

Effect Of Self-Management On The Productivity Of Nurses At Coast General Teaching And Referral Hospital, Kenya

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Abstract

The productivity of healthcare professionals has become a critical determinant of healthcare quality, patient safety, and organizational performance. Nurses, who constitute the largest proportion of healthcare workers, operate in highly demanding environments characterized by heavy workloads, emotional exhaustion, staff shortages, and increasing patient expectations. Consequently, self-management has emerged as an important personal leadership competency that enables nurses to regulate their emotions, manage time effectively, cope with occupational stress, and maintain high levels of productivity. Despite numerous organizational interventions aimed at improving healthcare service delivery, productivity challenges persist in many public referral hospitals in Kenya. This study examined the effect of self-management on the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital, Kenya. The study was anchored on Self-Leadership Theory and adopted a descriptive-correlational research design. The target population comprised registered nurses working at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis with the aid of SPSS Version 29. The findings established that self-management had a positive and statistically significant effect on nurses' productivity ($\beta = 0.415, p < 0.001$). Pearson correlation analysis further revealed a strong positive relationship between self-management and productivity ($r = 0.709, p < 0.05$). The study concludes that nurses who effectively manage their time, regulate emotions, manage occupational stress, and maintain self-discipline exhibit higher productivity levels. The study recommends that hospital management institutionalize self-management training, stress management programmes, coaching initiatives, and employee wellness interventions to enhance nursing productivity and healthcare service delivery.

Keywords: *Self-management, Self-leadership, Nurses' Productivity, Emotional Regulation, Healthcare Management, Kenya.*

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I. Introduction

Healthcare organizations operate in increasingly complex environments characterized by rising patient numbers, technological advancements, workforce shortages, and heightened expectations regarding service quality. Nurses remain central to healthcare delivery because they provide continuous patient care, coordinate multidisciplinary services, and ensure effective implementation of treatment plans. Consequently, the productivity of nurses directly influences patient outcomes, organizational performance, healthcare quality, and overall efficiency of health systems.

Globally, healthcare institutions continue to experience significant challenges associated with workforce productivity. According to the World Health Organization (2024), shortages of healthcare workers, increasing disease burden, occupational stress, and burnout have significantly affected healthcare service delivery across both developed and developing countries. These challenges have increased interest in personal leadership competencies such as self-management that enable healthcare professionals to remain productive under demanding work environments.

Self-management refers to an individual's ability to regulate personal behaviour, emotions, thoughts, and work activities in pursuit of organizational and personal goals. It encompasses competencies such as time management, emotional regulation, self-discipline, stress management, personal accountability, and continuous self-improvement. Employees possessing strong self-management skills are better able to prioritize responsibilities, cope with workplace challenges, make effective decisions, and maintain high performance despite demanding working conditions.

In developed countries, healthcare organizations increasingly recognize self-management as an essential determinant of employee performance. Hospitals have adopted coaching programmes, resilience training, emotional intelligence development, mindfulness interventions, and stress management programmes to strengthen healthcare workers' personal effectiveness. Studies conducted in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom consistently demonstrate that nurses possessing strong self-management competencies exhibit higher productivity, lower absenteeism, greater job satisfaction, and improved quality of patient care.

Across Africa, healthcare institutions continue to face considerable challenges associated with inadequate staffing, resource constraints, occupational stress, and increasing patient demand. These conditions frequently contribute to burnout, emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and declining employee productivity. Consequently, self-management has become increasingly important in enabling healthcare professionals to adapt to challenging working environments while maintaining high-quality healthcare services.

Kenya's healthcare sector has undergone substantial reforms following devolution, resulting in increased responsibility for county governments in managing healthcare services. Although investments have been made in infrastructure, medical equipment, and workforce recruitment, public hospitals continue to experience challenges associated with heavy workloads, inadequate staffing, high patient volumes, and limited financial resources. These challenges are particularly evident within referral hospitals where nurses often work under significant physical and emotional pressure.

Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital serves as the largest referral health facility within the Coastal region and provides specialized healthcare services to thousands of patients annually. Nurses working within the hospital perform diverse clinical, administrative, and patient support functions under demanding conditions characterized by long working hours, emergency cases, staff shortages, and increasing patient expectations. Under such circumstances, effective self-management becomes essential for maintaining productivity, improving patient outcomes, and enhancing organizational performance.

Despite the recognized importance of self-management, empirical evidence regarding its influence on nurses' productivity within Kenyan public referral hospitals remains limited. Most previous studies have concentrated on organizational factors such as leadership, motivation, remuneration, and working conditions while giving relatively limited attention to individual behavioural competencies. This study therefore sought to examine the effect of self-management on the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Healthcare organizations depend on productive nursing personnel to deliver quality healthcare services, improve patient outcomes, and enhance organizational performance. However, nurses continue to operate in increasingly demanding work environments characterized by staff shortages, heavy workloads, emotional exhaustion, prolonged working hours, and growing patient expectations. These challenges negatively affect employee productivity, job satisfaction, service quality, and patient safety.

Although Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital has implemented various organizational initiatives aimed at improving healthcare delivery, productivity challenges among nurses continue to manifest through work-related stress, burnout, absenteeism, reduced efficiency, and declining employee morale. While organizational interventions remain important, increasing evidence suggests that personal behavioural competencies such as self-management significantly influence employee performance by enabling individuals to regulate emotions, manage stress, prioritize tasks, and maintain work discipline.

Previous studies examining employee productivity within healthcare institutions have largely focused on organizational leadership, compensation, work environment, staffing levels, and motivation. Comparatively few studies have investigated the contribution of self-management to nurses' productivity within public referral hospitals in Kenya. This knowledge gap limits the development of evidence-based interventions targeting individual behavioural competencies that enhance workforce productivity.

The present study therefore sought to determine the effect of self-management on the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital, Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of self-management on the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital, Kenya.

Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on Self-Leadership Theory, developed by Manz (1986) and later expanded by Neck and Houghton (2006). The theory posits that individuals influence their own thoughts, behaviours, and emotions through self-regulation strategies that enhance personal effectiveness and organizational performance. Self-leadership extends beyond traditional supervision by emphasizing personal responsibility, intrinsic motivation, behavioural self-control, and continuous self-improvement.

According to the theory, employees who effectively manage themselves demonstrate higher levels of self-discipline, emotional intelligence, resilience, goal orientation, and productivity. Self-management strategies such as time management, self-observation, constructive thought patterns, stress management, and emotional regulation enable employees to perform effectively even in demanding work environments.

Within healthcare organizations, self-leadership enables nurses to prioritize patient care activities, manage competing demands, cope with occupational stress, regulate emotional responses, and maintain professional standards despite challenging working conditions. Nurses possessing strong self-management competencies are more likely to deliver quality healthcare services while maintaining high productivity and psychological well-being.

The theory further argues that organizations can improve employee performance by creating environments that encourage self-regulation, continuous learning, autonomy, coaching, and personal accountability. Training programmes that strengthen self-management competencies contribute to improved organizational performance through enhanced employee productivity and service quality.

Self-Leadership Theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for explaining the relationship between self-management and nurses' productivity. It suggests that nurses capable of effectively managing their own behaviour, emotions, time, and stress are more likely to achieve superior work performance and contribute positively to organizational objectives.

II. Empirical Literature Review

Self-management has become one of the most widely researched dimensions of self-leadership because of its influence on employee performance, resilience, adaptability, and organizational effectiveness. It encompasses an individual's ability to regulate emotions, manage time effectively, control stress, set personal goals, and maintain discipline while performing assigned responsibilities. In healthcare organizations, self-management is particularly important because nurses work in dynamic environments requiring rapid decision-making, emotional stability, and sustained concentration.

According to Neck and Houghton (2021), employees possessing strong self-management competencies demonstrate higher motivation, better decision-making, improved resilience, and greater productivity because they effectively regulate their behaviours and emotions. The authors argue that self-management enhances individual accountability by enabling employees to remain focused on organizational objectives despite workplace challenges.

