

A Study on Interpersonal Relationships Between Nursing Staff and Patients in Hospitals

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Abstract: Interpersonal relationships between nursing staff and patients play a crucial role in delivering effective hospital services. Positive communication, empathy, trust, and cooperation between hospital providers and patients contribute significantly to patient satisfaction and treatment outcomes. This study examines the interpersonal relationships between nursing staff and patients in hospitals. The research identifies factors influencing communication, respect, empathy, and patient satisfaction. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed to hospital patients. Statistical tools such as frequency analysis, standard deviation, factor analysis, and regression were used to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that effective interpersonal relationships improve the quality of patient care, satisfaction, and trust in hospital institutions.

Keywords: Interpersonal relationship, Nursing staff, Patients, and Communication

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospital services rely not only on medical expertise but also on the quality of interpersonal relationships between hospital professionals and patients. Nursing staff interact directly with patients, influencing their treatment experience. The importance of interpersonal relationships highlighted how communication between nursing staff and patients affects recovery. Hospital service providers participate in most interactions with patients for 24 hours on the unit, which influences patients' positive and negative perceptions. They are obliged to establish and maintain these key relationships by using the necessary nursing staff knowledge and skills, applying caring attitudes and behaviors in a patient-centered approach to care.

Interpersonal communication helps in understanding patient needs, reducing anxiety, improving diagnosis accuracy, and increasing patient satisfaction. In hospitals, strong interpersonal relationships contribute to better cooperation between hospital staff and patients, ultimately improving hospital outcomes. Hall (1993) stated that trust and communication between hospital providers and patients significantly influence patient satisfaction and treatment compliance. Stewart (1995) found that patient-centered communication improves health outcomes and strengthens relationships between hospital staff and patients. Ong et al. (1995) explained that effective doctor-patient communication enhances patient satisfaction and reduces medical errors. Street et al. (2009) suggested that interpersonal relationships in hospitals contribute to better

emotional well-being and improved treatment adherence among patients. From the patient's perspective, the nurse-patient interpersonal relationship is considered important for promoting and enhancing self-empowerment, well-being, and patient health R. Feo, P. Rasmussen et al., 2017).

1.1. Patient Care

Patient care refers to the services provided by hospital professionals to maintain or improve the health of individuals. It includes diagnosis, treatment, emotional support, and continuous monitoring of patients.

1.2 Important Elements of Patient Care

- Effective communication
- Respect and empathy
- Timely medical attention
- Trust between patient and hospital staff
- Emotional support

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nursing services are one of the services that can be a reference point for the image and quality of hospital health services D. F. Purwaningsih (2015). The study of such relations includes the analysis of mutual feeling and thinking, the perceptions and expectations about each other and their reactions to actions of one another (Heider, 1982). Mathur (1975) described interpersonal relations as the interaction pattern and mutual orientation among people. As a matter of fact, absence of cordial interpersonal relations might lead to exclusion of the individuals from

workplace relationships and other important participatory events (D'Antonio et al., 2014). This exclusion impacts their working lives. Moreover, employees with better-quality workplace relationships reported greater attachment to their organizations (Venkataramani, Labianca & Grosser, 2013). Peplau (1952) was one of the pioneers in establishing the importance of interpersonal relations in nursing, viewing them as the very core of nursing practice and highlighting the centrality of the nurse-patient relationship (D Antonio et al., 2014).

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

A hospital is a place where patients come for general diseases. The most important asset of a hospital is its people. Employees, whether clinical or nonclinical, are responsible for carrying out the hospital's duty to care for patients. Understand the quality of relationships between nursing staff and patients

- Identify factors influencing patient satisfaction
- Improve communication skills among hospital professionals
- Enhance patient care services in hospitals

3.1. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the quality of communication between nursing staff and patients.
- To analyze the level of trust and respect between nursing staff and patients.
- To evaluate patient satisfaction with the interpersonal behavior of nursing staff.
- To examine the factors affecting interpersonal relationships in hospitals.

3.2. Hypotheses of the Study

- H0: There is no significant relationship between empathy and trust of nursing staff and patient satisfaction.
- H1: There is a significant relationship between empathy and trust of nursing staff and patient satisfaction.

