving gaps in generalizability. The present research aims to address these limitations by adopting a comprehensive approach, incorporating larger and more diverse samples, and exploring the interplay between stress management, mindfulness practices, and organizational outcomes in under-researched contexts such as Nigeria's emerging industries. This approach seeks to provide more nuanced and generalizable insights into fostering employee well-being and productivity.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design that was used for the study is a cross-sectional survey research design. Cross-sectional surveys are efficient and cost-effective compared to other longitudinal or experimental designs. They allow researchers to collect data from a large and diverse population at a single point in time. This approach saves time and resources, as it does not require following up with respondents over an extended period or implementing complex interventions.

Population of the Study

The study was centred on the employees of five selected private hospitals in Asaba, Delta State. The population of the study was 211 employees of five selected private hospitals in Asaba, Delta State. This includes the medical doctors, nurses, and administrative staff of the hospitals.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was determined using Taro Yamane (1967) formula.

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where N is the population size
e is the margin of error (assume 5%)

$$1 = \text{constant } e = 0.05$$

$$n = \frac{211}{1 + 211(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{211}{1 + 0.5275}$$

n = 138

Thus, 138 employees of the selected hospitals in Asaba, Delta State, were selected as the respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to administer the questionnaire to the respondents, and it was used because it ensured that all categories of employees were represented in the sample. Stratified sampling divides the population into homogeneous subgroups (or strata) based on certain characteristics (e.g., age, gender, educational background). By ensuring that each stratum is adequately represented in the sample, this method increased the precision and representativeness of the sample. The cross-sectional survey design is justified for this study as it allows the collection of data from a broad population at a single point in time, enabling the examination of relationships and patterns among variables efficiently and cost-effectively. This approach is particularly suitable for investigating how stress management strategies influence employee performance and well-being, as it provides a snapshot of current conditions and perceptions. Compared to longitudinal designs, which require extended durations and resources to track changes over time, and experimental designs, which may lack real-world applicability due to controlled environments, the cross-sectional survey strikes a balance between feasibility and generalizability. Additionally, unlike case studies that focus on specific contexts, this design captures diverse perspectives, offering a comprehensive understanding of the research topic while remaining practical and timely.

Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection that was used for this study was the primary source of data through the use of a structured questionnaire. The study used structured research questions in a Likert scale format. The Likert scale format is particularly relevant for assessing the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours of the respondents. It allowed respondents to express the degree of their agreement or disagreement with specific statements, providing nuanced insights into their experiences and opinions. This quantification facilitates statistical analysis to identify trends and relationships between variables. Moreover, the Likert scale ensures consistency in responses, enhancing the reliability and validity of the data. The reliability test of the instrument was conducted using the Cronbach alpha measure of internal consistency. Ensuring internal consistency helps maintain the quality and integrity of the measurement instrument. It allows researchers to identify and address potential issues related to item clarity, wording, or relevance that could impact the reliability of the instrument.

Table 1: Reliability test for all items in the Questionnaire

S/N	Variables	Alpha (α) value
1	Relaxation techniques	0.744
2	Exercise programs	0.745
3	Mindfulness	0.751
4	Time management skills	0.733
5	Performance of health care workers	0.741

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Since all coefficient values in Table 3.2 were above 0.6, which is greater than the common threshold recommended by Seckaran (2003), the instrument was reliable.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are crucial for quality control in data analysis. They allow researchers to check data integrity, assess data completeness, and verify assumptions before proceeding with more advanced analyses. The hypotheses were tested by using the multiple regression analysis method. Multiple regression allows researchers to explore and quantify the relationships between a dependent variable (outcome of interest) and multiple independent variables (predictors). It helps in understanding how changes in one or more predictors are associated with changes in the dependent variable.

