

# Emotionally Intelligent among Nurses and Nursing Managers: An Integrative Review

Fatimah Hassan Suwaidi

General Directorate of Health Affairs, Aseer Region, KSA

Email: fhalswaidi@moh.gov.sa

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## Abstract

**Background:** Emotionally intelligent managers are able to use, understand and manage their feelings in a way that benefits themselves and others. **Aim:** The main aim of this integrative review is to assess the level of emotional intelligence among nurse managers within current literature and previous studies. **Materials and Methods:** An integrative review was conducted; a search was performed in the electronic databases (ISI, SCOPUS, Ovid, Proquest, Google Scholar, PubMed, and SID) for articles, which were published in the period 2002-2020 in English. Nine studies met the inclusion criteria. **Results:** Of 840 articles, and after exclusion criteria; Nine articles only were met the inclusion criteria. Of these eight studies, the majority found an average level of emotional intelligence among nurse managers and nurses. **Conclusion:** It is evident that the nurses are able to experience the ability to identify and experience a wide range of emotions in everyday practice. Despite the satisfactory level of emotional intelligence among nurses, they have to improve their skills to achieve maximum level of these skills of emotional intelligence.

## Keywords

Emotionally Intelligent, Nurses, Nursing Managers

## 1. Background

Effective nursing management and leadership in the hospitals require numerous talents, skills, competencies, and types of knowledge. At its core, leadership is about relations with other people. Without followers, there are no leaders [1]. Recent theories emphasize that effective management leadership is affected by the personality of the leader, the general conditions in the workplace and the quality characteristics of employees [2].

From the above perspective, the fact that the emotionally intelligent has made

a significant contribution to effective leadership becomes one of the key characteristics of leaders, since it has been argued that support, emotionally intelligent nurse managers inspire emotions, passion and motivation helping thus to achieve goals that might otherwise have not been conquered [2].

Furthermore, emotionally intelligent managers are able to use, understand and manage their feelings in a way that benefits themselves and others. Previous studies highlighted the beneficial effect of emotional intelligence on the happiness of the individual, emotional control, decision making, job satisfaction, occupational commitment and human resources management [3]. Thus, good leaders must know themselves well and be able to choose how they will respond in social situations. These strengths then provide the foundation for working effectively with others [4].

Emotional intelligence consisted of five defining qualities: self-awareness, self regulation, motivation, social awareness, and relationship management. High emotional intelligence is an indicator of being able to handle stressful situations and competitive environments [5]. A nurse leader's emotional intelligence is closely linked to his or her ability to therapeutically handle interpersonal conflicts. EI has been shown to promote connection, rapport and trust within a healthcare team [6].

Additionally, emotional intelligence deemed to be the most related signal for a great nurse manager; the manager's role is to motivate others to accomplish their job fruitfully. Health care leaders who are emotionally intelligent can develop their organizations at many levels, starting with their own employees, and leaders who are positive and successful professionals at exploring the emotional side of concerns in expectation of individual reactions [7]. Emotional intelligence is defined as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions [8].

One study conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed that the majority of nurse leaders could easily recognize their emotions as they experience it and are aware about these emotions, and the nurse leaders know why their emotions change; however, a lesser percentage agreed that they have control over their emotions [7]. The main aim of this integrative review is to assess the level of emotional intelligence among nurse managers within current literature and previous studies.

## **2. Aim**

The main aim of this integrative review is to assess the level of emotional intelligence among nurse managers within current literature and previous studies.

