


# Influence of Cultural Sensitivity on Self-Esteem of Palestinian Nurses in Neonatal Intensive Care Units

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** The relationship between cultural sensitivity and self-esteem among nurses in neonatal intensive care units is critical to job satisfaction and patient care quality.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted from February to March 2024 on 223 nurses in neonatal intensive care units. Data were collected using Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

**Results:** The study found that nurses had a moderate level of cultural sensitivity ( $M = 78.3$ ,  $SD = 9.4$ ) and self-esteem ( $M = 24.8$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ). A weak positive correlation was observed between cultural sensitivity and self-esteem ( $r = .26$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, cultural sensitivity was found as a predictor of self-esteem ( $p < .05$ ).

**Discussion:** Findings highlight the positive relationship between cultural sensitivity and self-esteem among NICU nurses, suggesting that enhancing cultural sensitivity could improve self-esteem and job satisfaction.

## Keywords

cultural sensitivity, self-esteem, neonate, intensive care unit, nurses

## Introduction

Cultural sensitivity, also referred to as intercultural sensitivity or cultural awareness, is defined as the ability to understand and appreciate cultural differences and to interact effectively with people from different cultures (Betancourt et al., 2003). In the context of health care, cultural sensitivity is crucial as it significantly affects the quality of care provided to patients from diverse backgrounds (Stubbe, 2020). This concept is particularly relevant in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs), where nurses must navigate the complexities of interacting with families from various cultural backgrounds, requiring a high level of sensitivity to effectively meet their needs (Gómez-Cantarino et al., 2020).

The relationship between cultural sensitivity and self-esteem among nurses is a critical area of study. Self-esteem, which refers to an individual's overall subjective sense of personal worth or value, influences professional behavior, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (Rosenberg, 1965). Nurses who possess high cultural sensitivity are more likely to feel confident in their interactions with patients and their families, potentially leading to enhanced self-esteem (Červený et al., 2022; Smith & Johnson, 2022). Conversely, a lack of cultural

sensitivity may contribute to feelings of inadequacy and decreased self-esteem (Kim et al., 2022; Robera et al., 2024). Studies have shown that cultural competence training can enhance nurses' self-esteem by providing them with the tools and confidence needed to manage culturally diverse patient populations (Chan et al., 2023; Leininger, 2002).

In Palestine, the diverse cultural landscape encompasses a rich mosaic of ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups, including Muslim, Christian, and Samaritan communities, each with distinct cultural norms and values (Al-Aqtam et al., 2023; Nair & Adetayo, 2019). This diversity influences health care practices, patient expectations, and communication styles in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) (Taha & Westlake, 2016). Nurses must navigate varying beliefs about medical interventions, gender roles in caregiving, and culturally specific

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