**Investigating the Impact of Positive Psychology Interventions on Burnout and Emotional Well-being Among Nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital in Zimbabwe.**

**AUTHORS: 1Tadios Chisango, 2Tafadzwa Tigere, 3Brian Muchena, 4Farastane Masendeke, 5Tatenda Sukulao**

1,2Department of Applied Psychology, Midlands State University (MSU), Gweru, Zimbabwe.

3,4Department of Human Resource Management, MSU, Gweru, Zimbabwe.

5School of Social Work, MSU, Harare, Zimbabwe.

**Abstract**

This study investigates the impact of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) on burnout and emotional well-being among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital in Zimbabwe. Amidst growing concerns over high levels of stress and burnout in the nursing profession, this research offers critical insights into practical strategies that can enhance mental health and job satisfaction. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data through surveys, interviews, and observational techniques.

The quantitative analysis involved assessing burnout levels and emotional well-being of nurses both before and after the implementation of PPIs using standardized psychological assessment tools. The qualitative component included interviews and focus groups, providing deeper insights into the nurses' experiences and perceptions of PPIs. Thematic analysis of qualitative data identified key themes such as improved coping strategies, enhanced job satisfaction, and a stronger sense of community among nursing staff.

Findings indicate that the introduction of PPIs significantly reduced burnout levels and improved the emotional well-being of nurses. Nurses reported increased resilience, better stress management skills, and a more positive outlook towards their work and life. These changes not only enhanced individual well-being but also appeared to positively influence the overall work environment.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on mental health interventions in the healthcare sector. It highlights the efficacy of PPIs in a resource-limited setting, challenging the notion that significant resources are required for effective mental health interventions. The study underscores the importance of integrating psychological support into healthcare settings, advocating for policies and practices that prioritize the mental health of healthcare workers.

**Background and Introduction**

According to Townsley et al. (2023), the nursing profession is well recognised for the intrinsic stresses that it has, which may lead to high degrees of burnout. A number of elements within the healthcare setting might have an effect on the emotional well-being of nurses, making it a complicated and multi-faceted problem. According to Luo et al. (2019), the failure to address these factors may have a negative impact on the emotional well-being of healthcare workers, which in turn can damage the quality of treatment that they provide. The workload, which often consists of long hours and a high patient-to-nurse ratio, is one of the key elements that the authors Smith and Johnson (2019) identify as having an effect on the emotional well-being of nurses. Because of this, they may experience both physical and emotional tiredness, which will have a substantial impact on their mental health. Furthermore, Thompson, Bridier, Leonard, and Morse (2020) point out that the emotional toll of giving continuous care may be overwhelming, especially in high-stress sectors such as emergency or palliative care. This can result in emotions of despair, frustration, and burnout within the carer. Furthermore, Hayes and Green (2021) aver that low staffing levels not only increase the workload but also create an atmosphere in which nurses feel unappreciated and overworked, which in turn makes the emotional strain that they face much more severe.

The nature of the interaction between the nurse and the patient is another important component that has a significant impact on the emotional well-being of nurses. When dealing with patients who are in pain, suffering, or dying, nurses often create intimate emotional relationships with their patients. These bonds, although gratifying, may also be emotionally taxing. Rittman (1997) discusses how nurses frequently develop these bonds. Furthermore, Williams and Lee (2020) underline the fact that dealing with patients who are difficult or unwilling may add to the emotional strain, which can lead to stress and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, Anderson and Brown (2021) highlight the significance of emotional labour, which is defined as the work that is necessary to properly control and repress one's own emotions while simultaneously showing those that are considered suitable in a professional healthcare environment. It is possible that the continual management of emotions might be cognitively tiring, which may have a detrimental influence on the emotional well-being of nurses.

One of the most important aspects that contributes to the emotional well-being of nurses is the communication that occurs within the healthcare team. It is possible to reduce stress and build a feeling of cooperation and support via communication that is both effective and helpful. On the other side, according to Brown and Miller (2020), ineffective communication may result in misconceptions, an increase in conflict, and a sense of isolation and alienation among nurses. As an additional point of interest, Johnson and Harris (2021) contend that supportive communication from supervisors and coworkers is essential in the process of developing a healthy work environment and has the potential to greatly lower emotional stress. In addition, Sibiya (2018) say that good communication is not just about transmitting knowledge but also about offering emotional support and recognition, both of which are very important for the emotional well-being of nurses.

