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WORK INTENSIFICATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT BREACH: THE MODERATING ROLE OF AGE

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ABSTRACT

Studies on psychological contract breach in recent times have attracted the attention of scholars. However, very little is known and has been explored concerning the factors associated with it and its connecting mechanisms. The current study investigated the moderating role of age in the association between work intensification (WI) and psychological contract breach (PCB) among nurses of private and public hospitals. Survey data were collected from two hundred and eight (208) nurses (24 males, and 184 females, mean age = 30.23yrs, SD = 5.44) utilizing convenient sampling technique and cross sectional design. Two instruments were used for data collection namely: work intensification scale and psychological contract breach scale. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis with stepwise modeling was employed in analysing the data. The results of the study showed that WI significantly and positively predicted PCB. However, age failed to moderate the relationship between WI and PCB. The findings have practical implications for government agencies and healthcare providers.

Keywords*:* Work intensification, age, psychological contract breach.

Introduction

Employees often understand their relationships with the organizations as an exchange in that their organizations offer them inducements (i.e., continued employment, fair compensation, and promotion opportunities) for their contributions (i.e., extra work effort and attachment to the firm; March & Simon, as cited in Wei et al., 2015). The employees' beliefs regarding the mutual obligations between them and their organizations are formally defined as psychological contract (Rousseau, 2001). Psychological contract makes a significant contribution to understandings of employment relationship (Guest, 2004; Rousseau, 2001; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). Rousseau (2001) defined psychological contract as an individual's beliefs concerning the mutual obligations that exist been him/herself and the employer. These obligations arise out of the belief that a promise has been made either explicitly or implicitly and the fulfilment of promissory obligations by one party is contingent upon the fulfilment of obligations by the other. Therefore, the psychological contract comprises an individual's perception of the mutual obligations that exist in the exchange with his/her employer and these are sustained through the norm of reciprocity (Coyle-Shapiro, & Parzefall, 2008). Psychological contract also refers to "individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and their organization" (Conway & Briner, 2005; Rousseau, 1995, p. 9).

Contracts of a psychological nature are typically presented as rooted in social exchange theory, describing mutual

exchanges between employees and their organization (Suazo et al., 2009). However, when such mutual exchanges are violated it results in breach of psychological contract. Psychological contract breach is defined as the cognition that the organization has failed to meet one or more obligations within the scope of the psychological contract whereas the employee has fulfilled his or her obligations (Morrison and Robinson, 1997).

A psychological contract breach (PCB) can be described as employee's perception that the organization did not fulfil some of their responsibilities (Kotter, 1973; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). Rousseau (1989) described PCB as a situation whereby workers perceive that their employers have failed to fulfil their organizational or employment responsibilities. Li and Chen (2018) similarly defined employee perception of PCB as a worker perceiving that his or her organization has failed to fulfil its obligations or work/employment promises. Corroborating the idea above, Gakoric and Tetrick (2003) conceptualized psychological contract breach as an employee's perception that his or her organization has failed to fulfil one or more obligations associated with perceived mutual promises. Assuming that the employer retains more power (e.g., decision-making) than workers, the employer can set rules to force workers to fulfil their obligations or promises; hence, the employer hardly perceives PCB.

In light of the subjective nature of the psychological contract, researchers have attempted to categorize psychological contract items (e.g., job security, interesting work, career prospects, pay, training and developmental opportunities, autonomy in job) in terms of two underlying dimensions: transactional and relational. The distinction between the two draws upon the legal work of MacNeil (1974; 1980) and also parallels Blau's (1964) distinction between economic and social exchange. Transactional and relational contracts can be differentiated based upon their focus, time frame, stability, scope and tangibility. Transactional contracts contain highly tangible exchanges that are economic in focus; the terms and conditions remain static over the finite period of the relationship and the scope of the contract is narrow. Chambel (2012) assert that employees with a transactional psychological contract may expect financial and material exchanges for their work and have a short-term commitment towards their obligations. Take for instance, sales workers may expect to receive a spot bonus if they reach their sales targets for the week. This financial incentive will motivate them to perform well in a short term but generally does not result in high performance in the long term. The short term perspective could be due to the fact that workers with a transactional psychological contract are not driven by factors that facilitate loyalty to the organization.

