



A Comprehensive Review of the Relationship Between Nursing Work Environments and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Background: Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction among nurses, particularly in high-stress environments like healthcare. This study explores the relationship between EI, conflict management, and job satisfaction among nurses, addressing the impact of emotional competencies in conflict resolution.

Methods: A comprehensive literature review was conducted, analyzing studies that investigate the connections among EI, conflict management styles, and job satisfaction in nursing. The review focused on empirical research published in the last two decades, emphasizing findings relevant to the context.

Results: The findings indicate that higher levels of emotional intelligence in nurses correlate positively with effective conflict management strategies. Nurses with elevated EI are more adept at resolving conflicts collaboratively, which in turn enhances their job satisfaction. The study highlights that conflict management serves as a mediator between EI and job satisfaction, suggesting that fostering emotional competencies can lead to improved workplace dynamics and nurse retention rates.

Conclusion: This research underscores the significance of emotional intelligence and conflict management in nursing practice. By integrating emotional intelligence training into nursing education and professional development, healthcare institutions can enhance job satisfaction and improve overall patient care quality. The findings advocate for policies that prioritize emotional competencies, suggesting that addressing

emotional intelligence in nursing can lead to better outcomes for both healthcare professionals and patients.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Conflict Management, Nursing, Healthcare.

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1. Introduction

In nursing, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a subject of increasing attention owing to its influence on various work outcomes and its importance in professions characterized by high emotional demands and interactions with patients and colleagues (1, 2). Emotional intelligence has been associated with work performance, job happiness, organizational commitment, and the mental health of nurses (3-7). In a domain where work satisfaction is crucial for productivity and the quality of healthcare, conflict management becomes an essential element. Conflict management is seen as vital in nursing and is directly associated with emotional intelligence and work satisfaction (8-10). Workplace conflicts may negatively affect productivity, patient care, the mental health of healthcare personnel, and the quality of services provided (11, 12). Consequently, the capacity to adeptly resolve disagreements among healthcare staff is essential for improving work satisfaction and providing prompt, efficient, and patient-centered treatment (13).

In tough environments, job satisfaction among nurses is significant as they contend with resource constraints, heavy workloads, and substantial emotional burdens (14, 15). Cultural and organizational variables, such as gender norms and healthcare system hierarchy, affect the work satisfaction of nurses (16, 17). Job satisfaction is influenced by both inner and extrinsic variables, significantly impacting employee retention, work dedication, and the quality of patient treatment. Confronting these difficulties and enhancing work satisfaction among nursing staff requires recognizing emotional intelligence as an essential competency. Emotional intelligence enhances nurses' ability to manage stress and make educated choices, while also strengthening organizational commitment, decreasing burnout and turnover rates, and ultimately fostering safer, higher-quality patient care. In light of the increased stress and emotional challenges in healthcare, emotional intelligence is crucial for improving professional competence, mental health, and the management of stress and conflict, therefore benefitting both healthcare personnel and patients.

The correlation between emotional intelligence and work satisfaction in nursing is complex and multifarious. Emotional intelligence acts as a catalyst for other essential variables, including empathy and communicative pleasure, which subsequently affect workplace well-being (23). In a setting where nurses face a wide range of emotional experiences, emotional intelligence is essential for maintaining professional neutrality while fostering empathy and care, therefore improving work satisfaction and organizational commitment. Emotional intelligence enhances overall clinical performance and is also crucial for keeping professionals in the nursing field (24, 25).

In this context, conflict management emerges as a vital factor in enhancing the correlation between emotional intelligence and work satisfaction among nurses. Conflict management methods, such as collaborative and integrative approaches, are essential for handling emotional issues and conflicts in the medical care environment. Conflict resolution measures, including organized training and team building, are essential instruments for sustaining a healthy work environment and enhancing job satisfaction (26). Furthermore, emotional intelligence in nurse managers not only improves their conflict resolution skills but also contributes to their professional growth and dedication to healthcare management (27).

2. Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a multifaceted concept that denotes the capacity to identify, comprehend, use, and manage emotions in oneself and others. Emotional intelligence has been associated with several beneficial outcomes in the workplace, such as job performance, job satisfaction, mental health, and healthcare quality (3, 28, 29). Consequently, emotional intelligence is likely essential in the healthcare

sector, since nursing professionals interact with patients more often, are required to provide patient care, and endure a greater emotional burden (3, 30).

