



## **MODERATING EFFECT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND TURNOVER INTENTION**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines how psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between job stress and turnover intention among nurses in public hospitals in Katsina metropolis. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, and data were collected from 327 nurses using a simple random sampling technique and self-administered questionnaires. Findings indicate that job stress significantly influences turnover intention. Psychological empowerment also has a significant effect on turnover intention and moderates the relationship between job stress and turnover intention. Based on the findings, the study concludes that enhancing psychological empowerment can reduce the negative impact of job stress on nurses' intention to leave. It is recommended that the managements of hospitals should implement empowerment-based interventions, provide supportive work environments and promote participatory decision-making to retain skilled nursing staff.

**Keywords:** Job Stress, Nurses, Psychological Empowerment, Turnover Intention, Workplace Intervention

## **Introduction**

Globally, nursing has continued to serve as major instrument for national economic development, especially due to its contribution to the healthcare sector. The World Health Organisation report (2024) revealed that there are estimated 29 million nurses worldwide and 2.2 million midwives. The organisation also estimated a shortage of 4.5 million nurses and 0.31 million midwives by the year 2030. That would bring a global shortage of health workers estimated for 2030 to 4.8 million nurses and midwives, with the greatest gaps found in countries in Africa, South-East Asia and Eastern Mediterranean Region, as well as some parts of Latin America.

Research studies on turnover intention have over the years become important in the context of management and organisational behaviour due to its negative cost implication (Başer, Büyükbese & Ivanov, 2025; Ding, et al., 2025; Kraak, et al. 2025). These costs include recruiting cost, training cost and cost of developing new employees (Jones & Smith, 2024; Thompson & Lee, 2024; Williams, 2024). Specifically, the cost of nurse turnover goes beyond the financial aspect, it also leads to more pressure on the remaining staff leading to inability to meet patient needs and provide quality care (Bradford, et al. 2025; Hooper, 2023). Nurses' turnover has an impact on human resource development and the delivery of nursing care in the health care system (Lee & Kim, 2024; Miller et al., 2023). According to Sugianto et al. (2025), turnover affects the performance, competitive advantage and productivity of organisations. Turnover intention is generally used as the best predictor of turnover and often refers to a situation in which individuals think seriously about quitting their current jobs (Abdelwahed, et al., 2024; Bradford & Burrell, 2025; Poku, et al., 2025; Yuan et al., 2021). Turnover intention is a precursor to employee turnover and is defined as the likelihood that individuals withdraw from the organisation and likely search for alternative jobs (Sender, et al., 2021).

Similarly, maintaining adequate nursing staff is a global challenge that many healthcare organisations are facing today. For instance, in the United Kingdom (UK), statistical figure from the Royal College of Nursing (2024) revealed that more than 11,000 nurses quitted the Nursing and Midwifery Council register within the first 10 years of gaining their registration. Furthermore, the report also revealed that between 2021 and 2024, the number of nurses leaving within 10 years of registering increased by 43%, whilst those leaving within five years rose to 67%. However, by 2036 or 2037 the estimated shortfall in community nurses in the UK is expected to be 37,000 and according to the RCN the figure is likely to rise if something substantial is not done. Moreover, a report by American Nurses Association (2024) indicated that nearly 18% of newly licensed registered nurses have quitted their profession in the United States.

In the Nigerian context, nurse turnover is increasingly becoming a problem. For example, in May, 2023, the President of National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) revealed that over 75,000 nurses and midwives had left the country in the last five years to seek greener pastures abroad (Alagbe, 2024; Fawole, 2024). Furthermore, according to the registrar, Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, over 15,000 nurses left in 2023 alone (Alagbe, 2024). Similarly, a recent report from the Nurses and Midwifery Council (NMC) in the UK reveals that up to 13,656 Nigerian-trained nurses were registered in March 2024 (Olujobi, 2024). Additionally, the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives, Katsina chapter, declared that public hospitals in Katsina have been experiencing shortage of nurses due to their turnover (Enna, 2025; Maji, 2025). Also, according to the NANNM, there are just about 1,000 Nurses/Midwives in the service of the whole state due to the exodus of nurses in search of a better remuneration where obtainable (Enna, 2025; Maji, 2025). Therefore, considering the

role of nurses in providing good health care service delivery with a view to improving the quality of life is imperative to finding out what might be responsible for their turnover intention in order to find possible ways that will help to reduce it.

