"Bridging the Gap: Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, and Their Influence on Nurses' Turnover Intentions"

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Job Satisfaction (JS), and Turnover Intentions (TI) among nurses, aiming to address critical gaps in existing literature. Demographic analysis of 177 respondents reveals a predominantly female, young, and less experienced workforce within the nursing profession. Using correlation and regression analyses, the study finds a robust positive correlation between EI and JS, with EI explaining nearly half of the variance in JS. Additionally, a significant negative correlation is identified between JS and TI, highlighting the important role of JS in mitigating nurses' intentions to leave their jobs. Furthermore, the study uncovers a moderate negative correlation between EI and TI, underscoring the potential of EI to influence nurses' turnover intentions. However, the findings also suggest the presence of unexplored factors impacting nurses' intentions to leave. This study provides valuable insights for healthcare organizations to foster EI skills among nurses, enhance JS, and ultimately reduce turnover rates. Further research is recommended to comprehensively understand the complex determinants of turnover intentions in nursing contexts.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Job Satisfaction (JS), Turnover Intentions (TI), Healthcare

Introduction:

In the contemporary landscape of healthcare, the retention of nursing staff stands as a critical challenge for healthcare organizations globally. The turnover intention among nurses, influenced by various factors, presents a significant concern due to its potential repercussions on patient care quality, organizational stability, and financial resources. Among the multitude of factors contributing to turnover intention, emotional intelligence (EI) has garnered substantial attention in recent years. Recognizing the profound impact of EI on job performance and interpersonal relationships, researchers have increasingly explored its association with turnover intention among nursing professionals.

The concept of emotional intelligence, popularized in the 1990s, encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In the high-stress, emotionally charged environment of healthcare, where interactions with patients, families, and colleagues are inherently emotional, the role of EI becomes critically important. Nurses, who are at the frontline of patient care, encounter daily challenges that test their emotional resilience, empathy, and interpersonal skills. It is within this context that understanding the impact of EI on turnover intentions becomes particularly relevant.

The significance of studying EI within the nursing profession cannot be overstated. High turnover rates among nurses not only disrupt the continuity of care but also impose significant financial burdens on healthcare institutions through the costs associated with recruiting, hiring, and training new staff. More importantly, turnover can erode the collective knowledge base and experience of nursing teams, affecting the overall quality of patient care. Therefore, identifying factors that can mitigate turnover intention is of paramount importance for healthcare management.

Emotional intelligence emerges as a potential salve for this pervasive issue. Preliminary studies have suggested that higher levels of EI are associated with better stress management, job satisfaction, and work-life balance, which in turn may lower the propensity for turnover. This article posits that nurses with high EI are better equipped to navigate the emotional complexities of patient care, foster positive interpersonal relationships with colleagues, and engage in more effective conflict resolution. These skills not only enhance individual job satisfaction but also contribute to a more supportive and cohesive workplace culture, further reducing turnover intentions.

While existing literature has established a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention, the precise mechanisms underlying this association remain inadequately understood. Job satisfaction emerges as a pivotal factor that could potentially mediate the relationship between EI and turnover intention among nurses. Job satisfaction reflects an individual's subjective evaluation of various aspects of their job, encompassing factors such as workload, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, and organizational support. Given that emotional intelligence influences one's ability to manage workplace stressors and foster positive interpersonal dynamics, it is plausible to posit that job satisfaction may serve as a mediator in the relationship between EI and turnover intention among nurses.

Moreover, this exploration into the impact of EI on turnover intention among nurses aligns with broader organizational behaviour theories that emphasize the importance of emotional competencies in leadership and team dynamics. By integrating the constructs of EI within the frameworks of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention, this study aims to offer comprehensive insights into how enhancing emotional intelligence can serve as a strategic approach to retaining nursing talent.

In synthesizing the existing body of literature and presenting new empirical research on the relationship between EI and turnover intention among nurses, this article seeks to contribute valuable knowledge to healthcare administrators, nurse leaders, and organizational behaviour scholars. The findings of this study have the potential to inform targeted interventions aimed at developing emotional intelligence competencies among nursing staff, with the ultimate goal of fostering a more stable, satisfied, and emotionally resilient nursing workforce.