Emotional intelligence and conflict management have been correlated in research undertaken across many environments, including professional and educational contexts (31–33). Emotional intelligence has been linked to an enhanced ability in nursing to resolve and manage workplace issues. Nurses with elevated emotional intelligence are less inclined to use evasive or competitive methods and more predisposed to implement conflict management approaches (9, 34). Nurses with elevated emotional intelligence may exhibit heightened sensitivity to the emotions of others, enabling them to anticipate and mitigate potential conflicts before they escalate. Moreover, the ability to regulate emotions enables nurses to maintain composure and objectivity during conflicts, thus fostering problem-solving, the pursuit of mutually beneficial solutions, and enhanced work satisfaction (23, 35).

Conversely, the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and work satisfaction has been examined in several settings, underscoring its specific significance in the nursing profession, which is characterized by substantial emotional and social demands. Research indicates that heightened emotional intelligence correlates with increased work satisfaction and organizational commitment (36, 37). Moreover, emotional intelligence is particularly vital in high-stress situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where it serves as a mediator for the impacts of psychosocial hazards, including burnout and psychosomatic disorders (29, 38). Consequently, emotional intelligence and work satisfaction serve as essential determinants of occupational well-being, particularly in light of the elevated turnover and burnout rates within the nursing profession (23). This underscores the need for hospital policies that prioritize both technical efficiency and the development of emotional and communication competencies (23, 36).

3. Occupational contentment

Job satisfaction is a complicated, comprehensive concept that pertains to an individual's favorable disposition and sentiments toward their employment, as well as the evaluation of working circumstances and related benefits (39). Job satisfaction is crucial in nursing due to its impact on patient safety, staff retention, productivity, and performance (40, 41). Factors influencing job satisfaction include workplace conditions, compensation, social support from supervisors and colleagues, opportunities for career advancement, and autonomy in decision-making (42–44). To address the challenges nurses face in the workplace and enhance job satisfaction, emotional competencies, and strategies may be crucial. Emotional intelligence may function as a stress-relieving buffer for nurses, leading to increased job satisfaction (45–47). Due to the increasing demands and challenges faced by nurses in the contemporary healthcare system, job satisfaction is of paramount importance.

4. Conflict resolution

Conflict, defined as a process involving two or more persons with opposing interests, perceived threats to their needs, or concerns, is prevalent in the field of nursing. Conflicts may arise between direct care nurses and nursing management. The fundamental problems often pertain to inadequate human resources, inconsistencies in expectations among nursing leaders, and challenges in interpersonal communication (49, 50). Conflict management is an essential interpersonal skill that focuses on an individual's capacity to address and overcome conflict situations (51). Its significance in the workplace is paramount since it directly influences job satisfaction, performance, and employee well-being (52, 53). This management is especially important in nursing because of the interpersonal aspects of the job, significant emotional strain, and the need for collaboration with other healthcare practitioners (54, 55). Nurses with elevated emotional intelligence are more adept at managing conflicts, enabling them to foresee and settle disagreements before escalation (56, 57).

Moreover, Rahim (51) has identified five main approaches for conflict resolution. The "Integrating" approach aims for collaborative solutions that meet the needs of all parties involved and is particularly preferred in in-patient care contexts, as noted among nurses and in critical care units. Conversely, the "Obliging or Accommodating" style aims to preserve harmony and is used less often by nurses, but the

"Dominating" style is successful in urgent scenarios necessitating rapid judgments (59-61). The "Avoiding" method entails circumventing conflict, which is beneficial when time is required or the disagreement is insignificant, however, it is not the primary style used by emergency nurses (62, 63). Finally, the "Compromising" approach aims for middle-ground solutions and is often used in practice (64, 65). Nonetheless, no style is inherently better; its selection is contingent upon the circumstances and the connection between the persons involved. In this context, nursing leaders need to implement good communication, constructive leadership, and appropriate conflict management to foster a healthy work environment and to use the potential advantages of conflict, including creativity and growth.

Limited research across various groups especially examines the mediation function of conflict management (68-70). Although there is increasing evidence connecting emotional intelligence, conflict management, and job satisfaction, research within the nursing environment has so far been presented in a theoretical framework (71). Considering the essential function of conflict management in nursing practice and its possible association with emotional intelligence and work satisfaction, it is imperative to investigate how conflict management may mitigate this link. This may provide significant insights for the design of nursing treatments and training programs that focus on both emotional skills enhancement and conflict resolution.

5. Discussion

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a progressively significant subject in social and professional environments, particularly in occupations with substantial emotional demands and interpersonal engagement, such as nursing. This study addresses a growing concern in healthcare, namely within the nursing domain. The objective is to examine the mediating function of conflict management in the association between emotional intelligence and work satisfaction among nurses. The findings validated that conflict management serves as a mediator between emotional intelligence and job happiness, so deepening our comprehension of the essential function emotional abilities fulfill in workplace well-being. This study has substantial implications for the development of training programs and hospital policies, especially in high-stress emotional and social environments such as nursing. This research emphasizes the significance of emotional intelligence and conflict management, establishing a foundation for future interventions to enhance healthcare quality and the welfare of healthcare personnel.