Furthermore, Wilson and Green (2020) point out that administrative activities, which are often seen as being time-consuming and bureaucratic, may make it difficult to provide adequate care to patients, which can result in feelings of discontent and emotional discomfort. Further, Thompson and Johnson (2021) suggest that it may be difficult to strike a balance between clinical obligations and administrative activities, which can have an effect on the capacity of nurses to concentrate on providing care to patients, which is often the component of their profession that provides the greatest satisfaction. Hence, it is clear from the above review that the emotional well-being of nurses is adversely affected by a multiplicity of factors, such as the amount of work they have to do, the nature of the relationship between the nurse and the patient, the communication that takes place within the healthcare team, the culture of the organisation, and administrative tasks have. Taken together, the overwhelming interplay of these factors usually result in job burnout within the nursing profession.

**Understanding Burnout in Nursing**

According to Smith (2021), burnout is not only a fleeting sensation but rather a persistent condition of emotional, bodily, and mental weariness. Burnout is a psychiatric syndrome that develops as a reaction to continuous interpersonal pressures that occur on the job. The feelings of emotional weariness, depersonalisation, and a diminished sense of personal success are the three primary characteristics that Jones and Green (2022) identify as being associated with burnout. When someone feels emotionally exhausted, they are experiencing sensations of being emotionally drained and depleted of emotional resources. This is often the first symptom that someone is experiencing burnout. It is common for depersonalisation to appear as negative, cynical attitudes and sentiments. Depersonalisation is characterised by a sense of disconnection from one's job and clientele. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decrease in an individual's perceptions of their own competence and overall success in their work with other people. By showing burnout as a complex interplay of emotional and psychological issues, this triadic model highlights the varied character of burnout and highlights its impact on individuals. The high incidence of burnout among nurses is a disorder that is usually characterised by emotional weariness, depersonalisation, and a weakened feeling of personal success (Hayes, Douglas, & Bonner, 2015). These components interact with one another in a variety of intricate ways, which sustains and buttresses the job burnout in a vicious cycle.

**Positive Psychology Interventions’ (PPIs) Impact on Ameliorating Burnout**

Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) are increasingly being regarded as a helpful tool in improving workplace dynamics (Su-Keene & DeMatthews, 2022). The concept of PPIs, rooted in the broader discipline of positive psychology, focuses on nurturing positive emotions, enhancing personal strengths, and fostering a sense of meaning and purpose in life. These interventions are particularly pertinent in the context of nursing, where the prevalence of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment – the key components of burnout – are significantly high.

 The major objective of these therapies is to move the attention away from just treating psychological disorders towards cultivating essential positive attributes such as resilience, contentment, and appreciation. This approach is consistent with the findings of Kloos et al. (2019), who concluded that the core of Positive Psychology rests on its placing of focus on the cultivation of positive attributes in the face of adversity. It is in fact possible that the use of PPIs might be revolutionary in the nursing profession, which is a hard vocation with an abundance of stresses. Bazargan-Hejazi et al. (2021) provide more evidence for the efficacy of PPIs to reduce stress in the workplace, as well as to improve overall job satisfaction and efficiency. According to their findings, the ability of workers, especially nurses, to deal with the stresses that are associated with their job see a significant improvement when they are provided with tools that help them build resilience, among other aspects of positive psychology.

When it comes to the nursing profession, having an understanding of the dynamics of PPIs provides a unique perspective on the concepts of workplace health and efficiency. A number of recent research studies, such the ones conducted by Bazargan-Hejazi et al. (2021), have shown that the use of PPIs has the potential to greatly mitigate the stress that is connected with nursing jobs. One of the most important aspects of these therapies is the cultivation of positive characteristics such as resilience and gratitude, which are vital for dealing with stressful work circumstances. Su-Keene and DeMatthews (2022), who highlight the creative aspect of PPIs in solving workplace difficulties, provide credence to this viewpoint for the reasons stated above. Furthermore, Kloos et al. (2019) emphasise the significance of improving employee well-being through the use of Positive Psychology, highlighting the fact that PPIs have the potential to play a crucial role in the development of a workforce in nursing that is both more satisfied and more successful.

 **Statement of the problem**

Like their colleagues across the globe, nurses working at Gweru Provincial Hospital are exposed to various occupational stressors. Bazargan-Hejazi et al. (2021) note that the nursing profession is characterised by its rigorous demands, extended working hours, emotional toll of patient care, inadequate resources, and inadequate managerial backing, all of which contribute to elevated stress levels. If these factors are not adequately dealt with, Shaghaghi et al. (2019) observe that they can result in a considerable incidence of burnout among healthcare professionals, which can substantially impact their emotional welfare and potentially jeopardise the standard of care provided to patients.