Turnover intention, or the likelihood of an employee leaving their current job, is a critical issue in the healthcare sector, particularly among nurses. High turnover rates can lead to staffing shortages, increased costs, and decreased quality of patient care (Kwon & Song, 2024). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence turnover intention is of paramount importance. Several studies have suggested that EI may play a role in turnover intention (Majeed & Jamshed, 2021). For instance, a study found that nurses with higher levels of EI reported lower levels of turnover intention. Another study found that EI could reduce turnover intention by enhancing job satisfaction and organizational commitment ((Majeed & Jamshed, 2021)).

Job satisfaction, defined as the extent to which individuals like their jobs, is another critical factor in the nursing profession. It has been identified as a significant predictor of turnover intention, with higher job satisfaction associated with lower turnover intention. Job satisfaction in nursing is influenced by various factors, including workload, work environment, professional relationships, and emotional demands.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and turnover intention among nurses. By employing robust methodologies and drawing on theoretical frameworks, this research endeavours to provide valuable insights into the intricate interplay of psychological factors influencing nurses' intentions to leave their positions. Such insights are not only instrumental in informing evidence-based strategies for nurse retention but also hold implications for enhancing patient care outcomes and organizational effectiveness within healthcare settings.

Through this exploration, we hope to provide valuable insights for nursing administrators and policymakers to develop effective strategies to enhance job satisfaction, improve emotional intelligence, and consequently reduce turnover intention among nurses. The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of patient care and the well-being of nurses in the healthcare sector.

Review of literature

The relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), job satisfaction, and turnover intention among nurses has been a subject of interest in recent research. This literature review aims to provide an overview of the current state of research on this topic.

Several scholars, including (Burcea & Sabie, 2020), have argued that emotional intelligence is a key factor for success within an organization . Emotional intelligence, as defined by (Chopra & Kanji, 2010), is the innovative interplay of emotions such as fear, pain, and desire . (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018) further elaborate on this concept, describing emotional intelligence as the capacity to identify, understand, and utilize emotions in various scenarios, encompassing communication, empathy, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. In the views of numerous authors, including (Drozdowski, 2016), emotional intelligence has emerged as an essential business competency that employees need to cultivate for the prosperity of the organization .

Job satisfaction is multi-dimensional, encompassing satisfaction with the job itself, remuneration, recognition, relationships with supervisors and colleagues, and opportunities for advancement. Indicators of job satisfaction can be gauged through measures of discipline, work morale, and low employee turnover. (Mathis & Jackson, 2001) define job satisfaction as a positive emotional state resulting from an individual's appraisal of their work experience. Conversely, job dissatisfaction emerges when these expectations are unfulfilled. When these indicators are positive, it suggests a high level of job satisfaction among employees. However, if there is a lack of discipline, low work morale, and high employee turnover, it is indicative of low job satisfaction within the company.

Turnover intention, as defined by (Ramlawati et al., 2021), refers to the extent of an employee's inclination to depart from an organization. (Rahman & Nas, 2013) describe worker turnover as the definitive departure of staff from a company, which poses a significant challenge for the organization.

In their study on the application of machine learning in predicting employee turnover, (Zhao et al., 2019) posited that employee resignations play a pivotal role in constraining a company's sustainability and growth potential. They argued that employee turnover, due to its unpredictable nature and the resulting gaps it creates in an organization's skilled workforce, is one of the most significant challenges an organization can encounter throughout its existence (Zhao et al., 2019). A study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic found that job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion significantly mediated the effect of psychological empowerment (which is closely related to emotional intelligence) on turnover intention among Chinese nurses. The study suggested that intervention measures to reduce the incidence of turnover intention of nurses should include evaluations of work demands and emotional exhaustion of nurses and organization's management strategies to promote their psychological empowerment and job satisfaction (Ding & Wu, 2023).

Another study found that emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between emotional labour, job stress, burnout, and nurses' turnover intention. The study suggested that increasing emotional intelligence might critically decrease nurses' turnover intention by reducing the effect of emotional labour on burnout (Anafarta, 2015). Research has also shown that positive psychological capital, which includes factors like hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, can influence turnover intention. One study found that turnover intention correlated with emotional labour and had no significant relationship with positive psychological capital (Chauhan et al., 2022).