In addition, job stress has been noted to be a critical antecedent of employee turnover intention (Finthariasari, et al. 2024; Iristian, & Khotimah 2024). Stress occurs when there is disequilibrium between employees' resources to cope with external demands from work (Berger & Czakert, 2022). The United Kingdom Health and Safety Executive (2021) conceptualised job stress as a harmful situation people have due to pressures and demands placed on them at places of work. Work stress has been viewed by the World Health Organisation (2020) as the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.

Despite the large body of literature on turnover intention, there is little attention regarding the turnover intention of nurses in the Nigerian healthcare sector. The few studies available are those of Felicia, Tolulope and Adeniyi (2025), Adesuyi, et al. (2024) and Balogun, Elisha and Uye (2025). However, these studies did not examine the combined effects of job stress and psychological empowerment with respect to turnover intention of nurses in Nigeria. Furthermore, there are reported cases of inconsistencies and mixed findings between job stress and turnover intention. For instance, Maharani and Tamara (2024) established that there is no direct correlation between occupational stress and turnover intention. Also, Ramadhanty (2024) reported instances of inconsistencies and mixed findings between job stress and turnover intention. Syahrial and Sari (2023) concluded that job stress does not have significant effect on turnover intention. Another study by Rahmawati and Widyanoro (2023) noted that the relationship between job stress and turnover intention is negative. Ahmad et al. (2023) found insignificant and weak relationship between job stress and turnover intention.

On the contrary, a couple of studies (e.g. Hajizadeh, et al. 2025; Pelealu, 2025; Smith et al. 2025; Wicaksana, Jihadi & Novianti 2024; Tariq, et al. 2024; Bachtiana, et al. 2024) found job stress to be positively related with turnover intention. As such there is a need for the introduction of moderator as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) with a view to weaken or change the direction of the relationships. In view of this, psychological empowerment was chosen as the potential moderating variable between job stress and turnover intention.

## **1. Literature review and hypotheses development**

This section reviews the findings of previous studies in order to establish the relationships between job stress and turnover intention as well as the hypotheses development.

### **Concept of turnover intention**

Employee turnover intention has invariably remained a problem for consideration by many organisations, thus attracting the attention of academic researchers in the field of organisational behaviour (Shrestha, 2025; Wang, 2024). Soelton and Atnani (2018) viewed turnover intention as the degree of attitudes held by employees to look for new jobs in other places or plans to leave the company within the next few times to come. According to Kumar et al. (2018), turnover intention or intention to leave refers to a voluntary attempt by the employees to exit from the current organisation.

### **Concept of job stress**

Stress is a widely used term for different types of physiological and psychological (mental) pressures felt and handled by people in their lives (Sheraz et al, 2014). It can be referred to as

work stress or occupational stress. Whitt and Wilson (2007) define job stress as “a feeling or a condition a person experienced when that person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize”. According to Stanks (2013), any situation at work that causes certain type of stress response and increases the level of stimulation in every individual person is called job stress. In the view of Folkman (2013), job stress is an individual's perception of external demands from working environment to be beyond their perceived capacity to cope with those demands. Job stress is popularly described as occurring when there are discrepancies between the physiological demands within a workplace and the inability of employees to either manage or cope with such work demand (Babatunde, 2013).

hus, it can be said that:

*H<sub>01</sub>: Job stress has no significant effect on nurses' turnover intention among nurses in public hospitals Katsina metropolis.*

### **Concept of Psychological Empowerment**

The conceptualisation of empowerment is relevant in understanding the link between psychological empowerment and various organisational outcomes, in terms of both organisational effectiveness and employee attitudes (Tripathi & Bharadwaja, 2018). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) define psychological empowerment as a set of cognitive dimensions that reflect an individual's active orientation to their work role. They specifically identify four intrinsic task motivations as core dimension of empowerment. The dimensions are:

1. **Meaningfulness** is the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards.
2. **Competence (self-efficacy)** refers to the belief in one's ability to perform work activities with skill.
3. **Self-determination** refers to a sense of choice in initiating and regulating one's actions.
4. **Impact** refers to the degree to which one can influence strategic, administrative, or operating outcomes at work.

According to Scott et al. (2011), psychological empowerment refers to an “intrinsic task motivation reflecting a sense of self-control in relation to one's work and an active engagement with one's work role. This “intrinsic task motivation” makes employees to find meaning in what they do, feel they are in control of their work, feel they have the required capacity to perform their job, determine to perform their job roles and believe that they can influence job outcomes and therefore are likely to be engaged in their work (Ugwu et al., 2014).