An essential element of this interaction is the intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies that emotional intelligence (EI) facilitates, enabling people to identify and manage their own emotions and those of others (21, 25). Adaptability and stress management, intrinsic attributes of emotional intelligence, enhance conflict resolution. The capacity to recognize and comprehend emotions, for example, might empower nurses to foresee and prevent hostile scenarios (35, 57). Furthermore, emotional self-regulation, an aspect of emotional intelligence, might enhance objective decision-making, facilitating less polarized conflict settlements (38). In professional settings such as healthcare services, the significance of emotional intelligence becomes more evident. The nursing profession, characterized by significant patient engagement and emotional demands, often encounters difficulties in dispute resolution. In this setting, nurses with elevated emotional intelligence often use more effective and less evasive or confrontational techniques to resolve problems. These abilities not only improve dispute resolution but also significantly affect work satisfaction, employee retention, and overall quality of care (40, 41).

Skills acquired from elevated emotional intelligence are crucial for addressing these particularities and the many causes of conflict that may emerge from differences in aims, expectations, and interpersonal communication. Organizations must acknowledge the significance of cultivating emotional intelligence, especially within the nursing profession. Given that this profession consistently engages with human well-being, strong conflict management abilities are essential to guarantee optimum treatment and enhance professionals' well-being (51).

Effective conflict management fosters a pleasant workplace and enhances interpersonal connections, hence impacting nurses' choices to retain their positions. Conversely, emotional intelligence (EI) is essential for proficient conflict management in nursing. Nurses with elevated emotional intelligence eschew evasive

tactics and embrace more collaborative methodologies (9, 34). These talents directly affect the establishment of harmonious work settings, hence impacting job satisfaction (8). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has shown its efficacy as a beneficial resource during emergencies, like the COVID-19 epidemic, alleviating job-related stress and burnout (29, 38). It is essential to recognize that job satisfaction in nursing is affected by several aspects, such as working environment, remuneration, social support, and autonomy (42). Consequently, healthcare facilities are apprehensive about nurse retention, since variables such as ineffective management might affect their choice to remain in or depart from their positions. Conflicts in nursing may stem from several sources, such as resource constraints or communication difficulties (50). Moreover, several conflict management strategies are available, and nurses often choose a collaborative method (49). A synthesis of elevated emotional intelligence and a cooperative strategy in conflict resolution may be crucial in enhancing work satisfaction within the nursing profession.

Individuals with advanced emotional intelligence are often more proficient in conflict resolution, resulting in enhanced happiness within their workplace (34, 67). In difficult circumstances, such as the recent COVID-19 epidemic, emotional intelligence has been shown to serve as a protective barrier against psychological hazards, emphasizing its significance in occupational well-being. Previous studies have examined the correlation between emotional intelligence and other dimensions, including social support and occupational engagement. This study's emphasis on conflict management offers a novel and crucial viewpoint (31). It is essential to emphasize that a conducive work environment is vital for nurse retention since adverse circumstances might result in elevated turnover rates. The significance of policies that prioritize the development of emotional and communication abilities in this environment is unequivocal (36). Conflict, sometimes stemming from few resources, divergent goals, or communication breakdowns, should not be seen as harmful (50). Conversely, it may be seen as an opportunity for the enhancement and fortification of healthcare teams (56). In some areas, nursing personnel may encounter distinct cultural and organizational issues necessitating particular conflict management skills. Ultimately, professional training may enhance its efficacy by including conflict management strategies. It is crucial to modify these tactics in light of contextual factors, such as company culture (9).

6. Constraints

This research has various limitations that must be considered before evaluating its conclusions. The sample of nurses may not sufficiently reflect the larger nursing community, limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader situations. To mitigate this restriction, further research should use more varied samples, including nurses from many specialties, varying levels of experience, and distinct geographical locations. Furthermore, the cross-sectional form of the research inhibits the creation of strong causal correlations among emotional intelligence, conflict management, and work satisfaction. A longitudinal methodology that monitors nurses over time would be more appropriate for comprehending the temporal and causal relationships between these factors. Non-probabilistic sampling constitutes an additional limitation, since it restricts the research to a particular geographical and professional setting, hence diminishing its generalizability. It is essential to include uncontrolled factors in this research, including job experience, educational attainment, and organizational assistance. The inadequately handled elements might substantially influence work satisfaction and conflict management, perhaps serving as moderators or mediators in the association between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

A notable weakness is the absence of analysis about the leadership styles of pivotal individuals in the nursing sector, including managers and head nurses. This omission may overlook essential factors affecting work dynamics and nurses' happiness. It is important to highlight that the measures used, although examining conflict management, do so indirectly and depend on nurses' views, which may introduce biases. Future research should investigate targeted treatments designed to improve the competences deemed essential in this study. Conducting the research in several cultural and organizational settings will authenticate and expand the relevance of the results. Furthermore, it would be advantageous to investigate the impact of other psychological factors that may affect these interactions, therefore enhancing the comprehension of the examined phenomena.