Another study examined the mediating role of leader-member exchange (LMX) in the relationship between emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. It presents a study conducted on the staff of Sayeh Sabz Oloum Company in Tehran, Iran. The key findings include: Higher emotional intelligence among staff leads to reduced turnover intention and increased job satisfaction, Quality LMX contributes to lower turnover intention and higher job satisfaction and Job Satisfaction negatively correlates with turnover intention, suggesting that higher job satisfaction reduces the likelihood of employees leaving the organization. The study concludes that improving emotional intelligence and LMX quality can enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention, benefiting organizational efficiency and employee motivation. The study emphasizes the managerial implications of these findings for organizational progress (Gholipour Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2017).

Research also explored the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit), highlighting the mediating role of Political Skill (PS). It explores how EI and PS, as job resources, contribute to employees' alignment with organizational culture and values. The study, conducted in Turkey's IT sector, uses Structural Equation Modeling to analyse data from 234 employees. Findings reveal that PS partially mediates the EI-P-O Fit relationship, suggesting that employees with high EI and PS are better adapted to their organizations. This research addresses a gap in organizational studies by focusing on the interplay between EI, PS, and P-O Fit, emphasizing the importance of these factors in enhancing workplace harmony and productivity.

Another research examined the influence of emotional intelligence on turnover intention within the Vietnamese banking sector, highlighting the mediating roles of work-family conflict and job burnout, as well as the moderating effect of perceived organizational support. the study reveals that higher emotional intelligence correlates with lower turnover intention, mediated by reduced work-family conflict and job burnout. Additionally, a supportive organizational environment strengthens the negative relationship between emotional intelligence and work-family conflict, suggesting that fostering a supportive work culture can enhance employee retention and well-being. The findings offer valuable insights for service industries aiming to improve work-life balance and reduce employee burnout for sustainable development (Giao et al., 2020).

Another study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), organizational justice (OJ), and work outcomes such as job satisfaction and turnover intentions. It presents a study conducted on 556 Malaysian service sector employees, using structural equation modelling to test hypotheses. The findings reveal that EI significantly impacts all OJ dimensions—distributive, procedural, and interactional justice—as well as job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Notably, distributive justice partially mediates the relationship between EI and the work outcomes. The study contributes to understanding how trait EI influences workplace attitudes and the distinct roles of OJ dimensions, emphasizing the importance of EI in shaping employees' perceptions of fairness and their subsequent work-related attitudes and intentions (Mustafa et al., 2023).

These findings suggest that interventions aimed at improving emotional intelligence and managing job stress and emotional labour could potentially reduce turnover intention among nurses. However, more research is needed to fully understand these relationships and develop effective interventions.

In conclusion, the literature suggests a complex interplay between Emotional Intelligence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among nurses. Further research is needed to explore these relationships and develop effective strategies to enhance job satisfaction and Emotional Intelligence, thereby reducing turnover intention among nurses.

As a result of the literature review the hypotheses are formed as follows:

H1: Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on job satisfaction.

H2: job satisfaction has a negative effect on Turnover intentions.

H3: Emotional Intelligence have significant impact on Turnover intentions.

Research Design and Methodology

Data Collection Methodology.

A predictive questionnaire was utilized to examine the hypothesized relationships of the study. The proposed model was tested using a purposive sampling technique, collecting data from nurses working in private hospitals in Kerala, India. The inclusion criteria for the study were a minimum of six months of clinical work experience and a willingness to participate in the study.

Prior to the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Each respondent was asked to evaluate the clarity, appropriateness, and applicability of the survey items. The final version of the instrument was then used for the actual data collection. Out of 225 distributed questionnaires, 192 were received, yielding a response rate of 85%. Out of these, 177 questionnaires were deemed valid for comprehensive data analysis.