Limitations of the Study

The methodology has limitations that may affect the generalizability of the findings. Excluding public hospitals overlooks the distinct challenges and resource constraints they face, potentially limiting the applicability of results to the broader healthcare sector. Moreover, relying solely on quantitative data excludes the nuanced insights that qualitative methods could provide, such as a deeper understanding of individual and organizational dynamics. These limitations may restrict the study's ability to capture the complexity of stress management and employee well-being comprehensively. Future research could address these gaps by including public hospitals and integrating qualitative approaches to enhance the depth and applicability of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 Analysis from the field survey

Pattern focused	Number administered	Number returned	Number rejected	Response rate
Employees	138	137	2	98%

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

A total of 138 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 137 were returned, and 135 were properly filled. Therefore, the analysis in this section was based on the response rate of 98%.

Table 3 Analysis of Respondents Profile

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Ratio (%)
1	Gender:		
	Male	60	45
	Female	74	55
2	Age Range:		
	Below 30 years	56	42
	31-40 years	58	43

	41years and above	20	15
3	Marital Status:		
	Single	66	49
	Married	68	51
4	Educational Qualification:		
	SSCE	7	5
	OND/NCE	15	11
	HND/B.Sc	83	62
	Postgraduate Degree	29	22

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 3 shows the background characteristics of the respondents. Findings showed that 45% of the sample respondents were males while 55% were females. The age bracket of the respondents indicated that 42% of the respondents were below 30 years of age; 43% of the respondents fell within the age bracket of 31-40 years of age, while 15% of the respondents were above 41 years of age and above. The marital composition of the respondents showed that 49% of the sample respondents were single, while 51% of the other respondents were married. The educational background of the respondents showed that 5% of the respondents were SSCE holders, OND/NCE holders, 11% of the respondents were OND/NCE holders, 62% of the respondents were HND/B.Sc holders, while 22% of the other respondents were postgraduate degree holders.

Table 4 Stress Management Strategies and Performance of Healthcare Workers

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-2.226	.771		-2.885	.005
Relaxation techniques	.208	.044	.190	4.714	.000
Exercise programs	.577	.065	.565	8.867	.000
Mindfulness	.194	.040	.191	4.846	.000
Time management skills	.134	.065	.127	2.069	.041

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of healthcare workers

Table 4 indicates that relaxation techniques have a positive effect on the performance of healthcare workers ($\beta = 0.190$, $P < 0.05$). Exercise programs have a positive effect on the performance of health care workers ($\beta = 0.565$, $P < 0.05$). It was indicated that mindfulness have a positive effect on the performance of healthcare workers ($\beta = 0.191$, $P < 0.05$). Time management skills have a positive effect on the performance of healthcare workers ($\beta = 0.127$, $P < 0.05$).

Table 5 Analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	209.928	4	52.482	219.004	.000 ^b
	Residual	31.153	130	.240		
	Total	241.081	134			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of healthcare workers

b. Predictors: (Constant), Time management skills, Mindfulness, Relaxation techniques, Exercise programs

Table 5 showed that the dimensions of stress management strategies considered in this study statistically significantly predict performance of healthcare workers, $F = 219.004$, $0.000 < 0.05$. This means that the regression model is statistically significant.

Table 6 Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.933 ^a	.871	.867	.490

a. Predictors: (Constant), Time management skills, Mindfulness, Relaxation techniques, Exercise programs

Table 6 shows the extent to which the dimensions of stress management strategies accounted for change in the performance of healthcare workers as reflected by the R Square, which showed that 87% (0.867) of the change in performance of healthcare workers was brought about by the variables of stress management strategies.

Discussion of Findings

Table 4.3 indicated that relaxation techniques have a positive effect on the performance of health care workers ($\beta = 0.190$, $P < 0.05$). Assibey-Ankrah (2021) opined that relaxation plays a vital role in curbing stress. In a state of great or deep relaxation, the employee is physically relaxed and detached from the stress-causing situation. For healthcare workers, who frequently encounter high-pressure situations, these techniques are invaluable.

