

Job Stressors and Burnout and coping strategies among Faculty Members and Assistants in Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University

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Abstract:

Background: There is no doubt that, job stress and burnout are thought to affect individuals' psychological and physical health, as well as organizations' effectiveness. Worker who are stressed are more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. Their organizations are less likely to be successful in a competitive service. **The aim** of the present study was to assess job stressors and burnout among faculty members and assistants in Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University. **Setting & sample:** A descriptive correlation design was utilized with all available faculty members and assistants working in different scientific departments. **Tools:** Data were collected by three questionnaire sheets, one for assessing job stressors composed of three parts, the other for assessing burnout level composed of one part, and the third for assessing different coping strategies of stress and burnout management composed of two parts. **Results** revealed that faculty members had personal stressors, and complain of physical and psychological responses more than the assistants, while the assistants suffered from high burnout level more than the faculty members, there was a statistically significant relation between burnout level and nurse educators job stressors. Regarding coping strategies, the highest used strategy was cognitive/emotional strategies, while ineffective behavioral coping strategies was the lowest used strategy for job stressors and the highest used strategy was playful problem solving, while distancing was the lowest used strategies for job burnout. **Recommendations:** Therefore, it is recommended that the nurse educators attending continuing education program about how to reduce their stressors, Give chance to nurse educators to share in discussing work problems and put their opinions into consideration, and Support of nurse educators and enhancement of coping abilities should be given to deal with stress and burnout.

Keywords: Job stressors, Burnout, Faculty members and assistants.

Introduction:

During the 1990s, a major restructuring of work was beginning to take place. Organizations dramatically downsized, delayed, flattened and right sized. Modern workers now find themselves in smaller organizations, with fewer people doing more and feeling much less secure. New technology has added the burden of information overload and, this new economic culture has created more stressful work environments, as seen through the increasing physical and mental tolls on employees, as well as

increasing costs for employers in the way of lost productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and disability.⁽¹⁾

Stress, up to a certain point, will improve people's performance and quality of life because it is healthy and essential that they should experience challenges within their lives, but if pressure becomes excessive, it loses its beneficial effect and becomes harmful.⁽²⁾

Stress is a state, not an illness, which may be experienced as a result

of an exposure to a wide range of work demands and in turn can contribute to an equally wide range of outcomes, which may concern the employee's health and be an illness or an injury, or changes in his/her behavior and lifestyle. ⁽³⁾

Stress can result from many factors such as workload (overload and underload), autonomy (e.g., the ability to make your own decisions about your own job or about specific tasks), physical environment (noise, air quality, etc.), isolation at the workplace (emotional or working alone), role conflict, role ambiguity, threat of violence, relationships at work (interpersonal) participation (or nonparticipation) in decision-making, management style and communication patterns. ⁽⁴⁾

On the other hand, Burnout pervades every occupation, but is thought to be especially prevalent among service professionals, or those who do "people work", such as teachers, health practitioners, and caregivers. These types of jobs require attending to the emotional needs of others, and can lead to emotional and physical fatigue, as well as the feeling of no longer being able to give of oneself. ⁽⁵⁾

Burnout is defined as a response to chronic stress that has received a great deal of research attention because of its relevance in today's workplace. Burnout is not simply excessive stress. Rather, it is a complex physical, mental, and emotional reaction to constant levels of high stress, and it relates to feeling that the inner resources are inadequate for managing the tasks and situations which presented. ⁽⁶⁾

Burnout can occur in any work situation where a person feels overworked, underappreciated, confused about expectations and

priorities, concerned about job security, overcommitted with responsibilities, and resentful about duties that are not commensurate with pay. ⁽⁷⁾

Nurse educators are responsible for designing, implementing, evaluating, and revising academic and continuing education programs for nursing students. These include formal academic programs that lead to a degree or certificate, or more informal continuing education programs designed to meet individual learning needs. In addition, nurse educators combine their clinical abilities with responsibilities related to designing curricula, developing courses/programs of study, teaching and guiding learners, evaluating learning and documenting the outcomes of the educational process. ⁽⁸⁾

Significance of the study:

Stress and burnout are very serious problems in any organization. Both affect productivity of the organization through increasing rate of absenteeism and turnover. About 2.3% of the work force is absent each day and 12% of absenteeism is attributed to stress ⁽⁹⁾. In this regard, Health & Safety Executive ⁽¹⁰⁾ estimated that about 12.8 million working days were lost due to stress, depression and anxiety. Each new case of stress leads to an average of 31 days off work. Work-related stress costs society about £3.7 billion every year.

