Path analysis of ethical sensitivity and empathy in critical care nurses

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Abstract

Introduction: Critical care nurses routinely confront moral issues as they care for extremely ill patients, they need to have an ethical sensitivity to recognize ethical conflicts and make appropriate decisions in ethical situations. According to theories, empathy is associated with ethical sensitivity. Nursing literature also demonstrates the impact of nurses' demographic and work factors on their level of empathy and ethical sensitivity. This study aims to provide a better understanding of the concept of empathy in care ethics by confirming the study conceptual model that links empathy and ethical sensitivity considering their potential predictors among critical care nurses.

Materials and Methods: A sample of 326 critical care nurses from 10 educational hospitals in Iran completed the study survey including Lutzen's Modified Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire (MMSQ), Jefferson Scale of Empathy-health professional version (JSE-HP), and Depression, Anxiety and Stress (DASS-21) scale. Path analysis was used to determine the relationship between study variables and the study reported according to the STROBE checklist.

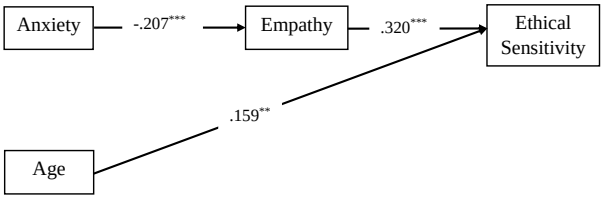
Results: The hypothesized model adequately fitted with study data. empathy mediated the influence of anxiety on ethical sensitivity. Anxiety was negatively associated with empathy, in turn, empathy and ethical sensitivity had a strong positive association. Among demographic characteristics, age positively predicted ethical sensitivity.

Conclusion: higher ethical sensitivity is associated with higher empathy and less anxiety among older nurses. This study can help to endeavor for ameliorating some modifiable factors like emotional states and empathy to resolve ethical dilemmas through improving nurses' ethical sensitivity.

Key Words: Empathy; Ethical sensitivity; Nursing; Path analysis

Image

FIGURE 1 Finalized path analytic model



Note: Standardized (β) path coefficients were used to display the direct and indirect effects between study variables,
**p <.01, ***p <.001

Recent Publications (minimum 5)

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Photograph



Biography

Mr. Amir Masoud Sharifnia, BSN, is a fourth-year undergraduate nursing student in Iran who will graduate in 2022. He is well acquainted with the design of studies and analytical skills in clinical research especially structural equation modeling and meta-analysis. He has contributions with research teams and groups in the United States and Australia and currently is working on a project under the supervision of professor Ritin Fernandez at the University of Wollongong Australia.

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