

Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction among Nurses of a Tertiary Hospital

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ABSTRACT

Background: Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a determinant of occupational outcome in nursing, including job satisfaction, staff retention, and quality of patient care. Despite its relevance, the relationship between EI and job satisfaction among nurses in Nepalese tertiary hospital settings remains insufficiently explored. This study aimed to assess the levels of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among nurses and examine their association with demographic factors.

Methods: A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted among 200 nurses at Bir Hospital, Kathmandu, using non-probability convenience sampling. Following ethical clearance from the IRB of NAMS, data were collected through self-administered questionnaires from November to December 2024 using Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) to assess EI and job satisfaction, respectively. Chi-square tests and Pearson's correlation coefficient were employed for statistical analysis using SPSS version 20.

Results: The majority of participants were aged 20-29 years (62%), held Bachelor of Nursing qualification (79%), were married (67%), and had fewer than five years of nursing experience (51%). Emotional Intelligence levels were average in 77.5%, high in 15.5%, and low in 7.0%. Job satisfaction was average in 97% and high in 3%. Participants had a mean age of 28.96. Emotional Intelligence was significantly associated with age ($p=0.021$), total nursing experience ($p=0.023$), and in-service training ($p=0.032$). A moderate positive correlation existed between EI and job satisfaction ($r=0.429$, $p<0.001$).

Conclusion: Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with job satisfaction among nurses. Higher emotional intelligence corresponds to higher job satisfaction, likely due to enhanced stress management abilities, stronger interpersonal relationships and better adaptation to workplace challenges.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, nurses, tertiary hospital

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, regulate, and use emotions that improve nursing performance, stress management, and workplace well-being worldwide.¹ Job satisfaction, based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, significantly impacts healthcare quality, staff retention, and professional fulfillment.² EI includes self-

awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, all of which aid effective communication and emotional control in high-stress environments like nursing.^{3,4} In Nepal, a cross-sectional study at a tertiary hospital in Kathmandu found that 40% of healthcare providers had low EI, while only 32% had high EI.⁵ Other studies report moderate satisfaction among

nurses, with 54.5% in eastern Nepal ⁶ and 46.9% in tertiary government hospitals⁷, highlighting morale challenges in the nursing field. Although international research shows a strong positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction ^{1,8} this link is still under explored in Nepalese tertiary hospitals. This study aims to assess the levels of EI and job satisfaction among nurses.

METHODS

This cross-sectional analytical study was conducted at Bir Hospital, a 960-bedded government tertiary hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal. Bir Hospital was selected because it is the largest government tertiary referral hospital in the country, employing 425 nurses across a wide range of clinical specialties. A total of 200 registered nurses including those holding Proficiency Certificate Level, B.Sc. Nursing, Bachelor in Nursing, and Master in Nursing qualifications were recruited using non-probability convenience sampling. Nursing in-charges (n=42) and supervisors (n=3) and nurses on leave at the time of data collection were excluded. The sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula based on a 35% prevalence of high job satisfaction ²¹, yielding a required sample of 200. Data were collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire comprising three parts: socio-demographic information (10 items), the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test ^{19, 24, 27} (SSEIT; 33 items on a 5-point Likert scale); Three items (5,28,33) are reversed score⁹, and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale).²⁸ The SSEIT demonstrated acceptable test-retest reliability ($r = 0.73$) and internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.90$); pretesting on 20 nurses at the National Trauma Center confirmed excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.9$). ²⁷ Ethical clearance was obtained from the IRB of NAMS, and written informed consent was secured from all participants. Data was collected from 10 November to 6 December 2024 and analyzed using SPSS version 20, employing descriptive statistics, Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests, and Pearson's product-moment correlation.

RESULTS

Participants were predominantly from the age group 20–29 (62%), Majority had B. Sc. qualified (79%), married (67%), with <5 years of experience (51%). The majority (77.5%) of the respondents exhibited an average level of emotional intelligence, meanwhile, 7.0% had a low level, potentially reflecting challenges in emotional awareness, self-regulation, or empathy.