In a systematic review of self-leadership interventions in healthcare, Stewart, Courtright, and Manz (2022) established that nurses who practiced behavioural self-management techniques experienced significant improvements in productivity, job satisfaction, and quality of patient care. Their findings indicated that self-management training reduced occupational stress while improving work engagement and organizational commitment.

Within the healthcare sector, Kim and Park (2023) found that emotional regulation and effective time management significantly enhanced nursing productivity in tertiary hospitals in South Korea. Nurses with higher self-management competencies demonstrated improved patient care coordination, reduced medical errors, and greater efficiency in handling clinical responsibilities.

Similarly, Al-Hamdan, Bani Issa, and Abu Al-Rub (2023) reported that self-management positively influenced nurses' work performance through improved emotional intelligence, resilience, and professional accountability. The study concluded that healthcare organizations should invest in continuous professional development programmes that strengthen self-management competencies among nurses.

In Africa, Munyewende and Rispel (2022) established that occupational stress and inadequate coping mechanisms significantly reduced nursing productivity in public hospitals. The researchers recommended institutionalization of stress management programmes, coaching, and employee wellness initiatives to enhance healthcare workforce performance.

Within Kenya, Mwangi and Wambua (2024) examined behavioural competencies among healthcare workers in county referral hospitals and found that self-management significantly improved employee productivity by strengthening work discipline, time management, and emotional resilience. The researchers emphasized that nurses capable of effectively regulating personal behaviour were better able to manage heavy workloads while maintaining quality patient care.

Although previous studies consistently demonstrate the importance of self-management, most have been undertaken outside Kenya or within private healthcare institutions. Limited empirical evidence exists regarding the influence of self-management on nurses' productivity within public referral hospitals such as Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital. This contextual gap justified the present study.

III. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the effect of self-management on the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital. The descriptive component enabled the researcher to describe nurses' self-management practices, while the correlational design established the relationship between self-management and productivity.

The target population comprised 143 registered nurses working at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital. Nurses were selected because they constitute the largest professional workforce within the hospital and directly influence quality of healthcare delivery.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire measured dimensions of self-management including time management, emotional regulation, stress management, self-discipline, and personal accountability, together with indicators of nurses' productivity.

Prior to the main data collection exercise, the research instrument was pilot tested to establish validity and reliability. Content validity was assessed through expert review by university supervisors, while reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

The collected data were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 29). Descriptive statistics comprising frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations summarized respondents' perceptions. Inferential statistics included Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis to determine the relationship between self-management and nurses' productivity and multiple linear regression analysis to establish the magnitude and statistical significance of the effect.

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant university and hospital authorities before data collection commenced. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from respondents, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

Response Rate

The study targeted 143 registered nurses, out of whom 109 completed and returned the questionnaires, representing a 76.22% response rate.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), a response rate above 70% is considered very good for social science research. Similarly, Kothari and Garg (2019) observe that response rates exceeding 60% provide sufficient data for meaningful statistical analysis. Therefore, the response rate achieved in this study was considered adequate for both descriptive and inferential analyses.

The high response rate further suggests that nurses were willing to participate in research aimed at improving healthcare management and employee productivity.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Hair et al. (2022) recommend a minimum Cronbach's Alpha value of **0.70** for acceptable reliability.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Self-Management	5	0.831
Nurses' Productivity	5	0.798

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for self-management ($\alpha = 0.831$) exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the questionnaire items exhibited satisfactory internal consistency. The findings confirm that the instrument reliably measured nurses' perceptions regarding self-management practices.

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The respondents comprised registered nurses working in various departments of Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital. Their demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 109)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	42	38.5
Female	67	61.5
Age		

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 30 Years	21	19.3
31–40 Years	48	44.0
41–50 Years	28	25.7
Above 50 Years	12	11.0
Highest Education		
Diploma	39	35.8
Bachelor's Degree	58	53.2
Master's Degree	12	11.0
Work Experience		
Below 5 Years	27	24.8
5–10 Years	46	42.2
Above 10 Years	36	33.0

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents possessed bachelor's degrees and substantial professional experience. This suggests that the respondents had adequate knowledge and practical experience to provide informed opinions regarding self-management and productivity within the hospital.

