

## Relation between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem among Nursing Students

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### Abstract

**Background:** Emotional intelligence and self-esteem are important factors that impact the success and wellbeing of nursing students as higher emotional intelligence improve academic and clinical performance and higher self-esteem increase motivation and confidence in nursing students. **Aim:** This study aimed at assessing the relation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among nursing students. **Research design:** A descriptive design has been utilized in this study. **Setting:** This study was conducted at Shaikh Zayed AL Nahyan Technical Nursing Institute which affiliated to Shaikh Zayed AL Nahyan Hospital affiliated to Specialized Medical Centers- Ministry of Health. **Study subject:** 100 nursing students were included in this study using convenience sampling technique. **Data collection tools:** Data were collected using I) Demographic data questionnaire, II) Schutte emotional intelligence scale and III) Rosenberg self -esteem scale. **Result:** More than one third of studied nursing students had moderate and high level of emotional intelligence respectively, while slightly less than half of them had moderate level of self-esteem. **Conclusion:** There was statistically significant relation between total level of self-esteem and total level of emotional intelligence. **Recommendations:** Educational workshop and seminars should be conducted regularly for the nursing students on how to develop and improve students' self -esteem and emotional intelligence skills.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence - Self-esteem – Nursing students

### Introduction:

Being a nursing student is essential to the learning process of becoming a nurse practitioner. During this stage of learning, students face challenges and reactions to high physical, mental and social pressures through their contact with patients and providing of care. These stresses not only affect nursing students learning outcomes but also their overall health and relationships with people. Nurses need to have high level of emotional intelligence and self-esteem to be able to adjust to their own (Tung, & Rong, 2022).

Emotional intelligence and self-esteem are important factors that can significantly impact the success and wellbeing of nursing students. Higher emotional intelligence can improve academic and clinical performance. While higher self-esteem can

increase motivation and confidence in nursing students (Bidyadhar, et al., 2019).

Emotional intelligence is the individual ability to establish healthy communication and social aspect. People who have high level of emotional intelligence can better understand the expectations, strengths, weaknesses and needs of others. Similar to emotional intelligence, the ability of the individual to arrive at better awareness of the expectations, strengths and weaknesses is related to self-esteem. self-esteem is appreciating one's own worth importance and having the character to be accountable for one and to act responsibly towards others (Srikumaran, et al., 2022).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence can contribute to the development of self-esteem. Therefore, it is important for nursing educational

programs to provide opportunities for nursing students to develop their emotional intelligence and self-esteem. This can be achieved through various interventions such as emotional intelligence training, self-esteem building activities and clinical simulations. By promoting emotional intelligence and self-esteem in nursing education, nursing students can become more competent, confident and empathetic nursing professionals, ultimately providing better patient care and contributing to the overall success of the nursing profession (*Dugué, et al., 2021*).

### **Aim of the STUDY**

This study aims to assess the relation between emotional Intelligence and Self-esteem among nursing students.

#### **Research questions:**

The aim of the study can be achieved through answering the following research questions:

- What are the levels of emotional intelligence among nursing students?
- What are the levels of self-esteem among nursing students?
- What is the relation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among nursing students?

### **SUBJECTS AND METHODS:**

#### **1) Research Design:**

A descriptive design was used to assess the relation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among nursing students.

#### **2) Research setting:**

This study was conducted at Shaikh Zayed AL Nahyan Technical Nursing Institute which affiliated to Shaikh Zayed AL Nahyan Hospital affiliated to Specialized Medical Centers- Ministry of Health in Cairo governance. The technical institute includes five academic years. The students study different nursing and medical specialists in the institute.

The graduates become technical nurses who can provide direct patient care.

#### **3) Subject of the study:**

##### **Type of sample:**

Convenient sample of nursing students.

##### **Sample size:**

The sample of this study included 100 nursing students from the second, third, fourth and fifth grades at Shaikh Zayed AL Nahyan Technical Nursing Institute and this is the total number of those academic years during data collection period.