In Egypt, Abd El-Hady ⁽¹¹⁾ reported that all nurse educators had a high percent of job stressors but (30%) of them had personal stressors and 70% had organizational related stressors. In addition, more than two thirds of nurse educators, regardless their position perceived moderate level of burnout.

Aim of the study:

The present study was conducted in order to assess job stressors and

burnout and coping strategies among faculty members and assistants in Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University.

Research questions:

- What are job stressors and levels of burnout among faculty members and assistants in Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University?
- Is there relationship between job stressors and levels of burnout among faculty members and assistants in Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University?
- How to manage stress and burnout among faculty members and assistants in Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University?

Subjects and methods:

Research design:

A descriptive correlation design was used to conduct the present study.

Setting:

The current study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing Zagazig University which includes six scientific departments, which are: nursing administration, psychiatric and mental health nursing, medical and surgical care nursing, maternal and newborn health nursing, pediatric nursing, and community health nursing.

Subjects:

All available faculty members and assistants who agreed to participate in the study at time of data collection in Zagazig Faculty of Nursing will be included. They divided as follows 30 faculty members (2 emeritus professors, 6 assistant professors, and 22 lecturers) and 72 assistants (20 assistant lecturers, 38 demonstrators, and 14 clinical instructors) working in different departments.

Tools of data collection:

Three tools were used to collect data for this study.

1. **The job stressors questionnaire sheet:**

It was developed by Abdel Hady ⁽¹¹⁾ and composed of three parts:

- **Part (A):** covered Personal characteristics e.g., department, age, marital status, no. of children, monthly income, salary, educational level, job position, years of experiences.
- **Part (B):** was used to assess the stressors facing faculty members and assistants in faculty of nursing at Zagazig University. It was composed of two categories: Personal stressors 9 statements. Job stressors 26 statements divided into four categories as follows: Organizational related stressors 7 statements. Work overload related stressors 7 statements. Job related psychological stressors 5 statements. Clinical area related stressors 7 statements.
- **Part (C):** Nurse Educators Job Stressors Physical/Psychological Responses used to evaluate the faculty members and assistants stress responses. It contained 28 statements, and divided into two responses: Job stressors Physical responses 17 statements, and Job stressors Psychological responses 11 statements. The responses were on a four point Likert scale rating from (3) means always happen, to (0) which means not applicable.

Scoring system:

For job stressors questionnaire items the responses were on a four point Likert scale rating from (3) means always happen, to (0) which means not applicable. The scoring system for calculating the degree of personal stressors using likert scale

ranged from 3 to 0. Since there were nine statements therefore a total score of 9 or less meant low personal stressors, from 10 to 18 moderate and 19 to 27 meant high personal stressors. The degree of job stressors questionnaire which had 26 statement using likert scale from 3 to 0 was scored as low for 26, from 27 to 52 as moderate and from 53 to 78 as high job stressors⁽¹¹⁾.

2. The Maslash Burnout Inventory Educator Survey (MBI-ES) sheet:

It was developed by Maslash et al⁽¹²⁾ to measure the frequency dimensions of burnout syndrome for faculty members and assistants in Faculty of Nursing at Zagazig University. It consisted of 22 statements, and classified under three dimensions subscales namely: Emotional exhaustion 9 statements, depersonalization 5 statements, and personal accomplishment 8 statements students. The responses were on a seven point Likert scale rating from (0) means never, to (6) which means every day.

Scoring system:

For burnout inventory educator survey questionnaire items, the responses were on a seven point Likert scale rating from (0) means never, to (6) which means every day. The final score of each group of items related to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment was divided into 'low, moderate and high'. The scores were rated as follows: persons with high score for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low score on the personal accomplishment tend to have high level of burnout. Persons with a moderate score on three subscales tend to have moderate level of burnout. While low level of burnout is reflected in persons with low score in the emotional exhaustion,

depersonalization and high score on the personal accomplishment.

