

Salary Satisfaction as a Predictor of Emotional Exhaustion and Work Incivility among Nurses at Tanta City Hospitals

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Abstract

Background: Nurses' happiness and performance on the job are significantly influenced by their salary. **Aim** The purpose of this study was to assess salary satisfaction as a predictor of emotional exhaustion and work incivility among nurses at Tanta City Hospitals. **Methodology** Data were gathered from 500 nurses working at public and government hospitals in Tanta City, Egypt, using a cross-sectional descriptive study approach. The factors were measured using the Workplace Incivility Scale, Emotional Exhaustion Scale, and Salary Satisfaction Questionnaire. **Results;** The results reveal strong, highly significant positive correlations between all three variables at the $p < .01$ level. Salary satisfaction was strongly correlated with emotional exhaustion ($r = .88^{**}$) and with workplace incivility ($r = .91^{**}$). Additionally, a robust positive correlation was observed between emotional exhaustion and workplace incivility ($r = .85^{**}$). **Conclusion** there were strong, highly significant positive correlations between all three variables. Salary satisfaction was strongly correlated with emotional exhaustion and with workplace incivility. Additionally, a robust positive correlation was observed between emotional exhaustion and workplace incivility. **Recommendations;** In order to increase nurse happiness and wellbeing, the study emphasised the necessity for healthcare organisations to provide fair and competitive wage structures top priority. Reducing emotional tiredness and workplace rudeness can also be achieved by fostering a supportive workplace environment.

Keywords: Emotional Exhaustion, Nurses, Salary Satisfaction, Work Incivility.

Introduction

Salary satisfaction refers to an individual's level of contentment or happiness with the amount of money they receive for their work. It is a subjective evaluation of how well the compensation matches the effort and value that an individual puts into their job. Salary satisfaction is influenced by a range of factors, including an individual's personal financial needs and goals, the level of compensation offered by their employer, their perception of the fairness of the pay system, and the availability of alternative employment opportunities. **(Mammen & Hills, 2023; Akgunduz & Eser, 2022).**

When individual feel they are not being compensated fairly for their work, it can lead to job dissatisfaction and disengagement, which can increase the likelihood of experiencing work incivility. Work incivility can then contribute to emotional exhaustion, which can further reduce job satisfaction and overall well-being **(Khan, Elahi & Abid, 2021).**

Work incivility and emotional exhaustion are particularly common among nurses, who often work in high-stress environments and face high levels of workload and job demands. Research has shown that work incivility can significantly contribute to emotional exhaustion among nurses, which can have serious consequences for their health and well-being. **(Faheem et al., 2022 and Doğantekin et al., (2023).**

Nurses who experience work incivility, such as verbal abuse, bullying, or undermining behavior from colleagues or supervisors, are

more likely to experience emotional exhaustion, burnout, and turnover intentions. This can lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased absenteeism, as well as increased risk of physical and mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and cardiovascular disease. **(Butt & Yazdani, 2021 and Gui, et al., 2022).**

To address work incivility and reduce emotional exhaustion among nurses, healthcare organizations can implement policies and training programs that promote respectful and supportive workplace cultures. This includes providing education and resources for managers and employees to recognize and address incivility, as well as establishing systems for reporting and investigating incidents of incivility. While providing a better source of income and good package of salary is another significant way to tackle and handles such situation **(Mammen, Lam & Hills, 2023 and Gustiawan et al., 2023).**

To address these issues, individual can take several steps. Providing competitive and fair compensation packages, with transparent and equitable pay structures, can help to promote salary or pay satisfaction among employees. Additionally, promoting a culture of respect, civility, and inclusion can reduce incidents of work incivility and foster a positive workplace environment. **(Butt & Yazdani, 2021 and Loh & Saleh 2022).**

Furthermore, providing resources and support for managing stress and promoting well-being, such as individual assistance programs or

mindfulness training, can help individual to better cope with the demands of their jobs and reduce the likelihood of experiencing emotional exhaustion. By taking a holistic approach that addresses all three factors, employers can create a positive workplace culture that supports employee well-being and promotes job satisfaction and retention. (Faheem et al., 2022 and Sahputri & Ahyakudin 2023).

