

## The Relationship between Assertiveness and Job satisfaction among Nursing Personnel at Benha University Hospital

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### Abstract

Nursing staff are the core stone in the healthcare organizations, Assertiveness enhances communication in work place and it increase the job satisfaction among nurses. **Aim:-**The study aimed to assess the relationship between assertiveness and job satisfaction among nursing personnel. **Design:-** Descriptive correlational design was used in this study **Setting:-** This study was conducted at Medical and Surgical departments Benha University Hospital. **Subjects:-** Included in this study were composed of (225) of nursing personnel working at the previously mentioned departments. **Tools:-** Two tools were used for data collection assertive behavior questionnaire and job satisfaction questionnaire **Results:-** The findings of the present study revealed that the majority of the nursing personnel had highly assertive and they were satisfied with their job. **Conclusion:-** The findings concluded that there was a positive correlation between nurses' assertiveness and their job satisfaction and this relation was statistical significance difference. **Recommendations:-** Periodical assessment for nursing staff work environment to reduce prediction and passivity, maintaining continuous staff development activities for nurses to improve their attitude, knowledge and skills in order to improve their assertiveness level. Encouraging excellent nurses by recognition and incentives are very important.

**Key words:** Nursing assertiveness, job satisfaction and nursing personnel.

### Introduction

Nursing is an interpersonal process involving human beings, which is why ability to forge human relations bears considerable significance in the field of nursing. In particular, without effective communication, a therapeutic relationship between nurse and patient cannot be formulated nor can nursing intervention be performed (King, 2007).

Assertive behavior and good communication are inextricably linked, Assertive behavior requires effective communication and lack of assertiveness result in the diminished effectiveness of communication (McCabe and Timmins F, 2010).

Assertiveness is a form of communication in which needs or wishes are started clearly with respect for oneself and the other person in the interaction (Seyedfatemi, Khoshnavaye. And Behbahani, 2009). Assertiveness helps the nurses in stress management, especially if they tend to take on too many responsibilities, because they have a hard time saying no. Being assertive is a core communication skill, based on mutual respect, it's an effective and diplomatic communication style can help the nurses to control stress, anger and improve coping skills (Elder, Evans and Nizette, 2013).

Assertiveness is considered to be healthy and desirable behavior for all people who interact in situation in so far as it militates against personal powerlessness and can result in personal empowerment and ultimately benefit the group, or workplace as a whole. Although some nursing studies have found assertive behavior in nursing practitioners to be an invaluable component of successful professional practice (Kilkus, 2008).

Assertive behavior develops respect towards self and other nurses, promotes self-disclosure, self-control, increase confidence, satisfactory communication (McCabe and Timmins F, 2010) and positive appreciation of self-worth. It is the most effective way of solving interpersonal problems and conflicts. Assertive nurses become happier, less manipulative, feel better about them and reach their goals more easily. Acting assertively can increase the nurses' chances for honest relationships, give a sense of control in everyday situations, achieving what they want, provide reassurance to the nurses as, improve decision-making ability, and increase work effectiveness and productivity (Hodgetts, 2011).

For any organization, job satisfaction of its workers means a healthier work force that is productive, retained and motivated. There will be significant reduction in complaints, grievances, absenteeism, turnover, termination; and significant improvement in punctuality and morale (Yaffee and Kark, 2011) Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which an individual likes the job. And the organizations with satisfied employees are more productive than those with unsatisfied employees (Hellriegel and Slocum, 2007).

Nurses who were not satisfied at work were also found to distance themselves from their patients and their nursing chores (Shinde and Durgawale, 2014).so job satisfaction is a critical issue in health care that affects all those responsible for

maintaining and growing a reliable and competent health care workforce. Increasing overall staff job satisfaction can improve retention and patient outcomes (Hayes et al., 2012) and it is can positively affect the overall work of the organization, whereas job dissatisfaction can negatively impact the work of the organization (McGlynn, et al, 2012).

A positive correlation exists between assertiveness role clarity, job and career satisfaction (Karakas, 2015). Assertiveness is viewed by Hargie (2011) as a valued behavior within nursing, resulting in positive outcomes such as the enhancement of leadership skills, an increase in job satisfaction and avoidance of compromising patient care alleviation of job stress, the heightening of nurses, effectiveness in bringing about change and a greater insight into the factors that influence the responding style is necessary. McCabe C and Timmins F, (2010) pointed that assertive nurses can handle confrontation more easily and satisfactory, feeling ease, having greater self-confidence, being tactful, away that maintains the effectiveness of the relationship, resisting other's attempts to manipulate themselves.

