



# Nurses' Emotional Intelligence, Satisfaction in Lebanon: The Mediating Role of Job Stress

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the direct effect of nurses' emotional intelligence (EI) on their job satisfaction, as well as the indirect effect through the mediating role of job stress (JS). The sample consisted of 365 nurses working in Lebanese hospitals during the COVID-19 period. The results revealed that EI elements (Self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness and relationship-management) had a significant positive effect on nurses' job satisfaction. The existence of the negative mediation of job stress between the four EI skills and attitudes was found. The generalizability is limited to the Lebanese registered nurses in hospitals. Future research needs to incorporate other samples like the private nurses. A comparative study to provide further clarify the effect of EI and JS on the nurses at different levels is needed. This study extends research on organizational behavior to Eastern culture by examining the direct effect of EI on attitudes as well as the indirect effect through the mediating effect of JS which was not previously tackled. It suggests that the four skills of EI have a significant positive effect on nurses' attitudes. It emphasizes the full mediation role of JS. The obtained results indicated that hospitals can increase job satisfaction bettering the employees' EI.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Nurses Attitudes, Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, COVID 19

**JEL Classifications:** M0, M1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The job stress has become an area of focus for almost all organizations as employees are an organization's heart and soul. When an individual is faced with stress, his/her quality of performance and behavior are adversely affected (Universari and Harsono, 2021). The term "stress" stems from the Latin word "stringere" meaning "to pull tight." Seyle (1936) in Burman (2018) defines stress to be a syndrome created by a group of harmful factors. Also explains stress to be a non-specific reaction of the body in the face of harmful stimuli. Stress happens when demands overwhelm the resources an individual has (Burman, 2018).

Nursing is deemed to be one of the most stressful career choices (Reeves, 2005). Contemporary studies have demonstrated that levels of chronic stress amongst nurses vary between 37.8 and 74.8% and as such, stress levels were considered to be

continuously at or above average (Chen et al., 2020). To that effect, it has been asserted that stress continuously stems from common stressors such as the daily interaction with colleagues including fellow nurses, medical practitioners, and patients and the condensed work schedule due to staff shortage among other factors. The exposure to such a high level of stress on a daily basis results in shaping their attitudes at work, a reduced commitment and satisfaction of the health worker toward the organization (Lambert et al., 2007). Essentially, one's attitude is a mental state by which the individual views, processes and perceives objects in his environment (Saari and Judge, 2004).

It has been noted that when the aforementioned stressors are experienced by the nurses, they have the potential to have a direct effect on satisfaction levels (Giorgi et al., 2012). There is a positive correlation between the increased levels of stress and turnover intentions (Cartledge, 2001) as well as an increase in absenteeism

(Gandham, 2000). With nurses experiencing such heightened levels of negativity, they are in dire need of a technique or approach that reduces their stress to a desirable tolerable level. One of the many approaches that an individual may potentially adopt in order to effectively deal with such a heightened level of stress as well as its repercussions is emotional intelligence (Kheirmand and Kheirmand, 2016 as cited in Rakhshani et al., 2018). The concept of emotional intelligence has become increasingly appealing to scholars from a plethora of academic backgrounds (Lambert et al., 2007).

The term emotional intelligence (EI) generally refers to a set of skills/competences, and/or capacities that permit its possessor to be aware of not only one's emotional states but that of others (Abbasi et al., 2018). This also includes the ability to control or harness emotions to create a positive effect on an individual's ability to survive the stresses and needs of the environment (Abbasi et al., 2018). Since Goleman introduced the term in 1995, it has gained a considerable level of momentum in both the sphere of mainstream culture as well as the business (Mattingly and Kraiger, 2019). In turn, within the last 20 years EI has managed to become a prominent topic in the field of academia with particular attention to education, psychology, and management (Pradhan and Nath, 2012). With regards to organizational research, emotional intelligence has become the most practical construct (Tamta and Rao, 2017). EI is divided into four branches or skills and consists of: self-management, self-awareness, social skills and social awareness (Mayer et al., 2001).

