

e-ISSN: 2829-6192, p-ISSN: 2829-6184

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/ijam.v3i2>

Received: July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Revised: July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Publish: July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



## Determinants of Occupational Stress in Health Services: Analysis of Communication Skills and Work Units (A Literature Review)

Muhammad Dwi Satriyanto<sup>1</sup>, Ratna Wardani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>IIK Strada Indonesia, Kediri, Indonesia, [dwi.satriyanto@gmail.com](mailto:dwi.satriyanto@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>IIK Strada Indonesia, Kediri, Indonesia, [ratnawardani61278@gmail.com](mailto:ratnawardani61278@gmail.com)

Corresponding Author: [dwi.satriyanto@gmail.com](mailto:dwi.satriyanto@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This literature review aims to identify and analyze the determinants of occupational stress in health services, with a specific focus on the impact of communication skills and work units. Understanding these determinants is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate stress and improve the overall well-being of healthcare professionals. **Methodology:** A comprehensive review of existing literature was conducted, utilizing academic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The selection criteria included peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2023, focusing on occupational stress in health services, communication skills, and work unit dynamics. Thematic analysis was employed to synthesize findings from the selected studies. **Results/Findings:** The review revealed that poor communication skills significantly contribute to occupational stress among healthcare professionals. Ineffective communication can lead to misunderstandings, increased workload, and conflict, exacerbating stress levels. Additionally, the work unit's structure and environment, including team dynamics, leadership styles, and resource availability, were found to influence stress levels. Units with supportive leadership and cohesive team dynamics reported lower stress levels, while those with high workloads and poor resource management experienced higher stress levels. **Contribution:** This review contributes to the body of knowledge by highlighting the critical role of communication skills and work unit dynamics in occupational stress within health services. It underscores the need for targeted interventions to enhance communication skills and optimize work unit environments to reduce stress among healthcare professionals. **Originality:** This literature review provides a unique synthesis of the determinants of occupational stress in health services, specifically emphasizing the interplay between communication skills and work unit dynamics. It offers a novel perspective that can inform the development of comprehensive stress reduction strategies tailored to healthcare settings.

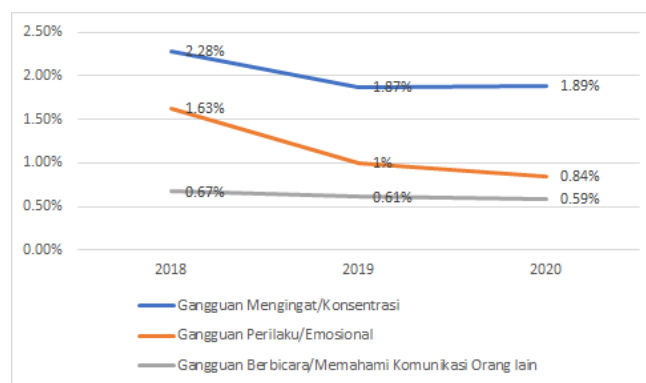
**Keyword:** Occupational Stress, Communication Skill, Work Unit, Health Care Service

## INTRODUCTION

In the health services industry, occupational stress is a major problem that has a profound impact on patient care quality as well as the wellbeing of healthcare professionals (King et al., 2019). Healthcare professionals' physical and mental well-being can be impacted by a variety of factors that are part of the complex and varied drivers of occupational stress in the health services sector (Vrdoljak Raguž & Čučuk, 2017).

In the health care industry, effective communication is crucial to reducing occupational stress. Effective communication techniques have been repeatedly demonstrated in studies to lower stress levels in healthcare workers. For example, empathy, a crucial component of communication skills, was found to have a negative link with occupational stress levels in a study on mental health nurses (Yao et al., 2021). Thus, lower levels of occupational stress were experienced by nurses with higher empathy levels. A study conducted on the use of occupational health services in law enforcement also found that team members of Occupational Health Services (OHS) reported less symptoms when there was efficient communication in managing workloads (Tehrani, 2024). This implies that effective communication abilities may be able to lessen the detrimental effects that workload demands have on mental health.

Occupational stress in dental care providers can be greatly impacted by knowledge of occupational health risks and the importance of communication in mitigating these risks. Stress levels can be lowered by recognizing and resolving hazards with the use of effective communication. An investigation conducted in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) area revealed a positive correlation between stress levels and hazard awareness, suggesting that improved communication about dangers may help reduce stress (Aldhaen, 2022).