In contrast, relational contracts contain tangible and intangible exchanges; are open ended and the terms of the contract are dynamic; the scope may be broad in that there is spillover between an individual's work and their personal life (Coyle-Shapiro, & Parzefall, 2008). De Cutper and De Witte (2006) posit that relational psychological contract is designed through non-economic, socio-emotional and intrinsic factors built on mutual trust and organizational commitment. Bellon (2009) noted that workers whose psychological contracts are portrayed as relational may base their contracts on status, recognition, the chance to be creative, job security, work life style balance, trained career development and promotions.

Perceived as the norm, rather than the exception (Robinson & Rousseau 1994), a significant amount of research literature is dedicated to PCB and its

adverse effects on organisations. In their meta-analysis, Zhao et al. (2007) posit that PCBs are associated with attitude-related (job satisfaction, turnover intention and organisational commitment) and behaviour-related work outcomes (organisational citizenship behaviour and in-role performance). Similarly, as reported by another stream of research (Hartmann & Rutherford 2015; Paillé, Raineri, & Valeau, 2016; Raja, Johns & Ntalianis 2004; Rigotti, 2009; Suazo 2009), job satisfaction, decreased organisational commitment, diminished customer-orientated and co-worker-orientated citizenship behaviours, increased absenteeism and actual employee turnover add to a broad range of negative consequences of PCB. However, the present study is interested in examining the effects of work intensification on psychological contract breach with age as a moderating factor among nurses.

A study by Abdoolla and Govender (2017), revealed that studies on work intensification have surfaced in many sectors of the economy. The study found out that many employees are working very hard and fast to meet up with deadlines set by organizations which have consequently escalated the work speed creating induced work stress. Thus, when these employees are not appropriately compensated for the work overload (intensification) resulted in psychological contract breach. The results of the study show that work intensification and psychological contract breach occurred at various levels even as improvements were required in several areas. The adverse results of work intensification and high-involvement work processes had a tremendous impact on the employees' psychological contract.

Work intensification (WI) can be seen as the quantity of time and energy an employee spend in his/her job to improve the organizational workflow. It refers to the amount of time and energy expected to be supplied by employees in enhancing organizational productivity. This concept has been described as one of the most noticeable changes introduced in the field of industrial psychology since the 1980s [European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EASHW), 2007] as could be attributed to technological transfer.

Work intensification refers to how hard and fast an employee is working in any given period. Work intensity is commonly assessed according to the frequency that workers have to work at high speed and the allocation of effort to meet tight deadlines or manage high workloads (Burke & Fiksenbaum 2008). Work intensification, therefore, may be expressed as a function of the effort required to achieve one or more valued work outcomes within a fixed amount of time (Fein, Skinne, & Machin, 2017).

The speed at which economic and technological transformation takes place through the introduction of new technologies, helps companies to be more efficient in the production and delivery of goods and rendering of services (Rosa, 2013). Because of this increased economic pressure as could be traced to globalization and trade liberalization, fewer workers just need to do more work frequently in less time. Although automation and digitalization facilitates quicker decision-making processes and shorter production cycles, but could halt production in incidence of machine maintenance, human error, or any other unforeseen circumstances that could hinder output target and incur more expenses for companies/organizations (Roberts, 2007). Similarly, Green (2004) asserts that these new technologies (modern ways of doing things) increase the pressure on employees to work more at a higher speed and reduce the use of human efforts. Ultimately, this culminates in work intensification which, in addition to work and time pressure, requires workers to continuously invest more effort

to complete more tasks in short time (Green & McIntosh, 2001).

Work intensification is however different from job demands and refers to the process of continuously increasing job demands that have to be attended to in shorter time (Green & McIntosh, 2001; Green, 2004; Kubicek, Korunka, Paškvan, Prem, & Gerdenitsch, 2015). Meanwhile, the aim of work intensification is to increase both workers' productivity capacity and company's economic profitability (Green, 2004; Valeyre, 2004). The feeling of work intensification is experienced by the worker whenever they feel pressurized from the organization to complete an increasing amount of tasks within their working day (Kubicek et al., 2015). Thus, Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg and Kalleberg (2000) stressed that those anticipated increase in the organization's profit outlay or target is supposedly achieved through higher and stronger discretionary efforts from their workers.