Contextually, Lebanese nursing sector is a tempting one to study the impact of emotional intelligence where nurses stress, satisfaction, turnover and migration is common (El-Jardali et al., 2009). There is also the sheer magnitude of disorder caused as a result of the pandemic within the health care sector highlights the array of challenges workers of the sector are subjected to, especially nurses. Some of the challenges include, the work requirements, prolonged working modality, increasing demand and the priority of their own wellbeing while being faced with shortage in the essential protective equipment such as PPEs (Sakr and Romani, 2020). The current crisis that has hit the country has driven a number of medical centers to lay off nurses in December 2019, this has in turn resulted in an increased level of responsibility on the remaining staff and as such putting more stress on the nurses. In parallel with the tremendous pressure exerted by the pandemic, nurses were already facing acute pay reductions due to the pressing economic situation and the collapse of the local currency; in fact, many health care workers were forced to take unpaid leaves (Doumit, 2020). Elements such as a hectic schedule, fear of virus spread, conflict with colleagues, as well as lack of support from the hospitals with the ongoing crisis pushed the patients to misbehave; a substantial constituent of job stress among the nursing staff.

According to what was presented earlier, one may conclude that there is a gap in the literature linking emotional intelligence, attitudes with job stress as a mediator, particularly in the nursing sector. Some previous study showed that there is a significant positive effect of EI on job satisfaction (Ashraf et al., 2014; Samanvitha and Jawahar, 2012), while other studies showed

such as those of (Jung and Yoon, 2016), confirmed that the social awareness as EI skill does not affect employee' level of job satisfaction. Whereas, (Lopes et al., 2006) asserted that social awareness as a subscale of emotional intelligence affect positively the employee attitudes. Accordingly, due to these contradictory results; we propose to study job stress as a mediator to solve this problem.

Following a literature review and establishing beyond doubt the Lebanese nurse's stress and the emotional exhaustion they have. In an attempt to reduce the literature gap on the above addressed topic, this study focuses on suggesting a theoretical and empirical examination in a comprehensive model that incorporates the EI skills to efficiently improve the job stress - satisfaction relationship within in hospital nurses. The aim of this research is two-fold: to investigate how does job stress affect the Lebanese nurses' work attitudes? And How does emotional intelligence mediate the relationship between work stress and Job satisfaction?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence first proposed by Thorndike (1920), who perceived the intelligence as the sum of the three parts abstract intelligence, mechanical intelligence, and social intelligence. Thorndike (1920) noted that it was of value in human interactions and relationships. He concluded that social intelligence was discrete from academic abilities and was a key to success in the practicalities of life. Within the group of social intelligences, Gardner (1993) distinguished between two types of personal intelligences: interpersonal and intrapersonal. Interpersonal intelligence was concerned with the ability to understand other people and to work well in co-operation with them. Intrapersonal intelligence involved being able to form an accurate picture of one's self and to use this to operate successfully in life. The latter included the ability to be self-aware, to recognize one's own feelings and to take account of them in social behavior.

There were four separate abilities within interpersonal intelligence. They included the ability to organize groups, negotiate solutions, make personal connections and engage in social analysis. According to Goleman (1995) these skills demonstrate 'interpersonal polish' and facilitate social success. People who possess such skills can form connecting relationships with others easily, read other people's feelings and responses accurately, lead and organize other people and handle disputes successfully. Mayer and Salovey (1993) are more explicit when they describe EI, indicating that it involves verbal and non-verbal assessment and expression of emotions, control of emotions and the use of emotion in solving problems.

Goleman (1995), expanded upon the term "emotional intelligence" where the researcher considered emotional intelligence to be a fundamental element of one's skill set. Emotional intelligence has five elementary fields. The first is considered to be the foundation of EI and is the ability to identify one's own emotions and monitor

them continuously. The second is emotion management, which revolves around the ability to handle one's emotions, and in turn enhances one's self-awareness. The third is self-motivated emotion organizing utilized to complete a goal, this element is critical to leveraging attention, mastering self-motivation, equates to mastering creativity as well as action. The fourth is the ability to identify the other person's emotions. The capacity to be empathetic is rooted in emotional self-awareness. The fifth is the ability to be in a functional relationship and refers to the ability to manage the other person's emotions. These five competences were later reduced to the four known skills: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management (Goleman, 2001).