Significance of the study

The nursing profession is known to be demanding, both physically and emotionally, which can lead to high levels of stress and burnout among nurses. The nursing profession in Tanta City-Egypt is facing challenges related to high levels of stress, burnout, and turnover, which can be influenced by various factors such as salary or pay satisfaction and work incivility. There is a need to explore the relationship between these factors and emotional exhaustion among nurses to better understand the root causes of job dissatisfaction and attrition in the profession. (Albougami et al., 2022)

This topic is important due to the significant role nurses play in the healthcare system. Nursing is a high-stress profession that requires long hours, critical thinking, and complex decision-making. Nurses, who experience high levels of work stress, including work incivility and emotional exhaustion, are at risk of negative health outcomes, including burnout and turnover intentions (Salama et al., 2022). This can lead to a shortage of nurses and negatively affect the quality of care provided to patients. Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to work

stress among nurses, including salary satisfaction, work incivility, and emotional exhaustion, is essential for developing effective interventions to improve nurses' well-being and job satisfaction.

Despite some previous research on the topic, there is still a lack of comprehensive studies that have investigated the relationship between salary satisfaction, work incivility, and emotional exhaustion among Egyptian nurses. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the prevalence of these factors and exploring their interrelationships to determine their impact on the emotional exhaustion experienced by nurses.

Purpose of the Research

The primary purpose was to assess salary satisfaction as a predictor of emotional exhaustion and work incivility among nurses at Tanta City Hospitals, Egypt. Further, this research explored sub objectives such as:

Research Questions

1. What is the level of salary satisfaction among nurses?
2. What is the level of work incivility experienced by nurses?
3. What is the level of emotional exhaustion experienced by nurses?
4. Is there a relationship between salary satisfaction and work incivility among nurses?
5. Is there a relationship between salary satisfaction and emotional exhaustion among nurses?
6. Is there a relationship between work incivility and emotional exhaustion among nurses?

Methodology

Research Design: A descriptive correlational cross-sectional research design was used.

Study Setting: different nursing departments of public and government hospitals located in Tanta City, Egypt.

Targeted Population: Nursing staff working in the targeted hospitals was considered as targeted population of this research.

Sample and Sample Technique: Sample size was comprised from 500 nurses from different hospitals. For this convenient sampling technique was used. While sample was calculated by using, Google based online sampling formula.

Study Tools

Tool 1 Demographic Data

This Tool was included the basic information of nurses such as age, marital status, qualification, role of job, duty hours, role, experience and number of dependent family members etc.

Tool 2 Salary Satisfaction Questionnaire

A 4-items based short questionnaire was developed by **Asekun (2015)**. This has 5-point response option with one for not satisfied, two for slightly satisfied, three for moderately satisfied, four for satisfied, and five for extremely satisfied. This scale holds a good validity and reliability as it was reported in Nigerian study as 0.94. (**Asekun, 2015**)

Tool 3 Emotional Exhaustion Scale

McCall (2002) developed a nine item based questionnaire with 5-point response option as zero= Not at all and four= extremely. This scale holds a good validity and reliability as it

was reported in Nigerian study as 0.81 (McCall, 2002).

Tool 4 Workplace Incivility Scale

Cortina et al. (2021) developed this scale to measure workplace incivility from co-workers as well as supervisors. This scale has 5-point response option as one for strongly disagree to five for strongly agree with 14 total items. The reliability of the tool is reported to be .85 (**Cortina et al., 2021**).

Plan and implementation process

Before start of study, a written permission was acquired from the regional ethical review board as well as Nursing department by providing a brief research proposal. After that, with the IRB approval from Faculty of nursing, Tanta university, data collection permission was be obtained. While from the participants, a written inform consent was taken by mentioning a brief and goal of the study. With signing the inform consent form participant who able to take part in the study. While researcher itself was collect the data, was assign coding, and was stored all data in the password-protected drive. Further data analysis was applied according to the research requirements.

Analysis of Data

For the current research, to analysis the data according to the objectives of the study, version 28 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used. To see the demographics, descriptive statistics was used. To check the Alpha reliability of the scales, reliability statics was used. To check the relationship among variables, Pearson Correlation method was used. To check the level of education

Anova was used. To see the casual effects there was used linear regression and group comparison's mean differences, Post-Hoc comparison was used.

Ethical Considerations

For the ongoing study, before starting the research process, the researcher followed all ethical approvals including inform consent, human rights, participant's safety etc. Before conduction of reseach, inform consent was obtained from the participants. Data was kept confidential and will be used only for the research purposes. It was explained well to the participants that, they are allow to participate willingly in the study, and at any stage of this process, they may leave with their concerns.

Results

The data analytic technique was used to conduct inferential and descriptive statistical analysis in the findings chapter. To assess the level of *salary satisfaction*, *work incivility* and emotional exhaustion mean and standered deviatin measuremed. Pearson Product Moment The association between salary or pay satisfaction, work incivility and emotional exhaustion using correlation analysis.