### **Significant of the study:**

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Actually nursing moves toward expanded roles and more responsibilities in patient care, so new approaches must be developed. The nurses need to be independent, decisive, assertive individuals in order to achieve self-confidence in their knowledge and abilities. The more nurses are satisfied with their action and more energy they will have to devote to their patient care. Therefore, this study was carried out to investigate the relationship between assertiveness and job satisfaction among nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital.

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### Aim of the study:

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The study aimed to assess the relationship between assertiveness and job satisfaction among nursing personnel.

### Research Questions

- 1) Do nurses have assertive behavior?
- 2) What are the job satisfaction levels among nursing personnel?
- 3) Is there a relation between nursing personnel assertive behavior and their job satisfaction?

### Subjects & methods:

**Design:** Descriptive – correlational research design was utilized to conduct this study.

**Setting:** The study was conducted at Medical and Surgical departments at Benha University Hospital: It includes 27 units, **Medical departments** 14 unit and **Surgical departments** 13 units

**Subjects** The subject included in this study consisted of the nursing personnel who were working at Medical and Surgical departments.

They were selected by representative sample of (225) nurses from the total number (512) nurses. The sample size was calculated according to the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where 'n' is sample size.

'N' is Number of one year (2014) at Governmental hospitals = 512

'e' is Coefficient factor = 0.05

### Tools of data collection:

To collect data for this study the following tools were used.

**First tool:-Assertive Behavior questionnaire:** It was used to assess assertiveness among nursing personnel; the questionnaire was adapted from Gouda, (2009) and essential modifications were done by the researcher.

**Part I:** concerned with personal data of nursing personnel such as (age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, and years of experience).

**Part II:** Included 68 statements grouped under six domains of assertiveness as the following:- Verbal and nonverbal(11) items, Active orientation(7) items, Work habit(7) items, Control of anxiety(29) items, Relating to coworkers(11) items, Negotiating the system(3) items.

Each item of the assertiveness Likert Scale was scored as (0) for never response, (1) for rarely,(2) for sometimes,(3) for usually and (4) for often.

Total assertiveness score of each assertiveness dimension was determined as the following according to the point of view of the statistical person:-

0 = un assertive

< 60% = partially assertive

≥ 60% = highly assertive

**The second tool: Job satisfaction questionnaire.** It was adopted from Ahmed, (2006) to assess job satisfaction among nursing personnel at Benha University Hospital. It consisted of 79 items that measures eight domain of job satisfaction, which are: Hospital policy(5) items,

Relations at work(17) items, Work environment(15) items, Work system(10) items, Salaries and Incentives(5) items, Achievement(18) items, psychiatric state(4) items, Safety at work(5) items,

#### **Scoring system:**

Scoring system of job satisfaction questionnaire; each item was scored as (0) for no, (1) for sometimes and, (2) for yes.

Total satisfaction score of each satisfaction dimension was determined as the following according to the point of view of the statistical person:-

Satisfactory-----  $\geq 60\%$

Unsatisfactory ----- $<60\%$

**Reliability of instrument** Test-retest reliability and internal consistency for the assertive behavior tool were ( $r = 0.93$  and  $\alpha = 0.93$  respectively,  $p < 0.0005$ ). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each dimension were verbal and nonverbal ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ), active orientation ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ), work habit ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ), control of anxiety ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ), relating to coworkers ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), negotiating the esteem emotional ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ).

Test-retest reliability and internal consistency for Job satisfaction tool were ( $r = 0.96$  and  $\alpha = 0.92$  respectively,  $p < 0.0005$ ). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each dimension were Hospital Policy ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ), Relations at work ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ), Work environment ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ), Work system ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ), Salaries and Incentives ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ), Achievement ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ) psychiatric state ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ), and Safety at work ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ).

**3- Pilot study:** Pilot study was conducted to assess tool clarity and applicability. It had also served in estimating the time needed for filling the form. The study was tested on 10 % of total subjects (23). There was no change accrued of the

pilot study so this sample was included in the study.

