

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN NURSING LEADERSHIP: EVALUATING THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF NURSE MANAGERS IN SELECTED HOSPITALS

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Paper Received: 19.01.2025 / **Paper Accepted:** 16.02.2025 / **Paper Published:** 18.02.2025

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Abstract

Background: Strong leadership is imperative in the healthcare, especially among the nurse managers, who are responsible for sustaining the workplace harmony, employee well-being, and quality patient care. The different leadership approaches, authentic leadership is a notable for its focus on the openness, ethical choices, and healthy interpersonal relationships. Yet issues arises like turnover, emotional exhaustion, and job dissatisfaction underscore the importance of the leadership strategies that foster the workplace dynamics and employee well-being. Emotional intelligence, which encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, is an essential determinant of leadership effectiveness, allowing nurse managers to communicate, manage conflicts, and motivate their staff. Notwithstanding studies on leadership in healthcare, there is still a need to understand how emotional intelligence acts as a mediator between authentic leadership and job satisfaction. The research seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by exploring how emotional intelligence contributes to the effectiveness of leadership in nurse managers at Level 2 hospitals and translating findings that can be used in leadership development training, emotional intelligence building, and organizational support for enhancing nurse retention and health care outcomes.

Result: The results show that the nurse managers have a high emotional intelligence, especially in self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which are important for the effective leadership and a positive work environment. Their stress management, conflict resolution, and teamwork development emphasize the role of the emotional intelligence in sustaining the job satisfaction and organizational success of the team. Enhancing emotional intelligence through leadership training and development programs is vital for improving nurse retention, staff well-being, and overall quality of healthcare.

Conclusion: The study highlights the crucial role of emotional intelligence in authentic leadership, showing that nurse managers with strong self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are more effective in fostering a positive work environment and job satisfaction. These findings emphasize the need for leadership training programs that enhance emotional intelligence, ensuring better team dynamics, improved nurse retention, and higher healthcare quality.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Nursing, Leadership, Core Competencies, Managers.

Introduction

There are different styles of leadership, issues like burnout, turnover, and communication problems in the workplace continue to be problems, highlighting the necessity for leadership styles that promote the emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. True leadership through self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral point of view, and balanced processing facilitates trust-based working relationships, ethically based decisions, and an optimistic work atmosphere. Still, there exists a gap in the research about emotional intelligence closing the gap between effectiveness in leadership and job satisfaction. Since a poor leadership, absence of emotional support, and heavy workloads are among the factors that could lead to nurse dissatisfaction (WHO, 2022; DOH, 2023), this study seeks to present the evidence-based recommendations for the training in leadership, emotional intelligence building, and organizational support interventions to enhance the nurse retention and quality of healthcare. Filling this gap is important, as poor leadership and low emotional intelligence among the nurse managers do not only affect the job satisfaction but also result in the increased of patient care mistakes, by diminishing the efficiency, as well as the turnover (Laschinger et al., 2021). Through developing emotionally intelligent and genuine nurse leaders, healthcare organizations can build a inclusive and supportive workplace cultures, ultimately leading to improved staff well-being and patient care outcomes.

Methods

Research Design

The research employed the descriptive correlational approach for this study. The approach utilized in this study will be quantitative research. According to Pandey et al. (2023), the quantitative research approach is a systematic collection and analysis of numerical data using statistical methods to test hypotheses and measure variables.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents' population and sampling strategy. The survey will comprise 129 respondents in total.

The study's target respondents will be nurse managers who fulfil the study's objectives and work in level 2 hospitals.

Instruments of the Study

The survey's self-structured questionnaires underwent to content validation and have been validated by an expert. The result showed that the modified-structured questionnaire is acceptable and will be permitted to be utilized as a research tool. The research tool also goes through a reliability test using an internal consistency method. Internal consistency assesses the correlation between multiple items in a test that are intended to measure the same construct (Middleton, 2022).

Result

Demographic Profile

The age distribution of the respondents is fairly even. The highest number (29.9%) comes from the 21–31 age group, and the rest of the groups (32–38, 39–44, and 45–50) each take up between 21% and 25%. The sex distribution is practically equal with 51.5% of males and 48.5% of females in the population. Years of experience are also spread evenly, with the highest proportion of (27.8%) having between 1 and 5 years, then 6–10, 11–15, and 15+ years, which in together make up 23%–25%. Participants' levels of education are even in their distribution, with the master's degree recipients making up 27.8% and those with bachelor's and doctoral degrees making up 36.1%. This indicates that a good share of people interviewed have higher-level of degrees.

Self-Awareness

The self-awareness data show high consensus among the respondents, with a general interpretation of strongly agree, indicating that the nursing managers are consistent in their views. Nurse managers specifically recognize their awareness of how the emotions influence the interactions, their leadership strengths and weaknesses, and their capacity to identify and manage emotional triggers. The results indicate that most respondents have a high self-awareness as leaders.

Similarly, emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in effective nursing leadership. Studies have shown that nurse managers generally exhibit high levels of EI, which is considered desirable for their position (Hirai & Yoshioka, 2020; Ibrahim Saleem & R. Faraj, 2022). EI is positively correlated with transformational leadership styles and various leadership competencies, including change management, subordinate leadership, and communication (Ibrahim Saleem & R. Faraj, 2022; Huthaifah Khrais & Mohammad Alsadi, 2021)

Self-Regulation

The self-regulation data show a strong consensus among nurse managers, with overall interpretation of strongly agree and consistent answers. The respondents did not hesitate in staying calm under pressure, resolving workplace conflicts in a professional manner, and regulating their emotions to promote a healthy work place environment. These results reflect that their excellent emotional regulation abilities, which are responsible for successful leadership in healthcare environments.