3. Coping strategies of stress and burnout questionnaire:

It was developed by Lazarus and Folkman⁽¹³⁾ and was modified by the researcher to assess different coping strategies of stress and burnout management that used by the nurse educators. It was composed of two parts:

- **Part (A):** was used to assess different coping strategies of stress management which used by the nurse educators. It comprised of 31 statements in relation to 4 main areas: Effective cognitive/emotional coping strategies consisted of 7 statements; Effective behavioral coping strategies consisted of 13 statements, Ineffective cognitive/emotional coping strategies had 4 statements, and Ineffective behavioral coping strategies comprised 7 statements.
- **Part (B):** was used to assess different coping strategies of burnout management which used by the nurse educators. It comprised of 66 statements and classified into eight ways of coping namely: Confronting coping means that aggressive efforts to alter the situation n=7, Distancing coping describes that cognitive efforts to isolate oneself from the situation n=9. Also Self controlling coping refers to the efforts to regulate one's feeling and actions n=11. Seeking social support coping which describes efforts to seek emotional support n=6. In addition, Accepting responsibility coping refers to acknowledge one's own role in the problem and try to put things right that refers to accept responsibility n=8. Escape/Avoidance coping, it

describes wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid the problem $n=9$, Join the analytic approach to solving the problem and the efforts to create positive meaning focusing on personal growth, which refers to planful problem solving $n=7$ and Positive Re-appraisal $n=9$ respectively.

Scoring system:

The responses were on two point Likert scale consisted of giving (1) for the response "yes" and (zero) for "no".

Content Validity and Reliability:

The validity of job stressors and burnout inventory educator survey questionnaire performed by taking the opinions of six experts: two professors from Nursing Administration Department at the Faculty of Nursing, Cairo University, two professors of Nursing Administration Department at the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, a professor of Maternal and Newborn health Nursing Department at the Faculty of Nursing, Zagazig University, and a professor of Community Health Nursing Department at the Faculty of Nursing, Zagazig University. They were requested to express their opinions and comments on the tool and provide any suggestions for any additional or omissions of items. The necessary modifications were done.

Test-retest reliability was done using Spearman's rank correlation to compute correlation between the items on the first and second time of applied tools. This was done with four weeks interval on the same nurse educators. Test-retest reliability for burnout $r=0.840$ $p<0.05$, for job stressors $r=0.980$ $p<0.05$, and for coping strategies $r=0.980$ $p<0.05$.

Pilot study:

A pilot study was carried out on

10% of nurse educators to test the clarity of the questions and determine the time needed to fill the questions. One question was omitted and subjects who shared in the pilot study were excluded from the main study sample.

Field work:

Field work of this study was executed in four months started in July, 2011 and was completed by the end of October, 2011. The preparatory phase that was done by meeting with faculty members and assistants to clarify the objective of the study and the applied methodology and each individual was given the opportunity to fill-in the questionnaire under guidance and supervision of the researcher which ranged from 15 to 20 minutes.

Administrative and ethical considerations:

An official permission was obtained from the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing after explaining the nature of the work. The researcher fully explained the aim and objectives of the research to the faculty members and assistants to get better cooperation during the implementation phase of the research; also an individual oral consent was obtained from each participant in the study after explaining the purpose of the study.

The aim of this study was explained to the subjects and their acceptance to share in the study was taken. Confidentiality of any obtained information was being insured.

Statistical Design:

Data entry and statistical analysis were performed using SPSS, version 14. Suitable descriptive statistics were used such as frequency, percentage, median, range, mean and standard deviation. T-test & Chi-square test and correlation coefficient (r) test were also used.

Results:

Table (1): displays personal characteristics of the studied nurse educators (n=102). It indicates that, 25.5% of the nurse educators worked at nursing administration department. As regard to educational qualifications, 49.0 % of the nurse educators has baccalaureate degree in nursing and works as a demonstrator. Regarding age, 56.9% of the nurse educators aged from 20-30 years, and the majority of them 72.5% were married. As regard to training, 76.5% of the nurse educators responsible for clinical training.

