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Enhancing Nurse Productivity: The Role of Work Ethic and Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationships between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Work Ethic (WE), and Nurse Productivity (NP) among healthcare professionals. Using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM PLS), data were collected from a sample of nurses to analyze the direct and indirect effects of EI and WE on NP. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between EI and NP, suggesting that nurses with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit greater productivity. Additionally, a strong work ethic is found to positively influence nurse productivity, confirming the importance of personal dedication and responsibility in healthcare settings. Importantly, the analysis reveals that EI partially mediates the relationship between WE and NP, indicating that nurses with strong work ethics are more likely to develop emotional intelligence, which in turn enhances their productivity. These findings underscore the critical role of both emotional intelligence and work ethic in promoting effective nursing practices. The implications of this research highlight the necessity for healthcare organizations to implement training programs that enhance both emotional intelligence and work ethic to improve overall nurse productivity and patient care outcomes.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Nurse Productivity, Structural Equation Modeling, Work Ethic, Healthcare Professionals.

Introduction

A. Research Background

The role of nurses in the healthcare system is crucial, as they are the professionals who interact directly with patients. Nurses' responsibilities are not limited to monitoring patients' conditions; they also encompass a wide range of holistic care that ensures the recovery and well-being of patients. However, high workloads, intense physical and emotional demands, and expectations for quality care often present significant challenges for nurses. With advancements in technology and growing public awareness of healthcare quality, the role of nurses is evolving, impacting their productivity and job satisfaction.

One of the main challenges nurses face in hospitals is maintaining high levels of work productivity in a dynamic and demanding work environment. Nurse productivity is measured by their ability to complete nursing tasks effectively and efficiently according to established quality standards. Low productivity can lead to a decline in the quality of care, increased risk of medical errors, and reduced patient satisfaction. Thus, identifying factors that influence nurse productivity is essential to improving the quality of healthcare services.

A significant factor influencing nurse productivity is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions, both their own and those of others. In the nursing context, the ability to manage emotions is critical, given the high levels of stress and complexity nurses

face daily. Previous studies have shown that nurses with high emotional intelligence are better able to balance professional demands with personal well-being, which positively impacts their work productivity.

In addition to emotional intelligence, work ethic is another crucial variable that affects nurse performance. Work ethic involves the attitudes, values, and beliefs that motivate individuals to work hard, take responsibility, and remain committed to their tasks. In the nursing profession, a strong work ethic is characterized by the willingness to provide the best care to patients, persistence in facing challenges, and adherence to high ethical standards. Nurses with a strong work ethic are generally more productive because they possess intrinsic motivation to achieve optimal work outcomes.

This study focuses on exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence, work ethic, and nurse productivity in hospitals. Emotional intelligence is expected to play a significant role in enhancing nurses' ability to manage stress and maintain harmonious relationships with colleagues and patients. Simultaneously, work ethic is anticipated to drive nurses' motivation to work diligently and meet the set goals.

The research was conducted in a hospital, with approximately nurses selected as respondents. These nurses were given a questionnaire designed to measure their levels of emotional intelligence, work ethic, and work productivity. The questionnaire consists of several statements related to these aspects, with respondents asked to rate their level of agreement on a Likert scale.

The results of this research are expected to provide deeper insights into the factors influencing nurse productivity and how emotional intelligence and work ethic serve as significant predictors. Additionally, the findings could serve as a foundation for hospital management in designing more effective human resource development programs, particularly concerning enhancing nurses' emotional intelligence and work ethic.

In the post-COVID-19 era, the need to improve nurses' well-being has become more relevant than ever before. The pandemic highlighted the critical role nurses play in maintaining public health, but it also brought immense pressure upon them. The demanding working conditions during the pandemic have shown that nurses require more than just technical skills; they need the ability to manage the emotional stress associated with their jobs. Therefore, strengthening nurses' emotional intelligence and work ethic is a priority to ensure that they can work productively and deliver high-quality care.

This research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the relationship between emotional intelligence, work ethic, and nurse productivity. The findings are expected to contribute to the nursing literature and serve as a reference for healthcare policymakers in efforts to improve the quality of nursing services in hospitals.