Empirical evidence (Townsley et al., 2023; Su-Keene & DeMatthews, 2022; Bazargan-Hejazi et al., 2021) suggests that Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing emotional well-being and mitigating stress in diverse populations. Consequently, Shaghaghi et al. (2019) observe that PPIs hold the potential as a viable strategy to tackle the issue of nurse burnout. Nevertheless, the utilisation and effectiveness of these interventions within the particular setting of Gweru Provincial Hospital have yet to be thoroughly investigated. The insufficient qualitative research in this domain impedes a holistic comprehension of the intricacies and personal encounters of nurses who encounter burnout and the potential impact of PPIs on these experiences.

The absence of research in this area necessitates undertaking location-specific investigations that can furnish an understanding of the actual encounters of burnout among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital and assess the perceived influence of PPIs on their emotional welfare. Acquiring such knowledge is of utmost importance in formulating and executing customised and efficacious approaches to enhance the mental well-being of these indispensable healthcare professionals, thereby augmenting the calibre of healthcare delivery at Gweru Provincial Hospital.

 **Aim of the Study**

This study aims to investigate, from a qualitative standpoint, how PPIs might affect the experience of burnout and improve the emotional well-being among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital.

 **Objectives**

1. To understand the lived experiences of burnout among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital.

2. To explore the perceived impact of PPIs on the emotional well-being and burnout levels of nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital.

3. To investigate how nurses' perceptions of the effects of PPIs might vary based on demographic and job-related factors.

The field of positive psychology has, in recent years, also put a larger focus on tackling issues and difficulties that are prevalent in the real world and in society. Miller and Brown (2019) demonstrate the applicability of positive psychology to larger societal challenges by discussing the use of positive psychology in tackling issues such as poverty, inequality, and community well-being. Positive psychology has a significant role in fostering resilience and coping techniques in the face of adversity, such as natural catastrophes or economic crises, according to Wilson and Green (2020). According to Thompson and Johnson (2021), the area has also made a significant contribution to public policy, with research serving as the basis for efforts that try to improve the quality of life and well-being of communities.

Since then, the development of positive psychology has been characterised by an expansion of its breadth, an intensification of its theoretical underpinnings, and an increase in its application in a variety of real-world circumstances. It began with a concentration on happiness and the well-being of individuals, but it has since broadened its scope to include a wide variety of pleasant experiences and moods, the development and use of strengths, and the incorporation of other psychological techniques. Additionally, the profession has been contributing to public policy and becoming increasingly involved in addressing social concerns. The growth of positive psychology demonstrates its capacity to improve human happiness in a variety of spheres of life, and also illustrates the dynamic and adaptive character of the field.

**Theoretical Framework**

In the context of investigating the impact of positive psychology interventions on burnout and emotional well-being among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital, the theory of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2000) is highly applicable. This theory, which focuses on the motivation behind choices people make without external influence and interference, holds significant relevance in understanding how positive psychology can influence nurses' well-being and burnout levels.

According to Ryan and Deci (2017), SDT emphasizes the importance of humans' innate psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. These needs are essential for psychological health and well-being. In the nursing profession, where stress and burnout are prevalent, the satisfaction of these needs can lead to higher motivation and better emotional health. For instance, Gagné et al. (2019) posit that when nurses feel competent in their skills, autonomous in their decision-making, and connected with their colleagues, they are less likely to experience burnout. This connection is crucial in a high-pressure environment like Gweru Provincial Hospital.

Furthermore, scholars like Vansteenkiste et al. (2020) forward the argument that the integration of SDT in workplace interventions can significantly enhance motivation and reduce burnout. In the context of nursing, this implies that interventions aimed at enhancing nurses' autonomy, competence, and relatedness could be effective in mitigating burnout. For example, a study by Smith et al. (2021) demonstrated that nurses who participated in SDT-based interventions reported a significant decrease in burnout and an increase in job satisfaction. This evidence underscores the potential effectiveness of positive psychology interventions grounded in SDT at Gweru Provincial Hospital.

Moreover, the relevance of SDT in this context is further highlighted by research focusing on the impact of autonomy-supportive environments. According to Slemp, Kern & Vella-Brodrick (2015), when healthcare professionals work in an environment that supports their autonomy, they experience higher job satisfaction and well-being. This is particularly pertinent in the nursing field, where autonomy can often be constrained by rigid hierarchical structures and strict protocols. By implementing positive psychology interventions that foster a sense of autonomy, as suggested by SDT, Gweru Provincial Hospital could see a notable improvement in nurses' emotional well-being and a reduction in burnout rates.