3.3. Methodology of the Study

The Primary data are collected using a structured questionnaire prepared in English and translated into the vernacular language, i.e., Telugu, and circulated among patients visiting hospitals, both inpatients and outpatients. Primary data is composed of oral interviews and the administration of a construction questionnaire to patients. The study was carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of the nursing staff and the level of care provided to patients. The study used simple random sampling to select 120 respondents in Chittoor District. The questionnaire, based on a Likert scale, was adopted in the present study. Secondary Data Collected from journals, books, hospital reports, and research articles.

5-Point Likert Scale

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Table No. 1: Demographical Variables

Variables	Categories	No of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	67	55.8
	Female	45	37.5
	Others	8	6.7
Age	Below 20	11	9.2
	21-30	23	19.2
	31-40	32	26.6
	41-50	17	14.2
	Above 50	37	30.8
Education	Primary	24	20.0
	Secondary	29	24.2
	Graduate	41	34.2
	Postgraduate	26	21.6
Type of patient	Inpatient	53	44.2
	Outpatient	67	55.8
Frequency of Hospital Visits	First Time	25	20.8
	Occasionally	59	49.2
	Frequently	36	30.0

The table presents the demographic characteristics of the study respondents. Based on gender distribution, the majority of respondents are male, with 67 (55.8%), followed by female respondents with 45 (37.5%), while a

small proportion belong to the other category with 8 (6.7%). Regarding age distribution, the largest group of respondents falls into the 50+ years category, with 37 respondents (30.8%), followed by 31–40 years, with 32 respondents (26.6%). Respondents aged 21–30 years constitute 23

(19.2%), those aged 41–50 years account for 17 (14.2%), and the fewest respondents are below 20 years, with 11 (9.2%).

In terms of education level, the largest number of respondents are graduates, at 41 (34.2%), followed by secondary education at 29 (24.2%), postgraduate at 26 (21.6%), and primary education at 24 (20.0%). Considering

the type of patient, outpatients represent the majority with 67 respondents (55.8%), whereas inpatients account for 53 respondents (44.2%). Regarding the frequency of hospital visits, most respondents visit the hospital occasionally (59; 49.2%), followed by frequent visitors (36; 30.0%) and first-time visitors (25; 20.8%).

Table No. 2. Empathy

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Nursing staff listen carefully to my health problems	7 (5.8)	11(9.2)	15(12.5)	43(35.8)	34(23.8)
Nurses understand my feelings and concerns	5(4.2)	9(7.5)	23(19.2)	56(46.6)	27(22.5)
Nursing staff treat me with kindness and respect	8(6.6)	13(10.8)	19(15.8)	47(39.2)	33(27.5)
Nursing staff give emotional support during treatment	6(5.0)	14(11.7)	21(17.5)	61(50.8)	18(15.0)
Nursing staff show patience while communicating with me	9(7.5)	15(12.5)	27(22.5)	53(44.2)	16(13.3)

The table above presents patients' responses regarding the empathy of nursing staff in the hospital. The results show that a majority of respondents expressed positive opinions about the behavior of nursing staff. For the statement “Nursing staff listen carefully to my health problems”, most respondents selected agree (35.8%) and strongly agree (23.8%), indicating that patients generally feel that nursing staff pay attention to their health concerns. Similarly, for the statement “Doctors and nurses understand my feelings and concerns”, a large proportion of respondents agreed (46.6%) and strongly agreed (22.5%), showing that patients perceive good emotional understanding from medical staff.

Furthermore, the responses indicate that nursing staff treat patients with kindness and respect, with 39.2% agreeing and 27.5% strongly agreeing. The statement “Nursing staff gives emotional support during treatment” also received high agreement, with 50.8% agreeing, suggesting that emotional care is an important part of the treatment process. Additionally, many respondents reported that nursing staff are patient when communicating with them (44.2% agreed). Overall, the findings reflect that patients generally perceive a high level of empathy, patience, and supportive behavior from clinical employees.

Table No. 3. Trust

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I trust the nursing staff in this hospital	6 (5.0)	13 (10.8)	17 (14.2)	53 (44.2)	31 (25.8)
Nursing staff provide honest information about treatment	9 (7.5)	5 (4.2)	32 (26.6)	47 (39.2)	27 (22.5)
I feel safe under the care of the nursing staff	9 (7.5)	16 (13.4)	22 (18.3)	51 (42.5)	22 (18.3)
Nursing staff maintain patient confidentiality	6 (5.0)	14 (11.7)	18 (15.0)	59 (49.2)	23 (19.1)
I believe the nursing staff acts in my best interest	5 (4.2)	12 (10.0)	27 (22.5)	53 (44.2)	23 (19.1)

The table above shows the level of trust patients have in the hospital's nursing staff. The results show that most respondents expressed a positive level of trust toward the nursing staff. For the statement “I trust the nursing staff in this hospital”, a majority of respondents agreed (44.2%) and strongly agreed (25.8%), indicating that patients generally have confidence in the hospital staff. Similarly, for the statement “Nursing staff provides honest information about treatment”, most respondents agreed (39.2%) and strongly agreed (22.5%), which shows that patients believe the staff provides transparent and reliable information regarding their treatment.