#### **Moderating role of psychological empowerment**

Several studies have demonstrated that psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between organisational variables (e.g. social exchange relations) and positive job outcomes. For instance, Sackey et al. (2025) found that psychological empowerment significantly moderates the relationship between workforce agility and employees innovative behaviour. Additionally, Nwanzu and Babalola, (2024) found psychological empowerment to moderate the relationship between core self-evaluation and proactive work behaviour. Similarly, studies (e.g. Nabil, 2025; Chompukum, & Vanichbuncha 2025; Badiah & Rojuaniah 2025; Chompukum & Vanichbuncha, 2025; Badiah & Rojuaniah 2025) show that negative relationship exists between psychological empowerment and turnover intention. This argument

provides evidence to support the suggestion that feelings of empowerment are associated with increased positive job attitudes and decreased intentions to quit the organisation.

Therefore, it can be argued that:

*H<sub>02</sub>: Psychological empowerment has no significant effect on nurses' turnover intention among Katsina public hospitals.*

*H<sub>03</sub>: Psychological empowerment does not significantly moderate the relationship between job stress and nurses' turnover intention among Katsina public hospitals.*

### **Review of empirical studies**

Hajizadeh et al. (2025) conducted a study to investigate turnover intention among nurses in Iranian hospitals, with the aim of determining the pooled proportion of turnover intention among Iranian hospital nurses through systematic review and meta-analysis. Overall, 42 studies were included in the review and meta-analysis. A total of 12,898 nurses participated in the 42 included studies. Results show that there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables of fear of COVID-19 and job stress, job stress and intention to leave. Pelealu (2025) also looked into the impact of occupational stress management strategies on performance and turnover intention in a competitive work environment. The study aims to explore the relationship between job stress, performance and turnover intention. The questionnaire was used to collect data from 100 employees from 10 different companies whom were selected using purposive sampling. Results reveal that job stress had a significant positive correlation with turnover intention. In the hospitality sector, a study by Çetin et al. (2024) examined the effects of job stress on burnout and turnover intention among hotel employees in Türkiye. The research reveals that job stress significantly increases work-related burnout, which in turn elevates turnover intention.

Pei et al. (2024) explored how work stress influences turnover intention among university teachers in China. The research highlighted that job stress has a negative effect on turnover intention. In the healthcare sector of Indonesia, Puspitawati et al. (2024) investigated the impact of job stress on job satisfaction and turnover intentions among hospital nurses in Bali, Indonesia. The study found that job stress negatively affects job satisfaction and positively influences turnover intention. Maharani and Tamara (2024) examined the effects of occupational stress and work-life balance on turnover intentions among employees in Indonesia's financial services industry with job satisfaction as a mediating factor. The results of the study reveal that occupational stress did not influence turnover intentions.

The reviewed literature demonstrates a positive relationship between job stress and turnover intention across various sectors (e.g., Smith et al., 2025; Hajizadeh et al., 2025; Çetin et al., 2024). However, some studies report mixed outcomes, suggesting the presence of moderating factors (e.g., Pei et al., 2024; Maharani & Tamara, 2024). These findings imply that the impact of job stress on turnover intention may depend on contextual or individual-level variables. Drawing from this, the current study posits psychological empowerment as a potential moderator, proposing that empowered employees may be more resilient to job stress and thus less likely to exhibit turnover intention.

