The Impact of Communication Skills on the Performance of Mental Hospital Nurses in South Sulawesi: A Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract: This study examined the impact of communication skills on the performance of mental hospital nurses in South Sulawesi, with work satisfaction as a mediating factor. Data was collected from 100 nurses at RSKD Dadi using a saturated sampling technique and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS4.

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between communication skills and work satisfaction. Additionally, both communication skills and work satisfaction had a significant positive impact on performance. Importantly, the study demonstrated that communication skills indirectly influence performance through the mediating effect of work satisfaction. These results suggest that enhancing communication skills among nurses can lead to greater work satisfaction and, consequently, improved performance.

Keywords: *Communication skills, Work Satisfaction, Performance.*

A. Introduction

The prevalence of mental health issues in Indonesia is a growing concern. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health reveals that in 2013, 14 million individuals over the age of 15 exhibited symptoms of mental illness, depression, and anxiety, representing 6% of the total population. This figure further escalated to 277,000 cases in 2020, marking a significant increase from 197,000 cases in 2019 (Denny Susanto, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, leading to heightened anxiety, fear, and mental stress due to isolation, physical distancing, and uncertainty (Gloria, 2022).

The demand for mental health services is substantial, yet Indonesia's infrastructure remains inadequate. Despite a population exceeding 250 million, the country has only 48 mental hospitals, with a disproportionate concentration in South Sulawesi (intelresos.kemensos.go.id, 2017). The Regional Special Hospital (RSKD) Dadi in South Sulawesi, the sole mental hospital in the region, faces a critical shortage of resources, with a bed capacity of 403 units insufficient to accommodate the 600 mental patients requiring care.

The situation at RSKD Dadi highlights the need for a robust and efficient healthcare

system, particularly in the mental health sector. Nurses, as the frontline providers of care, play a crucial role in ensuring patient well-being. However, challenges related to nurse performance, including inadequate communication skills and lack of work satisfaction, have emerged as significant obstacles (Purba, 2018; Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017).

The importance of effective communication skills in healthcare is well-established. Studies have shown a positive association between therapeutic communication skills and nurse work satisfaction (Mubyl, 2012; Vermeir, et al, 2018). Job satisfaction, in turn, is a key driver of employee performance (Dziuba, Ingaldi, & Zhuravskaya, 2020). Research by Saharuddin, Mus, Latief, and Budiandriani (2020) and Mubyl and Dwinanda (2020) has demonstrated a significant impact of work satisfaction on nurses' performance.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between communication skills and the performance of mental hospital nurses in South Sulawesi, with a particular focus on the mediating role of work satisfaction. By understanding the factors that influence nurse performance, this research seeks to contribute to the development of strategies for improving the quality of mental health care in Indonesia.

B. Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between communication skills, work satisfaction, and performance among mental hospital nurses in South Sulawesi. A correlational, non-experimental design was adopted, aligning with the ex post facto research approach (Danim & Darwis, 2002). This design allowed us to assess the strength of the association between these variables through correlation coefficients.

Primary data was collected through interviews, observations, and a questionnaire administered to all 100 nurses working at RSKD Dadi. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS 4 software.

The hypotheses guiding this study were formulated based on a comprehensive review of empirical research, relevant theories, and theoretical frameworks.

H1 : Communication skills have a positive and significant effect on nurses' Work Satisfaction.

H2 : Work Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on nurse performance.

H3 : Communication skills have a positive and significant effect on nurse performance.

H4 : Communication skills positively and significantly affect performance through nurse Work Satisfaction

C. Result and Discussion
Measurement Model / Outer Model

To assess convergent validity, we adopted a loading factor threshold of >0.50, following Chin's (in Ghozali & Latan, 2015) recommendation. Initial analysis revealed that two indicators – pay (0.258>0.01) and autonomy (0.294>0.01) – exhibited loading factor values below 0.50 (Figure 1).

Furthermore, these indicators demonstrated non-significant relationships (p > 0.01) with their respective constructs, indicating a lack of correlation. Therefore, these indicators were removed from further analysis.

After removing these two indicators, a subsequent bootstrapping analysis was conducted to ensure the remaining indicators met the validity criteria. The

results (Table 1) show that all remaining indicators exhibited loading factor values ranging from 0.496 to 0.892, and all achieved statistical significance ($p < 0.01$). This confirms the validity of all indicators and their suitability for inclusion in the hypothesis testing phase.
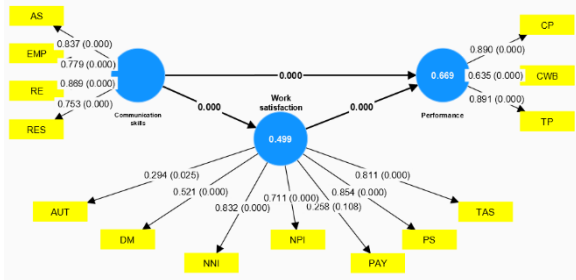

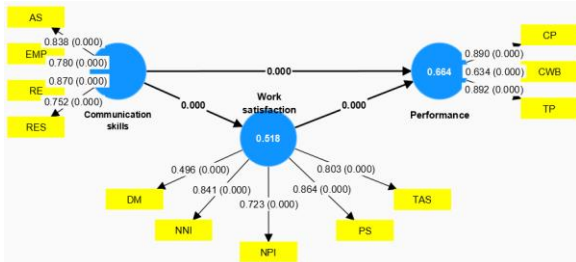Figure 1. Path chart before indicator is removed