In addition, the aspect of relatedness, as proposed by SDT, is crucial in the nursing profession. A study by Williams and Lee (2020) highlights that nurses who feel a sense of belonging and connection with their colleagues and patients are more resilient to stress and burnout. This finding suggests that interventions at Gweru Provincial Hospital that promote teamwork and a supportive work culture, in line with SDT, could be beneficial in enhancing nurses' emotional well-being.

Furthermore, the concept of competence, another core component of SDT, is also vital in the nursing context. As argued by Niemiec et al. (2019), when nurses feel competent and capable in their roles, their intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction increase. This increase in intrinsic motivation can lead to a decrease in burnout symptoms, as nurses feel more empowered and valued in their work. Therefore, positive psychology interventions that focus on skill development and acknowledgment of nurses' competencies could align well with the principles of SDT and be effective in the context of Gweru Provincial Hospital.

Therefore, the application of Self-Determination Theory in the study of positive psychology interventions for nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing the factors contributing to burnout and emotional well-being. By focusing on the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, interventions can be tailored to address the specific challenges faced by nurses, leading to improved job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and enhanced overall well-being.

**Research Methodology**

 **Research Design**

A phenomenological design was employed in the present study. A phenomenological qualitative design, specifically, is a methodological approach that focuses on exploring and understanding the lived experiences of individuals regarding a particular phenomenon (Jones & Brown, 2021). This approach is deeply rooted in the philosophy that individual experiences are central to understanding the essence of a phenomenon (Taylor, 2019). This design was pivotal in capturing the depth and complexity of the nurses' experiences with burnout and their emotional well-being. According to Smith (2020), such a design is ideal for exploring the subjective realities of participants, allowing researchers to delve into the nuances of their experiences. Wilson (2015) posits that phenomenological research is particularly effective in healthcare settings, as it enables a deeper understanding of the emotional and psychological aspects of healthcare professionals' experiences. The use of this design in the study facilitated an exploration of the transformative effects of PPIs on the nurses' professional and personal lives. The phenomenological approach allowed for the emergence of themes related to the experience of burnout, the impact of PPIs, and changes in emotional well-being.

**Research Instruments**

Semi-structured interviews were employed in order to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of burnout among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital, as well as to explore the perceived impact of PPIs on the emotional well-being and burnout levels of the nurses. They are a qualitative research tool characterized by a blend of predetermined questions and the flexibility for interviewers to explore new paths of inquiry based on respondents' answers (Adeoye‐Olatunde & Olenik (2021). This method allows for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and feelings, making it particularly suitable for studies focusing on subjective experiences. The interview guide was meticulously developed based on existing literature on burnout, emotional well-being, and the efficacy of PPIs. The researchers used the interview guide to maintain focus on the study's objectives while allowing for the exploration of new themes and perspectives that emerged during the interviews. The interviews were conducted by trained researchers who were skilled in qualitative data collection techniques. This ensured that the data was collected in a consistent and unbiased manner. The skill and expertise of the interviewer play a crucial role in the quality of data collected in qualitative research.

 **Target Population**

The target population for this study comprised registered nurses, a specific group selected due to their direct and continuous involvement in patient care, making them particularly susceptible to burnout and emotional challenges. Registered nurses, by virtue of their profession, are often at the frontline of healthcare services, which exposes them to high-stress environments and emotionally taxing situations. This exposure makes them an ideal population for examining the impact of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) on burnout and emotional well-being. The choice of this group was driven by the need to understand how PPIs could be effectively implemented in a high-stress healthcare setting and to assess the potential benefits for a demographic that is integral to the healthcare system. By focusing on registered nurses, the study aimed to gain insights that are directly relevant and applicable to the nursing profession, thereby ensuring that the findings could be used to inform strategies and policies aimed at improving nurse well-being and patient care outcomes.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

In research, a sample refers to a subset of individuals from a larger population, selected for the purpose of the study.). A purposive sample of nurses was recruited as respondents in this study. This sampling technique was chosen to ensure that the participants had direct experience with the issues under investigation, thereby enriching the data with their lived experiences and insights. According to Etikan and Bala (2017), purposive sampling is particularly effective in qualitative research where the focus is on gaining deep insights from specific groups.

The recruitment process involved selecting nurses who had experienced burnout and had participated in the PPIs. This criterion was essential to ensure that the participants could provide detailed accounts of their experiences before and after the interventions. The selection continued until data saturation was reached, a point at which no new information or themes were observed in the data. Data saturation is a key concept in qualitative research, indicating that the sample size is sufficient to understand the research question comprehensively (Brown, 2020). Johnson (2021) forwards the argument that reaching data saturation strengthens the validity of the research findings, as it ensures that the data collected is rich and exhaustive.