Self-awareness is recognising one's own preference, internal state, and intuition (Easa, 2021; Zakariasen and Victoroff, 2012). This essentially points out to the possibility to use, feel, lean, recognize and handle emotions. Self-awareness goes beyond knowledge of the feelings to processing such knowledge to more explore one's own self (Dirette, 2010). In a number of EI models, self-management alludes to "self-regulation". As such it is the capability to adjust actions and emotions to enable correct behavior in different situations. (McPheat, 2019) as cited in Easa (2021) reported that self-management is the notion of taking ownership of our emotions and the way our behavior and decisions are affected. Social awareness is linked to comprehending and handling the emotions of the members of the society (McPheat, 2019). As such, being socially aware is one's awareness of his/her surrounding; in addition to one's ability to acicularly decipher the emotions of others. Relationship management also known as social skills, are skills employees have or acquire while engaging with others. Relationship management puts forward methods to communicate with others which leverages productivity, reneforces relationships, and adds to employee's overall quality of life (Easa, 2021).

## 2.2. Attitudes, Job Satisfaction

As for attitude it is known as "predisposition or a tendency of a person to evaluate some symbol, person, place or thing in a favorable or unfavorable manner. In essence an attitude is a state of mind in which the individual carries around in his head, through which he focuses on particular objects in his environment" (Kelly, 1974) as cited by (Saari and Judge, 2004). Contemporary literature is rich in research conducted by various scholars and researchers who have tackled the relationship between emotional intelligence and attitudes (e.g. Fatima et al., 2010; Nahid, 2012; Brunetto et al., 2012; Seyal and Afzaal, 2013). It has been established that work personnel have different viewpoints with regards to different aspects of their work, their career path, and their employing organization. However, taking the research and practice perspective, job satisfaction is the work personnel most prominent attitude (Saari and Judge, 2004). As such, job satisfaction is, in the scope of this study, often referred to as employee attitudes. Job satisfaction is the employee's attitude founded on the individual's overall experience while working for an organization. The feelings of positivity or negativity associated to one's job, the perception that work dose not force a specific emotional response pertaining a task and, conditions of physical and social tasks are associated to job satisfaction. Persons build a specific attitude towards their

jobs and the work environment based on their perception of the existence or non-existence characteristics within the work that meet their particular needs (Fatima et al., 2010).

An examination of the prior relevant literature revealed that many studies emphasized on the role played by emotional intelligence on employee attitudes in terms of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, loyalty (Alavi et al., 2013; Hasanah and Mujanah, 2020; Pourkiani et al., 2016) especially in the nursing and healthcare sector. a study conducted on teachers in Iran found that there is a clear relation between IE and job satisfaction (Nahid, 2012). Within the relationship between attitude and emotional intelligence, a study conducted by Khani and Lalardi, demonstrated that the absence of EI amongst employees is considered to be a predicament for the organization; thus, being an extensive overhead (Khani and Lalardi, 2012). Other studies have revealed the strong relationship between emotional intelligence, organization commitment and job satisfaction (Brunetto et al., 2012). Guleryuz et al. (2008) emphasized the impact of emotional intelligence and its facets on work satisfaction and nurses' organizational commitment and revealed that emotional intelligence was directly linked to both organizational commitment and job satisfaction in different sectors. Moreover, a different study conducted on a group of educators found a negative relationship linking attitudes to emotional intelligence (Merida-Lopez and Extremera, 2017).

There is a strong association between emotional intelligence and both work satisfaction, and organizational commitment as well as also between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in different sectors amongst employees of all age groups (Anari, 2012; Sembiring et al., 2020). The association between emotional intelligence and work satisfaction was explored by various researchers such as Ashraf et al., 2014; Samanvitha and Jawahar, 2012. In their studies they offered little evidence as to why and how emotional intelligence will affect attitudes, confirming a favorable association between emotional intelligence and work satisfaction (Wen et al., 2019). Managers can utilize self-awareness to identify their positioning within the company and consequently increase productivity. Moreover, a correlation between occupational stress, emotional intelligence, and organizational commitment found that the higher an individual's EI level, the more he or she will possess a positive team spirit. This in turn will eventually lead to being able to effectively deal with challenges within the organization and be able to appropriately cope with difficulties and changes within the organization (Nikolaou and Tsousis, 2002; Dulewicz et al., 2003). A similar study found that the relationship between components of self-awareness and self-management and attitudes were also of significance (Yamani et al., 2014). Whereas Jung and Yoon (2016) found that self-awareness has no significant effect on job satisfaction. As for the self-management a skill that excel in the adaptation mechanism to the organizational conditions and employees are more committed and satisfied in their organization (Rozell et al., 2002). Alavi et al. (2013) that proved the positive impact of emotional intelligence as a whole and the self-management more specifically has on the employee commitment toward their job. Jung and Yoon (2016) found that the social awareness does not affect the person's level of job satisfaction.