Table 1 reveales that 59.8% of participants were male nurses, which is an interesting finding given that nursing is typically a female-dominated profession both globally and in Egypt. The sample had an equal distribution of single and married nurses, offering balanced perspectives on work-related outcomes. In terms of age, a relatively even distribution was observed, with the largest group

(30%) aged between 21–30 years, while a considerable proportion (26%) were aged 51 years and above, indicating a mature and experienced nursing workforce. Most participants were employed at Tanta University Hospital (62%), reflecting the institution's large nursing staff and central role in healthcare delivery in Tanta City. Nurses were well-distributed across various departments, ensuring representation from high-stress units like ICU and OT, as well as pediatric, medical, and emergency departments. Regarding job roles, nursing supervisors made up the largest category (40.2%), which could influence overall perceptions of salary satisfaction and workplace incivility due to differences in authority and workload compared to staff nurses and nursing assistants.

The bar chart (**Figure1**) illustrates the mean (M) and standard deviation (S.D.) levels of salary satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and workplace incivility experienced by nurses in the study. It is evident that the highest mean score was recorded for emotional exhaustion, followed closely by workplace incivility, indicating that nurses frequently experience high levels of both emotional strain and uncivil behaviors in their work environment. In contrast, salary satisfaction demonstrated a considerably lower mean, reflecting widespread dissatisfaction with pay among the participants. The relatively low standard deviations across all three variables suggest limited variability in responses, implying that these experiences were commonly shared among the nursing staff. Overall, the

findings highlight significant workplace challenges for nurses in Tanta City hospitals, with notable implications for staff well-being and organizational management.

Table 2 presents the psychometric properties of the scales used in the study, confirming strong internal consistency for all measures, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .88 to .97. The Salary Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ) demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = .97$) with a mean score of 18.17 (SD = 2.15), suggesting generally low satisfaction given the potential maximum of 20. The Emotional Exhaustion Scale (EE) also showed high reliability ($\alpha = .95$) and a notably high mean of 55.18 (SD = 4.75) relative to its potential range, indicating substantial emotional strain among participants. Similarly, the Workplace Incivility Scale (WI) reported good reliability ($\alpha = .88$) and a high mean score of 51.31 (SD = 5.01), highlighting frequent experiences of incivility. Skewness and kurtosis values indicate slight negative skewness for all scales, particularly for WI (-1.75), suggesting that most respondents scored toward the higher end of the scale, with acceptable levels of kurtosis indicating near-normal distribution. These results affirm the reliability and suitability of the instruments for assessing the study's variables in this sample.

Table 3 displays the correlation coefficients between salary satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and workplace incivility among the study sample (N = 500). The results reveal strong, highly significant positive correlations between all

three variables at the $p < .01$ level. Salary satisfaction was strongly correlated with emotional exhaustion ($r = .88^{**}$) and with workplace incivility ($r = .91^{**}$), indicating that lower satisfaction with salary is associated with higher levels of both emotional exhaustion and workplace incivility. Additionally, a robust positive correlation was observed between emotional exhaustion and workplace incivility ($r = .85^{**}$), suggesting that nurses who experience more uncivil behavior at work also report greater emotional fatigue. These findings underscore the interconnected nature of financial, emotional, and interpersonal stressors in the hospital work environment and emphasize the importance of addressing salary dissatisfaction and workplace civility to mitigate emotional exhaustion among nursing staff.

Table 4 presents the correlation coefficients between salary satisfaction and various demographic variables among the study sample (N = 500). The findings indicate that salary satisfaction (SSQ) was highly and significantly correlated with all demographic factors at the $p < .01$ level. The strongest correlation was observed between salary satisfaction and job role ($r = .861^{**}$), suggesting that nurses' positions within the hospital hierarchy significantly influence their perceptions of salary fairness and adequacy. Notably, substantial positive correlations were also found between salary satisfaction and gender ($r = .761^{**}$), marital status ($r = .791^{**}$), and age ($r = .534^{**}$), implying that personal characteristics may shape how nurses perceive and evaluate their

compensation. Additionally, hospital-related variables such as hospital name ($r = .689^{**}$) and department ($r = .822^{**}$) demonstrated strong associations with salary satisfaction, indicating that institutional and departmental contexts contribute

meaningfully to pay perceptions. Collectively, these results highlight the multifactorial nature of salary satisfaction, shaped by both personal demographics and workplace characteristics within the nursing profession in Tanta City.

