

SHORT ARTICLE

Emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and psychological well-being among nurses in a tertiary care hospital

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ABSTRACT

Background: Emotional intelligence helps in preservation of mental health because of their effective emotional regulation skills. **Objectives:** We aimed to evaluate the impact of emotional intelligence on nurses' job satisfaction and psychological well-being. **Methods:** This cross-sectional study was conducted in a tertiary hospital and included 120 nurses. Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, Psychological General Well-being scale and Job Satisfaction Survey questionnaires were used. **Results:** The study showed a low positive correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being ($r=0.313$) and a low correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction ($r= 0.122$). The emotional intelligence was significantly correlated to their psychological well-being (9.8%). **Conclusion:** Nurses with higher emotional intelligence experience greater psychological well-being. We did not find a link between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Implementing interventions to enhance emotional intelligence in nurses is crucial for improving psychological well-being and reducing burnout risk.

KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence; Job Satisfaction; Psychological well-being; Nurse

INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being is a state where an individual realizes their own potential, coping with everyday stresses of life with more efficiency and contributing in the best way they can.(1) People who possess emotional intelligence (EI) are better able to maintain their mental health because of their effective

emotional regulation skills.(2) A person's complex attitude about his or her work is referred to as job satisfaction. This is a pleasant psychological response resulting from positive appraisal of one's own performance that promotes the accomplishment of someone's job value.(3,4)

An analysis of virtues, psychological well-being and job satisfaction among nurses showed that

those with greater tiers of morals are reported to be happier and much more dedicated at job, have better psychological well-being. (4,5)

Nurses are crucial to emergency response and healthcare, handling primary care, disease prevention, and medical emergencies.⁶ During the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses faced supply and staff shortages, long hours, and high stress, leading to lower job satisfaction, increased psychological distress, and higher intentions to leave their jobs or careers.

In the current healthcare system, nurses face several challenges. It is critical to always identify and comprehend every potential obstacle encountered by nurses to effectively deal with them and seek ways to alleviate them.

Aim: To assess the role of emotional intelligence in job satisfaction and psychological well-being among nurses

Objectives

- To assess if Emotional Intelligence can predict job satisfaction
- To assess if Emotional Intelligence can predict Psychological well-being

MATERIAL & METHODS

Study type & Study-design: Cross-sectional

Study setting: Tertiary hospital in Mangalore, Karnataka

Study population: Male and Female nurses from tertiary hospital in Mangalore, Karnataka

Study duration: 1 year (March 2020- April 2021)

Sample size: 120

The sample size was estimated to be 120 as per details from previous studies.⁽⁵⁾ The formula used for sample size estimation was, $n = (Z_{\alpha/2} * p * q) / d^2$, where $Z_{\alpha/2} = 1.96$ at 95% confidence level, $P = 0.13$, $q = 0.87$, $d = 0.06$

Inclusion criteria: 1. Nurses in 25-50 age groups, both males and female. 2. Nurses who have been in active nursing practise as RNs for at least the previous 12 months.

Exclusion criteria: 1. He/she has been in active nursing practice for less than 1 year preceding to the study 2. Is from a nursing group besides registered nurses such as midwifery. Psychiatric nursing staff in our study as the training as a part of their specialty training

could be a potential confounding factor. 3. Nursing students.

Study Tools: Data was collected using demographic proforma that included details on age, gender, number of working hours per day, and details on Nursing unit posted at present. Additionally, the variables of interest were measured using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), with the range of internal consistency reliability for the factors between 0.83 and 0.90, Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), with average internal consistency being 0.70, and Psychological General Well-being Index (PGWBI), with high internal consistency, ranging from 0.90 to 0.94. (6,7,8) Data collection: Nurses were selected based on their availability. Nurses were contacted across different shifts to avoid selection bias. The questionnaire was administered on nurses fulfilling the inclusion/exclusion criteria. They were informed that they were not obliged to participate, that all the answers were anonymous and that at any time during the trial, participants had the option to withdraw their consent.

Ethical Consideration: Institutional Ethics Committee of Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore (IEC KMC MLR 02-2020/137) gave its approval for this study. The willing participants gave their written informed consent for the study. Patient information obtained was kept confidential. The trial participants received no additional benefits.

Data analysis: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 25.0 computer software was used for data analysis. Multiple linear regression and Pearson's correlation were applied. A p-value of less than 0.05 was deemed significant. Additionally, since EI affects how nurses handle stress, communicate with patients, and maintain teamwork, understanding the variations across different unit levels is important. Hence, a one-way ANOVA (Welch's) was conducted.

RESULTS

Among 120 nurses aged 25 to 50 who participated in this study, the majority, 65.8%, were between 25 and 35 years old, while 20.8% fell within the 35 to 45 age range, and the remaining 13% were aged 45 to 55.