The overwhelming majority, 97% of the respondents reported an average level of job satisfaction, while only 3% indicated high job satisfaction. The level of emotional intelligence shows statistically significant association with the age of the respondents ($p = 0.021$), total working experiences in nursing ($p = 0.023$), and in-service training ($p = 0.032$) whereas no statistically significant association has been observed with educational qualification ($p = 0.422$), marital status ($p = 0.924$), work experiences in currently working hospital ($p = 0.128$), job status ($p = 0.966$), working ward/unit ($p = 0.744$) and number of the patients assigned in each shift ($p = 0.132$). A moderate positive correlation was observed between EI and job satisfaction ($r = 0.429$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 1: Socio- demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=200)

Variables	Number	Percentage
Age in years		
20-29	124	62.0
30-39	71	35.0
40-49	5	3.0
Mean age ± SD = 28.96 ± 4.25		
Educational qualification		
PCL Nursing	37	18.0
Bachelor in Nursing	159	79.0
Master in Nursing	4	2.0
Marital status		
Married	134	67.0
Unmarried	66	33.0
Total working experiences		
< 5 years	102	51.0
5-10 years	6	3.0
10-15 years	69	34.0
> 15 years	23	11.0
Median (Q1, Q3) 1 (1,2); Range = 3		
Working experiences in currently working hospital		
< 5 years	173	86.0
5-10 years	5	2.0
10-15 years	16	8.0
> 15 years	6	3.0
Median (Q1, Q3) 1 (1,1); Range = 1		
Job status		
Temporary	149	74.5
Permanent	51	25.5
Working ward/unit		
Critical *	85	42.5
General **	115	57.5
In-Service training		
Yes	150	75.0
No	50	25.0

* Medical (Male, Female), Surgical, ENT, CTVS, Oncology, Gastro, Neuro, Nephro, Cabin; ** ICU, CCU, Post-operative, Hemodialysis, Operation Theater

Table 2: Respondents’ Level of Emotional Intelligence (n = 200)

Level of Emotional Intelligence	Number	Percentage
Low	14	7.0
Average	155	77.5
High	31	15.5
Median, IQR = 121, 14		
Minimum to Maximum = 67 to 153		

Table 3: Respondents' Level of Job Satisfaction (n=200)

Level of Job Satisfaction	Number	Percentage
Average	194	97.0
High	6	3.0
Median, IQR = 54, 15		
Minimum to Maximum = 28 to 84		

Table 4: Association of Socio-demographic Variables with Level of Emotional Intelligence (n = 200)

Variables	Emotional Intelligence		χ^2 value	p-value
	Low to Average No. (%)	High No. (%)		
Age				
Below 30 years	113 (88.98)	14 (11.02)	5.323	0.021 ^a
30 years and Above	56 (76.71)	17 (23.29)		
Educational qualification				
Below Bachelor Bachelor and above	32 (88.88)	4 (11.12)	0.646	0.422
	137 (83.54)	27 (16.46)		
Marital Status				
Unmarried	56 (84.84)	10 (15.16)	0.009	0.924
Married	113 (84.33)	21 (15.67)		
Total working experiences in Nursing				
Less than 5 years	92 (90.19)	10 (9.80)	5.157	0.023 ^a
5 years and above	77 (78.57)	21 (21.43)		
Work experiences in currently working hospital				
Less than 5 years	149 (86.13)	24 (13.87)	2.591	0.108
5 years and above	20 (74.07)	7 (25.92)		
Job Status				
Temporary	126 (84.56)	23 (15.44)	0.002	0.966
Permanent	43 (84.31)	8 (15.68)		
Working unit/ward				
Critical	71 (83.53)	14 (16.47)	0.106	0.744
General	98 (85.22)	17 (14.78)		
In-service training				
No Yes	47 (94.0)	3 (6.0)	4.594	0.041 ^b
	122 (81.33)	28 (18.67)		

^a Level of significant < 0.05; ^b Fisher's Exact test

Table 5: Association of Socio-demographic Variables with Level of Job Satisfaction (n = 200)

Variables	Job Satisfaction		χ^2 Value	<i>p-value</i>
	Average No. (%)	High No. (%)		
Age (years)				
Below 30	124 (97.64)	3 (2.36)	0.486	0.670 ^b
30 and above	70 (95.89)	3 (4.11)		
Educational qualification				
Below Bachelor	35 (97.22)	1 (2.78)	0.007	0.931
Bachelor and above	159 (96.95)	5 (3.04)		
Marital status				
Unmarried	63 (95.45)	3 (4.54)	0.809	0.398 ^b
Married	131 (97.76)	3 (2.24)		
Total working experiences in Nursing				
Less than 5 years	99 (97.06)	3 (2.94)	0.002	0.174 ^b
5 and above		3 (3.06)		
Work experiences in currently working hospital				
Less than 5 years	167 (94.89)	6 (5.11)	0.965	1.00 ^b
5 and above	27 (100.0)	0		
Job status				
Temporary	146 (97.98)	3 (2.01)	1.954	0.174 ^b
Permanent	48 (94.12)	3 (5.88)		
Working unit/ward				
Critical	81 (95.29)	4 (4.71)	1.478	0.405 ^b
General	113 (98.26)	2 (1.74)		
In-service training				
No	50 (100.0)	0	2.062	0.340 ^b
Yes	144 (96.0)	6 (4.0)		