Whereas, (Lopes et al. (2006); Rozell et al. (2002) proved that social awareness as a subscale of emotional intelligence affect positively the employee attitudes. The relationship management or social skills affect positively the employee's commitment and satisfaction, Alavi et al. (2013) found that the interrelationship has a significant influence on the emotional versatility among the employees.

Hence, we hypothesize the following:

- H1: Self-awareness is positively related to nurses' satisfaction in Lebanon  
 H2: Self-management is positively related to nurses' satisfaction in Lebanon  
 H3: Social awareness is positively related to nurses' satisfaction in Lebanon  
 H4: Social Skills is positively related to nurses' satisfaction in Lebanon

### 2.3. Mediating of Job Stress

Work stress is rooted in the increasing complexity of the nature of jobs, and the ever-changing work environment within organizations. Despite the conflicting findings pertaining to the effects of job stress on employee attitudes and behaviors, it has been found that stress is a major factor in fostering the inaugural's inclinations in relation to a job, as such staff performance is affected (Hrefish and Hadrawi, 2020). when the situations or conditions surpass the endurance capability of an individual, he or she reaches the state of what is called stress. job stress occurs when the balance between the work environment's demand and the abilities of the individual is not fulfilled. Thus, within the work environment, stress may be a result of an awareness warped with ambiguity and conflict topped with an overload from accumulating workload within the organization as well as the individual's personality characteristics (Gharib et al., 2016).

People are naturally inclined to peruse and nurture positive emotions and distance themselves from negative ones. When individuals exhibit emotional intelligence through their behavior, they encourage positive effects on the emotions and as such avoid becoming under the influence of negative thoughts and feelings which results in an adequate way to deal with stress (Parrott, 1993). In addition, another side of emotional intelligence, which is deemed as a vital indicator of success, is the individual's capability to survey, handle, and control stress. This feature of emotional intelligence is known to be an important predictor of success. With that said, an inverse relationship among the aforementioned, elements, emotional intelligence and stress could be inferred (Parrott, 1993). The ability to manage one's emotions results in leveraging the ability to cope with stress, avoiding becoming overwhelmed with negative thoughts and emotions. Furthermore, the ability to interpret and understand human feelings will lead to the ability to recognize and capture signals which trigger behavior of self-regulation. As such, emotional intelligence can be a tool to influence behaviors in the workplace (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Abraham, 2000).

Several studies have attempted to demonstrate a connection between stress and attitudes, and it was found that a number of

stressors affect stress itself. Bokti and Abu Talib (2009) looked at the relationship between stress and work satisfaction and showed that workplace stress was adversely correlated with the eight-work satisfaction. As an individual's performance in any organization type is affected by the stress and this also applies to air force military pilots. Khodabakhsh and Alireza, (2007); Mansoor et al. (2011) stipulates that work stress decreases job satisfaction. Yahaya et al. (2010) also revealed the negative impact of occupational stress on workplace satisfaction.

Generally, it was considered that job stress is a precursor to job satisfaction, and both constructs have been considered as connected but separate (Stanton et al., 2002). Thus, a connection between job satisfaction with work stress has been established. In addition, the workload and working conditions are organizational factors that are adversely linked to employee satisfaction (Vinokur-Kaplan, 1991). Little satisfaction within the workplace can also lead to stress whereas high satisfaction could alleviate stress. This leads to the conclusion that both work stress and job satisfaction are closely related (Mansoor et al., 2011). Job stress was shown to be a strong indicator of two of the three aspects of burnout. Correctional workers who indicated elevated levels of work stress encountered higher levels of emotional fatigue and detachment (Griffin et al., 2010). Another more recent study conducted in the Ghanaian banking sector context was able to confirm the negative effect occupational stress has on job satisfaction (Dartey-Baah et al., 2020). The mediating impact of job stress was not tackled in the literature; and because the above literature showed the contradictory direct of emotional intelligence skills on job satisfaction. Thus, this study aims to test the below hypotheses:

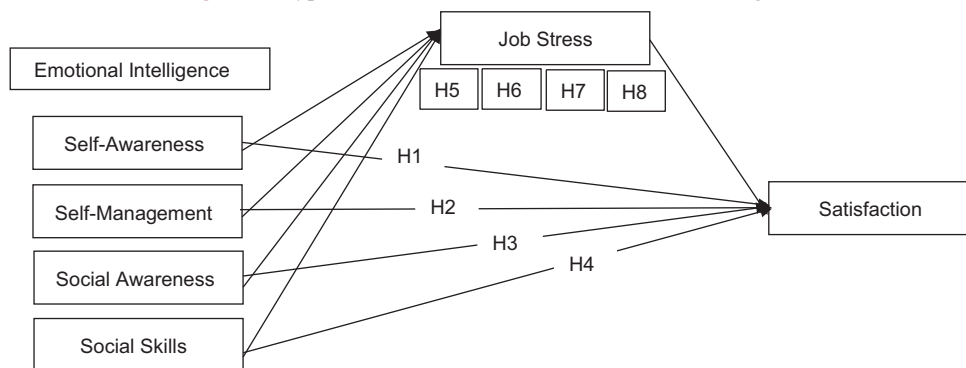
- H5: Job stress mediates the relationship between self-awareness and satisfaction  
 H6: Job stress mediates the relationship between self-management and satisfaction  
 H7: Job stress mediates the relationship between social-awareness and satisfaction  
 H8: Job stress mediates the relationship between social-skills and satisfaction.

### 2.4. Research Framework

The literature on job stress, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction guided us to develop the research framework which is outlined in Figure 1.

### 2.5. Research Methods

To test the proposed hypotheses, data were collected randomly online via google form, and in persons from all the Lebanese governates. The participants are the registered nurses currently working in the Lebanese hospitals occupying different positions in the hospital and the sample unit is the registered nurse who fills the questionnaire and assesses his own emotional intelligence and the work attributes and stress related to it based on his/her own subjective perceptions. In total 365 useable questionnaires were returned. Demographically, 33 % of the respondents were male and 67 % female. 98 % of them were between 20 and 50 of age. As for experience, 73 % had more than 5 years of experience within the field and 27% had less than 5 years of experience in the nursing sector.

**Figure 1:** Hypothesized research model of emotional intelligence

The survey contained three dimensions. The dimensions such as job stress, emotional intelligence, work satisfaction. Participants were asked to respond to the questions by rating each on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Emotional intelligence is measured through the four sub-components of EI: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills; moreover, this study adopts the 33-item Assessing Emotions Scale (Schutte et al., 2009). Job stress is measured by the Nursing Stress Scale (NSS) to pinpoint comprehensive stressors of nursing. This has already been tested and validated in a similar study (Lee et al., 2007). The NSS consisted of thirty-three questions that contained seven subscales. To measure satisfaction, the JSS scale will be adopted which includes thirty-six items such as pay, promotion, coworkers, work and communication, here the responses will be scored on a 6-point Likert scale (Spector, 1985). The reliability and the validity of the construct are found in a similar study (Andersen and Andersen, 2012).

### 3. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. Preliminary Analysis

The study scale has an overall reliability of 0.902 which is an acceptable reliability as it is above 0.7 (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). For testing the multicollinearity, the correlations among the variables were tested (Table 1). All the coefficients were below 0.9. Thus, there is no redundancy among variables. Moreover, a calculation of the variance inflation factor (VIF) showed that all coefficients are below 3, indicating the absence of multicollinearity.

#### 3.2. Descriptive Statistics

Correlation results matched the expected direction, therefore providing support for the study hypotheses (Table 1). For instance, Self-awareness was positively related to satisfaction ( $r = 0.463$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Self-management was positively related to satisfaction ( $r = 0.416$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Social awareness was positively related to satisfaction ( $r = 0.402$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). As for the job stress, was negatively related to Self-awareness ( $r = -0.870$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), Self-management ( $r = -0.835$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ), Social awareness ( $r = -0.705$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and Relationship-management ( $r = -0.789$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). It was also negatively related to satisfaction ( $r = -0.446$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ).

Table 1 reports the results of the means, standard deviations and correlations between variables.

#### 3.3. Regression Results

Hypotheses of the study were tested by simple and multiple regression analyses. Spearman correlations indicated that all the hypothesized relationships between emotional intelligence and satisfaction were supported. Self-awareness was positively related to satisfaction  $\beta = 0.346$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). Providing support to H1. Self-management was positively related to satisfaction respectively  $\beta = 0.341$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). Providing support to H2. Social awareness was positively related to satisfaction  $\beta = 0.357$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). Providing support to H3. Relationship management was positively related to satisfaction respectively  $\beta = 0.479$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). This provides support to H4.