Table 1: Demographical Information of the study participants. (N=500)

Variable	Categories	N	%
Sex	Female	201	40.2
	Male	299	59.8
Marital Status	Single	250	50.0
	Married	250	50.0
Age	21 – 30	150	30
	31 – 40	120	24
	41 – 50	100	20
	51 +	130	26
Hospital Name	Tanta university hospital	310	62
	Tanta cancer center	130	26
	El Menshawy hospital	62	12
Hospital department	OT	80	16
	ICU	80	16
	Surgery	50	10
	OPD	50	10
	Pediatric	75	15
	Emergency	55	11
	Medical	62	12.4
	Other	50	10
Job role	Staff Nurse (BSc nurses)	151	30.2
	Nursing Assistant (diploma nurses)	148	29.6
	Nursing Supervisor	201	40.2

Note: *f* =frequency, % = personage

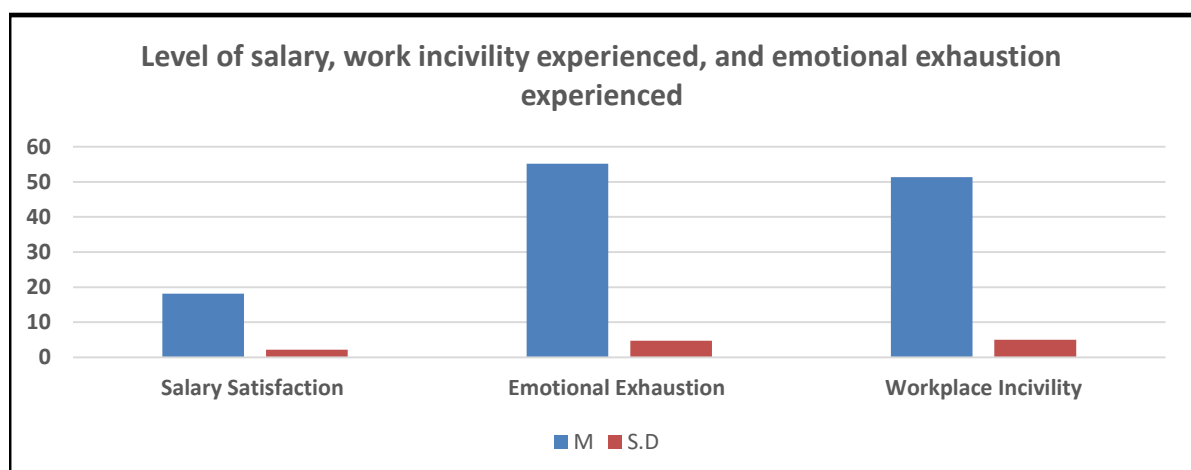


Figure 1: Level of salary, work incivility, and emotional exhaustion experienced

Table 2: Psychometric Properties of Scales Used in the study (N=500)

	k	A	M	(SD)	Range		Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Actual	Potential	Stati	Std. E	Stati	Std. E
SSQ	500	.97	18.17	2.15	5 – 20	4 – 20	-1.21	.12	1.71	.24
EE	500	.95	55.18	4.75	11 – 36	9 – 36	-.49	.12	.40	.24
WI	500	.88	51.31	5.01	16 – 68	14 – 70	-1.75	.12	.47	.21

Note: SSQ = Salary Satisfaction Questionnaire, EE = Emotional Exhaustion Scale, WI = Workplace Incivility. k = number of items, M = Mean, SD = standard deviation, α = Cronbach's alpha, Range Min= Minimum Score, Range Max= Maximum Score,

Table 3: Correlation between salary or pay satisfaction, work incivility and emotional exhaustion (K = 500).

Variables	SSQ	EE	WI
SSQ	-	.88**	.91**
EE	--	-	.85**
WI	-	-	-

Note: SSQ = Salary Satisfaction Questionnaire, EE = Emotional Exhaustion Scale, WI = Workplace Incivility.

** = highly significant at .01

* = Significant at .05

Table 4: Correlation between salary or pay satisfaction, with demographic values (K = 500).

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SSQ		.761**	.791**	.534**	.689**	.822**	.927**	.861**
Gender		-	.753**	.776**	.852**	.809**	.806**	.822**
Marital Status		-	-	.529**	.601**	.692**	.527**	.809**
Age		-	-	-	.638**	.529**	.664**	.792**
Hospital Name		-	-	-	-	.574**	.625**	.829**
Hospital department		-	-	-	-	-	.709**	.874**
Job role								.861**

Discussion

The present study investigates salary satisfaction as a predictor of emotional exhaustion and work incivility among nurses at Tanta City Hospitals, along with the influence of demographic and job-related factors on salary satisfaction. The findings provide valuable insights into the interconnected nature of financial, interpersonal, and emotional stressors within the healthcare environment.