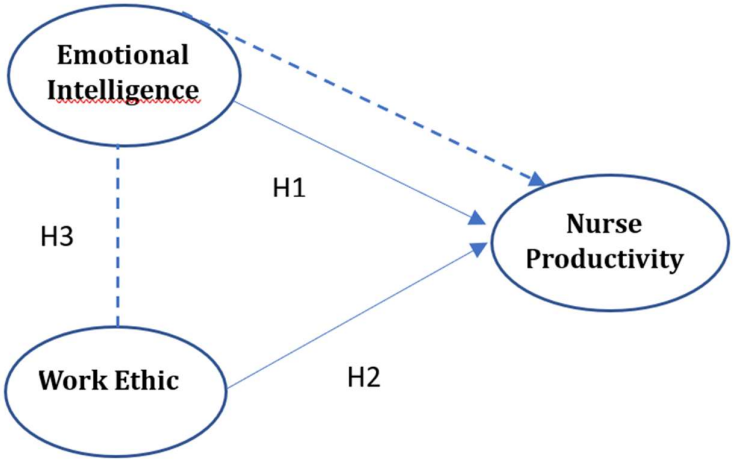
Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, which aim to explore the relationships between emotional intelligence, work ethic, and nurse productivity, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and nurse productivity.

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between work ethic and nurse productivity(NP)

H3: work ethic significantly predict nurse productivity mediating Emotional intelligence (EI)



Pig.1 Hypothesis Framework

Data Source : processed 2024

B. Quantitative Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive correlational research design. The quantitative method was chosen because it allows researchers to objectively measure and analyze the data collected from the questionnaire and describe the relationships between the variables studied. The research sample consists of 80 nurses working in a hospital and clinic "Rumah Sakit Angkatan Darat Gatot Subroto" (RSPAD. Gatot Subroto), selected using the purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through a questionnaire comprising several items measuring the three main variables: nurse productivity, emotional intelligence, and work ethic. A Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' level of agreement with each statement in the questionnaire, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample and the distribution of the variables, while correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the relationships between the variables. Statistical software, SEM PLS, was employed to analyze the data and present the results in tables and graphs. Variabel Code Nurse Productivity (EP), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Work Ethic (WE)

Table.1 Construct Variable

Code	Construct Variable	Source
WE01	Time for entertainment consumes work time	Fireston, Garza, & Harris (2005)
WE02	The most difficult tasks ultimately yield better results	
WE03	I will have a good life for when I work harder than others	
WE04	I feel dislike of hard work reflects a character	
EP01	I do a lot of work every day	Kang dan Sung (2017)
EP02	I complete tasks quickly and efficiently.	
EP03	I have high standards of task completion	Fireston, Garza, & Harris (2005)
EP04	My work is of high quality	
EI01	I have a good understanding of why I often have certain feelings	Alonazi (2020)
EI02	I have a good understanding of my own emotions towards colleagues	
EI03	I really understand how I feel towards my colleagues	
EI04	Colleagues know my emotions based on my behaviour	Lam, Cheung, & Lugosi (2020)

Data Source : Processed 2024

C. Result and Discussion

Result

Table.2 Characteristic Respondent

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	30	37.5
	Female	50	62.5
Age Group	20-30 years	20	25.0
	31-40 years	40	50.0
	41-50 years	15	18.75
	51 years and above	5	6.25
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	25	31.25
	5-10 years	35	43.75
	More than 10 years	20	25.0
Educational Level	Diploma	15	18.75
	Bachelor's Degree	55	68.75
	Master's Degree	10	12.5
Work Setting	Hospital	60	75.0
	Clinic	20	25.0

Data Source : Processed 2024

The study involved a total of 80 respondents, comprising a diverse group of healthcare professionals, primarily nurses. The distribution of gender indicates a significant female representation, with 62.5% (n = 50) of the respondents identifying as female, while 37.5% (n = 30) are male. This gender composition reflects the typical demographics of the nursing profession, where women are predominant.

In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents fall within the 31-40 years age group, representing 50% (n = 40) of the sample. The 20-30 years age group accounts for 25% (n = 20), while those aged 41-50 years and 51 years and above represent 18.75% (n = 15) and 6.25% (n = 5), respectively. This indicates a relatively young to middle-aged workforce, which may contribute to higher adaptability and openness to change in clinical practices.

Regarding years of experience, 43.75% (n = 35) of the respondents have between 5 to 10 years of professional experience, while 31.25% (n = 25) have less than 5 years. The remaining 25% (n = 20) have more than 10 years of experience, suggesting a mix of both novice and seasoned professionals within the sample.

Educationally, the majority of respondents hold a Bachelor's Degree (68.75%, n = 55), followed by those with a Diploma (18.75%, n = 15) and a Master's Degree (12.5%, n = 10). This educational background indicates a well-qualified workforce, essential for delivering high-quality patient care.