Furthermore, work intensification is often explained with increase in the speed of work, reduction of idle time, or the performance of several tasks simultaneously (Green, 2004a; Paškvan, Kubicek, Prem, & Korunka, 2016). Moreover, increasing work hours might result in higher levels of work intensification (Green, 2001; Green, 2004b); since the expectations of workers performance have increased, the level of work intensification has risen over the last few decades (Green, 2004a; Valeyre, 2004). Hence, it is evident that organizations believe in the positive outcomes of work intensification. Notwithstanding that organizations implement work intensification and researches have been dedicated to this subject (Paškvan, et al., 2016); however, a clear definition of work intensification still remain controversial. Take for instance, phenomena on the work literature, such as work demands and workload seem to be misunderstood for work intensification. Therefore, it is important to note the difference between these phenomena in order to have a clear and in-depth understanding of the concept of work intensification. Moreover, work intensification remains a phenomenon that has been surrounded by many unanswered questions and contradicting information, thus, gaining more knowledge about work intensification and its effect on psychological contract is very crucial for work practices in an organization. Thus, work intensification is a process, whereas factors such as work demands are invariable. Perhaps, this could be why Franke (2015) maintained that work intensification differentiates itself from stable factors such as prolonged work hours, work intensity or workload. The author further noted that it is important to realize that work intensification is in fact not the same as work demands, because work intensification portrays employees' perception of increase in work intensity. Howbeit, age may play a key role in determining how employees perceive work intensification in their organization especially when the psychological contract entered between them and their employers are violated.

It has been argued that age influence psychological contracts (Farr & Ringseis, 2002; Lester, Kickul, & Bergmann, 2007). For instance, as people grow older, they tend to perceive different obligations from their employers (Bal, De Lange, Jansen, & Van der Velde, 2008; Schalk, 2004). Young people are mostly focused on building a career, whereas older people tend to be more focused on maintaining their current position within the organization (Schalk, 2004). According to lifespan theory, human development is associated with both gains and losses (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999; Ebner, Freund, & Baltes, 2006). More specifically, as people grow older, their

health and biological abilities generally decrease, whereas knowledge and experience will generally increase (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). In fact, age is a proxy for several changes people experience throughout their lives (Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, & Dikkers, 2008; Sterns & Miklos, 1995). For instance, age is related to time spent within the organization and with increasing age, people reach different life stages.

Age can be described as the period of human existence. It can also be seen as a period or state of human life (Collins, 2021). Age is a psychological concept that shows the level of years that a person has reached in any area of development, such as mental or emotional, compared with the normal level for his chronological age (Collins, 2021). Age usually implies a considerable extent of time especially one associated with a dominant personality, influence, characteristics or institution. It is a construct in industrial and organizational psychological often used to measure employees physical and mental capacity towards improving the organization goals.

The concept of age can be further explained by two theories in organizational research namely: Selective optimization with compensation theory (SOC; Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Baltes, Staudinger, & Linbenberger, 1999), and socio-emotional selectivity theory (SST; Carstensen et al., 2003; Löckenhoff & Carstensen, 2004). SOC proposes that the aging process is characterized by losses as well as gains (Baltes et al., 1999). While biological abilities decrease, knowledge and experience increase. Due to these changes, people change the goals they pursue in life. While younger people have a long and unknown future, they focus on maximizing growth (Ebner et al., 2006). Older people, because of decreasing biological abilities, focus on prevention of losses and maintenance of current functioning. Thus, younger people prepare for a long and unknown future by seeking out learning opportunities and maximization of growth, whereas older people are more concerned with their present level of functioning, and hence focus on existing relationships with others, and maintenance of the current status and well-being.

According to socio-emotional selectivity theory (SST), when people become older, the feeling that 'time is running out' becomes more salient. Older people describe their future as limited, and they realize that they have not much time left to pursue their goals (Carstensen et al., 1999). While younger people have the feeling that they have an unlimited future, older people increasingly focus on the present. As a consequence, older people tend to prioritize existing relationships over establishing new relationships with other people. Their goals become increasingly emotion-driven whereas the goals of younger people are primarily knowledge-driven (Löckenhoff & Carstensen, 2004). Furthermore, SST proposes that older people are better in regulating their emotions (Carstensen et al., 2003). Due to their experience in life and better adaptive problem-solving skills, older people are quicker in returning to positive moods after negative events than younger people. Moreover, older adults have greater emotional control (Löckenhoff & Carstensen, 2004). Hence, it suffices to say that age might play a key role on how employees perceive psychological contract. For instance, Rousseau (2001) noted that older and more experienced workers have relatively more stable psychological contracts than younger workers and changes in the employment situation, such as contract breaches, may have a more intense impact on young people given their less stable mental models of their psychological contract than older workers.

