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Examining the Impact of Managerial Communication on the Link Between Nurses' Job Performance and Psychological Empowerment

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Abstract

Human resource empowerment is recognized as a key strategy in modern management for enhancing job performance. In the healthcare sector, senior management has increasingly focused on psychologically empowering nurses to improve their job performance. Enhancing nurses' job performance not only leads to better patient care but also improves the overall quality of medical services and ultimately contributes to the better health of society. This research specifically examines how the communication behaviors of nursing managers—such as empathic language, directive time, and meaningful language—moderate the relationship between nurses' job performance and psychological empowerment. This study was conducted with a descriptive-correlational approach using regression analysis. The statistical population of the study consisted of 366 people, of whom 188 were selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using three standardized questionnaires and analyzed through correlation tests and hierarchical regression analysis in SPSS version 23 software. The findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between nurses' psychological empowerment and their job performance. In addition, each aspect of nursing managers' communication behaviors played a moderating role in the played between job performance and psychological empowerment ($P < 0.05$). This study suggests that nursing managers should implement strategies such as granting nurses autonomy, revising the compensation system, organizing psychological training sessions, providing support for psychiatric nurses, conducting regular meetings, involving nurses in discussions on critical issues, and offering encouragement and support to enhance their capabilities and job performance.

Keywords: Health system, Human resources, Nurses' job performance, Psychological empowerment

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Introduction

Human resources are widely regarded as one of the most valuable intangible assets in organizations, serving as a critical competitive edge and a rare resource, especially in a knowledge-based economy [1, 2]. In the healthcare setting, nurses play a pivotal role in patient care, enduring significant challenges in treating patients alongside the medical team. Understanding the behaviors of nurses and enhancing their ability to perform their roles more effectively is crucial for improving their job performance. For nursing managers, a primary concern is identifying strategies to boost nurses' job performance, thereby

increasing the overall productivity of the healthcare sector. Organizations continuously strive for improved performance, and job performance remains one of the most critical concepts in human resource management research [3, 4].

Job performance refers to the occupational behaviors displayed by employees at various times and positions that generate value for the organization [5]. Scholars in organizational behavior and psychology argue that assessing employees' true performance requires attention to behaviors beyond just professional tasks [6]. Numerous factors, such as perceived organizational support, organizational learning, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational justice, organizational trust, quality of work life, intrinsic motivation, mental health, emotional intelligence, and empowerment, all influence job performance [7-12].

Psychological empowerment, as defined by Hui-Hua and Schutte [6], involves a set of psychological states where employees focus on and gain expertise in their work, develop self-confidence in their role and influence within the organization, and feel a sense of control and a drive for success. According to research by Chi Keung *et al.* [13], psychological empowerment starts with a shift in employees' beliefs, where they become convinced of their independence, the freedom to act, and their competence to perform tasks successfully. This sense of empowerment also allows employees to feel that they can influence and control job outcomes. When employees experience this sense of empowerment, it can lead to enhanced flexibility, creativity, problem-solving, job satisfaction, mental well-being, and high job performance. Empowered employees are self-regulating, take responsibility easily, and maintain a positive attitude toward their colleagues and surroundings [13]. Psychological empowerment is commonly understood in four dimensions: competence, autonomy, meaning, and acceptance of personal consequences [14-16].

Prior research has indicated that effective oral communication between managers and employees enhances motivation, job satisfaction, performance, and retention. How managers communicate with employees is crucial in reducing psychological stress and promoting higher job satisfaction and performance [17]. Managerial communication helps clarify organizational goals and priorities, and the communication style varies based on the manager’s leadership approach. Factors such as organizational size, type of services provided, employee work styles, and the level of employee training all influence how managers communicate with their staff [18, 19].