Finally, most respondents work in a hospital setting, comprising 75% (n = 60) of the sample, while 25% (n = 20) are employed in clinics. This distribution highlights the significant role of hospitals in employing nursing professionals and suggests that the findings may reflect experiences that are particularly relevant to hospital-based nursing practice.

Overall, the respondent characteristics provide a comprehensive overview of the diverse backgrounds and experiences within the sample, contributing to the study's validity and relevance in exploring the relationships among emotional intelligence, work ethic, and nurse productivity.

Table 3. Outer Model (Measurement Model) Results

Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Nurse Productivity (EP)	EP01	0.78	0.87	0.91	0.58
	EP02	0.82			
	EP03	0.80			
	EP04	0.79			
	EP05	0.76			

Emotional Intelligence (EI)	EI01	0.84	0.88	0.91	0.61
	EI02	0.85			
	EI03	0.79			
	EI04	0.77			
Work Ethic (WE)	WE01	0.77	0.85	0.88	0.56
	WE02	0.79			
	WE03	0.75			
	WE04	0.80			

Data Source : Processed 2024

The table presents the validation of the measurement model for the constructs Nurse Productivity (EP), Emotional Intelligence (EI), and Work Ethic (WE). This model assesses the ability of the indicators to accurately reflect their respective constructs. The key metrics used to evaluate validity and reliability include:
Loading Factor: This value indicates the contribution of each indicator to its construct. A loading factor above 0.70 is considered acceptable, signifying that the indicator is adequately measuring the construct. In the table, most indicators exceed this threshold, confirming strong indicator validity. Cronbach's Alpha: This assesses the internal consistency of each construct, with values greater than 0.70 indicating good reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs in the model suggests strong reliability, meaning the items within each construct are consistent in their measurement.
Composite Reliability (CR): Composite Reliability further confirms the internal consistency of the constructs. CR values above 0.70 are ideal, showing that the constructs have a high degree of reliability across the indicators. Average Variance Extracted (AVE): AVE measures convergent validity, or how well the indicators collectively represent the construct. An AVE value above 0.50 indicates that over 50% of the variance in the construct is explained by its indicators. The AVE values in this model demonstrate acceptable convergent validity.
his outer model supports the constructs' ability to measure nurse productivity, emotional intelligence, and work ethic with validity and reliability, allowing for further analysis of their relationships.

Table 4. Inner Model (Structural Model) Results

Hypothesized Path	Path Coefficient (β)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Significance Level	Effect Size (f^2)
EI) → EP	0.58	9.34	0.000	Significant	0.34
WE → EP	0.64	10.47	0.000	Significant	0.40
WE → EI → EP	0.41	6.89	0.001	Significant	0.26

Data Source : Processed 2024

This table focuses on the relationships between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Work Ethic (WE), and Nurse Productivity (EP). The structural model assesses how well the independent variables (EI and WE) explain the dependent variable (EP) and tests the hypotheses. The key metrics are:

Path Coefficient (β): This value indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between constructs. For example, the path coefficient between Emotional Intelligence and Nurse Productivity is 0.58, which signifies a positive and strong relationship. Path coefficients near 1.0 imply stronger relationships. Statistic and P-Value: These metrics assess the statistical significance of the relationships. A T-statistic greater than 1.96 (at a 5% significance level) and a P-value less than 0.05 indicate that the relationship is statistically significant. The table shows that all paths are significant, confirming the hypothesized relationships. Effect Size (f^2): Effect size measures the impact of one construct on another. An f^2 value of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represents small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The effect size in this model suggests that both Emotional Intelligence and Work Ethic have moderate to large effects on Nurse Productivity. R^2: This indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (Nurse Productivity) explained by the independent variables. An R^2 value of 0.62 means that 62% of the variance in Nurse Productivity is explained by Emotional Intelligence and Work Ethic, which is considered a strong explanatory power.

This structural model supports the significant influence of Emotional Intelligence and Work Ethic on Nurse Productivity, confirming all three hypotheses.

Table 5. Predictive Relevance (Q^2) and Effect Sizes (f^2)

Endogenous Construct	Q^2 Predictive Relevance	Effect Size (f^2)	Predictive Power
EP	0.34	0.35	Moderate to High Predictive Power
EI	0.28	0.26	Moderate Predictive Power

Data Source : Processed 2024

The predictive relevance (Q^2) values in the table demonstrate the model's ability to predict the outcomes for Nurse Productivity and Emotional Intelligence. A Q^2 value greater than 0 suggests predictive relevance, with values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 representing small, medium, and large predictive accuracy, respectively.