**4-Procedure:** Each nurse was interviewed after explaining the purpose of the study and getting agreement of staff nurses to participate in the study.

◆ Data has been collected from staff nurses in above mentioned study at Benha University Hospital. Collection of data took four months at Benha University Hospital from beginning of July / 2015 to the end of October/2015. the researcher applied interview for study sample for three days per a week. The time needed to complete questionnaire sheet take from (15:20) minutes.

#### **Ethical consideration:**

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The study was conducted with careful attention to ethical standards of research and rights of the participants:

##### **Informed consent**

The respondent rights was protected by ensuring voluntary participation, so the informed consent obtained by explaining purpose, nature time of conducting the study, potential benefits of the study, how data will be collected, any invasive procedure, expected outcomes and the respondent rights to withdrawing from the research study at any time in case of violation of his rights.

##### ▪ **Anonymity & confidentiality**

The respondent was assured that the data was treated as strictly confidential; furthermore, the respondent anonymity was maintained as they weren't require mentioning their names.

##### **Scientific honesty**

To ensure scientific honesty, the researcher uses bracketing & intuiting to avoid bias

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### Statistical design

Data entry and statistical analysis were performed using personal computer software, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), version 24. Suitable descriptive statistics were used such as; frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Chi-square test was used to detect the relation between the variables. In addition, correlation coefficient (r) test was

used to estimate the closeness association between variables. The p-value is the degree of significant and using the correlation (r) test. The p-value is the probability that an observed difference is due to chance and not a true difference. A significant level value was considered when  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$  and a highly significant level value was considered when  $p\text{-value} \leq 0.001$ , while  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$  indicates non-significant results.

**Result**

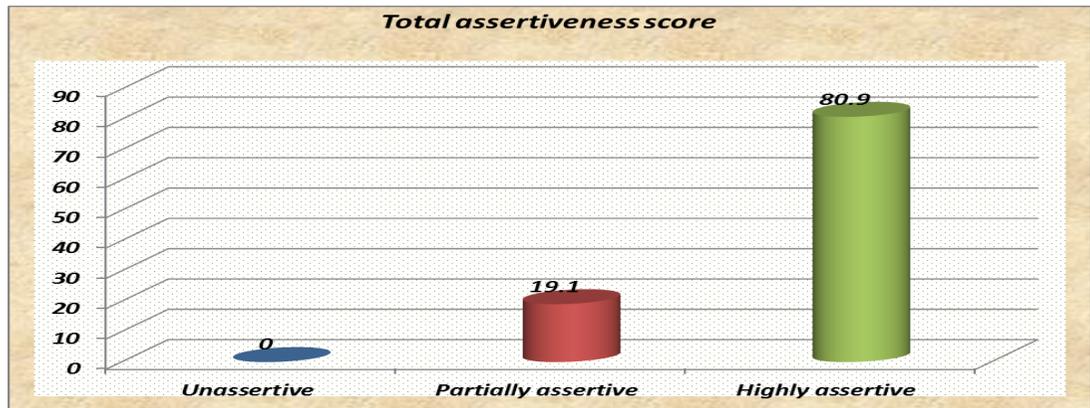
**Table (1).** Reveals distribution of nursing personnel according to their personal characteristics, it indicates that 42.7% of them had age group between 25-35 years old with mean of  $28.39 \pm 9.53$ , all of them were female, 64.9% of them had a secondary nursing education, 84.0% of them were married, 78.2% of them were resident at urban settings and 78.2% of them were not attended any training courses

**Table (1):** Distribution of nursing personnel According to their personal characteristics (No 225)

<b>Personnel characteristic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
	36	16.0
20-	96	42.7
25-	79	35.1
35-	9	4.0
45-	5	2.2
55-		
<b>Mean <math>\pm</math>SD</b>	<b>28.39<math>\pm</math>9.53</b>	
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	225	100.0
Male	0	.0
<b>Educational qualification</b>		
Bachelor degree in nursing	8	3.6
Technical nursing institute	50	22.2
Secondary nursing education diploma	146	64.9
Secondary nursing education +specialty	21	9.3
<b>Years of experience</b>		
1-	26	11.6
5-	86	38.2
15-	85	37.8
25-	19	8.4
35-	9	4.0
<b>Mean <math>\pm</math>SD</b>	<b>17.56<math>\pm</math>7.08</b>	
<b>Working setting</b>		
Medical	128	56.9
Surgical	97	43.1
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	189	84.0
Single	36	16.0
<b>Residence</b>		
Rural	93	41.3
Urban	132	58.7
<b>Training courses</b>		
Yes	49	21.8
No	176	78.2
<b>Number of training courses</b>		
1	10	20.4
2	25	51.0
3	9	18.4
4	5	10.2