Figure (1): illustrates Distribution of job stressors as mentioned by nurse educators. The figure reveals that the most stressors which the nurse educators suffer from are clinical area related stressors 87.2% followed by work overload related stressors 84.3%.

Figure (2): displays the comparison between faculty members and assistants regarding level of job stressors. The figure reveals that 59.7% of the faculty assistants suffer from job stressors compared to 56.7% of the faculty members.

Table (2): shows mean and standard deviation of burnout dimensions. Findings clarified that the highest mean percentage of burnout dimensions as reported by the nurse educators is emotional exhaustion 28.24 ± 10.65 . While lowest of burnout dimensions as reported by the nurse educators is depersonalization 12.33 ± 5.86 .

Figure (3): reveals the comparison between faculty members and assistants regarding burnout levels. This figure illustrates that the assistants suffer from higher level of burnout 52.8% compared to the faculty members 36.7%.

Table (3): shows the correlation between burnout, stressors and

responses as mentioned by the nurse educators. It clarifies that there are positive statistically significant relation differences between the nurse educators' job stressors, burnout, psychological and physiological responses (p at .002, .000, .000). Moreover, there are positive statistically significant relation differences between the nurse educators' burnout, physiological responses and psychological responses (p at .002, .000). Furthermore, there are positive statistically significant relation differences between the nurse

educators' psychological responses and physiological responses (p at .000, .000).

Table (4): demonstrates mean and standard deviation regarding ways of coping strategies for job stress as perceived by the nurse educators. It is obvious from this table that effective cognitive/emotional coping strategies are the most used coping strategy by the nurse educators 73.064 ± 13.723 , followed by effective behavioral coping strategies 62.643 ± 14.203 and ineffective cognitive/emotional coping strategies 53.156 ± 17.676 . The least number of nurse educators used ineffective behavioral coping strategies 32.908 ± 12.685 .

Table (5): demonstrates mean and standard deviation regarding ways of coping strategies for burnout as perceived by the nurse educators. It is evident from table (5) that the nurse educators having highest mean percentage in coping strategies of planful problem solving 62.851 ± 16.216 , while distancing is the lowest mean percentage of coping strategies for burnout 41.775 ± 14.879 .

Discussion:

Nurse educators face daily challenges in their roles as educators, while they strive to transform teaching

practices for future health care needs. Many of those issues are new, complex, and require creative approaches⁽¹⁴⁾. Stressors affecting nurse educators had a negative impact to the quality of their working life. This could lead to deterioration in the teaching process, nurse educators' turnover and increase of their shortages that are a threat to worsen the nursing education. Such shortages increase the workload for others; increase the likelihood of stress and burnout⁽¹⁵⁾. So, this study was conducted to identify job stressors and burnout among

faculty members and assistants, therefore reach solutions of their problems.

Results of the present study revealed that the most job stressors that the nurse educators suffered from were related to clinical area, work overload, organizational, and job related psychological stressors. In disagreement with these results, Mohamed⁽¹⁶⁾ conducted a study to identify job stressors among teachers at El-fayoum Faculty of Nursing, and found that managerial stressors and teaching stressors were the main sources of job stressors.

Regarding levels of burnout among nurse educators, the result of the present study revealed that the assistants perceived high level of burnout more than the faculty members. This could be attributed to role ambiguity as they transition from nurse student to assistant staff role facing many heavy workload as they are involved in two professions including nursing education and clinical nursing practice and they are asked to be proficient in both domains, in addition they responsible for large numbers of students, unrealistic expectations, and they did not have enough experience to deal with matters that face them through their work. In

disagreement with the previous results, Talbot⁽¹⁷⁾ studied burnout among 63 college nursing faculty members. Faculty members reported experiencing high to moderate levels of burnout. In congruent with the previous findings, Shea⁽¹⁸⁾ described the online instructors to be on the borderline of burnout showing signs of moving toward a high degree of burnout.

