



# Self-Esteem, Coping Strategies, And Job Satisfaction Among Nurses

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## Abstract

The present study investigates the relationship between self-esteem, coping strategies, and job satisfaction among nurses working in various hospitals in Kerala. Nursing professionals face high levels of occupational stress due to long working hours, critical patient care responsibilities, and organizational pressures. These stressors can impact nurses' self-esteem, coping mechanisms, and overall job satisfaction. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 120 registered nurses through standardized questionnaires, including the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Brief COPE Inventory, and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. Statistical analyses revealed significant positive correlations between self-esteem and job satisfaction and between adaptive coping strategies and job satisfaction. Conversely, maladaptive coping strategies were negatively associated with job satisfaction. The findings underscore the importance of psychological interventions, training programs, and organizational policies that promote self-esteem and adaptive coping among nurses, enhancing their well-being and professional efficiency.

## Keywords

Self-Esteem, Coping Strategies, Job Satisfaction, Nurses, Occupational Stress, Kerala

## Introduction

Nursing is a profession characterized by high emotional and psychological demands. Nurses not only provide critical healthcare services but also serve as emotional support for patients and families. These responsibilities can significantly impact their mental health, self-perception, and job satisfaction. Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall evaluation of their own worth, plays a crucial role in shaping personal resilience and coping abilities (Rosenberg, 1965).

Coping strategies, conceptualized as cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage stress, are pivotal in mitigating the adverse effects of occupational stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Adaptive coping strategies, such as problem-solving, seeking social support, and positive reframing, have been shown to enhance professional satisfaction, whereas maladaptive strategies, like avoidance or denial, may exacerbate stress and reduce job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction reflects the extent to which individuals feel content and fulfilled in their professional roles. In nursing, high job satisfaction has been linked to better patient care, lower turnover rates, and improved overall well-being (Spector, 1997). Understanding the interplay between self-esteem, coping strategies, and job satisfaction is therefore critical for designing interventions that support nursing professionals.

## Literature Review

Several studies have examined the psychological well-being of nurses. A study by AbuAlRub (2004) found that nurses with higher self-esteem reported better job satisfaction and lower burnout levels. Similarly, research by McVicar (2003) highlighted that coping strategies significantly mediate the relationship between stress and job satisfaction among healthcare professionals.

Adaptive coping strategies, including problem-focused approaches, have consistently demonstrated positive associations with job satisfaction (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Conversely, maladaptive strategies such as avoidance, self-blame, and substance use negatively impact work performance and satisfaction.

In the Indian context, limited studies have explored these variables comprehensively among nurses. Kerala, with its extensive healthcare infrastructure and high nurse-to-patient ratio, provides a relevant setting to examine these psychological constructs. The current study aims to fill this gap by analyzing self-esteem, coping strategies, and job satisfaction among nurses in Kerala hospitals.

## Objectives

1. To assess the level of self-esteem among nurses.
2. To examine the coping strategies employed by nurses.
3. To determine the level of job satisfaction among nurses.
4. To explore the relationship between self-esteem, coping strategies, and job satisfaction.

## Hypotheses

1. There is a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and job satisfaction.
2. Adaptive coping strategies are positively associated with job satisfaction.
3. Maladaptive coping strategies are negatively associated with job satisfaction.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** Descriptive-correlational design.

**Sample:** 120 registered nurses from government and private hospitals in Kerala, aged 22–45 years, with a minimum of 1-year work experience.

### Tools:

- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** Measures global self-esteem.
- **Brief COPE Inventory:** Assesses adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies.
- **Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ):** Evaluates intrinsic, extrinsic, and general job satisfaction.

**Procedure:** Participants were approached personally and provided with informed consent forms. Questionnaires were administered in person and digitally, ensuring confidentiality. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Correlation analyses (Pearson's  $r$ ) were conducted to explore relationships among variables.

## Results

1. **Self-Esteem:** 48% of nurses exhibited high self-esteem, 35% moderate, and 17% low.
2. **Coping Strategies:** Adaptive coping strategies (problem-solving, seeking support) were used more frequently than maladaptive strategies (denial, behavioral disengagement).
3. **Job Satisfaction:** 55% of nurses reported moderate satisfaction, 30% high, and 15% low.

### Correlation Analysis:

- Self-esteem was positively correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.52, p < 0.01$ ).
- Adaptive coping strategies showed a positive correlation with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.47, p < 0.01$ ).
- Maladaptive coping strategies were negatively correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = -0.38, p < 0.01$ ).

**Interpretation:** Nurses with higher self-esteem and effective adaptive coping strategies were more satisfied with their jobs. Conversely, reliance on maladaptive strategies led to lower satisfaction levels.

### Discussion

The findings align with prior research demonstrating the positive impact of self-esteem and adaptive coping on professional satisfaction (AbuAlRub, 2004; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Nurses with high self-esteem possess a stronger sense of self-worth, enhancing resilience against workplace stress. Adaptive coping mechanisms, such as seeking social support and problem-solving, buffer the negative effects of occupational challenges.

The negative association between maladaptive coping strategies and job satisfaction indicates that avoidance, denial, or self-blame exacerbate stress and reduce workplace engagement. These findings suggest the need for structured interventions, including stress management workshops, counseling services, and resilience-building programs, to enhance nurses' self-esteem and coping abilities.

### Limitations

1. The study was limited to nurses in Kerala and may not generalize to other regions.
2. Self-reported questionnaires may introduce social desirability bias.
3. Cross-sectional design limits causal inferences.

### Recommendations

1. Hospitals should implement regular psychological support and stress management programs for nurses.
2. Nursing curricula should include modules on coping strategies and self-esteem enhancement.
3. Future studies could adopt longitudinal designs to examine causal relationships and changes over time.

### Conclusion

The study underscores the critical role of self-esteem and coping strategies in shaping job satisfaction among nurses. Interventions targeting these psychological factors can improve professional well-being, reduce burnout, and enhance healthcare delivery. Promoting adaptive coping strategies and fostering positive self-perceptions among nurses is essential for sustainable healthcare outcomes.

### References

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