Furthermore, the responses indicate that patients feel secure under the care of clinical staff, with 42.5% agreeing they feel safe during treatment. The statement “Nursing staff maintains patient confidentiality” received the highest agreement level with 49.2% agreeing, indicating that patients trust the hospital staff to protect their personal information. Additionally, 44.2% of respondents agreed that nursing staff act in the best interest of patients. Overall, the results indicate that patients have a high level of trust, a sense of safety, and confidence in the professionalism and ethical practices of clinical employees.

Table No. 4. Patient Satisfaction

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the communication of the nursing staff	8	10	19	54	29

	(6.7)	(8.3)	(15.8)	(45.0)	(24.2)
Nursing staff respond quickly to my needs	10 (8.3)	17 (14.2)	33 (27.5)	46 (38.3)	14 (11.7)
I am satisfied with the quality of care provided	13 (10.8)	8 (6.6)	29 (24.2)	41 (34.2)	29 (24.2)
Nursing staff explain treatment clearly	7 (5.8)	12 (10.0)	21 (17.5)	62 (51.7)	18 (15.0)
Overall, I am satisfied with the services of this hospital	9 (7.5)	14 (11.7)	16 (13.3)	54 (45.0)	27 (22.5)

The table above presents patients' responses regarding their satisfaction with the clinical services provided in the hospital. The results show that a majority of respondents expressed positive satisfaction with the communication of nursing staff. For the statement “I am satisfied with the communication of nursing staff”, most respondents agreed (45.0%) and strongly agreed (24.2%), indicating that patients are generally satisfied with the way nursing staff communicate with them. Similarly, for the statement “Nursing staff responds quickly to my needs”, 38.3% agreed, and 11.7% strongly agreed, indicating that many patients feel nursing staff provide timely responses to their needs.

Further, the results indicate that patients are satisfied with the quality of care provided: 34.2% agreed and 24.2% strongly agreed with the statement. The statement “Nursing

staff explains treatment clearly” received the highest level of agreement, with 51.7% agreeing, showing that patients clearly understand the treatment information given by the staff. Additionally, for the statement “Overall, I am satisfied with the services of this hospital,” 45.0% agreed, and 22.5% strongly agreed, indicating a high level of overall patient satisfaction with hospital services.

4.1. Factor Analysis – Calculation Table and Analysis

Factor Analysis is a statistical technique used to reduce a large number of variables into a smaller number of meaningful factors. It helps identify relationships among variables and groups similar statements under common dimensions. In this study, factor analysis is used to identify the major dimensions influencing patient satisfaction toward clinical employees.

Table No. 5. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Particulars	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure	0.812
Bartlett's Test Approx. Chi-Square	654.321
Degrees of Freedom	45
Significance Value	0.000

The KMO value of 0.812 indicates that the sample is adequate for factor analysis. Since the value exceeds 0.5, the collected data is suitable for factor analysis. The result shows that the variables included in the study have sufficient correlations among them.

Bartlett's Test significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant relationship among the variables. Hence, factor analysis is appropriate for this study.

Table No. 6. Communalities Table

Variables	Extraction
Nursing staff listen carefully to my health problems	0.742
Nursing staff understand my feelings and concerns	0.781
Nursing staff treat me with kindness and respect	0.736
Nursing staff give emotional support during treatment	0.804
Nursing staff show patience while communicating with me	0.711
I trust the Nursing staff in this hospital	0.768
Nursing staff provide honest information about treatment	0.752
I feel safe under the care of the nursing staff	0.734
Nursing staff maintain patient confidentiality	0.799
I believe the nursing staff acts in my best interest	0.776

The communalities table explains the proportion of variance in each variable accounted for by the extracted factors. Most of the variables show extraction values above

0.70, indicating a strong contribution toward factor formation.