Regarding the relation between burnout and job stressors, the present study reported that there was a statistically significant relation between burnout and nursing educators' job stressors. This might be due to continuity of high job stressors level lead to increase level of burnout among the studied nurse educators. On the same line, Lopopelo⁽¹⁹⁾ mentioned that burnout causes a reduction in the quality of life and has a negative effect on work and family life. Similarly, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)⁽²⁰⁾ stated that in a survey by the Families and Work Institute, 26 % of workers report being often or very often burned out or stressed by their work. On the same way, Teresa, et al.,⁽²⁾ mentioned that lack of positive reinforcement from administrators creates job dissatisfaction and the risk of burnout. On the same context, Kokkinos⁽²¹⁾ studied the association between burnout, personality characteristics, and job stressors in primary school teachers and found that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were more related to environmental stressors.

Nurse educators face daily challenges in their role, which need using effective coping strategies to deal with their stressors. Nurse educators commonly use a variety of coping strategies to maintain a professional demeanor during their

interactions with nurse students or other health professionals.

Regarding coping strategies of job stress management, the study findings proved that effective cognitive/emotional coping strategy was the most used by the nurse educators, followed by effective behavioral and ineffective cognitive/emotional coping strategy. Moreover, the findings indicated that coping through religious practices (seeking help from God) was the most frequently reported effective cognitive/emotional coping strategy

used by nurse educators. This might be attributed to the fact that religious coping gives them inner strength, courage and encouragement to meet the challenges and stressors resulting from their work. This finding is consistent with that of Lopopelo⁽¹⁹⁾ and Abd El-Hady⁽¹¹⁾ found that the most nurses used religious beliefs to cope with stressful situations.

Regarding coping strategies of job burnout management, the study findings revealed that the nurse educators having highest mean percentage in coping strategies of planful problem solving, while distancing was the lowest mean percentage of coping strategies for burnout. This may be attributed to that using problem solving enhancing personal or maintaining a sense of self-worth for nurse educators where they attempts to identify, discover, or invent a solution to problems facing. In agreement with the previous findings, Huey⁽²²⁾ who stated that problem solving ability plays a central role as a multifaceted coping strategy that can significantly affect person's ability to increase adaptive performance and reduce, manage, and control stress and its negative effects across a wide range of situations. On the same way, Abd El-Hady⁽¹¹⁾ reported that the nurse

educators having highest mean percentage in coping strategies of planful problem solving, while distancing was the lowest mean percentage of coping strategies.

Conclusions:

In the light of the main study findings, it can be concluded that, there was a statistically significant relationship between job stressors and burnout levels among faculty members and assistants. More than half of both the faculty members and the assistants had high level of job stress. But, there were statistically significant differences between faculty members and assistants opinions regarding to burnout levels where; more than half of the assistants had high level of burnout, and more than half of the faculty members had low level of burnout. Moreover, the highest used strategy was cognitive/emotional strategies for job stressors management and the highest used strategy was problem solving for job burnout management.

Recommendations:

Based on the results of the main study findings the following recommendations are suggested:

- Development of nurse educators' training schedule in order to increase their technical skills, to decrease the gap between the theoretical and clinical learning, encourage nurse educators' post graduate education.
- Develop a system of communication between hospital administrators and faculty managers to improve teaching environment in hospital and give chance to nurse educators to share in discussing work problems and put their opinions into consideration.
- Conducting an orientation program for assistants about faculty policies,

regulations and innovative teaching methods and evaluation in which fostering their professional growth and enabling them to fulfill their roles.

- Support of nurse educators and enhancement of coping abilities should be given to deal with stress and burnout.