Exercise programs have a positive effect on the performance of health care workers ($\beta = 0.565$, $P < 0.05$). Physical exercise sustained in time leads to a series of physical benefits, such as improvements in cardiorespiratory functions and, therefore, less risk of cardiovascular diseases (Despres, 2016). These benefits translate to increased energy levels, greater resilience to stress, and enhanced overall job performance, allowing healthcare workers to perform their duties more effectively and with less fatigue.

It was indicated that mindfulness has a positive effect on the performance of health care workers ($\beta = 0.191$, $P < 0.05$). Mindfulness plays a crucial role in the achievement of positive results related to well-being (Depner et al. 2020; Garland et al. 2017). Mindfulness can also improve

communication with patients and colleagues, fostering a more compassionate and effective healthcare environment.

Time management skills have a positive effect on the performance of health care workers ($\beta = 0.127, P < 0.05$). Amidst this era of intense competition, organisations and directors prioritise the exploration of time management solutions to enhance performance (Kumar & Aithal, 2019). For healthcare professionals, effective time management can prevent the feeling of being overwhelmed and ensure that important tasks and patient care activities are completed in a timely manner.

The findings of this study align with both the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, emphasizing the significance of coping strategies and job resources in enhancing healthcare workers' performance. According to the Transactional Model, the positive effects of relaxation techniques, exercise programs, mindfulness, and time management on performance highlight the importance of stress management strategies in coping with job-related stress. These practices help healthcare workers manage stress through positive cognitive appraisals, improving emotional responses and job performance. In relation to the JD-R Model, the findings suggest that resources like exercise, mindfulness, and time management can buffer the negative effects of job demands, preventing burnout and enhancing work engagement. By providing these resources, healthcare institutions can mitigate stress, promote job performance, and improve overall well-being, reinforcing the theoretical implication that adequate resources are crucial for maintaining a healthy, productive workforce.

Unexpectedly, while relaxation and mindfulness showed significant effects, their impact was relatively modest compared to exercise programs, suggesting that physical health interventions might yield more pronounced benefits in high-stress environments like hospitals. This highlights the need for a balanced approach combining physical and mental well-being strategies. Practically, hospital management can implement fitness initiatives, mindfulness workshops, and time management training to improve healthcare workers' efficiency and morale. However, the study's limitations, such as the exclusion of public hospitals and reliance on quantitative methods, suggest a need for future research to explore these dynamics across diverse settings and incorporate qualitative insights to deepen understanding. Further investigations could also explore longitudinal effects of these interventions and evaluate how cultural and institutional contexts influence their efficacy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of relaxation techniques, regular exercise programs, mindfulness practices, and robust time management skills is vital for the well-being and performance of healthcare workers in Asaba, Delta State. These stress management strategies not only enhance their physical and mental health but also improve their ability to provide high-quality patient care. Neglecting these strategies can lead to significant challenges, including burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and compromised patient outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative for healthcare institutions in Asaba to promote and support these stress management practices to foster a healthier, more productive workforce.

From a policy perspective, these findings underscore the need for healthcare policies in Nigeria to prioritize employee wellness programs. Policies should mandate the inclusion of structured stress management initiatives as part of workplace wellness strategies, particularly in the healthcare sector. Investments in fitness facilities, mindfulness training, and time management workshops should be encouraged at both public and private hospitals. Furthermore, future research could explore the long-term effects of these interventions across diverse healthcare settings in Nigeria, comparing outcomes in rural and urban hospitals. Qualitative studies could also provide deeper insights into the personal experiences of healthcare workers regarding these stress management techniques, helping to refine and tailor interventions for maximum impact.

Recommendations

The study recommended that hospital management should

1. Regularly practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery to alleviate stress and promote a state of calmness.
2. Develop and adhere to a structured exercise program that includes aerobic activities, strength training, and flexibility exercises.
3. Integrate mindfulness practices into daily routines, such as mindfulness meditation or mindful breathing exercises. These practices can improve focus, reduce emotional reactivity, and help manage the stress inherent in healthcare work, leading to better decision-making and patient care.
4. Enhance time management skills by prioritising tasks, setting realistic goals, and using tools like planners or digital calendars.

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