## **3. Methods**

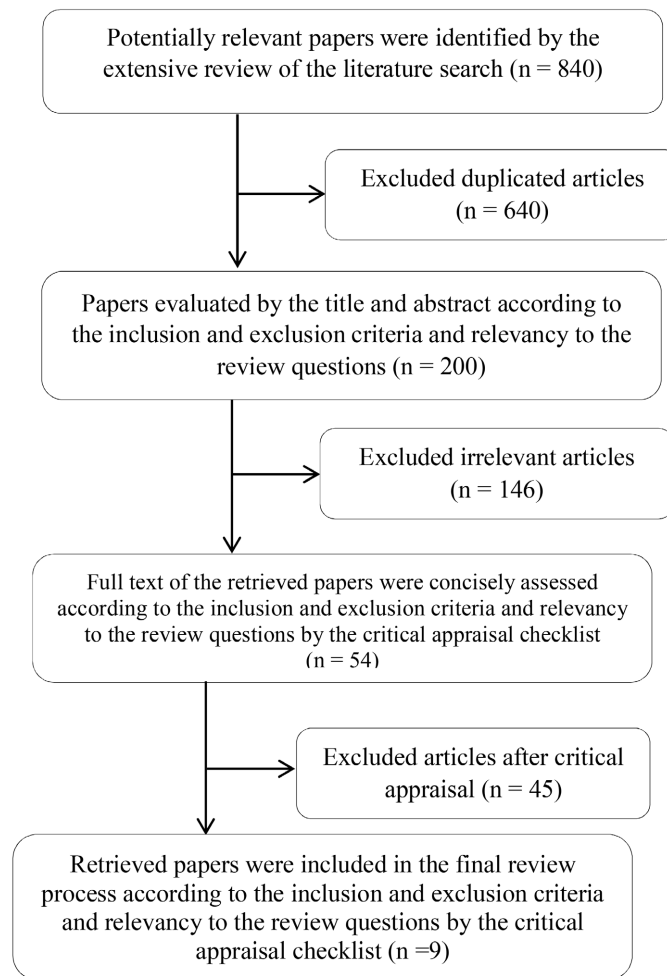
The design of the current study is an integrative review. This review has been conducted in five stages: 1) Problem identification, 2) Literature search, 3) Data evaluation, 4) Data analysis, and 5) Presentation. The inclusion criteria for ar-

ticles were publication from 2002 to 2019; written in English language; electronic publication with a formal peer-review process; congruency between the topic of the article and the study questions and purpose; the level of emotional intelligence among nurse managers. A total of 840 articles were found, including 344 articles in Pub Med, 175 in Google Scholar, 101 articles in Ovid, 75 articles in Proquest, and 145 articles in SID.

A checklist was designed based on the inclusion criteria, and all articles were assessed accordingly. The full text of the articles was investigated according to the designed checklist described in the previous step. After the quality of the articles was checked, only 9 articles were retrieved in the review process (**Table 1**). Information derived from the retrieved articles regarding the study questions and purpose were combined in this step. **Figure 1** demonstrates the flow diagram

**Table 1.** Final retrieved articles in the review process (N = 10, including design, sample size, determinants, main outcomes, and main finding).

Study	Design	Sample and setting	Main findings
Ohlson & Anderson (2015) [15]	Quantitative descriptive	87 Nurse Managers.	The mean total of EI score of nurse managers is 98.1, indicating that the EI of them is normal.
Prufeta (2017) [16]	Cross-sectional	38 nurse managers recruited in the Northeast	Mean EI scores among nurse managers were average. Nurse managers with less than 2 years of experience had statistically significant lower “using emotions” branch score and strategic EI. Nurse managers with a masters’ degree in nursing scored significantly higher in using emotions branch score than did those with a masters’ degree in a related field.
Muhurji & Yussef (2017)	Cross-sectional	125 nurse manager in Saudi Arabia	Two thirds of the nurses’ managers (64%) had adequate emotional intelligence, as they achieved above average scores on the scale.
Bikmoradi <i>et al.</i> (2018) [13]	Cross-sectional	370 nursing managers in Iran	Nursing managers had emotional intelligence mean score of 80.46 which was at appropriate level. Emotional intelligence of nursing managers had a positive and significant correlation with people-oriented leadership style and in contrast had not correlation with task-oriented leadership style.
Kabeel (2016)	Cross-sectional study	48 nurse managers	The mean score of emotional intelligence is 49.8 out of 61. The highest mean scores of emotional intelligent dimensions was self-emotional appraisal 12.58 out of 15.
Ezzatabadi <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Cross-sectional correlational study	38 nurse managers	The level of EI among nurse managers was positive. There was a direct, positive significant relationship was observed between EI among nurse managers and patient satisfaction.
Vahidi <i>et al.</i> (2016) [17]	Cross-sectional	338 nurses in Iran	The level of emotional intelligence among nurses was 235.8 which is less than average (270).
Ezzatabadi <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Cross-sectional study	193 nurses in Iran	The level of emotional intelligence among nurses was 3.86 out of 5.0. The nurses’ emotional intelligence has a direct effect on the hospital services quality.
Konstantinou <i>et al.</i> (2017) [14]	Cross-sectional study	585 nurses in Cyprus	The EI total mean score was 184.30. The nurses aged 36–50 years old had the highest EI scores with a positive effect on the EI coming from years of service, leadership positions, being married and having children.