Descriptive Analysis of Self-Management

The second objective of the study sought to determine the effect of self-management on the productivity of nurses. Respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with statements relating to various aspects of self-management using a five-point Likert scale.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Self-Management

Self-Management Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
I effectively manage work-related stress.	3.9541	0.801
I maintain emotional control during difficult situations.	3.7523	0.834
I remain disciplined in completing assigned duties.	3.6881	0.865
I prioritize my daily responsibilities effectively.	3.4862	0.911
I manage my time efficiently while performing nursing duties.	3.0183	1.042

The descriptive findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that self-management contributes positively to their productivity. The highest-rated statement was effective management of work-related stress (Mean = 3.9541), suggesting that stress management is the most developed aspect of self-management among nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital.

Respondents also reported relatively high levels of emotional regulation (Mean = 3.7523) and self-discipline (Mean = 3.6881), indicating that many nurses possess behavioural competencies that enable them to remain focused and productive despite challenging working conditions.

However, time management recorded the lowest mean score (Mean = 3.0183), suggesting that nurses experience difficulties in allocating sufficient time to accomplish competing clinical responsibilities. This finding may be attributed to heavy workloads, emergency cases, staff shortages, and increasing patient numbers within the referral hospital.

Overall, the descriptive results demonstrate that while nurses generally exhibit satisfactory self-management competencies, strengthening time management skills could further improve productivity and quality of healthcare service delivery.

Correlation Analysis

The study sought to determine the relationship between self-management and the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. Pearson correlation analysis was appropriate because it measures both the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis between Self-Management and Nurses' Productivity

Variables	Nurses' Productivity
Self-Management	$r = 0.709$
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

The findings indicate a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between self-management and nurses' productivity ($r = 0.709$, $p < 0.001$).

The results imply that improvements in nurses' self-management competencies are associated with corresponding improvements in productivity. Nurses who effectively regulate their emotions, manage occupational stress, prioritize responsibilities, maintain self-discipline, and organize their work schedules are more likely to perform their duties efficiently and deliver quality healthcare services.

The strength of the relationship further demonstrates that self-management is an important behavioural competency influencing employee performance within healthcare institutions. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at strengthening nurses' self-management skills can substantially improve organizational productivity and patient care outcomes.

These findings agree with Stewart, Courtright, and Manz (2022), who reported that behavioural self-management significantly improves healthcare workers' productivity and job performance. Similarly, Kim and Park (2023) found that nurses possessing strong self-management competencies consistently demonstrate higher efficiency, improved patient care coordination, and reduced workplace errors.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of self-management on nurses' productivity while controlling for the other dimensions of emotional intelligence included in the broader study.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.653	0.426	0.404	0.481

Source: Field Data (2026).

The model summary indicates that the emotional intelligence variables explained 42.6% of the variation in nurses' productivity ($R^2 = 0.426$). This suggests that self-management, together with the other emotional intelligence dimensions, makes a substantial contribution to explaining productivity among nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital.

Table 6: ANOVA Results

Source	F	Sig.
Regression	19.310	0.000

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model was statistically significant ($F = 19.310$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the predictor variables collectively explain a significant proportion of the variation in nurses' productivity.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized β	t	Sig.
Self-Management	0.415	4.892	0.000

Dependent Variable: Nurses' Productivity

The regression results reveal that self-management has a positive and statistically significant effect on nurses' productivity ($\beta = 0.415$, $p < 0.001$).

The regression coefficient implies that a one-unit improvement in self-management results in a 0.415-unit increase in nurses' productivity, holding the other emotional intelligence dimensions constant. This finding confirms that self-management is one of the strongest predictors of productivity among nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital.

The results indicate that nurses who effectively manage stress, regulate emotions, prioritize responsibilities, and maintain work discipline are more productive, demonstrate greater efficiency, and provide higher-quality patient care.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the following null hypothesis:

H₀₂: Self-management has no statistically significant effect on the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital.