**Figure 1. The urgency of Indonesian workers' mental health due to occupational stress**

Source: <https://microdashboard.feb.ugm.ac.id>

Working units can significantly impact occupational stress in health services. Tehrani (2024) argued which managing workloads was linked to decreased symptom levels among OHS team members, according to research on OHS in policing. This implies that these roles' occupational stress can be reduced by efficient workload management. A study Makoni et al. (2017) on occupational stress among Zimbabwean health service professionals found that a number of things, such as unfavorable working circumstances, insufficient resources, and a lack of support, contribute to stress. Reducing workplace stress may be possible with interventions targeted at improving these circumstances.

The purpose of this study is to look into how work environments and communication abilities affect healthcare workers' occupational stress. Through investigating the correlation between these variables and the stress levels encountered by healthcare practitioners, this study seeks to offer significant perspectives on the approaches that can be utilized to alleviate the adverse consequences of occupational stress and foster a more salubrious and efficient work milieu (Mingazova et al., 2023). The results of this investigation will play a pivotal role in providing valuable insights for the creation of efficacious interventions and policies that can

bolster the welfare of healthcare personnel and augment the general standard of healthcare provisions.

## **METHODS**

The technique used in this literature review focused on the functions of work units and communication skills in order to thoroughly assess the factors that contribute to occupational stress in health care. The research utilized an organized and methodical methodology to locate and compile pertinent studies that were available in different databases.

Four main databases were used for a thorough literature search: PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords pertaining to work units, healthcare professionals, communication skills, health services, and occupational stress were included in the search phrases. Only English-language papers that contained both quantitative and qualitative research were included in the search.

Thematic analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The primary findings and characteristics of the study were compiled using descriptive statistics. Themes and subthemes pertaining to work units, communication skills, and occupational stress were found and categorized using thematic analysis. With an emphasis on work units and communication skills, the methodology used in this literature review ensured a thorough and methodical investigation of the factors influencing occupational stress in health care. The study's conclusions offer insightful information about how these variables affect occupational stress as well as suggestions for enhancing workplace conditions and lowering occupational stress in healthcare workers.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The study of communication skills and work units as the primary focus of occupational stress determinants in health care has provided important new understandings into the elements that contribute to this widespread problem. According to a review of the literature, health workers have experienced a marked rise in occupational stress in recent years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous variables have been linked to this increase, including health professionals' reported dread, weariness, and work overload (Parco-Fernández et al., 2022).

The body of research emphasizes how important communication skills are for reducing work-related stress. Research has indicated that proficient communication abilities, specifically empathy, have the potential to lower work-related stress levels in healthcare personnel. One study on mental health nurses, for example, discovered a negative correlation between occupational stress levels and empathy, meaning that nurses who exhibited higher levels of empathy also experienced lower levels of job stress (Tehrani, 2024). Similarly, empathy was shown to help lower levels of professional stress in a study on workplace violence among mental health nurses.

It has also been discovered that work units, such as Occupational Health Services (OHS) teams in law enforcement, are important contributors to occupational stress. Managing workloads was linked to decreased symptom levels in the study on OHS team members in law enforcement, indicating that efficient task management can lessen occupational stress (Yao et al., 2021). The study also found that OHS counselors experienced less symptoms and sick days than their peers, underscoring the significance of supporting roles in lowering occupational stress.

The literature also highlights the harm that high levels of professional stress may do to one's physical and mental health. Research has indicated that work stress is linked to mental health conditions including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as well as physical health conditions like cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, and

hypertension (Rahimi et al., 2017). The results of these studies highlight the necessity of taking preventative measures to lessen the negative effects of occupational stress on mental health.

To sum up, there are many different and intricate aspects that contribute to occupational stress in the health services, including work units, communication skills, and workload management. In order to lessen occupational stress, the literature emphasizes the value of supportive work environments, efficient communication techniques, and task management (Al Hassan, 2023). The results of these research highlight how important it is for healthcare companies to put healthcare workers' health first and put policies in place to lessen the harmful impacts of occupational stress. Healthcare organizations can raise the general standard of healthcare services by doing this, which will also improve patient care and outcomes.