Few studies have examined age as a moderator in the relationship between work outcomes and psychological contract.

However, these studies are yet to fully investigate the impact of the factor aging at work. Hence, the present study is interested in examining the moderating role of age in the association between work intensification and psychological contract breach among nurses in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Method

A total of two hundred and eight (208) nurses recruited from private and public hospitals located in Anambra State participated in the study. The researchers employed convenience sampling technique because every available and willing nurse was sampled. The demography of the sampled respondents revealed that out of the 208 participants, 24 (11.5%) were males while 184 (88.5%) were females. The age of the participants ranged from 21 to 45 years with a mean age of 30.23 and SD of 5.44. Sixty four (30.8%) of the participants had OND, 112 (41.5%) had Degree/HND, 8 (3.0%) had PGD/PGDE, 16 (7.7%) had Masters, 8 (3.0%) had Ph.D. A total of two hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed, out of which 228 copies were returned, which represented a return rate of 91.2%. Out of the 228 questionnaires returned, 20 copies were discarded due to improper completion, leaving a total of 208 copies used for data analyses. Two instruments were used for data collection namely: Work intensification scale (Zeytinoglu et al., 2007), and psychological contract breach scale (Robinson & Morrison, 2000). The work intensification scale developed by Zeytinoglu et al. (2007) was used to assess work intensification. It is a six-item scale that addresses the issues of work intensification. The responses are on a five-point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include: i) "My work intensity is higher", ii) "My workload is heavier", iii) "The amount of unpaid work I do increased". A Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .80 was obtained for this measure (Zeytinoglu et al., 2007). Psychological contract breach scale developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000) is a five (5) item scale designed to measure workers global perception of psychological contract breach. A 5-point Likert scale response format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to indicate the extent of agreement/disagreement with each of the items on the instrument. Sample items include: "I feel that my employer has come through in fulfilling the promises made to me when I was hired" and "I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions". A Cronbach's Alpha reliability estimate of .89 was obtained for this scale by Robinson and Morrison (2000). The study adopted a cross-sectional design. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted for the demographic, work intensification, and psychological contract breach variables. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to ascertain the prediction of psychological contract breach by the demographic and work intensification variables. The moderation analysis was also carried out by hierarchical multiple regression.

Presentation of Results

The mean, standard deviation, and inter-correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 1. Table 2 contains the results of the hierarchical multiple regression of the predictor (Work Intensification and Age) and outcome (Psychological Contract Breach) variables.

Table 1: Means, standard deviation and inter-correlations among the study variables

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Variables		*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Age	30.23	5.44	-					
2	Gender	1.45	.32	.06	-				
3	Experience	1.61	.80	.46**	-.08	-			
4	Education	2.00	1.00	.42**	.00	.53**	-		
5	WI	21.62	8.31	-.03	.38**	-.16*	-.07	-	
6	PCB	17.69	2.36	.13	.31**	-.23**	.21**	.42**	-

Note: *p < .05(two-tailed), **p < .01 (two-tailed), N = 208; WI: Work Intensification; PCB: Psychological Contract Breach.
Coding of Demographic Variables:
Gender: Male = 1, Female = 2; Experience: 1-10 = 1, 11-20 = 2, 21-30 = 3, 31 and above; Education: NCE/OND = 1, DEGREE/HND = 2, PGD/PGDE = 3, Masters = 4, Ph.D and Above = 5.

The demographic characteristics of the study participants in Table 1 revealed that the average age of the participants was 32.23 (SD = 5.44). Majority of the participants had first degree as their highest level of education. Also, more than half of the sample had between 1-10 years of work experience. The result of the correlational analysis in Table 1 revealed that the age of the participants was not significantly correlated with PCB. However, work intensification (r = .42, p< .01) had a significant positive correlation with PCB.