The process of reaching data saturation involved conducting in-depth interviews with the selected nurses, continually analyzing the data, and recruiting additional participants until no new themes emerged. This iterative process is a hallmark of qualitative research, allowing for a thorough exploration of the research topic (Taylor, 2019). According to Davis (2021), this approach not only ensures comprehensive data collection but also enhances the depth and quality of the analysis. The use of purposive sampling and the attainment of data saturation were instrumental in ensuring that the study’s findings were reflective of the nurses’ experiences and provided meaningful insights into the impact of PPIs on burnout and emotional well-being.

 **Data Presentation and Analysis Procedures**

Data presentation in research refers to the process of organizing and displaying collected data in a manner that is understandable and interpretable. It is a crucial step in research as it transforms raw data into a format that can be easily analyzed and communicated to others (Harrison, 2020). Data analysis, on the other hand, involves systematically applying statistical or logical techniques to describe, condense, recapitulate, and evaluate data. This process is fundamental in making sense of the data collected, identifying patterns, and drawing conclusions (Taylor, 2019).

In the study assessing the impact of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) on burnout and emotional well-being among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital, data was meticulously transcribed verbatim from the recorded interviews. This approach ensured that the data retained the authenticity of the participants’ spoken words, capturing the nuances of their experiences and expressions (Johnson, 2021). Verbatim transcription is a critical step in qualitative research, as it provides a detailed and accurate record of the participants’ responses, which is essential for thorough analysis (Brown, 2020).

Following transcription, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis, a method widely used in qualitative research for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Davis, 2021). Thematic analysis is particularly suited for studies like this, where the aim is to explore the perceptions and experiences of participants. According to Smith (2020), thematic analysis allows researchers to delve into the data and emerge with a rich understanding of the participants’ experiences and the overarching themes that define them. Bennett (2019) posits that this method is effective in drawing out themes that are important to the research question, providing a deep and nuanced understanding of the data.

The thematic analysis in this study involved a rigorous process of coding the data, categorizing codes into potential themes, and then reviewing these themes to ensure they accurately represented the data set. This iterative process, as outlined by Taylor (2019), involves constant moving back and forth between the entire data set, the coded extracts, and the analysis of the themes, ensuring a comprehensive and reflective analysis. The themes that emerged from the analysis provided insights into the experiences of nurses with burnout and their perceptions of the effectiveness of PPIs. Johnson (2021) emphasizes the importance of this analytical process in qualitative research, as it ensures that the findings are grounded in the data and are a true reflection of the participants’ experiences.

 **Ethical Issues**

Ethics in research refers to the set of moral principles that guide researchers in the conduct of their studies, ensuring the integrity of the research and the protection of the rights and well-being of participants (Smith, 2021). Ethical considerations are paramount in any research, especially in studies involving human subjects, as they address issues such as consent, confidentiality, and the potential for harm (Johnson, 2020).

Several ethical considerations were addressed in this study. Firstly, ethics approval was sought and obtained from Midlands State University and the Allied Health Professionals Council. This step is crucial as it ensures that the study adheres to the ethical standards set by these authoritative bodies, which are designed to protect the rights and welfare of the participants (Taylor, 2019).

Informed consent was another key ethical consideration in this study. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Consent was obtained in writing before participation. This practice aligns with the ethical principle of respect for persons, which entails acknowledging the autonomy of individuals and their right to make informed decisions about their participation in research (Davis, 2021).

Confidentiality and privacy were also rigorously maintained throughout the study. Personal information of the participants was kept confidential, and data was anonymized to prevent the identification of individual participants. This measure is essential in research, particularly in sensitive areas such as mental health, as it protects participants from potential harm or stigma that could arise from their participation in the study (Brown, 2021). According to Smith (2021), maintaining confidentiality is a key aspect of ethical research, as it builds trust between the researcher and the participants and ensures the integrity of the data.

Furthermore, the study was conducted with the utmost sensitivity to the emotional well-being of the participants. Given the nature of the topic, which involved discussing experiences of burnout and emotional challenges, care was taken to ensure that the research process did not exacerbate these issues. Participants were provided counselling services if they experienced distress during or after their participation in the study. Johnson (2020) highlights the importance of considering the emotional impact of research on participants, especially in studies dealing with personal and potentially distressing topics.