**Table 1. Relevant previous research**

No	Name, Year, Title	Purpose	Finding
1	<b>Al Hassan (2023)</b> , Unveiling the Strains: A Qualitative Study on Work Stress among Health Care Aides in Assisted Living Facilities	In assisted living facilities (ALFs), health care aides (HCAs) are the primary caregivers for senior citizens. They do, however, frequently endure work-related stress, which may have an adverse effect on their well-being. This study set out to investigate the causes, effects, and coping mechanisms of work-related stress in HCAs in ALFs.	The study describes how HCAs deal with work-related stress in ALFs. High workloads, time constraints, a lack of assistance, and emotional demands are examples of stressors. Stress has a detrimental impact on the personal and health of HCAs. Getting help, taking care of oneself, and finding purpose in one's work are examples of coping mechanisms. The concept of stress, its causes, its effects, and its coping techniques are its main concerns. The report also pinpoints the dream workplace for HCAs.
2	<b>Rahimi et al. (2017)</b> , Psychological Health and Its Relation with Occupational Stress in Midwives	This study was conducted in order to evaluate the relation between psychological health and occupational stress among midwives employed at the governmental and private hospitals of Neyshabur, Iran.	The study's findings demonstrated a substantial and opposing relationship (P=0.049) between midwives' psychological well-being and professional stress. The majority of the midwives employed by these facilities had psychiatric issues. It is likely that the stress they experienced at work contributed to their declining mental health.
3	<b>Rink et al. (2023)</b> , Stressors Among Healthcare Workers: A Summative Content Analysis	Research sometimes concentrate on stresses in a specific environment or in relation to the pandemic, which restricts our comprehension of a more complete picture of the stressors faced by healthcare professionals. This study aimed to evaluate the key stressors that healthcare workers self-reported.	Work stressors (49 percent of total stressors), personal life stressors (32 percent of total stressors), and stressors that overlap work and personal life (19% of total stressors) were the three types of stresses that healthcare workers mentioned. Future studies and clinical procedures ought to take into account the many aspects of stressors.

---

4	<b>Yao et al. (2021)</b> , Does workplace violence, empathy, and communication influence occupational stress among mental health nurses?	This study examined if workplace violence, empathy, and communication skills affected occupational stress levels among mental health nurses working in psychiatric institutions. It also looked at the prevalence of occupational stress in this population.	The prevalence of work stress among mental health nurses is limited by the results. Following a violent incident, it's critical to have both organizational and psychological assistance, and professional education should be emphasized.
5	<b>Krutova et al. (2023)</b> , Work unit level personnel working hours and the patients' length of in-hospital stay-An administrative data approach.	The purpose of the study was to look into relationships between the average length of a patient's stay in the hospital and the work unit level. It also looked at how these associations were affected by factors such as age, work units, working hours, night work, nurse-patient ratio, and year.	The findings indicated that 8–10 hour work shifts were linked to a higher chance of an overall duration of hospital stay (RR 1.16, 95%CI 1.15, 1.16) and the length of hospital stay following a medical procedure (RR 1.28, 95%CI 1.27, 1.30) in comparison to work shifts of less than 8 hours.

---

Data Processed by Resercher (2024)

### Communication Skill

A variety of elements of successful communication are included in the broad definition of communication skill. It is a dynamic, interpersonal construct that encompasses four interrelated aspects: linguistic competence, operational competence, social competence, and strategic competence (Oliveros et al., 2019). It also includes the functioning and sufficiency of communication as well as knowledge, judgment, and ability in these four areas.

The concept of "communicative competence" is a dynamic and relative one, based on four interrelated areas: communication functionality, communication adequacy, and sufficient knowledge, judgment, and skill (Narkchai & Fadzil, 2017). It is necessary for successful engagement in both personal and professional contexts and is a crucial part of good communication. In a variety of settings, such as business, education, and healthcare, effective communication is essential. It makes it possible for people to accomplish their objectives, form enduring connections, and communicate clearly. For example, good communication is essential to patient care and satisfaction in the healthcare setting (Johnson et al., 2024). In the classroom, it facilitates better learning for both teachers and students (Septiana et al., 2018). In the workplace, it promotes teamwork and aids in achieving goals.

### Working Unit

The concept of a working unit is essential in many domains, such as research, healthcare, and agriculture. When discussing healthcare, a working unit is a collection of medical specialists that collaborate to offer patients complete care. This unit may consist of a group of physicians, nurses, and other medical specialists who work together to provide patients with top-notch care (Chen et al., 2020).