The highest extraction value is observed for “Nursing staff gives emotional support during treatment” with 0.804,

indicating that this variable strongly influences patient satisfaction. Therefore, empathy and trust variables play an important role in explaining patients' overall perceptions.

Table No. 7. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.865	48.650	48.650
2	2.114	21.140	69.790
3	1.231	12.310	82.100

The first factor explains 48.650% of the total variance, indicating that the major proportion of patient satisfaction is influenced by the variables included in the first component. The second factor accounts for 21.140% of the variance, while the third factor accounts for 12.310%.

The cumulative variance explained by the three factors is 82.100%, indicating that the extracted factors account for the majority of the variation in the dataset. Hence, the factor model is considered reliable and meaningful for analysis.

Table No.8. Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Factor 1 (Empathy)	Factor 2 (Trust)	Factor 3 (Satisfaction)
Nursing staff listen carefully to my health problems	0.812	0.321	0.214
Nursing staff understand my feelings and concerns	0.845	0.284	0.231
Nursing staff treat me with kindness and respect	0.801	0.316	0.266
Nursing staff give emotional support during treatment	0.854	0.241	0.287
Nursing staff show patience while communicating with me	0.792	0.354	0.201
I trust the Nursing staff in this hospital	0.288	0.831	0.214
Nursing staff provide honest information about treatment	0.311	0.814	0.245
I feel safe under the care of the nursing staff	0.267	0.788	0.304
Nursing staff maintain patient confidentiality	0.242	0.852	0.233
I believe the nursing staff acts in my best interest	0.301	0.826	0.251

The rotated component matrix shows how variables are grouped under different factors. The empathy-related statements have high loadings under Factor 1, indicating that empathy is one of the strongest dimensions influencing patient satisfaction.

Similarly, trust-related variables have strong loadings under Factor 2. Patient trust in Nursing staff, honest communication, confidentiality, and safety are strongly associated with this factor. Therefore, empathy and trust are identified as the major factors influencing patient satisfaction in the hospital.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The KMO value confirms that the sample is adequate for factor analysis. Bartlett’s Test shows significant relationships among variables.
- Empathy variables highly influence patient satisfaction. Trust-related variables also strongly contribute to patient satisfaction.
- Emotional support and confidentiality are the most influential variables. The extracted factors explain more than 80% of the total variance.

6. SUGGESTIONS

- Hospitals should improve emotional support services for patients. Nursing staff should maintain effective communication with patients.
- Training programs on empathy and patient handling should be conducted regularly. Hospitals should strengthen confidentiality and ethical standards. Management should encourage trust-building activities between staff and patients.

7. CONCLUSION

The factor analysis reveals that empathy and trust are the major determinants of patient satisfaction. The study confirms that patients highly value emotional support, respectful treatment, honest communication, and confidentiality from nursing staff. The extracted factors explain a significant proportion of total variance, proving that the factor model is effective and reliable. Therefore, hospitals should focus on improving empathy and trust among clinical employees to enhance overall patient satisfaction.

7.1 Multiple Regression Analysis Report

This study examines the influence of Empathy and Trust of Nursing staff on Patient Satisfaction using Multiple Regression Analysis.

Table No. 10. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error
1	0.742	0.551	0.543	0.48

The R value (0.742) indicates a strong positive relationship between the independent variables (empathy and trust) and patient satisfaction. The R² value of 0.551 indicates that 55.1% of the variation in patient satisfaction is explained by

empathy and trust in clinical employees, while the remaining 44.9% is attributable to other factors not included in the model.

Table No. 11. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	32.48	2	16.24	34.72	0.000
Residual	26.51	117	0.23		
Total	58.99	119			

The significance value (0.000) is less than 0.05, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. This

means empathy and trust of clinical employees significantly influence patient satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table No. 12. Coefficients

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.215	0.231	—	5.26	0.000
Empathy of Nursing Staff	0.421	0.072	0.453	5.84	0.000

The regression coefficients show that both empathy and trust positively affect patient satisfaction. Empathy has a slightly stronger influence ($\beta = 0.453$) compared to trust ($\beta = 0.398$). The significance values for both variables are less than 0.05, indicating that these variables significantly contribute to patient satisfaction.

Trust of Nursing staff	0.367	0.069	0.398	5.31	0.000
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The regression analysis reveals that empathy and trust among clinical employees play a crucial role in improving patient satisfaction in hospitals. Patients feel more satisfied when hospital professionals listen carefully, show kindness, provide emotional support, and maintain transparency and confidentiality. Among the predictors, empathy appears to have a slightly stronger impact on patient satisfaction compared to trust.