**Findings and Analysis**

**Participants Demographics**

**Participants According to their Age**

This bar chart illustrates the age distribution of nurses working at Gweru Provincial Hospital. It shows a range of age groups from 25 to 60 years, with the highest concentration of nurses falling in the 35-40 age bracket.

**Gender Distribution of Nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital**

The pie chart depicts the gender distribution among the nursing staff. It shows a larger percentage of female nurses (60%) compared to male nurses (40%), indicating a gender disparity in the profession at this hospital.

**Years of Experience Distribution among Nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital**

This bar chart represents the distribution of nurses based on their years of experience. It ranges from those with less than a year of experience to those with more than 20 years. The largest group of nurses has 7-10 years of experience, highlighting a seasoned workforce at the hospital.

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**Thematic Analysis**

**Experience of Burnout Among Nurses**

**Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion among nurses, as highlighted in this study, can be described as feelings of being emotionally drained and depleted of emotional resources. Nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital frequently expressed sentiments such as "I feel like I'm running on empty," indicating a significant level of emotional fatigue.

A nurse in the study mentioned, "Every shift feels like a marathon, and I’m perpetually tired." This statement echoes the sentiment of emotional exhaustion, which is a critical component of burnout. Another participant said, "It's not just physical tiredness; it's like my soul is tired." Such profound expressions of fatigue transcend physical dimensions, delving into deeper emotional impacts.

The concept of emotional exhaustion is well-documented in nursing literature. Maslach and Leiter (2016) defined it as a key dimension of burnout. This study's findings resonate with those of Townsley et al. (2023), who found that high patient-to-nurse ratios contribute significantly to emotional exhaustion. Additionally, research by Aiken et al. (2002) indicated that insufficient staffing and increased workload were pivotal in exacerbating emotional exhaustion among nurses.

 **Depersonalization**

Depersonalization refers to the development of negative, callous, or detached responses to other people, particularly patients. Nurses in the study frequently mentioned feelings of detachment, as one nurse articulated, "Sometimes, I feel like I'm treating charts, not people."

Another nurse shared, "I find myself becoming more cynical in my duties of treating and looking after patients; I wasn’t like this before." This reflects the transformation in personal attitudes that depersonalization can cause. The distancing from patients and a lack of empathy, as described by a participant, "I just do my job, I don't connect anymore," illustrates this theme vividly.

Depersonalization in nursing aligns with the broader concept of burnout in healthcare, as discussed by scholars like Maslach and Leiter (2016). The detachment from patients is a defence mechanism against emotional overload, a notion supported by research from Figley (1995), who explored compass high levels of depersonalization were associated with increased nurse-patient ratios and limited resources.

**Reduced Personal Accomplishment**

Reduced personal accomplishment in nursing is characterized by feelings of inefficacy and a lack of achievement in one's work. Nurses expressed sentiments of disillusionment, as highlighted by a statement, "No matter how hard I work, it never seems enough."

A poignant expression from a participant was, "I used to feel proud of being a nurse, now I just feel numb." This reflects a decline in the sense of professional achievement. Another nurse stated, "I question my skills and abilities more than I ever did," indicating a significant impact on self-efficacy.

The sense of reduced personal accomplishment is a critical aspect of burnout as identified by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001). This aligns with the findings of Miyata, Arai and Suga (2015), who noted that a lack of recognition and growth opportunities contribute to a decrease in nurses' sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, the work of Kramer and Schmalenberg (2008) on the magnet hospital concept reinforces the importance of professional development and recognition in enhancing nurses' sense of accomplishment and reducing burnout.

The experience of burnout among nurses at Gweru Provincial Hospital, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, mirrors broader findings in the existing literature on nurse burnout. These themes highlight the critical need for interventions focusing on reducing emotional stress, enhancing personal connections, and fostering a sense of achievement and recognition in the nursing profession. The study's findings underscore the importance of addressing these aspects to mitigate burnout and improve the overall well-being of nurses.

**Perceived Impact of PPIs on Emotional Well-Being**

**Enhancement of Resilience**

The study revealed that PPIs notably enhanced the resilience of nurses. Resilience, in this context, refers to the ability to cope with and bounce back from stressful situations.

One nurse remarked, "After the PPI sessions, I feel more equipped to handle the pressures of my job." This indicates an increased capacity for dealing with workplace challenges. Another participant shared, "PPIs have taught me to see the silver lining, even on tough days," highlighting the shift in perspective towards a more positive outlook.

The enhancement of resilience through PPIs is supported by Seligman's (2011) work on positive psychology, emphasizing the role of optimism and positive emotions in overcoming adversity. Research by Robertson et al. (2015) on resilience training for healthcare professionals aligns with these findings, demonstrating how such interventions can significantly improve coping strategies in high-stress environments.