### Research model

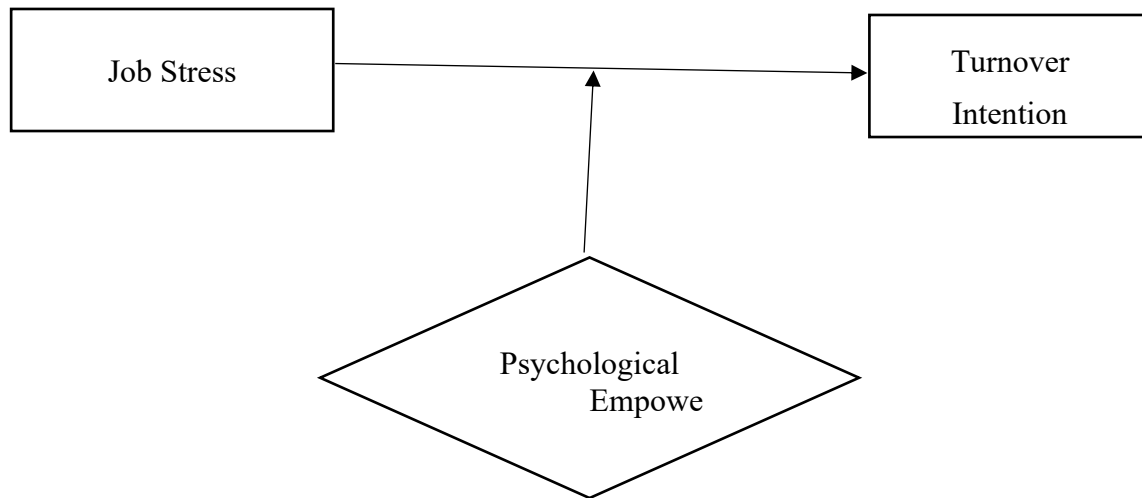


Fig. 1: Conceptual model

### 2.3 Theoretical framework

#### Person-environment fit theory

Person-environment fit theory was initially proposed by French scholars Rodgers and Cobb in 1974. The theory has several properties which may be of theoretical and empirical value in understanding adjustment in organisations. Person-environment Fit (P-E Fit) theory explains how the compatibility between an individual and their work environment affects outcomes such as satisfaction, performance and well-being. The theory proposes that when a person's characteristics (e.g., values, needs, abilities) align with the demands and supplies of their work environment (e.g., job demands, organisational values, and rewards), positive outcomes result. Conversely, a mismatch (misfit) can lead to stress, dissatisfaction and negative behavioural intentions like turnover.

Thus, it is neither the person nor the situation alone which causes stress experiences and strains rather it is misfit between the demands of the environment and the abilities of the person as well as misfit between the needs of the person and the supplies in the environment. In the context of an organisation, when these two misfits occur, stress emerges and an employee may develop intention to quit because of inability to cope with the situation. The study adopts this theory because it explicates how mismatch between person and his working environment brings about stress.

### 3.0 Methodology

This study makes use of a cross-sectional research design as against longitudinal research design. The study utilised cross-sectional research design because the researcher uses structured questionnaire to collect needed information from respondents at once. As such, a cross-sectional research design is viewed as the most appropriate for this study as the researcher could not carry out a longitudinal study because of time constraint.

#### Population

The population of the study consists of registered nurses in public hospitals located in Katsina metropolis, Nigeria, with a total population of 2,215. The total population was obtained from Katsina Hospital Service Management Board in 2024.

### **Sampling**

Simple random sampling technique through self-administered questionnaire was utilised. In order not to be bias in selecting elements from each unit of the population, proportionate random sampling was used. The elements drawn from each unit or subgroup of the population are proportionately distributed relative to the total population. In getting proportion of the sample per hospital, the below formula was used:

$$S = \frac{\text{Number of nurses in a particular hospital}}{\text{Total number of nurses in all the hospital}} \times \text{sample size}$$

Total number of nurses in all the hospital

In line with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table, the researcher arrived at 327 sample size given the population of 2,215. However, the sample size was increased by 30% to cater for the non-response bias (Israel, 2013). Therefore, 425 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents. Of the 425 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 303 were returned representing 71% response rate. Out of 303 returned, 7 were unusable representing 69% (296) valid response rate and thus considered adequate for a survey (Sekaran, 2013). Thus 296 copies of questionnaire were utilised for the data analysis. The questionnaire contained 16 items on a 5-point likert scale comprising three (3) variables: job stress, psychological empowerment and turnover intention. The questionnaire used for this study was adapted from various sources.

**Job stress (JB):** Respondents were evaluated on the degree to which they are stressed in their job using 5 items adapted from the scale developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983) with a reported Cronbach alpha of 0.86.

**Psychological empowerment (PE):** Psychological empowerment was measured by 6 items scale of empowerment developed and used by Spreitzer (1995) with a Cronbach alpha of 0.80.

**Turnover intention:** Questions on turnover intention were adapted from Cammann et al., (1979). The instrument consists of 5 items with a reported cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.85. All the questions are structured and measured in 5-point likert scale ranges from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

Data analysis, results and discussion

Data collected were analysed using Partial Least Square–Structural Equation Modeling (Smart pls3).