A working unit is an organization of medical specialists that collaborate to offer patients complete care. This unit may consist of a group of physicians, nurses, and other medical specialists who work together to provide patients with top-health care. To guarantee the best results, the working unit is in charge of organizing patient care, communicating clearly, and controlling patient flow (Krutova et al., 2023). Healthcare working units are essential because they allow healthcare providers to collaborate efficiently, exchange knowledge, and provide excellent patient care (Pillay et al., 2023). Working units can lower healthcare costs, increase

patient happiness, and improve patient outcomes by promoting cooperation, communication, and coordination.

### Work Stress

Stress at work is a widespread problem that impacts healthcare workers in a variety of locations and jobs (Al Hassan, 2023). It is a complex phenomenon that takes into account a number of variables, such as emotional pressures, lack of support, time constraints, and workload (Zhang et al., 2021). The physical and emotional health of healthcare workers, as well as their general well-being and job performance, can all be significantly impacted by work stress (Yao et al., 2021).

The unpleasant mental and physical reaction to excessive demands, pressures, and challenges in the workplace is known as work stress in the healthcare industry (Girma et al., 2021). Burnout, weariness, and emotional exhaustion are its defining characteristics, and they can cause a decline in job satisfaction, a reduction in productivity, an increase in absenteeism, and a higher likelihood of employee turnover.

### FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

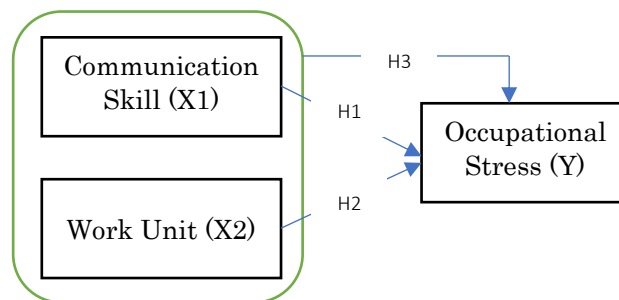


Figure 2. Framework Model

Hypotheses:

H1: Communication Skill has positive and significant impact on Occupational Stress

H2: Work Unit has positive and significant impact on Occupational Stress

H3: Simultantly Communication Skill and Work Unit impact on Occupational Stress

### CONCLUSION

Healthcare professionals' stress levels are significantly influenced by work unit dynamics and communication abilities, according to a review of occupational stress factors in the health services sector. Stress can be reduced by minimizing misunderstandings, lowering disagreements, and guaranteeing efficient workflow—all of which depend on having effective communication skills. On the other hand, unclear communication raises the risk of mistakes and confrontations, which in turn makes stress worse. Stress levels are also greatly impacted by work unit dynamics, which include resource management, team cohesion, and leadership styles. Stress levels are reduced in a healthier work environment when there is supportive leadership, well-coordinated teams, and sufficient resources. Staff stress levels are higher in units with excessive workloads, inadequate resources, and bad management techniques, on the other hand.

It is critical to put into practice measures that improve work unit environments and communication skills in order to alleviate occupational stress in health services. Developing excellent communication skills through training programs can give healthcare workers the tools they need to handle encounters more skillfully. A more supportive work environment can also

be produced by encouraging cohesive team dynamics and cultivating supportive leadership. The necessity for a comprehensive strategy to stress management in health services that takes into account both specific communication abilities and larger work unit dynamics is highlighted by this review overall. Healthcare organizations can improve the quality of patient care and foster a more positive work environment for healthcare personnel by addressing these determinants.