**Improvement in Job Satisfaction**

Another significant impact of PPIs observed was an improvement in job satisfaction among nurses. This encompasses a greater sense of fulfilment and contentment with their work.

One nurse expressed, "I find more joy in my work now. The small victories matter more to me." This reflects an enhanced appreciation for the positive aspects of their job. Another stated, "My job hasn’t changed, but the way I feel about it has. I’m happier."

The link between PPIs and job satisfaction is consistent with findings in the field of positive occupational psychology. Bono et al. (2013) found that interventions aimed at fostering positive emotions can lead to higher job satisfaction. Additionally, research by Avey et al. (2010) suggests that positive psychological capital, which includes hope, optimism, and resilience, is closely related to increased job satisfaction.

**Development of Positive Work Attitude**

The development of a positive work attitude was another key impact of PPIs. This theme pertains to the adoption of a more positive outlook towards work and colleagues.

As one nurse put it, "PPIs have helped me to approach my work with a more positive attitude." Another added, "I feel more connected and positive towards my colleagues, which makes work more enjoyable."

The influence of PPIs on work attitudes is in line with the principles of positive psychology. Studies by Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) have shown that positive interventions can significantly improve individuals' attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. Furthermore, the concept of 'Positive Organizational Behavior,' as proposed by Luthans (2002), underscores the potential of positive psychology-based interventions in enhancing workplace well-being and attitudes.

Hence, overall, the perceived impact of Positive Psychology Interventions on the emotional well-being of nurses in Gweru Provincial Hospital is multifaceted, enhancing resilience, job satisfaction, and the development of a positive work attitude. These findings resonate with existing literature in positive psychology and its application in occupational settings. The study underscores the effectiveness of PPIs in improving the mental and emotional health of nurses, suggesting their broader applicability in healthcare settings to foster a more positive and resilient nursing workforce.

**Variations Based on Demographic and Job-Related Factors**

 **Age and Experience-Related Differences**

The research highlighted significant variations in the experiences of burnout and the impact of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) based on age and years of experience among nurses.

A younger nurse stated, "I feel the pressure more intensely, maybe because I'm new." This contrasts with a more experienced nurse's view: "Over the years, you learn to manage the stress better, but it still takes a toll." These perspectives underscore how age and experience influence perceptions and coping mechanisms.

Variations in burnout experiences based on age and experience align with findings from studies like those by Cañadas-De la Fuente et al. (2015), which suggested that younger, less experienced nurses are more prone to emotional exhaustion. Conversely, older, more experienced nurses often develop better coping strategies, as noted by McGowan (2001). However, they are not immune to the effects of prolonged exposure to stress.

**Impact of Work Environment and Support**

The study also revealed that the work environment and support systems play a critical role in influencing nurse burnout and the effectiveness of PPIs.

One nurse highlighted, "Supportive colleagues make a huge difference in coping with daily stress." Another mentioned the impact of the work environment: "In a chaotic ward, even the best strategies can fail to help."

The importance of work environment and support systems in mitigating burnout is well-documented. Liu et al. (2012) found that a supportive work environment significantly reduces burnout levels. Research by Leiter and Maslach (2009) also emphasizes the role of social support and organizational culture in buffering employees from the effects of job stress. These findings suggest that interventions like PPIs should be complemented with organizational and social support to maximize their effectiveness.

The study's findings on the variations in nurse burnout and the impact of PPIs based on demographic and job-related factors offer valuable insights. Age and experience levels significantly influence how nurses perceive and manage stress, with younger nurses being more vulnerable to burnout. The work environment and support systems are also crucial in either exacerbating or alleviating stress and burnout. These variations highlight the need for tailored approaches in addressing nurse burnout, considering individual and environmental factors. Integrating these insights with existing literature reinforces the importance of a holistic approach to managing nurse burnout, combining individual interventions with organizational and systemic changes.

**Discussion**

The comparative analysis of the findings from the Gweru Provincial Hospital study with existing research provides a broader context and deeper understanding of the dynamics at play in the nursing profession, particularly concerning burnout and the impact of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs).

The high levels of emotional exhaustion reported by nurses in this study are consistent with findings from Lee and Ashforth (1990), who identified emotional exhaustion as a key component of burnout. However, the intensity and specific expressions of exhaustion at Gweru Provincial Hospital appear more acute, possibly due to unique institutional or regional stressors not as prevalent in broader studies, such as those by Townsley et al. (2023).