By studying the impact of managerial communication behaviors on nurses, nursing managers can refine their leadership skills. Research shows that communication behaviors from nursing managers are positively associated with factors such as work engagement, reduced psychological stress, intrinsic motivation, performance feedback, and rewards [20]. Most prior studies examining the relationship between communication behaviors and nurses’ mental health relied on self-reported data. With growing recognition of the link between psychological empowerment and job performance, along with the critical role of nursing managers’ communication behaviors, this study aims to clarify how these variables interact. By doing so, it can help managers better foster human resource development and improve organizational performance. This research specifically explores how the communication behaviors of nursing managers—such as empathic language, directive time, and meaningful language—moderate the relationship between nurses’ job performance and psychological empowerment.

Materials and Methods

The research methodology employed in this study is descriptive correlation, utilizing hierarchical regression analysis to examine the impact of one variable on another. This approach is practical, as the findings have real-world applications in hospitals and organizations, allowing for the testing of theoretical frameworks in actual settings. Within the conceptual model, the psychological empowerment of nurses is the independent variable, nurses' job performance is the dependent variable, and the communication behaviors of nursing managers serve as the moderating variable.

The study’s statistical population consisted of approximately 366 nurses working at a hospital. Based on Morgan's table, the sample size was calculated to be 187 individuals. Given the varied hospital departments and potential non-responses, a stratified random sampling method was employed, selecting 200 individuals from various internal departments through a simple random method. A total of 188 respondents completed the questionnaires. To ensure confidentiality and adhere to ethical guidelines, the questionnaires were distributed and explained by one of the researchers, who was also a staff member of the hospital. In addition to gathering demographic data, the questionnaires assessed nurses' psychological empowerment, nursing managers' communication behaviors, and nurses' job performance.

For data collection, three standardized instruments were used: A) The Spreitzer Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire, which evaluates five dimensions: competence, influence, autonomy, meaningfulness, and trust, with 15 items on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), developed by Spreitzer and Mishra (1995); B) The communication behaviors of nursing managers were measured using a 24-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). This tool, validated by Kunie *et al.* [17], had a reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.90; and C) Job performance was assessed using Patterson's (1992) job performance questionnaire, which employs a five-point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = always), with the employee evaluation form (six items) used in this study.

The content validity of the questionnaires was ensured through a review of theoretical literature and feedback from subject matter experts, who confirmed their appropriateness. Data were analyzed using correlation tests and hierarchical regression analysis, performed with SPSS23 software, with statistical evaluations conducted at both descriptive and inferential levels.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic details of the sample population in this study.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the society.

Descriptive specifications		N	%
Gender	Male	49	26.06
	Female	139	73.94
Age	< 30 years	46	24.47
	30-40 years	93	49.47
	> 40 years	49	26.06
Degree of education	BSc	183	97.34
	MSc	5	2.66
	PhD	0	0
Work experience	< 5 years	33	17.55
	6-10 years	47	25
	11-15 years	56	29.79
	> 15 years	52	27.66

The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between psychological empowerment (independent variable) and job performance (dependent variable), with a correlation coefficient of 0.68 at a 99% confidence level. Additionally, each moderator variable -directive language (r = 0.51), empathic language (r = 0.67), and meaningful language (r = 0.79)- exhibits a significant positive correlation with the independent variable at the same confidence level. Furthermore, directive language (r = 0.64), empathic language (r = 0.78), and meaning-making language (r = 0.67) also demonstrate a significant positive relationship with the dependent variable at a 99% confidence level.

To examine the first hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was performed following the research methodology. For the second through fourth hypotheses, a two-stage hierarchical regression analysis was applied. The results of the first hypothesis test, derived from simple linear regression analysis, are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Results of simple linear regression analysis to test the first hypothesis

Hypothesis	Model	Non-standard coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T-value	Significance level	The result of the hypothesis
		B	Std. Error	β			
The first hypothesis	Constant	2.972	0.151	-	19.695	0.000	Confirmed
	Psychological empowerment	0.384	0.043	0.680	8.852	0.000	
Dependent variable: Job performance The regression coefficient is significant at the 95% level.							