Figure 2. Path chart after indicator is removed

Table 1. Loading Factor Value

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor After Deleted
Comm. Skills	*Attending skills* (AS)	0,838
	Respect (RE)	0,870
	Empathy (EMP)	0,780
	Responsiveness (RES)	0,752
Work Satisfaction	*Nurse-Physician Interaction* (NPI)	0,723
	Task (TAS)	0,803
	Decision Making (DM)	0,496
	Nurse-Nurse Interaction (NNI)	0,841

	Professional Status (PS)	0,864
Performance	*Task Performance* (TP)	0,892
	Contextual Performance (CP)	0,890
	Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB)	0,634

Source: Data processing of 100 respondents (2024)

Discriminant Validity

The outer model analysis demonstrated that all constructs – communication skills, work satisfaction, and performance – achieved an average variance extracted (AVE) value exceeding 0.50, specifically 0.658, 0.573, and 0.663, respectively. This finding supports the convergent validity of the measurement model, indicating that each construct adequately captures the variance in its associated indicators.

Table 2. Cross loading and AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values

	Comm. skills	Work satisfctn	Perform.	AVE value
AS	0,838	0,601	0,585	
RE	0,870	0,597	0,567	0,658
EMP	0,780	0,584	0,489	
RES	0,752	0,551	0,664	
NPI	0,618	0,723	0,516	
TAS	0,512	0,803	0,621	
DM	0,229	0,496	0,315	0,573
NNI	0,643	0,841	0,704	
PS	0,610	0,864	0,718	
TP	0,536	0,667	0,892	
CP	0,574	0,720	0,890	0,663
CWB	0,641	0,512	0,634	

Source: Data processing of 100 respondents (2024)

Furthermore, Table 2 reveals that each indicator exhibits a stronger correlation with its corresponding construct than with other latent variables. This confirms that each indicator aligns with its respective construct

group, satisfying the criterion for discriminant validity.

Construct Reliability

Table 3 presents the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for each variable. While there were slight adjustments in these values following the removal of the "pay" (PAY) and "autonomy" (AUT) indicators, all variables demonstrate acceptable reliability.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores

Var.	Indicators	*Cronbach's alpha*	*Composite reliability*	Information
Com Skills	AS	0,825	0,826	Reliable
	RE			
	EMP			
	RES			
Work Satis-faction	NPI	0,808	0,848	Reliable
	TAS			
	DM			
	NNI			
	PS			
Perfor-mance	TP	0,731	0,748	Reliable
	CP			
	CWB			

Source: Data processing of 100 respondents (2024)

Table 3 demonstrates that all variables exhibit acceptable reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the standard threshold of 0.70. While a value of 0.70 is generally preferred, values ranging from 0.5 to 0.7 are considered acceptable (Hasan, 2023).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping to estimate path coefficients and specific indirect effects.

Table 4. Path coefficients value, T-count value, and significance value (p)

Hyp	Var. reltionshp	Std. direct effect	Std. indrct	T-Stat.	P-Values
H1	Comm. Skills → Work sats.	0,720	-	15,319	0,000
H2	Work Sats. → Performance	0,563	-	6,584	0,000
H3	Comm. skills → Performance	0,715	-	17,083	0,000
H4	Comm. skills → Work Sats.→ Performance	-	0,405	5,679	0,000

Source: Data processing of 100 respondents (2024)

From Table 4, All four hypotheses were supported by the data analysis. The T-statistics for all hypotheses exceeded the critical value of 1.985, based on a two-tailed test with a significance level of 0.050 and a degrees of freedom of 95 (calculated from 100 respondents and 5 variables). Additionally, all hypotheses exhibited a significance value (p)<0.050, further supporting their acceptance.

Discussion:

The research at RSKD Dadi, a mental hospital in South Sulawesi, investigated the complex interplay between communication skills, work satisfaction, and nurse performance. This study, unique in its focus on this specific pathway, aligns with the growing body of research emphasizing the importance of employee well-being and engagement in driving organizational success (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2019).

The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between communication skills and work satisfaction, echoing the established link between positive relationships and work satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001). Nurses who demonstrated strong communication skills, characterized by empathy, active listening, respect, and responsiveness, reported higher levels of work satisfaction. This finding aligns with the concept of intrinsic motivation, where

feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness contribute to work satisfaction and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Furthermore, both communication skills and work satisfaction were found to have a significant positive impact on nurse performance, supporting the robust relationship between work satisfaction and performance (Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2019). Nurses with strong communication skills and high work satisfaction demonstrated higher levels of commitment, responsibility, collaboration, communication, creativity, and initiative in their work. This aligns with the Job Characteristics Model, which suggests that jobs with characteristics like skill variety, task identity, and autonomy lead to higher work satisfaction and motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Interestingly, while compensation played a role in work satisfaction, its impact was relatively low. This finding resonates with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which suggests that motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition, responsibility) are more powerful drivers of work satisfaction than hygiene factors (e.g., salary, working conditions) (Herzberg, 1966). Despite potentially inadequate income, nurses at RSKD Dadi maintained a high level of professionalism and dedication to their work, highlighting the importance of intrinsic motivators and a positive work environment in driving performance.

The research at RSKD Dadi underscores the critical role of communication skills in fostering work satisfaction and enhancing nurse performance. It reinforces the importance of investing in communication training and fostering a culture of open and effective communication to improve the well-being and productivity of nurses, ultimately leading to better patient care.

D. Conclusion

This study examines the human resource management model in hospital settings, specifically focusing on managing patients with psychiatric disorders. The findings highlight the significant role of communication skills in enhancing nurse performance. Communication skills positively influence performance both directly and indirectly, through increased work satisfaction.

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