**Figure 1.** Flow diagram of articles selection.

of the article selection.

### **Problem identification**

Nursing leadership matters in today's healthcare environment, which is experiencing unprecedented intense reform. It requires effective communication, self-awareness, and social awareness. Unlike yesterday's leadership requirement for stabilization and growth, today's leaders must transform their organization's values, beliefs, and behaviors [9].

More importantly, emotional intelligence was correlated with positive processes in hospitals and positive institutional outcomes [1], lack of it among nurse managers might lead to diminish the quality of healthcare and bad management practices; which in turn might lead to bad consequences on the health of the patients. Previous studies also revealed that emotional intelligence of nurse managers were positively correlated with staff turnover, and increased staff resilience, the absence of this concept could lead to diminish staff retention as well as decrease in nurses' resilience [10].

Studies related to this concept in Saudi Arabia is lacking, very few studies considered this concept, and these studies did not consider factors which en-

hance and affect the concept of emotional intelligence among nurse managers; hence, it is necessary to assess the emotional intelligence and associated factors among nurse managers, since they are the core stone of the healthcare organizations because they are manage the biggest group within each hospital.

#### 4. Literature Search

An extensive review was made of the available literature in English databases (2002-2019), including ISI, SCOPUS, Ovid, Proquest, Google Scholar, PubMed, and Scientific Information Database (SID). The keywords searched included “emotional, intelligence, nurse, manager, management, nursing, emotional, intelligence, nurse manager” and different combinations of the aforesaid words. To find more related articles, the references of the searched articles were comprehensively investigated.

#### 5. Discussion

Within healthcare institutions such as hospitals, the role of the nurse managers becomes critical in creating supportive and positive work environment to help nurses cope with stress of managing their own and other’ emotions concurrently; this requires the nurse managers to have a balanced emotions referred as emotional intelligence; if the nurse manager do not have this characteristics, nurses would not be able to cope with stress during work especially at the time of heavy workloads.

The above mentioned results showed that the mean score of emotional intelligence was on average and some studies said that is were adequate. This could attribute to the experience of nurse managers in their work and their contact with difficult situations. Emotional intelligence is very important in the workplace. Being able to understand, perceive and express emotions in an appropriate way can determine whether an individual is successful or not as an employee in a career [11]. So, the issue of emotional intelligence is considered from of the most important competencies for individual and manager especially nurse managers for the healthcare organizations because this issue might be related to have an effect on healthcare organizational performance as well as employees’ job satisfaction [12].

More importantly, the main aim of the work nature of nursing as a profession is to promote health and prevent disease as well as to provide healthcare for those who are physically ill and mentally disturbed, thus this work requires the nurses to have skills related to emotional intelligence for the purpose to respond to their multifarious duties [18]. The anthropocentric nature of nursing requires Emotional Intelligence as a high-level skill that contributes to effective patient centered care [2].

#### 6. Conclusion

The issue of emotional intelligence is considered an important for the purpose to

achieve satisfactory level of effective leadership and management in nursing work. It is evident that the nurses are able to experience the ability to identify and experience a wide range of emotions in everyday practice. Moreover, despite the satisfactory level of emotional intelligence among nurses and nurse managers, they have to improve their skills to achieve maximum level of these skills via workshops, research studies, periodic assessment and interventional methods.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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