The statistical analysis of the first hypothesis indicates that psychological empowerment significantly impacts nurses' job performance at a 95% confidence level. **Table 3** provides the findings from the two-stage hierarchical regression analysis conducted to evaluate the second, third, and fourth hypotheses. In each case, the standardized beta coefficient (β) serves as the key metric for determining the statistical significance and strength of relationships among the variables.

For this analysis, each hypothesis was tested in two stages. Initially, psychological empowerment and the respective dimensions of communication behaviors were introduced into the model. In the second stage, the interaction between psychological empowerment and each communication behavior dimension was incorporated. A significant interaction effect in this stage confirms the presence of a moderating relationship.

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analysis results to test the second to fourth hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Regression stages	Variable	Modified R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	β
The second hypothesis	1	Features of the model	0.474*	0.479*	86.708*	-
		Psychological empowerment	-	-	-	0.541*
		Guide language	-	-	-	0.483*

	2	Features of the model	0.483*	0.011*	4.653*	-
		Psychological empowerment	-	-	-	0.435*
		Guide language	-	-	-	0.379*
		Psychological empowerment + guiding language	-	-	-	0.183*
The third hypothesis	1	Features of the model	0.571*	0.577*	145.025*	-
		Psychological empowerment	-	-	-	0.480*
		Empathic language	-	-	-	0.594*
	2	Features of the model	0.592*	0.024*	8.693*	-
		Psychological empowerment	-	-	-	0.396*
		Empathic language	-	-	-	0.502*
		Psychological empowerment + empathetic language	-	-	-	0.252*
The Fourth hypothesis	1	Features of the model	0.509*	0.512*	107.322*	-
		Psychological empowerment	-	-	-	0.528*
		Meaningful language	-	-	-	0.511*
	2	Features of the model	0.521*	0.015*	5.981*	-
		Psychological empowerment	-	-	-	0.436*
		Meaningful language	-	-	-	0.407*
		Psychological empowerment + meaningful language	-	-	-	0.196*
Dependent variable: Job performance The regression coefficient is significant at the 95% level.						

Table 3 outlines the findings from the two-stage hierarchical regression analysis conducted to examine the second, third, and fourth hypotheses.

Second hypothesis analysis

In the initial phase, psychological empowerment and guiding language were separately introduced into the model. At this stage, the adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2) accounted for 47.4% of the variance in job performance. With the inclusion of guiding language as a moderator, ΔR^2 increased slightly, bringing the explanatory power to 47.9%. The standardized beta values for psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.541$) and guiding language ($\beta = 0.483$) were both statistically significant at a 95% confidence level, demonstrating their independent and positive impact on job performance. In the next phase, the moderating role of guiding language was assessed by incorporating the interaction between psychological empowerment and guiding language into the model. The revised R^2 and ΔR^2 values indicated that this interaction accounted for 48.3% of the variance in job performance, with an additional 1.1% variance attributed specifically to the moderating variable. The β coefficient for the interaction effect was 0.183 and significant at the 95% confidence level, confirming that guiding language used by nursing managers influences the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance.

Third hypothesis analysis

At the first stage, psychological empowerment and empathic language were independently added to the model, explaining 57.1% of the variance in job performance. Upon integrating empathic language as a moderator, ΔR^2 increased, raising the explanatory capacity to 57.7%. Psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.480$) and empathic language ($\beta = 0.594$) both exhibited statistically significant effects at a 95% confidence level, highlighting their positive contributions to job performance. In the next step, the interaction term between psychological empowerment and empathic language was introduced to assess its moderating impact. The revised R^2 and ΔR^2 values demonstrated that this addition explained 59.2% of the variance in job performance, with a unique contribution of 2.4% due to the moderator. The β coefficient for this interaction effect was 0.252 and was statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, confirming that the use of empathic language by nursing managers moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance.