The results revealed generally low levels of salary satisfaction among nurses, accompanied by high levels of emotional exhaustion and frequent experiences of workplace incivility. These findings are consistent with prior research conducted in similar healthcare contexts. For instance, **El-Gazar et al. (2020)** found that inadequate financial rewards were a key predictor of burnout and job dissatisfaction among Egyptian

nurses, particularly in public hospitals where resource limitations are more pronounced. The high emotional exhaustion scores observed in this study mirror international evidence indicating that nurses frequently experience significant emotional strain due to demanding workloads, staffing shortages, and limited organizational support (**Kelly et al., 2021**).

Correlation analysis confirmed strong, statistically significant positive relationships between salary dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and workplace incivility. This suggests that lower salary satisfaction is associated with both higher emotional fatigue and increased exposure to uncivil behaviors at work. Similar patterns were reported by **Alquwez (2020)**, who emphasized that insufficient compensation often contributes to poor morale, interpersonal conflict, and burnout in nursing environments. These findings reinforce the importance of addressing financial and organizational factors simultaneously when seeking to improve the work climate for nursing professionals.

Moreover, the study identified significant correlations between salary satisfaction and demographic variables such as gender, marital status, age, hospital name, department, and job role. Notably, the strongest association was between salary satisfaction and job role, indicating that nurses in higher supervisory positions reported greater satisfaction with their pay compared to staff nurses and nursing assistants. This is aligned with findings from **Hussein et al. (2022)**, who highlighted that leadership roles

within Egyptian hospitals typically receive better remuneration and benefits, which may buffer against work-related stressors. Additionally, variations in salary satisfaction based on department and hospital name suggest that institutional policies and departmental workloads influence financial perceptions, as documented in studies by **Ismail et al. (2019)**, which showed that specialty units like ICU and emergency departments often report higher occupational stress and dissatisfaction.

Interestingly, the significant positive correlations between salary satisfaction and both gender and marital status indicate possible sociocultural influences on how financial compensation is perceived among Egyptian nurses. This observation aligns with the work of **El Dahshan and Keshk (2014)**, who noted that cultural expectations surrounding gender roles and family responsibilities in Egypt can shape job satisfaction determinants, with male and married nurses often seeking higher income stability.

In conclusion, this study underscores the critical need for hospital administrators and policymakers in Egypt to adopt comprehensive strategies that address both financial incentives and workplace civility to improve nurses' well-being and job satisfaction. Future interventions should consider demographic disparities and departmental differences to ensure equitable and supportive work environments for all nursing staff.

One of the primary limitations of this study is its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to draw

causal inferences between salary satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and workplace incivility. While significant associations were identified among these variables, the nature of their relationships over time remains unclear. Longitudinal or experimental studies would be necessary to establish causality and to determine whether changes in salary satisfaction directly lead to alterations in emotional exhaustion levels or workplace behavior.

Another limitation lies in the reliance on self-reported questionnaires for data collection. Participants' responses may have been influenced by social desirability bias, as nurses might underreport negative experiences such as workplace incivility or emotional exhaustion due to fear of professional repercussions or stigma. Additionally, recall bias could affect the accuracy of the responses, as participants might not fully remember or objectively assess their past experiences and feelings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed that nurses' income satisfaction is essential in minimising emotional weariness and rudeness at work. The results showed a substantial correlation between lower levels of emotional tiredness and rudeness at work and wage satisfaction. These findings have significant ramifications for nurses, legislators, and healthcare organisations.

This study emphasises the significance of income satisfaction for nurses and illustrates how it affects emotional tiredness and workplace rudeness. Enhancing nurse wellbeing and providing high-quality

healthcare services depend on addressing pay concerns and fostering a healthy work environment.

Recommendation

The following suggestions for further investigation can be made in light of the study's limitations:

- In order to increase nurse happiness and wellbeing, the study emphasised the necessity for healthcare organisations to provide fair and competitive wage structures top priority.
- Reducing emotional tiredness and workplace rudeness can also be achieved by fostering a supportive workplace environment.
- To recruit and keep skilled professionals, policymakers should take into account setting wage norms that match nurses' credentials and duties.

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