#### 3.4. Testing Mediation

##### 3.4.1. Hypothesis H5

The same three steps were followed to test this hypothesis (Table 2). In the first step, the linear regression indicated that Self-awareness predict nurse' satisfaction with  $\beta = 0.346$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). The second step showed that self-awareness is a predictor of job stress with  $\beta = -0.791$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). Therefore, stress fully mediates the relationship between self- awareness and satisfaction.

##### 3.4.2. Hypothesis H6

The same three steps were followed to test this hypothesis (Table 3). In the first step, the linear regression indicated that Self-management predict nurse' satisfaction with  $\beta = 0.341$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). The second step showed that self-management is a predictor of job stress with  $\beta = -0.805$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). Since the standardized coefficient of Self-management in the univariate is greater than the standardized coefficient in the multivariate approach ( $0.341 > 0.132$ ), it is concluded that stress partially mediates the relationship between Self-management and satisfaction and H6 is partially supported.

##### 3.4.3. Hypothesis H7

The same three steps were followed to test this hypothesis (Table 4). In the first step, the linear regression indicated that Social awareness predict nurse' satisfaction with  $\beta = 0.357$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). The second step showed that Social awareness is a predictor of job stress with  $\beta = -0.601$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). Therefore, stress fully mediates the relationship between social- awareness and satisfaction and H7 is fully supported.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations of variables**

| Variable                | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        | 5        | 6        | 7        |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Self-awareness          | -        | 0.867**  | 0.686**  | 0.803**  | -0.870** | 0.629**  | 0.463**  |
| Self-management         | 0.867**  | -        | 0.723**  | 0.774**  | -0.835** | 0.639**  | 0.416**  |
| Social awareness        | 0.686**  | 0.723**  | -        | 0.674**  | -0.705** | 0.556**  | 0.402**  |
| Relationship management | 0.803**  | 0.774**  | 0.674**  | -        | -0.789** | 0.595**  | 0.438**  |
| Stress                  | -0.870** | -0.835** | -0.705** | -0.789** | -        | -0.620** | -0.446** |
| Satisfaction            | 0.463**  | 0.416**  | 0.402**  | 0.438**  | -0.446** | -        | 0.445**  |
| Mean                    | 3.44     | 3.82     | 2.69     | 3.92     | 1.67     | 1.99     | 1.74     |
| SD                      | 0.71     | 0.65     | 0.79     | 0.68     | 0.92     | 1.04     | 1.16     |

SD: Standard deviation

**Table 2: The mediating effect of job stress on the relationship between self-awareness and satisfaction**

| Variables | B1            | B2             | B3             |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sat       |               |                |                |
| SA        | 0.346 (0.000) | -0.791 (0.000) | 0.124 (0.124)  |
| Stress    |               |                | -0.444 (0.000) |

SA: Self-awareness, Sat: Satisfaction

**Table 3: The mediating effect of job stress on the relationship between self-management and satisfaction**

| Variables | B1            | B2             | B3             |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sat       |               |                |                |
| SM        | 0.341 (0.000) | -0.805 (0.000) | 0.132 (0.112)  |
| Stress    |               |                | -0.447 (0.000) |

SM: Self-management, Sat: Satisfaction

**Table 4: The mediating effect of job stress on the relationship between social awareness and satisfaction**

| Variables | B1            | B2             | B3            |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Sat       |               |                |               |
| SoA       | 0.357 (0.000) | -0.601 (0.000) | 0.020 (0.741) |

SoA: Social awareness, Sat: Satisfaction

**Table 5: The mediating effect of job stress on the relationship between social skills and satisfaction**

| Variables | B1            | B2             | B3             |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sat       |               |                |                |
| SS        | 0.479 (0.000) | -0.757 (0.000) | 0.008 (0.914)  |
| Stress    |               |                | -0.290 (0.000) |

SS: Social skill

and Salovey (1995). The results also show that there is a full negative mediation between self-awareness, satisfaction, thus implying that job stress decreasing the positive effect of self-awareness on satisfaction. These results are similar to the past results, because it shows that job stress has a negative impact on nurses' satisfaction (Mansoor et al., 2011; Dartey-Baah et al., 2020)

The results show a positive effect of self-management on both nurses' satisfaction, this suggest that the nurses with high self-management skill who can control their emotions can also favorably accept positive emotion and perceive the support from the organization, resulting in high job satisfaction. In addition, they excel in the adaptation mechanism to the organizational conditions and are more committed to their organization. These results are consistent with (Rozell et al., 2002; Alavi et al., 2013; Jung and Yoon, 2016).