The scales used in the study were derived from previous literature. The questionnaire comprised 28 items, with responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from '1 = completely disagree' to '5 = completely agree'. Emotional intelligence was

measured using the 16-item Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by (Wong & Law, 2017) the scale has good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72. The job satisfaction measured using questionnaire developed by Schriesheim and Tsui (Schriesheim & Tsui, 1980) is composed of six items. These items require respondents to express their level of satisfaction with various aspects of their job, including the intensity and pressure of work, relationships with leaders and colleagues, salary, and opportunities for promotion and development (Schriesheim & Tsui, 1980). Responses are gathered using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 signifies 'very dissatisfied' and 5 indicates 'very satisfied'. A higher score on this scale implies greater job satisfaction. This questionnaire is extensively utilized in China to measure job satisfaction and has demonstrated good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78 (Dong & Wu, 2010). Nurses' turnover intention was measured using a 6-item scale adapted from the 15-item scale developed by (Roodt, 2004).The reliability and validity of this 6-item scale have been confirmed by previous research (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to analyse statistical data. Correlation and regression analysis were used to determine the impact of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction on turnover intention.

Results

Table 1 Characteristics of Respondents

Variables		Number of respondents	Percentage of the respondents
Gender	Male	25	14
	Female	152	86
	Total	**177**	**100**
Age	up to 30	115	65
	31-40	40	23
	41-50	14	8
	Above 50	8	4
	Total	**177**	**100**
Educational Qualification	Diploma	25	14
	Graduate	132	75
	Post Graduate	20	11
	Total	**177**	**100**
Annual income	Upto 2 lakhs	62	35
	Above 200000 - below 350000	75	42
	Above 3500000	40	23
	Total	**177**	**100**
Work Experience	Up to 5 years	120	68
	6-10 years	28	16
	11-15 years	17	9
	Above 15	12	7
	Total	**177**	**100**

The demographic details describe that among 177 respondents, predominantly female, making up 86% (152) of the total, with males representing a smaller fraction at 14% (25). The age distribution indicates a youthful demographic, with 65% (115) of respondents up to 30 years old, followed by those aged 31-40 at 23% (40), 41-50 at 8% (14), and a minority above 50 years old at 4% (8). In terms of education, a significant majority of 75% (132) are graduates, complemented by 14% (25) with diplomas and 11% (20) holding postgraduate qualifications. The annual income data reveals that 35% (62) of participants earn up to 2 lakhs, 42% (75) fall into the bracket above 200,000 to below 350,000, and 23% (40) earn above 3,500,000. Regarding work experience, a substantial 68% (120) have up to 5 years of experience, 16% (28) have 6-10 years, 9% (17) have 11-15 years, and 7% (12) possess over 15 years of experience, highlighting a relatively young and less experienced workforce.

Testing of Hypothesis
H1: Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on job satisfaction.

Table 2 Correlations between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Job satisfaction (JS)

Variables	N	R	P value
Emotional Intelligence (EI)			
Job satisfaction (JS)	177	0.681	0.000

The correlation between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Job Satisfaction (JS) is 0.681, which is a strong positive correlation. This means that as Emotional Intelligence increases, Job Satisfaction also tends to increase, and vice versa.

The p-value is 0.000, which is less than the commonly used significance level of 0.05. This means that the correlation is statistically significant.

Table 3 Analysing the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.681	0.462	0.44	0.483

a. Predictors: Emotional Intelligence (EI)
b: Dependent variable: Job Satisfaction (JS)

The regression analysis results indicate that Emotional Intelligence (EI) explains about **46.2%** (R^2 = 0.462) of the variance in Job Satisfaction (JS). This means that nearly half of the changes in Job Satisfaction can be predicted from the Emotional Intelligence. H1 assess whether the emotional intelligence has significant and favourable impact on job satisfaction. According to the findings H1 is accepted, means that Emotional Intelligence has a significant impact on Job Satisfaction

H2: job satisfaction has a negative effect on Turnover intentions

Table 4 Correlations between Job satisfaction (JS) and Turnover Intention (TI)

Variables	N	R	P value
Job satisfaction (JS)			
Turnover Intention (TI)	177	-0.591	0.000

there is a statistically significant negative correlation (R = -.0591) between job satisfaction and turnover intention among the participants of this study. This suggests that nurses who are more satisfied with their jobs tend to have a lower intention to leave their positions.

Table 5 Analysing the impact of Job satisfaction (JS) on Turnover Intention (TI)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-0.591	0.349	0.335	0. 524

a. Predictors: Job Satisfaction (JS)
b. Dependent variable: Turnover Intention (TI)

The regression analysis states that there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention, with job satisfaction accounting for approximately 34.9% of the variation in turnover intention (as shown by the R Square). However, it also highlights those other factors, not included in the model, play a significant role in explaining Turnover Intention, given that the majority of the variance is unaccounted for by job satisfaction alone.