Table (1): Personal characteristics of the nurse educators (no=102)

Personal Data	No.	%
Department:		
▪ Nursing administration	26	25.5
▪ Community health nursing	16	15.7
▪ Maternal and newborn health nursing	15	14.7
▪ pediatric nursing	10	9.8
▪ Medical and surgical care nursing	25	24.5
▪ psychiatric and mental health nursing	10	9.8
Job position:		
▪ Emeritus professor	2	2.0
▪ Assistant professor	6	5.9
▪ Lecturer	22	21.6
▪ Assistant lecturer	20	19.6
▪ Demonstrator	38	37.3
▪ Clinical instructor	14	13.7
Educational qualifications:		
▪ Baccalaureate degree	50	49.0
▪ Baccalaureate degree+ MSC	22*	21.6
▪ Baccalaureate degree+ PHD	30	29.4
Age in years:		
▪ <20-	58	56.9
▪ 30-	26	25.5
▪ 40-	15	14.7
▪ > 50	3	2.9
Training :		
▪ Yes	78	76.5
▪ No	24	23.5
Marital status:		
▪ Single	21	20.6
▪ Married	74	72.5
▪ widow	4	3.9
▪ Divorced	3	2.9

*N.B. * means that two clinical instructors had master degree.*

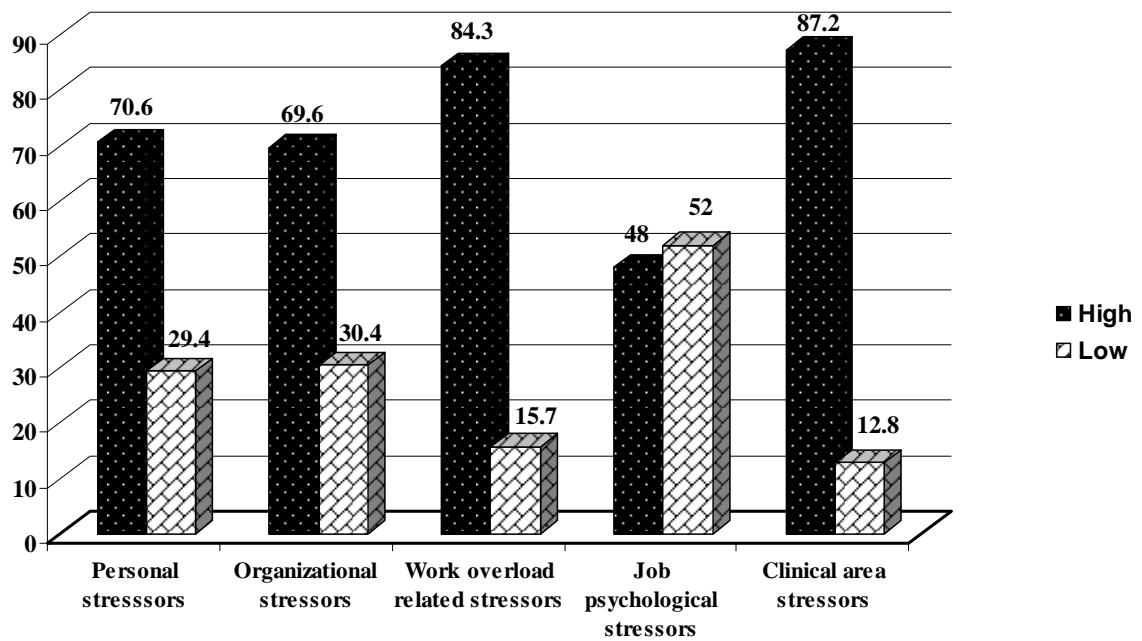


Figure (1): Distribution of job stressors as mentioned by nurse educators (no=102)

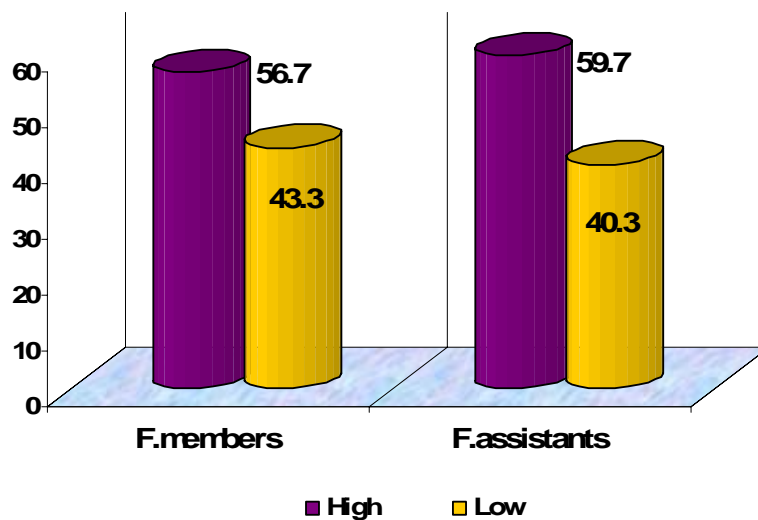


Figure (2): Comparison between faculty members and assistants regarding level of job stressors (no=102)