##### **Tools of data collection:**

Data were collected using the following tools:

##### **Tool I: Demographic Data Questionnaire:**

This tool was developed by the researcher in Arabic language to elicit information about the demographic characteristics of the studied student. It includes 8 items including age, sex, residence, marital status, grade, parent's education, work during studying and work during vacation.

##### **Tool II: Schutte emotional Intelligence Scale:**

Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by *Schutte et al. (1998)*. This tool is an international standardized tool adapted by the researcher and was used to assess the level of the emotional intelligence. It consisted of 33 items which divided into four dimensions as follows: Emotion Perception (10 items) e.g. " I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people", Utilizing Emotions (6 items) e.g. "Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important ", Managing Self-Relevant Emotions (9 items) e.g. " When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them " and Managing Other's Emotions (8 items) e.g. " I know when to speak about my personal problems to others".

### Scoring system:

Students' responses were scored at five - point Likert type from 1= (strongly disagree), 2= (disagree), 3= (neither disagree nor agree), 4 = (agree) and 5= (strongly agree). The total scale was summed-up and the total divided by the number of items, and the sum scores were converted into percent scores. Higher scores indicate higher emotional intelligence. The total scores represent varying levels as follows: High level of students' emotional intelligence was >137 scores, Moderate level of students' emotional intelligence was 111-137 scores and Low level of students' emotional intelligence was from 33-110 scores.

### Tool III: Rosenberg self -esteem Scale:

This scale was developed by *Rosberg (1965)*. This tool is an international standardized tool, adapted by the researcher and was used to assess Self –esteem of adolescent student it consists of 10items e.g. "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself".

### Scoring system:

Students' responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1= (strongly agree), 2 = (Agree), 3 = (Disagree) and 4 = (Strongly disagree). The total scale was summed-up and the total divided by the number of items, and the sum scores were converted into percent scores. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. The total scores represent varying levels as follows: High level of students' self-esteem was from 30-40 scores, Moderate level of students' self-esteem was from 26-29 scores and Low level of students' self-esteem was from 10-25 scores.

### ii. Operational design:

The operational design includes preparatory phase, pilot study and field work.

#### *A. Preparatory phase:*

It included reviewing of literature and different studies related to Nursing students' perception toward emotional intelligence and self –esteem with using text books, articles, journals periodicals, articles and internet

resources. The researcher also translated the tools in this phase.

#### *B. Pilot Study:*

A pilot study was carried out on 10% of the total sample of the study in order to ensure the validity and clarity of the questions. In addition, pilot study was conducted to check validity and applicability of the tools. Moreover, to check the feasibility of the study such as time needed to complete questionnaire and overall plan of data collection. No modifications were done and the studied students of the pilot study were included in the study.

#### Tools reliability:

The reliability of the tools was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be high as indicated in the following tables.

**Table (1): Description of self-esteem reliability:**

Scale of self esteem	
No of items	Alpha Cronbach test
10	0.832

**Table (2): Description of emotional intelligence reliability:**

Questionnaire of emotional intelligence			
Emotional intelligence dimension		No of items	Alpha Cronbach test
1	Emotion Perception	10	0.628
2	Utilizing Emotions	6	0.765
3	Managing Self-Relevant Emotions	9	0.646
4	Managing Other's Emotions	8	0.732
Total emotional intelligence		33	0.824

#### *C. Field work:*

The field work of the study took three months started in the middle of February 2023 and completed at the end of April 2023. Data

was collected at Shaikh Zayed AL Nahyan Technical Nursing Institute. The researcher explained the aim of the study to subjects and reassure the subjects that information collected will be treated confidentiality and that will be used only for the purpose of the research.

#### **The first step:**

Before starting the data collection oral consent was obtained from each nursing student. The researcher met with the students after introducing herself and explained the nature and the purpose of the study to gain their cooperation. Data were collected (1) day / week the questionnaire required (25 - 35) minutes.

#### **Second step:**

The researcher was present during the data collection period to explain how to filling the tools, clarify any ambiguity and answer any questions. The researcher interviewed the students who agreed to participate in the study for data collection. The researcher collected about nine to eleven tools every week. The filled tools were handed back to the researcher to check each one to ensure its completeness.