Studies have found that nurse managers generally exhibit higher EI scores compared to average working adults (Hirai & Yoshioka, 2020). However, some research indicates that a significant portion of nurse managers may have low levels of work-related EI (Dar Assi & Eshah, 2023). Higher EI levels are associated with more effective conflict resolution styles, particularly integrating and compromising approaches (Dar Assi & Eshah, 2023). EI also correlates positively with participative decision-making styles and negatively with authoritative styles (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2020). Factors such as age, education level, and years of experience have been found to influence EI levels among nurse managers (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2020). While most studies report average to high levels of EI among nurse managers, there is recognition that further improvement in EI skills could be beneficial for maximizing their effectiveness in leadership roles (Suwaidi, 2022).

Motivation

The motivation data show a high agreement among the nurse managers, with the overall interpretation of strongly agree. They illustrate that the persistence in goal achievement, self-starting to improve performance, and resilience in facing a adversity. These results affirm their high motivation and dedication to their work in the healthcare environment.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ), defined as the capacity to recognize, assimilate, and respond effectively in diverse cultural situations (Van Dyne et al., 2012), has gained increasing attention in the field of international management over the past two decades (Crowne, 2013; Jyoti and Kour, 2017). It plays a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of international managers across various domains, such as negotiation styles (Caputo et al., 2019), learning organizations (Mangla and Singh, 2022), expatriate retention (Ren et al., 2021), multicultural team dynamics (Shokef and Erez, 2008), trust building in virtual teams (Mangla, 2021)

Empathy

The empathy data show a strong agreement among the nurse managers, with a general interpretation of strongly agree and uniformly high scores. They

actively empathize with their teammates' emotions, modify their style to assist colleagues emotionally, and show genuine concern for their welfare. These results point to empathy as one of the strengths in their leadership.

Similarly shows that the integrative framework explored by (Zhao and Williams, 2024) proposes that emotional intelligence and authentic leadership are responsible for creating a culture of support and empathy in the workplace, contributing to nurses' job satisfaction. This theoretical framework suggests that EL and AL, when used in conjunction, are well-suited to the nursing profession's fundamental values and are more likely to result in increased job satisfaction and positive patient outcomes. The review data shows that these skills can be developed using existing leadership training and professional development courses, thereby outlining a feasible way for organizations to address nurse satisfaction, retention, and the overall quality of care concerns posed by the complexity and emotional tension of the role.

Social Skills

Social skills data reveal that there is an overwhelming consensus of nurse managers who rate strongly Agree overall and rate consistently high. They feel confident that they are good communicators, and that they are effective in promoting team work, developing good relationships, and handling conflicts constructively. These results serve to underscore the significance of social skills in a peaceful workplace culture.

Link with it is emotional intelligence (EI) is a multidimensional construct that refers to the ability to recognize, understand, use, and regulate emotions in oneself and others Goleman, D. (2025). EI has been linked to a number of advantageous outcomes in the workplace, including job performance, job satisfaction, mental health, and healthcare quality Karimi, L., Leggat, S. (2025). As a result, emotional intelligence may be crucial in the health services industry since nursing practitioners engage with customers more, must adhere to patient care, and bear a bigger emotional weight Codier, E. (2023).

Self-Awareness	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I recognize how my emotions influence my interactions with colleagues.	4.42	0.50	Strongly Agree
2. I understand my strengths and weaknesses as a leader.	4.57	0.50	Strongly Agree
3. I can identify my emotional triggers and manage them effectively.	4.35	0.48	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.45	0.49	Strongly Agree
Self-Regulation	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I remain calm and composed during stressful situations at work.	4.56	0.50	Strongly Agree
2. I handle workplace conflicts professionally without reacting impulsively.	4.49	0.50	Strongly Agree
3. I can control my emotions to maintain a positive work environment.	4.47	0.50	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.51	0.50	Strongly Agree
Motivation	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I stay motivated to achieve both personal and organizational goals.	4.52	0.50	Strongly Agree
2. I take initiative to improve my performance and that of my team.	4.40	0.49	Strongly Agree
3. I remain optimistic and committed to my work even in difficult situations.	4.37	0.49	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.43	0.49	Strongly Agree
Empathy	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I take the time to understand the emotions and concerns of my team members.	4.49	0.50	Strongly Agree
2. I adjust my approach to support the emotional needs of my colleagues.	4.53	0.50	Strongly Agree

3. I show genuine concern for the well-being of my co-workers.	4.55	0.50	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.52	0.50	Strongly Agree
Social Skills	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I communicate effectively to foster teamwork and collaboration.	4.58	0.50	Strongly Agree
2. I build strong relationships with my colleagues and subordinates.	4.40	0.49	Strongly Agree
3. I handle disagreements constructively to maintain a harmonious work environment.	4.49	0.50	Strongly Agree
Category Mean	4.49	0.50	Strongly Agree

Conclusion

The results conclude that the nurse managers show a high levels of emotional intelligence, as shown by their overall high scores for all the crucial elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. They have a good awareness of their emotions and good control over workplace conflicts and stress, and a high level of motivation to realize a personal and organizational objectives. In addition, their high empathy allows them to relate with others in the workplace, and their social abilities encourage them into a teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution. Consistency in the responses indicates that the emotional intelligence is an essential strength among the nurse managers, which supports the effective leadership, job satisfaction, and a good work environment. These findings underscore the importance of continued support and training programs to enhance further their emotional intelligence, supporting continued leadership effectiveness and enhanced health outcomes.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research. Results have been deduced objectively; nothing influenced this result by any individual, monetary, or institutional interests. In effect, utmost endeavors were in order to conduct a bias-free operation of gathering and analyzing the data into interpretation and producing a study based on merit, away from research inconsistencies.

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