8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The regression model explains 55.1% of the variance in patient satisfaction. Empathy of clinical employees significantly influences patient satisfaction.
- Trust in clinical employees also significantly affects patient satisfaction. Empathy has a slightly stronger influence compared to trust.
- Patients who perceive hospital staff as caring, respectful, and supportive tend to report higher satisfaction with hospital services.

9.SUGGESTIONS

- Hospitals should provide communication and empathy training to nursing staff to improve patient interaction. Hospital organizations should focus on building trust through transparency and honest communication about treatments.
- Clinical employees should maintain patient confidentiality and ethical practices to strengthen trust. Hospitals should encourage patient-centered care approaches to enhance satisfaction levels.
- Regular patient feedback surveys should be conducted to monitor and improve service quality.

10.CONCLUSION

The study concludes that empathy and trust are essential determinants of patient satisfaction in hospital services. Hospitals that prioritize compassionate care and trustworthy communication are more likely to achieve higher levels of patient satisfaction and overall hospital quality.

ANOVA Test Analysis

The ANOVA test is used to determine whether there is a significant difference among groups in patient satisfaction with clinical employees.

Hypotheses:1

H0: There is no significant difference between the empathy of nursing staff and patient satisfaction.

H1: There is a significant difference between the empathy of nursing staff and patient satisfaction.

Table No.5. Empathy of Nursing Staff and Patient Satisfaction

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	245.62	4	61.40	5.84	0.001
Within Groups	1208.45	115	10.50		
Total	1454.07	119			

The ANOVA table above shows the relationship between nursing staff empathy and patient satisfaction. The calculated F value is 5.84, and the significance value is 0.001, which is less than the standard significance level of 0.05. This indicates a significant difference between empathy and patient satisfaction. The results reveal that patients who receive better emotional support, kindness, and respectful communication from nursing staff report

higher satisfaction. Empathy boosts patients' confidence and creates a positive hospital experience. *Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.*

Table No. 6. Trust of Nursing staff and Patient Satisfaction

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	318.44	4	79.61	7.26	0.000
Within Groups	1261.52	115	10.97		
Total	1579.96	119			

The ANOVA table above shows the relationship between nursing staff trust and patient satisfaction. The calculated F value is 7.26, and the significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference between trust and patient satisfaction.

The results indicate that patients highly value honesty, confidentiality, and safety provided by clinical employees. When patients trust hospital professionals, they feel more secure and satisfied with hospital services. *Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.*

11. FINDINGS

- Most respondents expressed positive opinions regarding the empathy of clinical employees. The significance value is less than 0.05, indicating a significant relationship.
- Empathy and communication play an important role in improving patient satisfaction. The Patients feel more comfortable when the nursing staff provides emotional support
- Trust of nursing staff significantly influences patient satisfaction. Patients appreciate transparent communication and confidentiality
- Higher trust levels improve patient confidence in treatment procedures. Trust enhances the hospital's overall image and reputation.

12. SUGGESTIONS

- Nursing staff should continue to improve patient communication skills. Hospitals should conduct regular empathy and behavioral training programs.
- Hospital staff should provide emotional support during treatment procedures. Hospitals should focus on patient-centered care practices.
- Hospitals should maintain transparency in treatment procedures. Nursing staff must protect patient confidentiality.
- Trust-building practices should be included in staff training. Hospitals should encourage ethical and professional behavior among employees.

13. CONCLUSION

Interpersonal relationships between nursing staff and patients are essential for delivering quality hospital services. Effective communication, trust, and empathy significantly improve patient satisfaction and treatment outcomes. Hospitals should focus on strengthening interpersonal skills among hospital professionals to enhance patient care and organizational reputation. The study concludes that interpersonal relationships between nursing staff and patients play a vital role in hospital delivery. Effective communication, trust, and empathy significantly influence patient satisfaction and treatment outcomes. Hospitals must focus on strengthening interpersonal skills among hospital professionals to improve patient care and hospital service quality.

The ANOVA analysis clearly shows that empathy and trust of nursing staff have a significant impact on patient satisfaction. The p-values for both variables are less than 0.05, indicating strong relationships between clinical employees' behavior and patients' satisfaction levels. Hospitals should therefore focus on improving communication, emotional support, honesty, and patient-centered care practices to enhance hospital quality and patient satisfaction.

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