#### **iii. Administrative design:**

An official permission to conduct the study was obtained for the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University. In addition to, an official permission from the faculty of nursing Ain Shams University to the administrator of Shaikh Zayed AL Nahyan Technical Nursing Institute the letter included the aim of the study and photocopy from data collection tools in order to get the permission and help for collection of data.

#### **Ethical Consideration:**

The study proposal was approved by the Ethics committee of faculty of Nursing, Ain shams University. Official permission to conduct the study was secured from pertinent authorities. Verbal consent was obtained from each participant before collecting data. This was done after explaining the study aim and demonstration of data collection form. The participants were informed about their rights to refuse or withdraw at any time without giving

any reasons. Data were considered confidential and used only for scientific research.

#### **iv. Statistical design:**

Data entry and statistical analysis were done by using (SPSS) version 26 computer software package. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables, means and standard deviations for quantitative variables. Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the reliability of the scales used through examining their internal consistency. Statistical significance was considered at p-value <0.05.

Emotional intelligence and self-esteem play an important role in the level of academic success among nursing student, also may strength the progression forwards personal and certified success, enhance relations, take healthy risks, solve problems and improve communication abilities (*Houston, 2020*).

So, it is important to nursing students to have the skills to recognize the perception and needs of different types of people and they should be competent taken into consideration the individual emotional reactions, self-confidence, how to handle stress, and promote social roles. Thus, a high level of emotional intelligence plays vital role in maintaining a state of equilibrium in oneself and helps the students to be more self-confident in managing life's challenges (*Jenaabadi, 2014*).

Therefore, this study will be conducted to assess the relation between emotional intelligence and self –esteem among nursing students.

#### **Results:**

**Table (3)** shows that, slightly two thirds (62 %) of the studied nursing students had age less than 18 years old with mean  $\pm$ SD (18.27 $\pm$ 1.17). All (100%) of them were females. The majority (84%) of them lived in rural residents. Majority (93%) of them were single. Regarding to the grade of the nursing students, near to one quarter (24%) of them were in the second grade,

less than one quarter (22%) of them were in the third grade, more than one quarter (27%) of them were in the fourth and fifth grades. Regarding to students' parent education most (82%) of them had educated parents. While the majority (94%) of them were not working in the studying period and most (88%) of them were not working in the vacations.

**Figure (1)** Shows that levels of emotional intelligence dimensions among the studied nursing students, the majority of them had a moderate level (64%), (76%), (76%), (72) in dimension emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self-relevant emotions, managing others' emotions respectively.

**Figure (2)** displays emotional intelligence levels among the studied nursing students, the minority

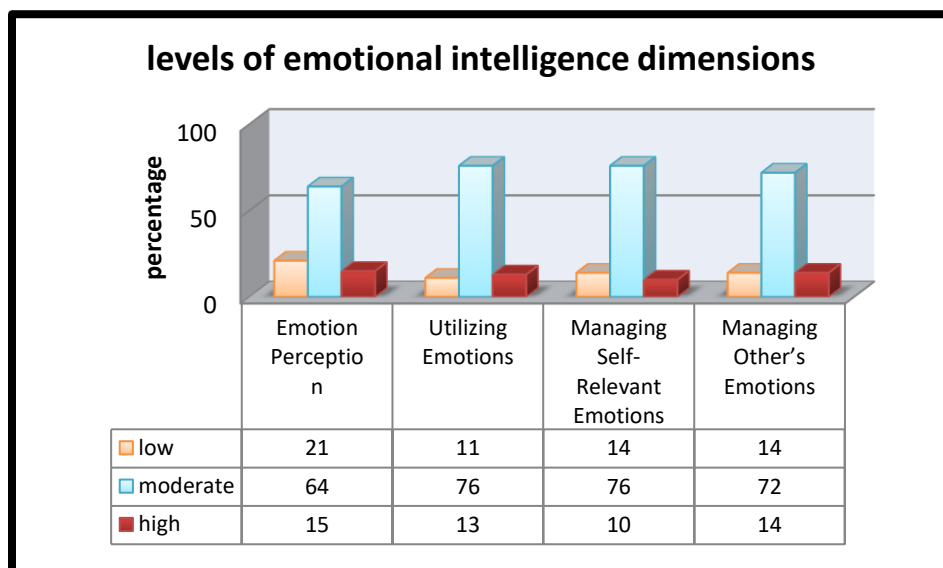
of them had low level of emotional intelligence, it represents (8%); while more than half (54%) of them had moderate level of emotional intelligence while more than one third (38%) of them had high level of emotional intelligence.