As for the social awareness ability, the results show that it is positively related to both satisfaction and commitment. This indicates that employees with high social awareness skill possess a great ability to accurately pick up on emotions of other people and understand what is going on with them This result was contradictory with (Jung and Yoon, 2016) where they found that the social awareness does not affect his level of job satisfaction. Whereas, (Lopes et al., 2006) asserted that social awareness as a subscale of emotional intelligence affect positively the employee attitudes. The social awareness is concerned with understandings others, willingness to serve the others, awareness of other's feelings, needs, and concerns. People who have this attribute enjoy their participation and membership in the organization and will be faithful to it, these results are consistent with (Alavi et al. (2013); Rozell et al. (2002).

Finally, the relationship management or social skills is positively related to satisfaction, this suggest that employees with high relationship management skill possess a great ability to accurately manage their emotional relationship with other people. And the interrelationship has a significant influence on the emotional versatility among the employees. Thus, these results are consistent

### 3.4.4. Hypothesis H8

The same three steps were followed to test this hypothesis (Table 5). In the first step, the linear regression indicated that relationship management predict nurse' satisfaction with  $\beta = 0.479$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). The second step showed that relationship management is a predictor of job stress with  $\beta = -0,757$ , ( $P < 0.01$ ). Therefore, stress fully mediates the relationship between relationship management and satisfaction and H8 is fully supported.

## 4. DISCUSSION

This study examined the direct effect of emotional intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-management, Social-Awareness and Relationship-management) on nurses' attitudinal factor (satisfaction) as well as their indirect effect through job stress as a mediator. Correlation results showed that nurse' self-awareness is positively related to satisfaction a result that is congruent with prior research (Alavi et al., 2013, Hasanah and Mujanah, 2020, Pourkiani et al., 2016). This suggest that the more nurses possess high ability in self-awareness, the more they show higher commitment and satisfaction toward their job, they are more likely to overcome their job stress. Also, there is positively related to satisfaction, a result that is congruent with prior research Mayer

with prior research Alavi et al. (2013) Jung and Yoon, (2016). Since that stress negatively fully mediates the relationship between relationship management, satisfaction. Thus, this assumes that job stress would negatively affect the impact of emotional intelligence on the nurses' satisfaction.

#### 4.1. Theoretical Implications

The current study makes some contributions to the organizational behavior literature. First of all, it verifies the ability model of Mayor and Salvoy (1997). It highlights the positive effect of the four skills of emotional intelligence on satisfaction in the Lebanese nursing workplace. It also, showed the negative mediating role of job stress on increasing the positive effect of emotional intelligence skills on nurses' satisfaction.

#### 4.2. Managerial Implications

This research provides hospitals and nurses with practical insights and suggestions that allow them to identify the emotional intelligence skill that help them the best in to tolerate the job stress that they are experiencing it daily which in turn would affect their attitude at work. For the Lebanese nursing sector, the results indicated that EI influences attitude through its four skills. Self-awareness, Self-management, has the influence followed by social awareness and relationship management. Therefore; the hospitals management would consider coaching the nurses by emphasizing the emotional intelligence skills, building strategies to help nurses to maximize their self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Further, customized training for the staff on the emotional intelligence skills, how to use and implement in their own life as well as their working life. This will allow the nurses to accept and tolerate the stress and focus on their job and avoiding the bad attitude.

It is also suggested that topics related to the concept of emotional intelligence, such as emotion management, social consciousness, self-awareness, etc., should be included in the academic curriculum of nursing students, and from the beginning, nursing students should be familiar with the concept of emotional intelligence and its dimensions.

#### 4.3. Limitations and Future Research

This study focused on the emotional intelligence model that incorporate the four skills. Future research can enlarge to include skills or pillar of the EI such as motivation and empathy, as well as to investigate the overall direct and indirect effect of EI on other attitudinal facets. Moreover, the aim of this research was to investigate the role of EI and JS among the nurse without considering the differences between the supervisor and registered nurses' responses. Therefore, a comparative study can be used to provide a better understanding of the effect of EI and JS on the nurses at their different level or positions. Moreover, this study studied the mediating role of job stress. It is suggested that future studies incorporate other potential mediator and moderator such as work experience that could influence these relationships.

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