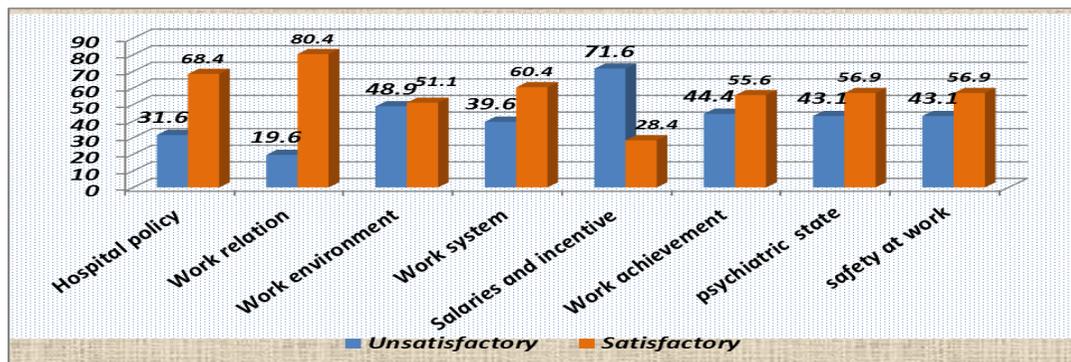
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**Figure (1):** Percentage distribution of nursing personnel according to their total assertiveness scores this figure showed that the majority of the studied nurses had a high level of assertiveness mean scores (80.9%).



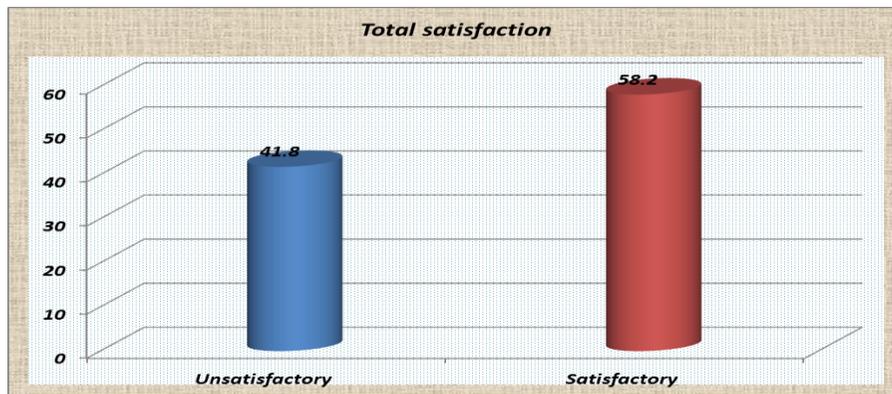
**Figure (1):** Percentage distribution of nursing personnel according to their total Assertiveness scores.

**Figure(2):** shows percentage distribution of nursing personnel job satisfaction related dimensions shows the highest percentage was related to work relation (80.4%) while the least percentage was related to salaries and incentive (28.4%).



**Figure (2):** Percentage distribution of nursing personnel according to job satisfaction related dimensions.

**Figure (3):** shows Percentage distribution of nursing personnel total job satisfaction scores showed that the more than half of the nursing personnel had a high level of job satisfaction mean scores (58.2%).



**Figure (3):** Percentage distribution of nursing personnel according to their total job satisfaction scores

**Table (2):** correlation between nursing personnel total assertiveness scores and job satisfaction scores shows a positive correlation between assertiveness of nurses and their job satisfaction, finally, these correlations were statistically significant.

**Table (2):** Correlation between nursing personnel total assertiveness scores and job satisfaction scores

Variable	Assertiveness	
	r	P value
Satisfaction	.462(**)	.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Discussion

As regarding to distribution of the studied sample according to their socio demographic characteristics. The result indicated that the total study samples were (225) staff nurse. The highest percentage of them (42.7%) their age ranged between 25-35 years old, as regarding to educational qualification the highest percentage (64.9%) have a secondary nursing education. As regarding to years of experience the highest percentage (38.2%) ranged between 5-10

years of experience and in relation to marital status the majority of study sample (84.0%) was married. While as regarding of training program more than half of study sample (78.2%) not have any training programs about assertiveness.