### **Nexus between psychological empowerment, job stress and turnover intention**

Table 1 displays the validity and reliability of each construct employed in this study, which is sometimes referred to as the outer model. The constructs are convergent based on the average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability metrics (Cronbach alpha and composite reliability). The results show that the construct dependability of all the variables is higher than the allowed level of internal consistency of 0.7. The average variance extracted value for each construct is greater than 0.5, which further supports the data's reliability (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 1: Item loadings, internal consistency, and average variance extracted**

Constructs	Indi-cators	Load-ings	VIF	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
<b>Job Stress</b>	JB1	0.671	1.538	<b>0.800</b>	<b>0.826</b>	<b>0.554</b>
	JB2	0.741	1.784			
	JB3	0.658	1.377			
	JB4	0.814	2.020			
	JB5	0.821	1.857			
<b>Psychological Empowerment</b>				<b>0.810</b>	<b>0.885</b>	<b>0.507</b>
	PE1	0.811	1.976			
	PE2	0.678	1.815			
	PE3	0.784	1.765			
	PE4	0.719	2.351			
	PE5	0.660	1.922			
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.783	1.586	<b>0.769</b>	<b>0.766</b>	<b>0.517</b>
	TI2	0.756	1.527			
	TI3	0.682	1.475			
	TI4	0.626	1.421			
	TI5	0.739	1.485			

Source: Smart-PLS Output (2025)

The study validated the discriminant validity by looking at the cross-loading of each item; the cross-loadings for the majority of pertinent items of a given variable were more than 0.7 and appropriate for JS, PE and TI with only seven items falling below 0.7. Hence, in order to preserve a particular signal, the deletion is dependent on the growth of the AVE and CR and needs that the loading be between 0.40 and 0.70. Consequently, no item was removed in order to increase the model's average variance extracted (AVE) (Hair, et al. 2017; Henseler et al. 2009). Therefore, Table 2 also used the Fornell and Larcker (1981) technique to demonstrate the discriminant validity of the data. The numbers in the diagonal indicate the square root of the average variance extracted values and the remaining value Table 1 above compiles the loadings, whereas figure 1 below displays the study's graphical loading. Fornell and Larcker (1981) state that only elements with loadings greater than 0.50 should be retained in the measurement model.

**Table 2: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)**

Construct	JB	PE	TI
JB	0.744		
PE	0.594	0.712	
TI	0.680	0.820	0.719

Source: Smart-PLS Output (2025)