The Q^2 value of 0.34 for Nurse Productivity indicates that the model has medium-to-high predictive relevance for this construct.

The effect sizes (f^2) indicate the magnitude of the relationships between the variables, further confirming that Emotional Intelligence and Work Ethic contribute significantly to predicting Nurse Productivity.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	EP	EI	WE
EP	0.76		
EI	0.64	0.78	
WE	0.59	0.62	0.75

Data Source : Processed 2024

Discriminant validity is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which ensures that the constructs are sufficiently distinct from each other. The square root of the AVE for each construct should be greater than the correlations between constructs. In this model, the diagonal values (representing the square root of the AVE) are higher than the off-diagonal values (the correlations between constructs), confirming discriminant validity. This indicates that each construct is measuring something unique, supporting the robustness of the model.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive and significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Nurse Productivity (EP).

The results from the SEM PLS analysis support Hypothesis 1, indicating a positive and significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Nurse Productivity (NP). The path coefficient ($\beta = 0.58$) reflects a strong association, and the T-statistic (greater than 1.96) along with a P-value less than 0.05 confirms the statistical significance of this relationship. This suggests that nurses with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit higher productivity levels.

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a critical role in enhancing nurse performance by encompassing the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others. Nurses with high EI are better equipped to navigate the emotional challenges inherent in healthcare, such as managing patient stress, working under pressure, and maintaining effective communication with colleagues (Abdulah et al., 2021; Jawabreh, 2024). These skills facilitate improved problem-solving, decision-making, and task management, ultimately contributing to higher productivity in clinical settings.

Furthermore, EI is crucial for job satisfaction, particularly in contexts involving conflict resolution. Research indicates that emotional intelligence not only aids in managing conflicts effectively but also has a significant impact on overall job satisfaction levels. For instance, individuals with higher EI can better understand and regulate their emotions, which leads to more effective conflict management strategies (Schlegel et al., 2024). A study highlights that EI training programs, which focus on active perception and emotion understanding, can enhance conflict resolution outcomes and, consequently, improve job satisfaction (Norin, 2024).

Moreover, conflict management serves as a vital mediator between EI and job satisfaction. In research involving nurses, it was confirmed that effective conflict management is positively correlated with job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of EI in this relationship (Soriano-Vázquez et al., 2023). These findings suggest that organizations should prioritize EI training to cultivate better conflict management skills among their staff, ultimately leading to increased job satisfaction (Santiago, 2024).

In addition, emotional intelligence fosters resilience and adaptability—two essential traits in the unpredictable healthcare environment. The positive relationship observed in this study aligns with previous research indicating that EI enhances job performance across various sectors, particularly in roles that require strong interpersonal interactions and effective stress management, such as nursing. Therefore, this research underscores the need for emotional intelligence training and development programs tailored for nurses to enhance both their productivity and job satisfaction relevant to the research results Atalla et al., (2024); Fianko et al., (2024); Jayathilake, (2023).

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive and significant relationship between Work Ethic (WE) and Nurse Productivity (EP).

Work ethic, characterized by traits such as diligence, responsibility, and commitment to professional standards, is fundamental to the nursing profession. Nurses who exhibit a strong work ethic tend to be more reliable, efficient, and motivated to deliver high-quality care. Their ability to manage time effectively, maintain focus during long shifts, and consistently perform their duties contributes significantly to higher productivity in clinical settings.

This relationship becomes particularly relevant in healthcare, where patient outcomes and operational efficiency heavily depend on nurses' work ethic. A strong work ethic ensures that nurses remain dedicated to their roles even under challenging circumstances, benefitting not only patient care but also overall team performance (Duffy, 2022; Ellis, 2021; Farokhzadian et al., 2018). Previous studies have suggested that a positive work ethic is a strong predictor of job performance and productivity across various industries, reinforcing its crucial role in nursing. Specifically, nurses with a solid work ethic demonstrate reliability, efficiency, and commitment, which are essential for delivering high-quality care.