According to the study finding, there was non statistical significant difference between assertiveness and the educational qualification of the studied nurses, this finding was incongruent with several research studies which concluded that there

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was a positive association between stronger assertiveness and higher educational levels (**Essa, 2009**) in Egypt at Zagazig University Hospital. According to the study finding, there was non statistical significant difference between assertiveness and age or the years of experiences of the studied nurses this result was congruent with **Unal (2012)** examined assertiveness in 79 nursing students and found that age and sex were not related with assertiveness in Ankara at Gazi Universits Facults of Health scienes Besevler. In contradictory with the previous findings, **Kilkus (2008)** in Minnesta State Board of Nursing at Winona state University who had concluded that, the oldest group of nurses was significantly less assertive than any of the younger groups of nurses also the study finding. In contradictory with **Küçük, Buzlu, and Can, (2008)** in their study the assertiveness of the students stated that as the age increased so did their assertiveness in Istanbul at Istanbul Universites.

The finding of the present study had indicated that there was a highly statistical significant difference between attending training courses about assertiveness and the level of assertiveness of studied nurse from the point of view of the researcher this may be lead to increased personal maturity, increased knowledge or responsibility and their interpersonal skills and their experiences gained by developing their learning which in turn increased ability to negotiating a workable situation, managing conflict, take appropriate decision, solve problems and increase their ability to maintain their assertiveness skills in interactions with others.

The finding was congruent with **Arslan, Akça, and Nand Baser (2013)** in Tukeya at Bozok University Health School who founded that two third of the subject of his study were described as assertive, also the previous finding was consistent with **Kilkus (2008)** who found that the majority of staff

nurses were assertive in Minnesta State Board of Nursing at Winona state University.

For nurse`s job satisfaction, the studied nurse were satisfied with hospital policy, work relation, work environment, work system, work achievement, safety at work and psychiatric state but they were not satisfied about salaries, and incentives, and this result showed that more than half of staff nurses were satisfied so this findings answer the second research question from the point of view of the researcher this means that the management of the Benha Hospital University attempted to be more focused on the factors which improve and achieve better satisfaction among nurses .this finding agreed with study in Albania (**Gabrani Adriatik, 2014**) concluded that nurses at public hospitals in Albania experienced high level of overall job satisfaction.

Concerning the relationship between assertiveness and job satisfaction among nursing personnel, according to the present study, there was a positive correlation between assertiveness and job satisfaction, these findings answered the third research question of this study that nurses who were more assertive would be more satisfied with their job.

This was supported by **Mayo Clinic Staff, (2012)** as stated that behaving assertively can help the nurse to: gain self-confidence and self-esteem; understand and recognize your feelings; earn respect from others; improve communication; create win-win situations; improve decision-making skills; create honest relationships; and gain more job satisfaction. And this also agreed with **Kamal, (2009)**, who reported that there is appositve correlation between assertive nurses behavior and their job satisfaction in Egypt at Zagazig University Hospital.

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## Conclusion

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In the light of the present study it can be concluded that majority of nurses at Surgical and Medical departments at Benha University Hospitals were highly assertive, and they were satisfied with their job.

There was a positive correlation between nursing personnel assertiveness and their job satisfaction and this relation was statistical significance difference.

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## Recommendations

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In the lights of the findings obtained from the present study these points are recommended:

1.Periodical assessment for nursing staff work environment to reduce prediction and passivity

2.Encouraging excellent nurses by recognition, emotional and monetary incentives are very important.

3.Nurse Managers match nurses` needs and interest with work need for the satisfaction of both.

4.Periodic meeting of staff nurses with the managers of nursing must be maintained to discuss and solve work problems and set action plans to enhance nurse job satisfaction.

5.Assertive training programme are needed for the nursing staff.

6.There should be a continuing educational department to train staff nurses and provide facilities, media, budget, and resources needed, based on nurses skills, this is required to upgrade their efficiency and improve their skills.

7.Further research is required to investigate the factors that may improve the level of assertiveness and job satisfaction among nurses staff personnel.

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