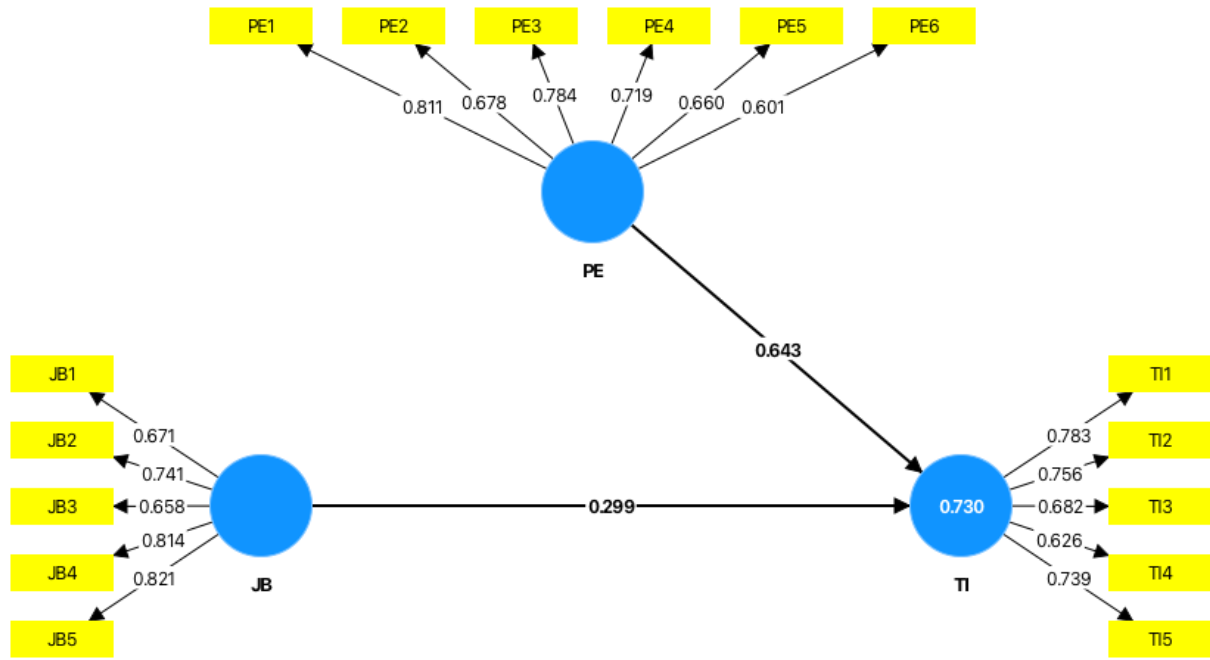


Figure 1: Measurement Model with Loadings, Beta, and R-Square values

**Variance inflation factor (VIF)**

Once the validity and reliability of the outer model were established, the researchers examined potential issues with multicollinearity in the data. Values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) were compared between the inner and outer models. Because the criterion needs the variance inflation factor values to be lower than 5, multicollinearity is not an issue. Table 1 above displays the model's values, which fall under the 5 criterion and range from 1.377 to 2.251 (Cohen, 2003).

As a result, multicollinearity problems are not an issue in this study. Path tests were then performed on the inner model. The value of R squared with the estimated Q2 values, which stands at 73%, indicates a robust model fit and an overall model fitness of 37%. Each variable's F squared value should be greater than 0.35 for a significant contribution, and greater than 0.15 for a moderate contribution, greater than 0.02 for a minimum contribution. Every factor had an effect on R squared, as evidenced by the data, which revealed that the F squared values for each variable were JB – TI was 0.253 and PE – TI was 0.967 higher than the cutoff mark (significant contribution).

**Path coefficients**

Table 3 provides a summary of the overall path coefficient data and the hypothesis validation. A t-test and a bootstrapping approach were applied to 5,000 resamples.

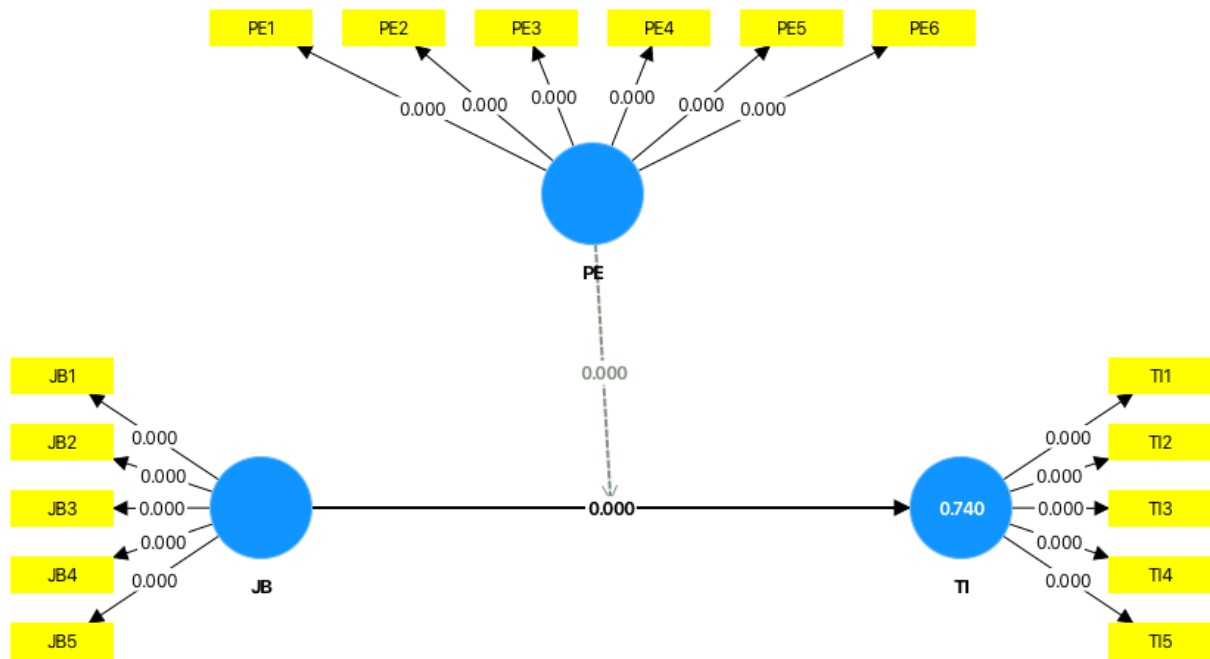


Figure2: Model of bootstrapping

Table 3: Summary of the structural model

	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
JS -> TI	0.328	0.027	12.079	0.000
PE -> TI	0.628	0.020	31.691	0.000
PE x JB -> TI	-0.090	0.025	3.638	0.000