7. Implications

This research emphasizes the crucial relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), conflict resolution, and work satisfaction within the nursing profession. In this context, it has been shown that emotional intelligence (EI) is not only crucial in its own right but also directly affects conflict management, which subsequently serves as a mediating element for work satisfaction. The proficient use of emotional intelligence cultivates a more peaceful workplace, particularly in the essential field of nursing. By acknowledging and regulating personal and others' emotions, misunderstandings are reduced, fostering a favorable work environment. The importance of these results extends beyond academia; it has extensive practical and strategic implications. Healthcare institutions, recognizing the significance of these competences, need to advocate for training programs aimed at improving emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills. By doing so, they are not only enhancing employee work happiness but also indirectly elevating the quality of treatment delivered to patients.

Head nurses and the director of nursing need to lead with ethical integrity and honesty. Their roles impose an additional need to exemplify and promote a leadership approach that cultivates a constructive and cooperative workplace atmosphere. Training in these domains not only enhances the management capabilities of these leaders but also has a ripple effect on all personnel under their supervision. Health authorities should integrate these results into existing policy, particularly with staff retention and well-being. In doing so, they advocate for the welfare of healthcare workers while guaranteeing high-quality medical treatment for society. This research significantly contributes to the literature by elucidating the mediating function of conflict management between emotional intelligence and work satisfaction. In the future, it will be pertinent to duplicate and broaden this study across other geographical and cultural settings, so reinforcing the universality of these results and perhaps enhancing comprehension in this domain.

8. Summary

This research has shown the significance of emotional intelligence and conflict management as determinants of work satisfaction among nurses. The results demonstrate that conflict management mediates the association between emotional intelligence and work satisfaction, implying that nurses with high emotional intelligence may attain enhanced job satisfaction partly owing to their proficiency in conflict resolution.

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مراجعة شاملة للعلاقة بين بينات العمل التمريضية والرضا الوظيفي

الملخص

الخلفية: تلعب الذكاء العاطفي (EI) دورًا حيويًا في تعزيز الرضا الوظيفي بين الممرضين، لا سيما في البيئات عالية الضغط مثل قطاع الرعاية الصحية. تستكشف هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين الذكاء العاطفي، إدارة النزاعات، والرضا الوظيفي بين الممرضين، مع التركيز على تأثير الكفاءات العاطفية في حل النزاعات.

الطرق: تم إجراء مراجعة شاملة للأدبيات، لتحليل الدراسات التي تبحث في الروابط بين الذكاء العاطفي، أنماط إدارة النزاعات، والرضا الوظيفي في مجال التمريض. ركزت المراجعة على الأبحاث التجريبية المنشورة خلال العقدين الماضيين.

النتائج: تشير النتائج إلى وجود علاقة إيجابية بين ارتفاع مستويات الذكاء العاطفي لدى الممرضين واستراتيجيات إدارة النزاعات الفعالة. يتمتع الممرضون ذوو الذكاء العاطفي المرتفع بقدرة أكبر على حل النزاعات بشكل تعاوني، مما يعزز رضاهم الوظيفي. تسلط الدراسة الضوء على دور إدارة النزاعات كوسيط بين الذكاء العاطفي والرضا الوظيفي، مما يشير إلى أن تعزيز الكفاءات العاطفية يمكن أن يحسن ديناميكيات العمل ويزيد من معدلات الاحتفاظ بالممرضين.

الاستنتاج: تؤكد هذه الدراسة على أهمية الذكاء العاطفي وإدارة النزاعات في الممارسات التمريضية. من خلال دمج تدريب الذكاء العاطفي في التعليم التمريضي والتطوير المهني، يمكن للمؤسسات الصحية تعزيز الرضا الوظيفي وتحسين جودة الرعاية المقدمة للمرضى. تدعو النتائج إلى اعتماد سياسات تركز على الكفاءات العاطفية، مما يشير إلى أن معالجة الذكاء العاطفي في التمريض يمكن أن تؤدي إلى نتائج أفضل لكل من المهنيين الصحيين والمرضى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء العاطفي، الرضا الوظيفي، إدارة النزاعات، التمريض، الرعاية الصحية.