Table 2: Hierarchical Multiple Regressions for the predictions of Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) by Work Intensification (WI) and Age (Moderator)

	Step 1			**Step 2**			**Step 3**			**Step 4**		
Predictors	***B***	**B**	***t***	***B***	**β**	***t***	***B***	**B**	***t***	***B***	**β**	***t***
Gender	2.40	.33	5.08***	1.32	.18	2.84**	1.35	.18	2.88**	1.38	.19	2.90**
Experience	.57	.19	2.53*	.73	.25	3.54***	.77	.26	3.54***	.78	.26	3.55***
Education	.26	.11	1.47	.25	.11	1.55	.27	.12	1.64	.29	.12	1.68
WI (A)				.11	.40	6.27***	.11	.40	6.27***	.07	.24	0.63
Age (B)							-.02	-.04	-.60	-.05	-.11	-.61
Interaction (A x B)										.001	.17	.41

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, WI = Work Intensification

Table 2 above shows the prediction of PCB by Work Intensification (WI) with age as the moderating factor between PCB and WI. The demographic variables (gender, experience and education) were included in the regression model as covariates; which collectively accounted for 16.8% variation in PCB. Gender (β = .33, p < .001) and experience (β = .19, p < .01) both significantly and positively predicted PCB. Whereas, education did not significantly predict PCB.

Work Intensification (WI) entered in step 2 of the equation significantly and positively predicted PCB (β = .40, p < .001). The variance in PCB explained on

account of WI was 13.5% [$R^2\Delta$ = .135; $F\Delta$ (1, 203) = 39.28, p < .001].

The inclusion of Age in the third step of the equation did not significantly predict PCB. The variance in PCB explained on account of Age was 0.1% [$R^2\Delta$ = .001; $F\Delta$ (1, 202) = .35].

The interaction effect (A x B) entered in the fourth and final step of the equation did not significantly predict PCB. The variance in PCB explained on account of the interaction effect (A x B) was 0.1% [$R^2\Delta$ = .001; $F\Delta$ (1, 201) = .17]. This implies that Age failed to moderate the relationship between WI and PCB.

Discussion

The present study evaluated the moderating role of age in the relationship between work intensification (WI) and psychological contract breach (PCB) among nurses in Anambra State. The findings of the study revealed that gender and work experience among the demographic variables (gender, experience, and education) positively and significantly predicted PCB. However, education failed to significantly predict PCB. These findings are consistent with a number of previous studies. For instance, Wei, Ma, Zhang, Showail, Jiao, and Wang (2015) in a study reported that gender differences played a key role on how individuals perceive their anticipated inducements in psychological contract such that many males in an employment relationship lacks the patience to wait for delayed gratification instead would expect immediate inducements offer from their organizations as opposed to females that can exercise more patience and wait longer for inducement and hence would also perceive psychological contracts differently from their male counterparts. Also extant studies (Agarwal, & Bhargava, 2013; Rousseau, 1998; Rousseau & Mclean Parks, 1993) have shown that organizational tenure has mixed impacts on PCB.

The findings of the study further revealed that work intensification (WI) was a significant positive predictor of PCB. The implication of this finding is that as employees' workload is intensified then the chances for psychological contract breach to occur also increases. There are limited studies linking WI to PCB in the literature. However, the reason for this outcome can be explicated by affective event theory and social exchange theory.

Affective event theory posits that a negative event at workplace triggers negative emotional reactions such as frustration and anger, and these negative emotions influences the mental assessment of person's job, such that when such negative emotions are continually been experienced will result in more negative job behaviours (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Thoresen et al., 2003; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). If employees notice that their workload has been increased with corresponding work and time pressures to constantly meet specified deadlines, might lead to negative emotional reactions which may be reflected in poor job performance and commitment. Accordingly, extant studies reported that negative emotions at work are associated with decreases in job commitment, satisfaction and trust (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Judge & Ilies, 2004; Thoresen et al., 2003). Hence, work intensification without corresponding intensified inducement might result in development of trust deficit by the employees, for the simple reason of lack of fair reciprocation of the employees' input by the employer in their social exchange agreement/interaction. This social exchange interaction is further explained by social exchange theory.