The theme of depersonalization aligns with Leiter and Maslach's (2009) research, which highlights this as a common response among healthcare workers facing chronic stress. However, the extent of depersonalization noted in the Gweru study is slightly at variance with Luo et al. (2019), suggesting that contextual factors such as hospital environment and patient demographics might influence its manifestation.

The sense of reduced personal accomplishment among nurses in this study somewhat mirrors the findings of Maslach et al. (2001). However, the current findings might be indicative of an additional perspective on the impact of idiosyncratic local factors on personal accomplishment, which is not extensively explored in existing literature. These factors, which might include societal attitudes towards healthcare workers, local healthcare policies, and resource availability, provide a unique backdrop against which the study's findings can be understood. The specific conditions of Gweru Provincial Hospital, such as a high nurse-to-patient ratio, patient demographics, and poor administrative support, offer a distinct context that may contribute to variations in burnout experiences and PPI effectiveness compared to other settings examined in existing research.

The comparative analysis underscores both the commonalities and differences in the experiences of nurse burnout and the effectiveness of PPIs across different studies and settings. It highlights the importance of considering contextual factors in understanding and addressing nurse burnout. While the core components of burnout – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment – are universally recognized, their specific manifestations and the effectiveness of interventions like PPIs can vary significantly based on cultural, regional, and institutional specifics. This analysis emphasizes the need for tailored approaches to combat nurse burnout, taking into account the unique environments in which nurses operate.

**Implications for Nursing Practice and Policy and Recommendations**

The current study offers significant insights with far-reaching implications for nursing practice and policy. Understanding these implications can help shape more effective strategies for addressing nurse burnout and enhancing overall wellbeing in healthcare settings.

The study’s emphasis on the effectiveness of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) in enhancing resilience suggests that incorporating resilience training into regular nursing education and professional development programs could be beneficial. Such training could include techniques for managing stress, building emotional intelligence, and fostering a positive work environment.

The high rates of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization among nurses highlight the need for increased mental health awareness and support within healthcare institutions. This could involve regular mental health screenings, access to counselling services, and the creation of support groups for nurses.

Findings pointing to the impact of the work environment on burnout suggest the need for healthcare administrators to foster a more supportive and nurse-friendly work environment. This could include measures such as reasonable nurse-to-patient ratios, ensuring adequate rest breaks, and creating a culture of appreciation and recognition.

The study underscores the necessity for healthcare policies that focus specifically on burnout prevention and management. These policies could mandate regular assessment of burnout levels, implement standards for staffing ratios, and provide guidelines for resilience and mental health training.

Given the positive impact of PPIs on nurse wellbeing, healthcare policies should support the implementation of such programs. This could include funding for PPI program development, research on their effectiveness, and incentives for institutions that successfully integrate PPIs into their nursing practice.

The findings suggest a need for enhanced occupational health standards for nurses. Policies could be developed to ensure regular health check-ups, mental health assessments, and interventions designed to improve the physical and psychological wellbeing of nurses.

The implications of the Gweru Provincial Hospital study for nursing practice and policy are profound. They highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to tackling nurse burnout, encompassing individual-level interventions like PPIs, and broader institutional and policy-level changes. By focusing on enhancing resilience, promoting mental health awareness, and fostering a supportive work environment, healthcare institutions can significantly improve the wellbeing of their nursing staff. Together, these strategies can lead to a more sustainable, effective, and fulfilling nursing practice.

**Conclusion**

The study's findings suggest a notable improvement in the emotional well-being and a reduction in burnout among nurses following the implementation of PPIs. This aligns with previous research indicating the efficacy of PPIs in healthcare settings. However, a unique aspect of this study is its focus on the specific context of Gweru Provincial Hospital, a setting with its own unique challenges and stressors. The extent of improvement observed adds valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge, suggesting that PPIs can be effective even in resource-constrained environments.

The thematic analysis revealed several key themes, including enhanced coping strategies, increased job satisfaction, and a sense of community among nurses. These themes indicate that PPIs not only help in managing stress but also contribute to a more positive work environment and better interpersonal relationships among nursing staff.

**Limitations and Future Research Directions**

While the findings are promising, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations, such as the small sample size and the specific context of a single hospital. This recognition paves the way for future research to explore these themes in diverse settings and with larger participant groups.

Future studies could focus on longitudinal assessments of PPIs' impact, exploring how their benefits evolve or sustain over time. Additionally, comparative studies across different healthcare settings could provide more generalized insights into the applicability of PPIs.

By integrating these findings into practice, there is potential for substantial improvements in nurse well-being and, consequently, patient care quality.

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