

The Predictive Power of Moral Intelligence on Professional Commitment of Nurses

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Abstract

Background: Nurses' adherence to ethical values in the field of patient care is affected by various factors, especially moral intelligence. The role of moral intelligence on professional commitment is an issue leading to improving the quality of services and health promotion. The aim of this study was to investigate the predictive power of moral intelligence on professional commitment of nurses.

Method and Materials: This descriptive-analytical study was carried out on 100 nurses and 300 patients selected by stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Lenik & Kiel moral Intelligence Questionnaire and Nurse Professional Commitment Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis and regression.

Results: The results showed that there was a significant statistical relationship between moral intelligence and professional commitment ($P=0.001$). There was a significant relationship between demographic variables, age and work experience with moral intelligence and two variables of gender and professional commitment ($P < 0.05$). In addition, regression showed that dimensions of nurses' moral intelligence account for 41% of the variance of nurses' professional commitment. of the four dimensions of nurses' moral intelligence, compassion had the most significant effect ($P=0.03$, $\beta=0.32$).

Conclusion: The results of this study showed that moral intelligence is associated with professional commitment and is able to predict it. Therefore, it is recommended that nursing managers and authorities to put the Strengthening nurses' moral intelligence in the list of their priorities.

Keywords: *Moral Intelligence, Professional Commitment, Nursing.*

Introduction

Nowadays, health care environments are rapidly changing, and nurses meet various ethical issues in their

daily practice¹. Among the factors that influence the performance of nurses in enforcing standards, providing professional and ideal care and making the right decisions, attention is paid to ethical values². Nurses' adherence to ethical values in the field of patient care is influenced by various factors, especially moral intelligence³. Moral intelligence is one of the four dimensions of intelligence (intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and moral) that encompasses the mental capacity of individuals to apply human principles rather than personal goals and values⁴. In fact, moral intelligence provides a framework for proper human performance and is a behavior predictor⁵. Kiel considers moral intelligence to include the

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principles of righteousness, responsibility, compassion, and forgiveness⁶. People with high moral intelligence link their work to ethical principles, which in turn increases their commitment and responsibility and thereby improves individual and group performance⁷.

Professional commitment is a practical and social dimension of ethics that has created a positive emotional tendency to respect the rights of others in the context of ethics⁸; adherence to it promotes the nursing profession and increases the satisfaction of nurses and patients⁹. Given the role of professional commitment in increasing the efforts of individuals to devote themselves to their profession, this issue has received special attention by managers of different professions around the world¹⁰. Professional commitment is one of the main subjects of the nursing^{11,12}. So that professions commitment, belief in and acceptance of professional values and goals, strives for its realization and better service delivery^{9,11,13}.

A review of existing studies of professional commitment indicates the relationship between professional commitment and various performance indicators including job satisfaction, loyalty to the profession, individual stability, and staying in the profession and job performance. Studies show that commitment is one of the factors influencing the intention of nurses to leave work, in such a way that the higher the commitment of nurses, the lower their rate of leaving work^{9,11,14-18}. According to the findings of various researches, professional commitment not only leads to better care delivery by nurses, but also job satisfaction and striving for career advancement^{19, 20}. While only 1.2% of nurses reported high job satisfaction in our country, most of them did not have much commitment and desire to leave the nursing profession²¹. As the nursing profession has increased, the quality of nursing care has also declined^{22, 23}.

Nurses with high moral intelligence appear to be more capable and willing to provide comprehensive care. Given the proven impact of professional commitment on various indicators, the present study investigated the predictive power of moral intelligence on professional commitment of nurses working in educational centers of Urmia. It should promote and, at the same time, improve the quality of nursing care.

Method and Materials

This descriptive-analytical study was carried out on 100 nurses working in educational centers of Urmia

city (Imam Khomeini, Taleghani, Motahari, Seyyed al-Shohada hospitals) and 300 patients selected by stratified random sampling.

Inclusion criteria for nurses were having at least one year of clinical experience, having at least a bachelor's degree, nurses working in all wards with the exception of intensive care units, emergency departments, clinics, children, infants, psychiatrists, operating rooms, angiography, burning, and willingness to participate in the study.

Inclusion criteria for patients were being hospitalized for at least three days, having no serious communication problems such as blindness and hearing loss, having no serious physical or psychological problems, hospitalized patients in all departments except the wards that was mentioned for nurses.

Exclusion criteria for both groups of patients and nurses were unwillingness to continue cooperation. Data were collected using demographic questionnaire, Lenik & Kiel Moral Intelligence Questionnaire and Nurse Professional Commitment Questionnaire (NPCS). We used Moral Competency Index of Lenik & Kiel²⁴ to investigate moral intelligence with 40 questions including 10 items of moral competence. Distribution of scores of nurses' moral intelligence were excellent (90-100), very good (80-89), good (70-79), and poor (>69).

Nurses' Professional Commitment Questionnaire (NPCS), developed by Lachman and Aranya for the first time to investigate professional commitment²⁵. This questionnaire consisted of 4 items and four domains of perception of nursing (six items), satisfaction with the nursing profession (six items), Getting involved with the nursing profession (six items), and self-sacrifice for the nursing profession (ten items). Answering this questionnaire is a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, have no idea, agree, completely agree). Scoring in this questionnaire is between 26-130, so the higher score means the higher professional commitment of the nurse.

