



Original Article

Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Mental Health in Hospital Nurses, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is a tool, as is the ability to understand, perceive, manage and utilize information. Therefore, an emotionally intelligence people could control their stressors and improve the individual's productivity at the workplace. **Objective:** To explore the relationship of emotional intelligence and mental health in female hospital nurses in Pakistan. **Methods:** The correlational design was used in this study. The sample comprised of (N=217) hospital nurses with the age range of 20 years to 45 years (Mean age=29.98; SD=6.37) were selected through systematic randomization procedure from different public hospitals of Hyderabad. The data collection was gathered about 8 months from January 2019 August 2019. The demographic Form, Trait Emotional Intelligence, Pakistani Urdu translated version (TEIQue-SF) & Aga Khan University Anxiety Depression Scale were used. **Results:** The results showed a significant predictive relationship of emotional intelligence with mental health of hospital registered female nursing ($R^2 = .374, p < .001$). **Conclusions:** The hospital nurses (who have high emotional intelligence) suffer less from mental health problems and are at low risk of anxiety and depression.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI), a concept first introduced by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 and popularized by Daniel Goleman in 1995, refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively [1, 2]. It involves skills like empathy, self-control, and self-awareness, playing a pivotal role in an individual's psychological health and adaptive functioning. EI significantly contributes to improved life outcomes, mental well-being, and job satisfaction [3, 4]. Different EI models, such as the ability model by Mayer and the trait model by Petrides, offer insights into how EI integrates with personality traits and self-perception [5, 6]. In nursing, EI's application is invaluable. Nurses with high EI can foster positive interactions with colleagues and patients,

effectively manage stress and burnout, and enhance patient care [7, 8]. This aspect of EI underscores its importance in interpersonal relationships and stress management in professional environments. Moreover, EI is linked to better job performance and staff satisfaction [9]. The broader impacts of EI are seen in mental health and overall well-being. Disruptions in EI can lead to mental health disorders, one of the most common causes of disability globally [10, 11]. Proficiency in EI equips individuals to handle life's stressors and emotional challenges better, enhancing psychological health. Studies have indicated an inverse relationship between EI and depression, highlighting EI's role as a protective factor against mental health issues [12, 13]. The significance of EI

in mental health is further underscored by its interplay with cognition, behavior, and emotional regulation. Emotional health, defined as the ability to express emotions positively and healthily, is crucial for overall well-being. Difficulty in emotional expression can lead to mental illnesses [14], emphasizing the need for EI in maintaining mental health. EI is essential for personal and professional success, especially in professions like nursing. Its influence on mental health, workplace dynamics, and interpersonal relationships is substantial. As a skill set intertwining with personality and emotional self-perception, EI's role in enhancing life satisfaction, coping mechanisms, and overall well-being cannot be overstated. Its growing importance over the past two decades highlights its relevance in modern social and professional contexts [10-17].

This study was designed to investigate the emotional intelligence as a predictor of mental health in the nursing profession.

METHODS

The female hospital nurses were selected randomly from different registered hospitals of Hyderabad, Pakistan. The age ranges of participants were between 20 years-45 years. Mean age=29.98; SD=6.37. The study was approved from Institute of Clinical Psychology, University of Karachi vide Letter No. ICP-1(101)/5470. After getting permission from the authorities of registered hospitals, the researcher took the participant's consent for further study procedure. The data were collected from the participants. The demographic form, Trait emotional intelligence, and Aga Khan University anxiety depression were administered. The trait emotional intelligence questionnaire short form is 7 point, Likert-style and ranging from 1 = Completely Disagree to 7 = Completely Agree. This scale is based on a 30-item questionnaire. It is designed to measure global emotional intelligence. AKUADS scale is an indigenously developed screening instrument. It is used in the community for assessing psychiatric morbidity. This questionnaire consists of 25 questions, consists of 13 psychological (anxiety and depression) and 12 somatic. There are 4 choices for example: (never= 0, sometimes= 1, mostly=2, and always=3. About confidentiality, informed to the respondents.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistical analyses were applied to assess the entire sample's demographic characteristics. For interpretation of the data, linear regression analysis was used. Table 1 outlines demographic data of the study's participants, showing that 77.9% are Muslims, 21.7% Christians, and 0.5% Hindus. In terms of marital status, 60.8% are married, 35.0% unmarried, 2.8% divorced, and

1.4% widowed. Family systems are nearly evenly split with 53.5% nuclear and 46.5% joint. Socioeconomically, 94.5% are middle class, and 5.5% are lower class, with no representation from the upper class.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of samples

Variables	Categories	F (%)
Religion	Muslims	169 (77.9)
	Christians	47 (21.7)
	Hindus	1 (0.5)
Marital Status	Unmarried	76 (35.0)
	Married	132 (60.8)
	Divorced	6 (2.8)
	Widow	3 (1.4)
Family System	Nuclear	116 (53.5)
	Joint	101 (46.5)
Socioeconomic Status	Lower	12 (5.5)
	Middle	205 (94.5)
	Upper	000 (000)

The table 2 demonstrated that Cronbach's alpha for TEI and AKUADS for the current study.