^a Level of significant < 0.05; ^b Fisher’s Exact test

Table 6: Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction (n=200)

Variables	Correlation	p-value
Job Satisfaction	.429**	<0.001
Emotional Intelligence		

Significant using the Pearson’s correlation test at p <0.01 (two-tailed)

DISCUSSION

The present study found that the majority (77.5%) of staff nurses demonstrated an average level of emotional intelligence (EI), while 15.5% exhibited a high level. International studies report considerably higher EI levels than those found in

the present study: nurses in India demonstrated high EI at rates of 59% and 63.1%, while other studies reported average or above-average EI in 31% of participants. These discrepancies may reflect differences in training availability,

workplace culture, and the emotional demands of different healthcare environments. However, some studies reported low levels of EI among nurses, which contradicts the present findings.¹¹ These variations may be attributed to differences in workplace environments, availability of EI training, job-related stress, and cultural factors.

The present study shows that 97% of respondents reported an average level of job satisfaction, while 3% had a high level. This finding is consistent with studies conducted in comparable settings. A study in India reported that 65% of nurses had moderate job satisfaction and 35% reported high satisfaction²¹, while another study reported that 95.11% of participants were satisfied with their jobs, including both high and low levels of satisfaction. The observed levels of job satisfaction in this study may be influenced by factors such as heavy workloads, inadequate staffing, low financial incentives, limited career advancement, and lack of organizational support.

In the present study, EI was significantly associated with age ($p = 0.021$) and total nursing experience ($p = 0.023$), but not with educational qualification ($p = 0.422$), marital status ($p = 0.924$), job status ($p = 0.966$), or working unit ($p = 0.744$). Regarding age, studies conducted in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, and Iran similarly reported a significant association between age and EI ($p = 0.021$ and $p = 0.003$, respectively),^{10,11} and a study at a tertiary hospital in Kathmandu corroborated this finding ($p = 0.003$).²⁴ Increased age is generally associated with greater professional maturity and accumulated experience, which may facilitate the development of emotional competence. Studies found no significant relationship between nursing experience and emotional intelligence (EI), which contrasts with the present study.¹⁰ However, another study reported a significant association between years of nursing experience and EI, while finding no link between marital status and EI results consistent with the current findings.¹¹ In contrast to our results, some research has shown that higher education levels are associated with higher EI²⁶, though other studies reported no such association. Additionally, gender and job experience were found to significantly influence

EI scores in some studies, which contradicts the findings of the present study.¹³

In the present study, no statistically significant association was found between job satisfaction and any socio-demographic variable, including age ($p = 0.670$), educational qualification ($p = 0.931$), marital status ($p = 0.398$), total nursing experience ($p = 0.174$), or in-service training ($p = 0.340$). This is consistent with findings from Chitwan Medical College, which also reported no significant association between job satisfaction and age, marital status, or work experience among nurses.¹⁶ In contrast, Datuah et al. (2022) found significant associations between age, work experience, and job satisfaction,¹² which contradicts the present findings, possibly reflecting differences in organizational support structures and income levels across study settings.

The present study identified a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between EI and job satisfaction ($r = 0.429$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that nurses with higher EI tend to report greater job satisfaction. This finding is supported by Tagoe and Quarshie (2017), who reported a positive correlation between EI and job satisfaction ($r = 0.340$, $p = 0.001$) among nurses in Accra,¹⁴ and by Rakhshani et al. (2018), who found a significant correlation between EI and job satisfaction ($r = 0.240$, $p = 0.008$) among nurses in Iran.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

The majority of nurses demonstrated average levels of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence was significantly associated with age, total nursing experience, and participation in in-service training. A statistically significant moderate positive correlation was observed between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction indicating that nurses with higher emotional intelligence tend to report greater occupational satisfaction. These findings suggest that healthcare institutions should invest in structured emotional intelligence development programs as a part of continuing

nursing education to enhance both nurse well-being and the quality of patient care.

Conflict of Interest: None

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