Source: Smart-PLS Output (2025)

As presented in Table 3, the results of the statistical study reveal that job stress has significant effect on turnover intention with  $\beta = 0.328$ ,  $t = 12.079$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , the study did not accept  $H_{01}$ . Psychological empowerment has significant effect on turnover intention with  $\beta = 0.628$ ,  $t = 31.691$ ,  $p > 0.000$ , hence  $H_{02}$  was rejected.

Furthermore,  $H_{03}$  examines if psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between job stress and turnover intention. The results show that psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between job stress and turnover intention with  $\beta = -0.090$ ,  $t = 3.638$ ,  $p 0.000$ ).  $H_{03}$  was rejected.

#### 4.0 Discussion

$H_{01}$ : The result reveals that job stress has significant effect on nurses' turnover intention among nurses in public hospitals in Katsina metropolis. The finding implies that nurses at Katsina's public hospitals who experience higher levels of job stress are more likely to plan to quit their positions implying that their desire to leave the field or look for job elsewhere is influenced by difficult working conditions such as workload, long shifts, emotional strain or a lack of resources. The finding of this study is in line with the studies of Hajizadeh, et al. (2025); Pelealu (2025); Smith et al. (2025); Wicaksana, Jihadi and Novianti (2024) but goes in contrary with the studies of Maharani and Tamara (2024) and Syahrial and Sari (2023) who found that job stress has no significant effect on turnover intention in their studies.

H<sub>02</sub>: Result shows that psychological empowerment has significant effect on nurses' turnover intention among nurses in public hospitals in Katsina metropolis. This finding indicates that nurses' intention to quit their positions is highly influenced by their degree of psychological empowerment at Katsina public hospitals. Job satisfaction and retention are significantly impacted by psychological empowerment, which encompasses elements like autonomy, meaningful work, competence and impact. Nurses are more likely to stick around if they feel empowered, but they may be more inclined to leave if they do not. The results are consistent with the theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), whereby nurses who experience psychological empowerment feel more competent and in control, which might enhance their opinion of working conditions and lower their intention to leave.

H<sub>03</sub>: Also, the finding reveals that psychological empowerment moderates the relationship between job stresses on nurses' turnover intention among nurses in public hospitals in Katsina metropolis. This finding shows that psychological empowerment affects the direction or degree of the relationship between job stresses on nurses' turnover intention among nurses in public hospitals in Katsina metropolis. In particular, it implies that the detrimental impacts of job stress on turnover intention may be mitigated when nurses experience psychological empowerment, which includes autonomy, competence and a sense of impact. On the other hand, nurses' intention to quit may be more strongly impacted by job stress when they feel less psychologically empowered. The result supports the theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), whereby psychological empowerment serves as a factor that strengthens nurses' perceived behavioural control, reducing the adverse impact of job stress on turnover intention.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **Conclusion**

The study's findings indicate that job stress has a significant effect on nurses' turnover intention in public hospitals in Katsina metropolis. The study concludes that nurses are more likely to plan to quit their professions when they are under a lot of stress at work. Furthermore, psychological empowerment has a considerable impact on turnover intention, indicating that nurses are more inclined to stay in their roles when they feel empowered. Furthermore, the relationship between job stress and nurses' turnover intention is moderated by psychological empowerment, suggesting that nurses who are empowered can lessen the detrimental impacts of job stress on their desire to leave.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Managements in the public hospitals should implement comprehensive stress reduction initiatives for nurses, including regular counseling services, workload redistribution, adequate staffing and training in coping mechanisms to reduce job-related stress and its impact on turnover.
- ii. Hospital administrators should promote psychological empowerment by providing nurses with opportunities for career advancement, autonomy in clinical decision-making and involvement in policy or procedural reviews. These practices can increase nurses' sense of control and purpose, reducing their intent to leave.



- iii. Public healthcare systems should embed empowerment-focused strategies such as leadership support, recognition programmes and participatory management into their retention and stress management policies to mitigate turnover intentions among nurses.

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