Fourth hypothesis analysis

Initially, psychological empowerment and meaningful language were separately incorporated into the model, accounting for 50.9% of the variance in job performance. With the inclusion of meaningful language as a moderator, ΔR^2 increased slightly, raising the explanatory power to 51.2%. Psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.528$) and meaningful language ($\beta = 0.511$) were both statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, confirming their independent positive effects. In the next phase, the moderating role of meaningful language was assessed by including its interaction with psychological empowerment. The adjusted R^2 and ΔR^2 values indicated that this interaction explained 52.1% of the variance in job performance, with 1.5% attributed specifically to the moderating effect. The β coefficient for the interaction term was 0.196 and statistically significant

at the 95% confidence level, confirming that meaningful language used by nursing managers serves as a moderating factor in the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance.

This study aimed to examine the connection between nurses' psychological empowerment and their job performance, considering the moderating influence of nursing managers' communication behaviors, including empathetic language, directive language, and meaning-making language, within a hospital setting.

The findings indicated a significant and positive correlation between nurses' psychological empowerment and their job performance. Previous studies have explored similar associations between psychological empowerment and various organizational factors such as organizational citizenship behavior, employee productivity, job satisfaction, quality of work life, and organizational trust, consistently reporting positive and meaningful relationships in work environments. The results of this hypothesis align with prior research conducted by Boyd and Bentley [21], Chang and Liu [1], Battin *et al.* [22], Afsar *et al.* [23], and Kuo *et al.* [24]. Additionally, Chiang and Hsieh [25] demonstrated the significance of this relationship and emphasized that fostering organizational citizenship behavior through psychological empowerment can enhance job performance.

Interpreting these results suggests that when employees experience psychological empowerment, they develop greater confidence and trust in their roles, leading to increased efficiency and improved job performance. Given the confirmation of the first hypothesis and alignment with existing literature, it is evident that nurses' empowerment and psychological well-being, directly and indirectly, contribute to the overall productivity of the healthcare sector.

The study also found that nursing managers' communication behaviors—directive language, empathetic language, and meaning-making language—serve as moderating factors in the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance. Previous research has examined similar moderating roles of emotional intelligence, intrinsic motivation, transformational leadership, self-fulfillment, self-esteem, and organizational trust, confirming their impact on employees' job performance in workplace environments [12, 26-29].

Kunie *et al.* [17] explored the association between managerial communication behaviors (directive language, empathetic language, and meaning-making language) and key workplace variables such as work commitment and psychological distress among nurses, finding significant relationships in all cases. The present study's results indicate that among the moderating factors examined, empathetic language had the strongest enhancing effect on the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance, followed by meaning-making language and directive language, respectively.

Based on these findings, incorporating psychological empowerment strategies in healthcare settings should involve clear communication from nursing managers regarding goals, responsibilities, values, policies, and organizational norms. Furthermore, providing support, encouragement, and recognition fosters a stronger professional identity among nurses and reinforces the significance of their work. This approach cultivates mutual respect, self-worth, and a sense of being valued, ultimately increasing internal motivation, participation, and job commitment while reducing anxiety and psychological distress. Consequently, these factors contribute to enhanced job performance among nurses.

Conclusion

The research hypotheses are categorized into two main areas: the first examines how nurses' psychological empowerment relates to their job performance, while the second explores the moderating influence of nursing managers' communication behaviors—directive language, empathetic language, and meaning-making language—on the connection between psychological distress and job performance. Findings from the regression analysis support these hypotheses, confirming both the direct relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance and the amplifying role of communication behaviors in this dynamic.

Managerial communication strategies not only have a direct impact on job performance but also enhance the link between psychological distress and job performance. Among the three communication behaviors, empathetic language exerts the strongest positive influence, followed by meaning-making language and directive language. Since nurses are essential to providing safe and high-quality patient care, their psychological empowerment plays a crucial role in shaping their effectiveness and productivity. To optimize nurses' performance, they must be given the tools and support necessary to feel competent and valued. Thus, healthcare administrators should prioritize psychological empowerment while also fostering effective communication behaviors—particularly empathetic language—to enhance nurses' professional capabilities.

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