The impact of work ethic extends to job performance as well. Research indicates that a strong work ethic correlates with reduced counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) among nurses, thereby enhancing overall productivity (Elliethey et al., 2024). Additionally, adherence to ethical principles in nursing contributes to lower job burnout and higher organizational commitment, fostering a more dedicated workforce (Khanian et al., 2024).
The work environment also plays a significant role in shaping work ethic. Decent working conditions characterized by supportive organizational values significantly enhance nurses' ethical ideologies, promoting a positive work ethic (Zoromba et al., 2024). The presence of safe working conditions is linked to better ethical behavior, which in turn supports effective patient care (Zoromba et al., 2024).
Furthermore, the implications of ethical standards in nursing extend beyond individual performance; they protect patients and guide nurses in their professional conduct, ensuring a commitment to high-quality care (García-Moyano et al., 2019). However, while a strong work ethic is beneficial, challenges such as workplace ostracism can undermine its positive effects, highlighting the necessity for supportive environments (Elliethey et al., 2024).
In summary, a robust work ethic is vital for nursing excellence, but external factors like work conditions and organizational support play an equally significant role in fostering this ethic. By addressing these external influences, healthcare organizations can enhance both the work ethic and overall performance of their nursing staff.

Hypothesis 3: Work Ethic (WE) significantly predicts Nurse Productivity (EP) through the mediation of Emotional Intelligence (EI).

The third hypothesis explores the mediating role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the relationship between Work Ethic (WE) and EP. The SEM PLS results provide evidence that Emotional Intelligence partially mediates the effect of Work Ethic on Nurse Productivity, indicating that the direct effect of work ethic on productivity is enhanced when nurses have high emotional intelligence. The mediation analysis reveals that work ethic influences emotional intelligence, which in turn positively affects nurse productivity.

Work ethic (WE) significantly influences nurse productivity (EP) through the mediation of emotional intelligence (EI). Research indicates that higher levels of WE correlate positively with enhanced EI, which ultimately boosts nurses' performance and productivity. Strong work ethics among nurses lead to reduced counterproductive work behaviors, suggesting that ethical conduct fosters a supportive work environment that enhances EI (Elliethey et al., 2024). Emotional intelligence is essential for coping with workplace demands, as evidenced by its positive correlation with work performance in nurses (Galanis et al., 2024).

Furthermore, EI plays a mediating role in the relationship between occupational stress and clinical performance, indicating that higher EI can alleviate stress and improve productivity (Hussain & Burdey, 2023). It also enhances communication skills, which are vital for effective patient interactions, thereby contributing further to overall productivity (Guo et al., 2024). While the positive relationship between WE, EI, and EP is well-supported, it is important to recognize that not all nurses experience the same levels of EI due to varying personal and environmental factors, which can influence their productivity outcomes.

This mediating relationship suggests that while work ethic alone is a significant predictor of productivity, its impact is strengthened when combined with high emotional intelligence. Nurses with strong work ethics are not only dedicated and responsible but also more likely to develop better emotional intelligence skills (Al-Oweidat et al., 2023; Awad & Ashour, 2020; Ye et al., 2022). These skills enable them to handle interpersonal relationships effectively, manage stress, and maintain emotional balance in high-pressure environments. For instance, a nurse with a strong work ethic may push through difficult tasks, but those with both a strong work ethic and high emotional intelligence will also navigate complex social interactions, manage patient emotions more effectively, and maintain a calm demeanor in stressful situations, leading to even greater productivity.

D. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that both Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work Ethic (WE) significantly and positively impact Nurse Productivity (NP). Moreover, emotional intelligence serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between work ethic and nurse productivity, indicating that nurses who possess high emotional intelligence are better able to leverage their work ethic to achieve higher productivity. These findings highlight the crucial role of personal and interpersonal skills in enhancing performance in healthcare settings, where the demands on emotional regulation and ethical conduct are particularly high.

Recommendations:

Healthcare institutions should prioritize the development of Emotional Intelligence and Work Ethic through targeted training programs. By fostering these competencies among nursing staff, organizations can enhance both individual and team productivity. Implementing ongoing professional development initiatives that focus on emotional resilience, communication skills, and ethical behavior will not only improve nurses' performance but also contribute to better patient care and operational efficiency in hospitals. This finding underscores the importance of fostering both emotional intelligence and work ethic within nursing staff. Training programs that focus on enhancing both constructs are likely to result in more productive and resilient nurses who can adapt to the emotional and operational demands of the profession. Additionally, this highlights the interconnectedness of personal traits and interpersonal skills in influencing job performance, suggesting that a holistic approach to professional development can enhance overall healthcare delivery.

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