The negative correlation and the findings from the regression analysis strongly suggest that improvements in job satisfaction can be associated with reductions in turnover intention, making job satisfaction a valuable point of intervention for organizations aiming to reduce employee turnover. However, considering the substantial amount of variance in turnover intention not explained by job satisfaction alone, it's crucial for further studies to explore additional predictors of turnover intention.

H3: Emotional Intelligence have significant impact on Turnover intentions

Table 6 Correlations between Job satisfaction (JS) and Turnover Intention (TI)

Variables	N	R	P value
Emotional Intelligence (EI)			
Turnover Intention (TI)	177	-0.43	0.02

The correlation coefficient (R) is reported as -0.43, indicating a moderate negative correlation between emotional intelligence and turnover intention. The p-value (0.02) which is less than 0.05 indicates that the observed correlation is unlikely to have occurred by chance, thus providing strong evidence to support the negative relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention.

Table 6 Analysing the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Turnover Intention (TI)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-0.43	0.184	0.18	0. 359

a. Predictors: Emotional Intelligence (EI)
b. Dependent variable: Turnover Intention (TI)

The correlation coefficient (R) is reported as -0.43, indicating a moderate negative correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Turnover Intention. This implies that as Emotional Intelligence increases, Turnover Intention tends to decrease. The negative sign suggests an inverse relationship, meaning that individuals who are better at recognizing, understanding, and managing their own emotions, as well as those of others, are less likely to want to leave their jobs. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.184, suggesting that approximately 18.4% of the variance in Turnover Intention can be explained by Emotional Intelligence. This indicates that while Emotional Intelligence contributes significantly to predicting Turnover Intention, there are other unaccounted factors that influence turnover intention beyond Emotional Intelligence alone.

Discussion

The demographic analysis revealed a predominantly female and youthful workforce, with a significant portion being graduates and earning moderate annual incomes. Most respondents had relatively less work experience, with a substantial majority having up to five years of experience. Moving on to the hypotheses testing, the first hypothesis (H1) aimed to ascertain whether Emotional Intelligence (EI) positively impacts Job Satisfaction (JS). Both correlation and regression analyses supported this hypothesis, indicating a strong positive correlation between EI and JS. The regression analysis further revealed that nearly half of the variance in JS could be predicted by EI, affirming that Emotional Intelligence indeed has a significant and favourable effect on Job Satisfaction.

Regarding the second hypothesis (H2), which posited that Job Satisfaction negatively influences Turnover Intentions (TI), the results consistently supported this notion. Correlation analysis demonstrated a significant negative correlation between JS and TI, while regression analysis revealed that JS accounted for approximately 34.9% of the variance in TI. This implies that higher job satisfaction is associated with lower turnover intentions, making it a critical factor for organizations aiming to reduce employee turnover.

Lastly, the third hypothesis (H3) explored the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Turnover Intentions. Both correlation and regression analyses indicated a moderate negative correlation between EI and TI. While EI explained approximately 18.4% of the variance in TI, suggesting a meaningful contribution to predicting turnover intentions, it's essential to acknowledge the presence of other unaccounted factors influencing TI beyond Emotional Intelligence alone. Hence the results partially supported this hypothesis.

In summary, the results suggest that both Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction play pivotal roles in influencing Turnover Intentions among the respondents. Organizations seeking to mitigate turnover rates may benefit from strategies aimed at enhancing Emotional Intelligence among employees and improving overall job satisfaction. However, it's crucial to recognize that turnover intentions are influenced by a myriad of factors beyond Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction, warranting further exploration into additional predictors of turnover intentions in future research endeavours.

Conclusion

This finding contributes valuable insights into the role that emotional intelligence plays within the workplace. It underscores the importance of emotional intelligence not just in enhancing individual job performance and team dynamics but also in its potential to reduce employee turnover. This suggests that organizations might benefit from investing in training and development programs aimed at improving emotional intelligence skills among their employees, as a means to foster a more stable and satisfied workforce. However, further research is warranted to comprehensively understand the multifaceted determinants of turnover intentions in nursing contexts.

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