Majority worked 6 to 8 hours daily, and 95% were women. Emotional intelligence had a mean score of 5.5 (SD = 0.98), job satisfaction had a mean of 139.9 (SD = 16.9), and psychological well-being had a mean of 66.24 (SD = 11.7).

Pearson r correlations revealed a low positive correlation between EI and psychological well-being ($r = 0.313$) and a very low correlation

between EI and job satisfaction ($r = 0.122$), indicating minimal impact of EI on job satisfaction and a slight potential for improving psychological well-being.

Regression analysis showed that EI significantly predicts psychological well-being, accounting for 9.8% of its variance. However, EI did not significantly predict job satisfaction, explaining only 1.5% of its variance. (Table 1)

Table 1: Regression model for predicting Psychological well-being through emotional intelligence; Job satisfaction through emotional intelligence

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R2	F	P	Hypothesis supported
H1	EI → PGWB	3.729	0.098	12.842	.000	Yes
H2	EI → JS	2.1	0.015	1.79	.183	No

H1 = Emotional intelligence has a significant impact on psychological well-being; H2 = Emotional intelligence significantly impacts job satisfaction; P < 0.05 = Significance level; EI: Emotional Intelligence, PGWB: Psychological general well-being; JS: Job Satisfaction; R2: coefficient of determination; F = F statistic of the model.

In our study 78 nurses were posted in general wards, 25 nurses were posted in intensive care units and 17 nurses were posted in specialty departments. A one-way ANOVA found no significant differences in EI across different nursing unit levels ($F(2, 118) = 0.349, p = 0.708$).

DISCUSSION

This study assessed the impact of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being and job satisfaction in nurses. Findings show a positive correlation between EI and psychological well-being, with EI explaining 9.8% of the variance in psychological well-being. The regression model further demonstrates the positive impact of EI on Psychological well-being, thus concluding that EI can significantly shape psychological well-being, supporting the first hypothesis. Synonymous with other research findings, Emotional Intelligence is a key component of psychological well-being. (2,5,9,10) It contributes to better self-concept, improved life satisfaction and the ability to manage adversities and disappointments more efficiently and intelligently.(2,5) Researchers suggest that emotional intelligence could predict work related outcomes like performance and satisfaction at work as well as improved resilience. Managing anxiety and negative emotions through self-awareness improves workplace functioning.(9,11) Emotional intelligence is crucial for job

satisfaction. While some studies suggest that EI may not significantly influence job satisfaction, others highlight its positive correlation with work-related outcomes, including job performance and satisfaction, particularly in fields like nursing.(12) However, our study disproved the second hypothesis and found that emotional intelligence did not significantly impact job satisfaction. This disparity may be due to methodological differences or other contributing factors such as dramatic increase in patient numbers during the early pandemic of COVID-19, leading to severe shortages in the facilities and heightened workload for healthcare workers, as well as the constant risk of contamination, which threatened their lives and mental well-being.9 The One-way ANOVA (Welch’s) findings reveal that regardless of the unit in which they work, nurses exhibit similar levels of EI, implying that training programs aimed at enhancing EI could be beneficial across all units, as baseline levels appear to be comparable.

Thus we can conclude that by establishing a link between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, this study suggests that interventions to enhance emotional intelligence in nurses could improve their well-being and reduce burnout.

CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in nursing industry, affecting both the quality of patient care and the psychological well-being

of nurses. This study reveals that nurses with higher emotional intelligence experience greater psychological well-being, although it does not establish a connection between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, diverging from previous research.

RECOMMENDATION

The study findings suggest that target interventions may be developed to enhance emotional intelligence among nurses to mitigate burnout and improve their psychological well-being in the workplace. Study recommendations are in keeping with WHO's World Mental Health Day theme 2024 "Mental health at work". It is recommended to organize regular interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence across all nursing units. This would help in managing negative emotions, and enhancing quality of life, thus contributing to improved patient care outcomes. Future research should examine the role of psychological well-being and job satisfaction through mediation analysis, explore gender differences, and compare data across different situations to assess their impact and formulate interventions for crisis and non-crisis situations.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study must be viewed in light of certain limitations, such as, the potential influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on variables, an imbalanced male-to-female ratio, and a lack of exploration of other predictors like organizational or family factors. Additionally, the findings from a tertiary hospital setting may not be generalizable to other primary and community settings.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Nursing is the cornerstone of healthcare, emphasizing holistic patient care over merely treating illness. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature by exploring these constructs in the nursing profession and underscore the importance of regular interventions to enhance emotional intelligence, improve psychological well-being, and reduce the risk of burnout.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All authors have contributed equally.

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Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the authors used Grammarly for grammar correction. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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