Table 2: Psychometric properties of trait emotional intelligence and mental health scale

Scale	Number of items	A
Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI)	30	.811
Aga Khan University Anxiety Depression Scale (AKUADS)	25	.904

Table 3 summarizes a linear regression analysis indicating Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a strong predictor of Mental Health (MH) among hospital nurses. The analysis involved 217 participants and showed that EI accounts for 40.9% ($R^2 = .409$) of the variance in MH. The regression coefficient (B) is -639, and the model is statistically significant ($F = 148.659$, $p < .001$, one-tailed). This suggests that EI is a significant determinant of mental health outcomes in this population.

Table 3: Summary of linear regression analyses with emotional intelligence (EI)

Predictor	N	R ²	B	F	Sig.
EI	217	.409	-639	148.659	.000*

Note: $p < .001^*$ (1 tailed)

Emotional Intelligence (Predictor)
Mental Health (Dependent Variable)

DISCUSSION

The clear indication by research shows that female hospital nurses work in stressful circumstances, leading them to develop the problems of mental health [18]. Therefore, it is alarming situation with different mental health variables to improve their condition, and one of them is capacity of emotional intelligence. Moreover, emotional intelligence is a significant contributing factor in the nursing populations' physical, mental health and well-being. The hypothesis

investigated the association between hospital nurses' emotional intelligence (EI) and mental health (MH). According to the results of the linear regression analysis (Table 3), there is a very strong significant predictive connection between EI and MH. Previous studies revealed a significant link between emotional intelligence and mental health. Results from this study correlate these conclusions [19, 20]. The nursing profession requires a lot of time and effort. Due to their many responsibilities, they devote their energies to maintaining their emotional, mental, and physical well-being. As a result, nurses struggle to cope with demanding and stressful conditions. They are more susceptible to pressures as a result, and carrying out the responsibilities puts their mental health (in the current study, this means anxiety and depression) at greater risk [21]. Due to its specific working levels and requirement of engagement in the environment with diverse sort of people (clients and their families, coworkers, etc.) under a high stress environment, the nursing profession is challenging. Ultimately, the key to enduring ups and downs is emotional intelligence. This study investigates the links between emotional intelligence and mental health [22]. The goal of the study was to better understand emotional intelligence as a talent, how it enhances productivity at various levels of personal, social, emotional, and professional functioning, and how nurses can improve their mental health. The model of trait emotional intelligence, or EI, which emphasizes the perception of one's own and other people's emotional worlds, serves as the backdrop for this investigation [23]. People with emotional intelligence can better comprehend, control, and utilize their emotions as they move from thinking to doing. Unfortunately, there isn't much information available in Pakistan about these variables. The findings of the current study combined all previously existing but unrelated relationships between emotional intelligence and mental health. Age, marital status, years of experience, and job position are just a few examples of the various demographic factors at play. A study revealed the distribution of the personal traits of nurses and nurse supervisors, for instance. The majority of participants were nurses who were female and aged 20 to 30. Other characteristics include: qualified (56.2%) and having between five and ten years of experience (41.1%). Similar to marital status, employment positions were also 68.2% (married) and 90.4% (staff nurses). Critical care units made up the largest percentage [24]. There were significant differences in EI levels between staff nurses and nurse managers, according to research on the function of emotional intelligence in conflict management. 90% of nurse managers had a high level of emotional intelligence, compared to 75.1% of staff nurses. Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are the

five components of EI [25]. The highest scores were for motivation (23.74.2 and 23.23.3), and there was no other significant difference save controlling emotions. In the survey, workload (41.5%), management system (13%), shortage of resources (33.3%), and schedule (29.2%) are among the other factors that contribute to occupational conflict. In daily routine lives, emotional intelligence is essential to people's functioning. A study found a significant correlation with happiness, and life satisfaction. Therefore, EQ training for the nursing department is advantageous and requires good planning for making their lives healthy. These kinds of training may be helpful for them and support developing trustworthy relationships, understanding each other in a better way, dealing with their emotions themselves and with others, managing others' behavior effectively, and empathizing with the feelings of others' people [26]. Emotions are a vital part of personality. Therefore, further studies in the future would be interesting and are precious to examine the more domains of personality that may have different relationships with emotional intelligence. In this study, as it was mentioned that trait emotional intelligence is the global trait EI and the array of different traits or skills.

CONCLUSIONS

It was found out that the hospital nurses with have high emotional intelligence are suffering less with the mental health problems and were found to be at lower risk of anxiety and depression. The current study demonstrated a protective effect of higher emotional intelligence with regards to the mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

Authors Contribution

Conceptualization: A, RA

Methodology: A, RA, UA

Formal analysis: A, RA

Writing-review and editing: RA, UA

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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