**Figure (3)** shows that levels of self-esteem of nursing students, the minority of them had low level of self-esteem, it represents (5%); while slightly less than half, it represents (49%); (46%) had moderate and high level of self-esteem respectively with  $\chi^2= 36.2$  and  $P=0.00$ .

**Table (4)** shows correlation between self-esteem and emotional intelligence of the nursing students, there was moderate positive correlation between total self-esteem and total emotional intelligence among the studied nursing students at  $p= (.004)$ .

**Table (3):** Frequency distribution of the studied nursing students according to their demographic data (N=100).

Socio-Demographic data		No.	%
Age (year)	≤ 18 years	62	<b>62</b>
	>18 years	38	38
	<b>Mean± SD</b>	<b>18.27±1.17</b>	
Sex	Female	100	<b>100</b>
Residence	Urban	16	16
	Rural	84	<b>84</b>
Marital status	Single	93	<b>93</b>
	Married	7	7
Grade	Second grade	24	24
	Third grade	22	22
	Fourth grade	27	<b>27</b>
	Fifth grade	27	<b>27</b>
Parent education	Literate	82	<b>82</b>
	Illiterate	18	18
Work during studying	Working	6	6
	Not working	94	<b>94</b>
Work during vacation	Working	12	12
	Not working	88	<b>88</b>

**Figure (1):** Levels of emotional intelligence dimensions of the studied nursing students (N=100).

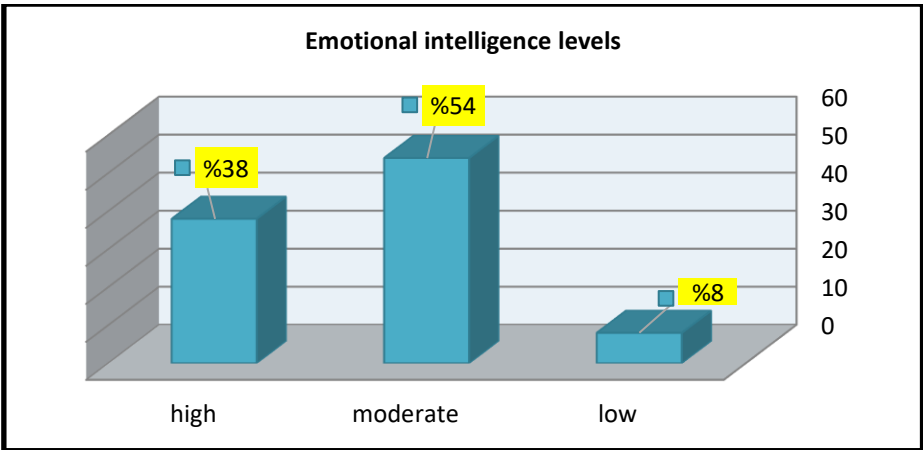


Figure (2): Emotional intelligence levels of the studied nursing students (N=100)