The validity and reliability of the moral intelligence questionnaire were confirmed by Martin and Benjamin²⁶. The NPCS was first designed by Lachman and Aranya in 1968 with a reliability of 0.86²⁵. This questionnaire was first used in Iran by Shali and Joolaei with acceptable reliability, so that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.7²⁷.

Statistical Analysis: Data were coded and analyzed through SPSS version 16 (SPSS Inc., Chicago IL, USA). Descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, and standard deviation) and analytical statistical tests were used to access the research objectives. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine if the data were obtained from a normal distribution. According to the normal distribution of the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. Stepwise regression was used to investigate the predictive power.

Results

The mean and standard deviation of nurses' age, nurses' work experience and patients' age were (29.56±5.48), (5.53±4.87) and (43.74±16.88) respectively. The education of 90 nurses was bachelor's science and 10 was master's science, and 27 nurses participated in seminars or workshops (Table 1). Most nurses had a good level of moral intelligence (Table 2). The mean score of moral intelligence and professional commitment among nurses was 71.79±8.87 (and 84.50±11.42) respectively (Table 3). There was a significant direct relationship between the overall score of moral intelligence and professional commitment (r = 0.47 and p = 0.001) (Table 4). Multiple correlation coefficient results indicated that based on the first model, the dimensions of nurses' moral intelligence explained 41% of the variance of nurses' professional commitment, and of the four dimensions of nurses' moral intelligence, only the compassionate dimension had the most significant effect (P = 0.03, β= 0.32) (Table 5).

Table 1: Descriptive results of nurses

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	72	72
	Male	28	28
Marital status	Single	52	52
	Married	48	48
Education	Bachelor	90	90
	Master	10	10
History of attending seminars or workshops	Yes	27	27
	No	73	73

Table 2: Frequency of moral intelligence among nurses

Moral intelligence	Frequency	Percent
Poor (>69)	9	9
Good (70-79)	74	74
Very good (80-89)	14	14
Excellent (90-100)	3	3
Total	100	100

Table 3: Mean of moral intelligence and professional commitment among nurses

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Righteousness	29.75	3.79
Responsibility	21.32	3.05
Compassion	13.53	2.13
Forgiveness	7.19	1.27
Overall moral intelligence	71.79	8.87
Overall professional commitment	84.50	11.42

Table 4: Correlation between professional commitment and moral intelligence among nurses

Correlation	R	P value
Moral intelligence and professional commitment	0.47	0.001

Table 5: Results of regression test based on predictive regression coefficients

Coefficient	R2	B	SE	Beta	t	P value
Constant	0.41	2.08	0.34	-	6.01	0.001
Righteousness		0.35	0.12	0.038	0.27	0.78
Responsibility		0.012	0.12	-0.001	-0.007	0.995
Compassion		0.22	0.10	0.32	2.16	0.03
Forgiveness		0.072	0.11	0.08	0.64	0.51

Discussion

In this study, the level of nurses' moral intelligence was assessed at a good level. The results of the present

study are consistent with the results of Mohammadi et al.²⁸ and Khosravani et al.²⁹ who rated the level of moral intelligence at a good level. The findings of the present study were not in line with the findings of the study by Bahrami et al., who assessed the level of moral intelligence of faculty members and staff of Yazd Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences at very good level³⁰. The differences in findings regarding the level of moral intelligence can be related to the different community and study sample. Nursing is a profession in which ethics is an important principle in providing care to patients. The result can therefore be a confirmation of the morality of the profession. According to the search, no external study that examined nurses' moral intelligence was found. Therefore, the researchers were satisfied to compare the level of moral intelligence in this study with the studies in Iran.

The professional commitment of the nurses under study was good and more than average value. In the study by Shali et al, the mean total score for professional commitment of nurses was 86 indicating high level of professional commitment of nurses under study³¹. A study by Lu et al, conducted in Taiwan to assess the professional commitment of nurses revealed that nurses had a high level of professional commitment³². In the study by Moradi et al., the professional commitment of nurses working in Qazvin educational centers was evaluated at a moderate level³³. Al-Hamadan also reported a moderate level of professional commitment of nurses working in private centers and educational hospitals in Jordan³⁴. In this study, there was a significant and direct relationship between the total score of moral intelligence and professional commitment and the dimensions of nurses' moral intelligence explained 41% of the variance of nurses' professional commitment, and of the four dimensions of nurses' moral intelligence, only the compassionate dimension had the most significant effect. In the study of Lakeh et al., The results of multivariate linear regression model showed the effects of honesty and compassion subscales of moral intelligence on job satisfaction of university faculty members³⁵. Compassion means paying attention to others and creating an atmosphere in which people care about those around them, such as colleagues or patients. Compassionate people give priority to others. As a result, they show greater devotion to the profession, patients and colleagues and seems to have more job satisfaction^{35,36}.

Conclusion

In general, the results of this study showed the predictive power of moral intelligence on the important concept of professional commitment of nurses. Appropriate training programs that enhance nurses' moral intelligence level simultaneously affect the important concepts of professional commitment.

Competing Interests: Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Source of Funding: Not

Ethical Clearance: The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of Declaration of Helsinki, 1996 version and its later amendments and also Good Clinical Practice standards. Each subject signed consent form before they were admitted into the study. Ethics approval was also received from Urmia University of Medical Sciences and ethics committee (#IR.UMSU.REC.1398.309). Also, during the study, patients would be excluded from research if they did not consent to continue their research. The results of this study were presented to the patients.

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