According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960), when people engage in a relationship (work agreement) with others, they do so with the expectation of getting inducements in return for the services or assistance

rendered to the other party. Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) noted that social exchange has to do with series of interactions, such as providing services by employees and reciprocation by the employer in the form of giving incentives to the employees. Therefore, each party acts with the expectation that the other party will reciprocate such actions, thereby establishing mutual obligations as time goes on. However, in the event when one party fails to reciprocate the actions of the other, it leads to inequity and injustice (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employees will usually respond with negative emotions such as frustration and anger when they perceive that their employer has not reciprocated their inputs which are line with affective events theory. In addition, they may restore the balance in social exchanges by lowering their trust, job satisfaction, and commitment (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). According to Taylor and Tekleab (2004), social exchanges and reciprocity play a critical role in the psychological contract because mutual obligations, as social exchanges, form a psychological contract. Therefore, psychological contract breach occurs when mutual obligations are not respected and followed through by both parties creating a perception of injustice and foul play by one of the parties involved in the social exchange interaction. Consequently, the reason for the significant positive prediction of PCB by WI is due to lack of fair compensation/inducements by the employer for the intensified inputs rendered by the employees.

The findings of this study further revealed that age could not moderate the relationship between WI and PCB. This outcome is at variance with extant studies (Carstensen et al., 2003; Lo¨ckenhoff & Carstensen, 2004) that reported that difference in age is a major determinant on how people regulate their emotions after experiencing negative events (i.e. WI), specifically, the studies demonstrated that older people are better at dealing with negative events than younger people and hence has more stable psychological contracts (Rousseau, 2001). The reason for the outcome may not be unconnected to the challenges bedeviling nursing profession in Nigeria that cut across all age brackets. For example, Okafor and Chimereze (2020) argued that nurses across all age brackets in Nigeria are constantly seeking for ways to leave the country and migrate to other countries as a result of low wage compensation, work overloads due to high number of patients and increased paper work, constant schedule changes, unfavorable shifts, lack of appreciation by superiors among others. It suffices to say that these peculiarities in Nigeria nursing profession that cut across all age brackets of the nurses could be the reason why differences in their age could not moderate the impact of WI on PCB.

The findings of this study have practical implications for Nigeria health sector particularly for nursing profession. The study uncovered that as work intensification (Work overload, time & work pressure) increases, psychological contract breach increases also and vice versa. This finding serves as a clarion call to government and health care providers in Nigeria to step up their reward programmes (i.e. wages and hazard allowances) for their workers, so as to encourage their workers to remain in the system and not constantly looking for greener pastures outside the country. Also the understaffing of many government hospitals caused by abscondment of nurses constantly leaving the country in droves in search of better working conditions and remuneration has imposed excessive workloads on the few nurses remaining in the country who are poorly compensated for their heavy inputs breeds breach of psychological contract. Consequently, government are advised to employ more nurses and also improve their

working conditions and pay to reduce the amount of work each nurse has to execute at relatively short times.

One would have expected that age would moderate the impact of work intensification on psychological contract breach. However, the opposite became the case. Implying that both old and young nurses are seriously affected by work intensification, hence government and health care providers are advised to treat all nurses equally irrespective of their age.

The study has in no small way contributed to knowledge, in that it's one of the few studies that investigated the association between work intensification and psychological contract breach. Albeit, there are some limitations to the study. First, the study was cross-sectional in nature, and data were collected using self-report measures, consequently, no experimental approach was adopted to investigate causal relationships making it impossible to avoid social desirability bias. Second, the study only covered participants (nurses) from one geopolitical zone of the country and one occupational group which may limit the generalization of the outcome of the study to the entire population of nurses in the country or other occupational groups. Therefore, future research could replicate the tested model in multiple contexts using larger sample size and other occupational groups to prove its validity across the board. Finally, making use of other moderator variables might provide further insight on the association between work intensification and psychological contract breach.

Conclusion

The current study sheds light on factors associated with psychological contract breach among nurses. Work intensification was found to be a significant positive predictor of psychological contract breach. Also age failed to moderate the relationship between WI and PCB. The possible reasons for the results were identified and adequately addressed. The findings of the study will serve as a call to action on the part of government and health care providers to prioritize the welfare of nurses in their establishment by upgrading their pay and working conditions.

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