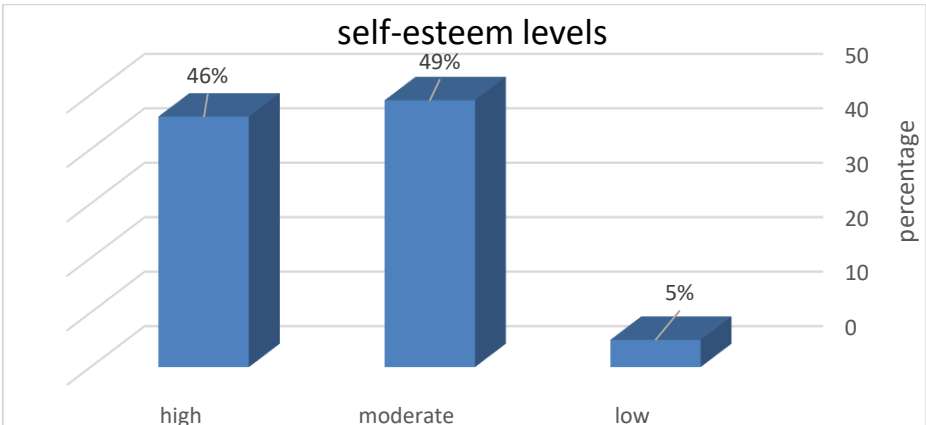


Figure (3): Levels of self-esteem of the studied nursing students (N=100).

Table (4): Correlation between total emotional intelligence and total self-esteem among the studied nursing students (N= 100)

Total self esteem	Total emotional intelligence	
	r	.572
	p	.004*

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion:

Emotional intelligence has become an interesting topic of psychology. Emotional intelligence is considering a subject that attempts to explain, understand, and interpret the individual’s feelings, pleasures, and ability status (Ashori et al., 2023). The current study aimed to assess the relation between emotional

Intelligence and Self-esteem among nursing students.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical trait for healthcare professionals, including nursing students. The ability to perceive and manage one’s own emotions and those of others can enhance communication skills, empathy, and overall patient satisfaction. The results provided in the current study showed that the majority of nursing students

had a moderate level of EI across all four dimensions, indicating the need for targeted interventions to develop these skills further. As healthcare continues to evolve, incorporating emotional intelligence skills into healthcare education and training will be increasingly essential.

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of EI training for healthcare professionals, including nursing students. In a randomized controlled trial, *Emamipour et al. (2021)* who studied "Effect of emotional intelligence training on nursing students' emotional intelligence and patient satisfaction: A randomized controlled trial" and found that an EI training program improved the emotional intelligence of nursing students, leading to better patient satisfaction scores. Similarly, a systematic review by *Liu et al. (2020)* who studied "Effects of emotional intelligence interventions on healthcare professionals: A systematic review" and identified several studies that demonstrated the effectiveness of EI interventions in improving communication skills, empathy, and reducing burnout among healthcare professionals.

Moreover, on the other hand, recent studies have also emphasized the need to incorporate EI training into nursing curricula. For instance, *Alenizi et al. (2021)* conducted a study about "Emotional intelligence skills among nursing students in Kuwait: A cross-sectional study" and found that nursing students in Kuwait lacked emotional intelligence skills, highlighting the need for incorporating EI training in nursing curricula to enhance students' ability to manage emotions and improve patient care.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of other" found that emotional intelligence levels were generally high, with only a small percentage of students demonstrating low levels of emotional intelligence (*Peterson et al., 2020*). Also, nursing students with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to have better patient outcomes, including improved patient satisfaction and fewer adverse events. In addition, nursing students with high EI have been found to have better coping skills, which can help them manage stress and

prevent burnout. Similarly, a study of Iranian nursing students about "The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among nursing students" and found that the majority of students had moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence (*Vafaei et al., 2019*).

Contrary, *Oussi et al. (2023)* studied "Managing emotions in panic disorder: A systematic review of studies related to emotional intelligence, alexithymia, emotion regulation, and coping" and explained that students living with panic disorders are characterized by low emotional intelligence levels, excessive use of suppression, impaired cognitive reappraisal. *Elsayed Abd Elkader et al. (2023)* studied "Assessment of Nursing Teachers' Emotional Intelligence" and found the majority of nursing teachers had low emotional intelligence level regarding general mood, more than half of them low emotional intelligence level regarding adaptability and intrapersonal emotional intelligence.