Table (2): Mean and standard deviation of burnout dimensions (n=102)

Burnout Dimensions	x ± SD
▪ Emotional exhaustion	28.24±10.65
▪ Depersonalization	12.33±5.86
▪ Personal accomplishment	21.77±9.2
<i>Total</i>	62.35±13.43

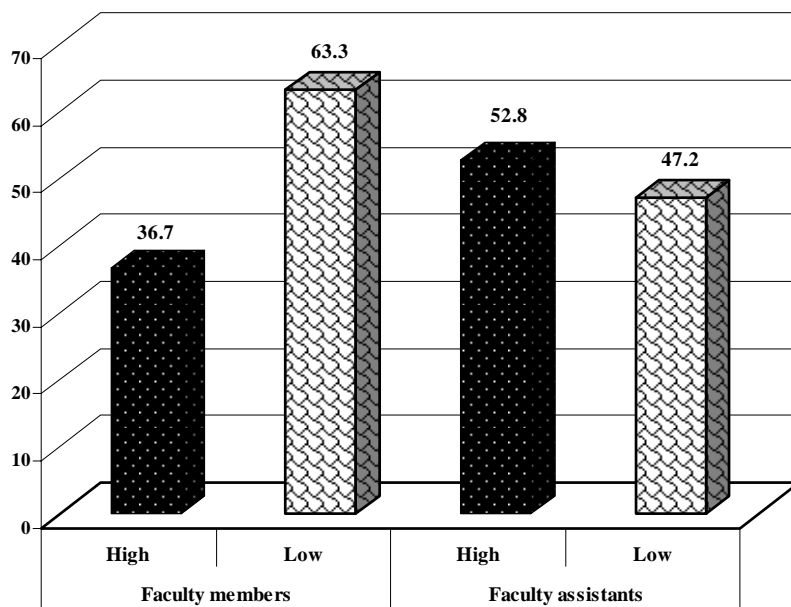


Figure (3): Comparison between faculty members and assistants regarding burnout levels (no=102)

Table (3): Mean and standard deviation regarding ways of coping strategies for job stress as perceived by the nurse educators (n=102)

Ways of coping	x ± SD
▪ Effective cognitive/emotional coping strategies (n=7)	73.064±13.723
▪ Effective behavioral coping strategies (n=13)	62.643±14.203
▪ Ineffective cognitive/emotional coping strategies (n=4)	53.156±17.676
▪ Ineffective behavioral coping strategies (n=7)	32.908±12.685

Table (4): Correlation between burnout, stressors and responses as mentioned by the nurse educators (n=102)

Items	Job stressors		Burnout		Physiological responses		Psychological responses	
	r	p	R	P	r	P	r	p
▪ Job stressors	-	-	.29**	.002	.35**	.000	0.5**	.000
▪ Burnout	.29**	.002	-	-	0.3**	.002	0.36**	.000
▪ Physiological responses	.35**	.000	0.3**	.002	-	-	.52**	.000
▪ Psychological responses	0.5**	.000	0.36**	.000	.52**	.000	-	-

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table (5): Mean and standard deviation regarding ways of coping strategies for burnout as perceived by the nurse educators (n=102)

Ways of coping	x ± SD
▪ Distancing (n=9)	41.775±14.879
▪ Acceptance (n=8)	58.643±14.203
▪ Escape (n=9)	43.156±17.676
▪ Self controlling (n=11)	52.908±12.685
▪ Problem solving (n=7)	62.851±16.216
▪ Confronting (n=7)	49.216±14.115
▪ Social support (n=6)	60.697±16.959
▪ Positive reappraisal (n=9)	55.831±14.203

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