## REFERENCES

- Al Hassan, M. (2023). Unveiling the Strains: A Qualitative Study on Work Stress among Health Care Aides in Assisted Living Facilities. *Nursing & Healthcare International Journal*, 7(6). <https://doi.org/10.23880/nhij-16000300>
- Aldhaen, E. (2022). Awareness of occupational health hazards and occupational stress among dental care professionals: Evidence from the GCC region. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.922748>
- Chen, L. K., Woo, J., Assantachai, P., Auyeung, T. W., Chou, M. Y., Iijima, K., Jang, H. C., Kang, L., Kim, M., Kim, S., Kojima, T., Kuzuya, M., Lee, J. S. W., Lee, S. Y., Lee, W. J., Lee, Y., Liang, C. K., Lim, J. Y., Lim, W. S., ... Arai, H. (2020). Asian Working Group for Sarcopenia: 2019 Consensus Update on Sarcopenia Diagnosis and Treatment. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, 21(3), 300-307.e2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamda.2019.12.012>
- Girma, B., Nigussie, J., Molla, A., & Mareg, M. (2021). Occupational stress and associated factors among health care professionals in Ethiopia: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10579-1>
- Johnson, E. A., Hill, G., Smith, H. A., Marsh, L., & Beer, K. (2024). A Global Pilot Comparative, Cross-Sectional Study of Clinical Research Nurses/Research Midwives: Definition, Knowledge Base, and Communication Skills Related to the Conduct of Decentralized Clinical Trials. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cts.2024.535>
- King, B., Berg, L., Koenig, J., Jade Adair, J., & Tirado, C. (2019). A revised occupational stress measure for popular musicians: Pilot test of validity and reliability. *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 34(1), 85-91A. <https://doi.org/10.21091/mppa.2019.2015>
- Krutova, O., Ervasti, J., Virtanen, M., Peutere, L., Härmä, M., & Ropponen, A. (2023). Work unit level personnel working hours and the patients' length of in-hospital stay-An administrative data approach. *PLOS Digital Health*, 2(5), e0000265. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pdig.0000265>
- Makoni, K. M., Mutanana, N., & Gasva, D. (2017). IRJIF IMPACT FACTOR: 3.52 Sources of Occupational Stress and its Effects on the Performance of Workers and the Company: A Case of Rock Chemicals Fillers (Private) Limited in Chegutu, Zimbabwe. *North Asian International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 3(January), 0–13.
- Mingazova, E. N., M.M., Y., S.A., G., & R.N., M. (2023). the Role of Psychosocial Factors on the Health of the Working Population From the Point of Industrial and Restorative Medicine. *Bulletin "Biomedicine and Sociology"*, 8, 3–8. <https://doi.org/10.26787/nydha-2618-8783-2023-8-3-3-8>
- Narkchai, S., & Fadzil, F. H. B. (2017). The communication skill on the performance of internal auditors in thailand public limited company. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 7(4), 1–5. <https://www.econjournals.com/index.php/irmm/article/view/5278/pdf>
- Oliveros, E., Brailovsky, Y., & Shah, K. S. (2019). Communication Skills: The Art of Hearing What Is Not Said. *JACC. Case Reports*, 1(3), 446–449. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaccas.2019.09.003>

- Parco-Fernández, E., Joaquin-Apaza, A., & Cárdenas-Vásquez, M. (2022). Systematic review: Occupational stress of health professionals in times of pandemic. *Journal of Global Health and Medicine*, 6(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.32829/ghmj.v6i1.158%0Ahttps://journals.cincader.org/index.php/ghmj/article/view/158>
- Pillay, L., Coetzee, S. K., Scheepers, N., & Ellis, S. M. (2023). The association of workplace violence with personal and work unit demographics, and its impact on nurse outcomes in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. *International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences*, 18(April), 100571. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijans.2023.100571>
- Rahimi, M. O., Moosazadeh, M., Mohammadyan, M., Emkani, M., Khanjani, N., & Tizabi, M. N. L. (2017). Psychological Health and Its Relation with Occupational Stress in Midwives. *International Journal of Occupational Hygiene*, 8(4), 217–222. <http://ijoh.tums.ac.ir/index.php/ijoh/article/view/239>
- Rink, L. C., Oyesanya, T. O., Adair, K. C., Humphreys, J. C., Silva, S. G., & Sexton, J. B. (2023). Stressors Among Healthcare Workers: A Summative Content Analysis. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23333936231161127>
- Septiana, A. C., Kusmayati, T. A., & Fitriana, L. (2018). Mathematical communication skill of senior high school students based on their personality types. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1108(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1108/1/012027>
- Tehrani, N. (2024). Occupational Health Services in policing: identifying the psychological burden to OHS team members. *Occupational Medicine*, 74(2), 193–197. <https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqae011>
- Vrdoljak Raguž, I., & Čučuk, I. (2017). Managerial Stress—Effects and Consequences. *DIEM: Dubrovnik International Economic Meeting*, 3(1), 519–532. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.21.1.15>
- Yao, X., Shao, J., Wang, L., Zhang, J., Zhang, C., & Lin, Y. (2021). Does workplace violence, empathy, and communication influence occupational stress among mental health nurses? *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 30(1), 177–188. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12770>
- Zhang, M., Murphy, B., Cabanilla, A., & Yidi, C. (2021). Physical relaxation for occupational stress in healthcare workers: A systematic review and network meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 63(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/1348-9585.12243>