Self-esteem is an essential aspect of mental health and well-being. It is a psychological construct that is often studied in the context of various populations, including nursing students. The study's findings indicated that nursing students have varying levels of self-esteem, with a significant proportion wishing they had more respect for themselves. This may be due to the self-esteem levels of nursing students are of particular interest as they can impact their ability to cope with stress and perform well in their academic and clinical settings.

The findings presented in the current study indicated that a significant proportion of nursing students have moderate to high levels of self-esteem, which is consistent with previous studies on healthcare students. A study by *Abbasi et al. (2020)* about "Self-esteem and its association with mental health among nursing students: A cross-sectional study" and found that the majority of nursing students in Iran had moderate to high levels of self-esteem, with only a small proportion reporting low self-esteem.

While having moderate to high levels of self-esteem can have positive effects on individuals' mental health and academic performance, it is important to note that self-



esteem can also be influenced by external factors such as stress, workload, and social support. A study by *Baraz et al. (2021)* about “The relationship between stress and self-esteem in nursing students: A cross-sectional study” and found that nursing students who reported higher levels of stress also had lower levels of self-esteem.

Moreover, research has shown that interventions aimed at promoting positive self-esteem can have significant benefits for healthcare students. A recent systematic review by *Hamaideh et al. (2022)* about “Self-esteem interventions for reducing stress among nursing students: A systematic review and meta-analysis” and found that various types of interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness-based stress reduction, can improve self-esteem and reduce stress among nursing students.

The current study found that there was a statistically significant correlation between self-esteem and emotional intelligence among the nursing students. Specifically, a positive correlation between these two variables suggested that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with higher levels of emotional intelligence, and vice versa. This may be due to this relationship is that individuals with higher levels of self-esteem are better able to regulate their emotions and manage stress, which are key components of emotional intelligence. Conversely, individuals with lower levels of self-esteem may struggle with emotional regulation, which can in turn negatively affect their emotional intelligence. This finding is in line with previous research about “Emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior in college students: A moderated mediation analysis” which has also identified a positive correlation between these two constructs (*Wang et al., 2021*).

Recent research about “Emotional intelligence and self-esteem in nursing students: A cross-sectional study” and “Emotional intelligence, self-esteem and burnout in healthcare professionals: A cross-sectional study” has also highlighted the potential importance of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in healthcare settings, particularly among nursing students and healthcare

providers (*Ramos-Sánchez et al., 2020; Vizcaya-Moreno et al., 2021*). So, higher levels of emotional intelligence have been associated with better patient outcomes and more effective communication and teamwork among healthcare providers. Similarly, higher levels of self-esteem have been linked to better job performance, lower burnout, and greater job satisfaction among healthcare providers in a study about “The effects of self-esteem on job satisfaction, burnout, and job performance: Evidence from hospital employees in Korea” (*Kim & Han, 2018*).

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## Conclusion:

The study findings concluded that, above half of the students had moderate and one third of the students had high level of emotional intelligence, while slightly less than half of them had moderate level of self –esteem. There was statistically significant relation between demographic data and emotional intelligence except the grade of the studied nursing students. There was statistically significant relation between demographic data and self –esteem except the grade of the studied nursing students. There was moderate positive correlation between total level of self -esteem and total level of emotional intelligence.

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## Recommendations:

Based on findings of the current research, the following recommendations are suggested:

### In service:

- Mentorship from experienced professionals in the field by inviting experts to give courses and workshops to the nursing students about self-esteem. This can boost their self-esteem and improve their emotional intelligence.

- The community can foster a positive learning environment that promotes inclusivity, empathy and respect. This can help nursing students feel valued and supported which can boost their self –esteem.

### Education:

- Interview of student's self –esteem and emotional intelligence should be included among the criteria for student's selection to be affiliated to the nursing institute.

- Integrate emotional intelligence and self-esteem courses into nursing curriculum.
- Educational workshop and seminars should be conducted regularly for the nursing students on how to develop and improve students' self-esteem and emotional intelligence skills.

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