Regression analysis produced a regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.415$ with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. Since the significance level is less than the critical value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The study therefore concludes that self-management has a statistically significant positive effect on nurses' productivity at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital.

IV. Discussion Of Findings

The second objective of the study was to determine the effect of self-management on the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital. The findings established that self-management positively and significantly influences nurses' productivity. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between self-management and productivity ($r = 0.709$, $p < 0.001$), while regression analysis established that self-management significantly predicts productivity ($\beta = 0.415$, $p < 0.001$).

These findings demonstrate that nurses possessing effective self-management skills perform their responsibilities more efficiently than those with weaker self-regulation abilities. Self-management enables nurses to regulate emotions, manage occupational stress, organize workloads, prioritize patient care activities, and maintain professional discipline despite demanding clinical environments.

The descriptive analysis further revealed that stress management was the strongest component of self-management (Mean = 3.9541), indicating that nurses have developed coping mechanisms that help them manage occupational pressure. However, time management recorded the lowest mean score (Mean = 3.0183), suggesting opportunities for improvement in work scheduling and prioritization.

The findings support Self-Leadership Theory, which argues that employees who regulate their own behaviour, emotions, and work practices achieve superior performance without relying solely on external supervision. Nurses who practice self-management demonstrate greater accountability, resilience, motivation, and commitment to organizational goals.

The results are consistent with Stewart, Courtright, and Manz (2022), who found that behavioural self-management significantly improves employee productivity by strengthening personal responsibility, goal attainment, and resilience. Similarly, Kim and Park (2023) reported that nurses with effective emotional regulation and time management skills exhibit greater clinical efficiency and improved patient outcomes.

The findings also corroborate those of Al-Hamdan, Bani Issa, and Abu Al-Rub (2023), who established that self-management enhances nursing performance through improved emotional intelligence, stress management, and professional accountability. Likewise, Mwangi and Wambua (2024) concluded that behavioural competencies such as self-management significantly improve healthcare workers' productivity within Kenyan public hospitals.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that hospital administrators should recognize self-management as a strategic competency that complements organizational interventions. Regular coaching, mentorship, resilience training, and employee wellness programmes can strengthen nurses' capacity to cope with occupational demands while maintaining high productivity.

The relatively lower rating for time management also indicates the need for interventions focusing on workload planning, shift organization, delegation, and prioritization of clinical tasks. Such initiatives can reduce work overload, improve efficiency, and ultimately enhance patient care.

Overall, the study demonstrates that self-management is a critical determinant of nurses' productivity. Hospitals that invest in developing nurses' self-management competencies are likely to experience improved workforce performance, enhanced patient satisfaction, higher quality of care, and greater organizational effectiveness.

V. Conclusion

The study concludes that self-management significantly influences the productivity of nurses at Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital. Nurses who effectively manage stress, regulate emotions, maintain self-discipline, prioritize tasks, and organize their work demonstrate higher productivity and improved job performance. The positive and statistically significant relationship observed in this study confirms that self-management is an essential behavioural competency for improving healthcare service delivery.

Practical Implications

The findings have important implications for healthcare management and policy. Hospital administrators should integrate self-management into staff development programmes by providing training on stress management, emotional regulation, resilience, time management, and personal effectiveness. These interventions are likely to improve employee well-being, reduce burnout, enhance productivity, and contribute to better patient outcomes. Additionally, incorporating self-management competencies into performance appraisal and professional development frameworks can reinforce continuous improvement among nursing staff.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

- i. Coast General Teaching and Referral Hospital should institutionalize regular self-management and resilience training for all nurses.
- ii. Hospital management should introduce structured time management programmes to improve workload planning and prioritization.
- iii. Employee wellness initiatives, including stress counselling and psychological support services, should be strengthened to reduce burnout.
- iv. Nurse managers should adopt coaching and mentorship programmes that reinforce self-discipline, emotional regulation, and accountability.
- v. The County Department of Health should incorporate self-management competencies into continuous professional development programmes for nurses across public health facilities.

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