

THE DESCRIPTION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE PHARMACISTS IN PHARMACIES

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ABSTRACT

Background: Consumer satisfaction with pharmaceutical services in pharmacies has not met expectations. This is due to several factors, such as a lack of communication skills and low levels of empathy among pharmacists. Friendly, polite, and communicative pharmaceutical services are crucial determinants of the quality of pharmacy services. Emotional intelligence enhances pharmacists' ability to empathize, control emotions, and listen actively. **Objective:** This study aims to identify pharmacists' characteristics and assess their emotional intelligence level in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. **Methods:** This study employed a descriptive quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach. A purposive sampling technique was used, and 30 pharmacists who met the predetermined criteria were selected. The instrument utilized was a questionnaire. **Results:** The study found that the average age of pharmacists was 28.17 years. The average length of practice as a pharmacist was 4.02 years, and 70% of pharmacists reported being present in the pharmacy daily at specific hours. The emotional intelligence levels among pharmacists showed that 13.3% had low emotional intelligence, 76.7% had moderate emotional intelligence, and 10% had high emotional intelligence. **Conclusion:** These findings indicate the need to enhance pharmacists' emotional intelligence through training and improving working conditions to support optimal pharmaceutical service quality in pharmacies.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Empathy; Pharmacist; Pharmaceutical Services; Patient Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Pharmacies play a vital role in healthcare facilities. They serve as hubs for pharmaceutical activities, the distribution of pharmaceutical supplies, and other health provisions for the community. Pharmaceutical services have shifted from being drug-oriented to patient-oriented, focusing on *pharmaceutical care* to optimize patients' quality of life^[1].

A study on the implementation of pharmaceutical service standards in the city of Banjarmasin revealed that out of 30 pharmacies, only one was categorized as

good, nine were categorized as fair, and 20 were categorized as poor^[2]. Research by Yulia et al. (2016) showed that consumer satisfaction with pharmaceutical services in pharmacies in Depok City did not meet expectations. A negative gap across all service indicators evidenced this^[3].

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others. In the context of pharmaceutical services in pharmacies, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role. Pharmacists are not only tasked

with providing information about drugs and prescriptions but also with interacting with patients who are often in poor health or dealing with emotional challenges. Therefore, pharmacists with high emotional intelligence can provide better services, enhance patient satisfaction, and contribute to the effectiveness of healthcare^[4].

Studies have shown that pharmacists with good emotional intelligence are more likely to understand patients' emotional needs and provide more empathetic services, which in turn improves patient adherence to treatment^[5,6]. The ability to manage emotions is also critical for coping with workplace stress, especially in high-pressure environments like busy pharmacies^[7].

Additionally, emotional intelligence contributes to pharmacists' ability to work effectively in teams and maintain professional relationships with doctors and other healthcare professionals. This is important because pharmaceutical services are multidisciplinary, and good collaboration between professions can improve patient care outcomes^[8].

In the context of pharmaceutical services in pharmacies, emotional intelligence enhances effective communication with both patients and colleagues. Good communication is essential for providing accurate drug information, preventing misunderstandings, and improving patient satisfaction^[9]. Furthermore, research shows that high emotional intelligence can increase pharmacists' job satisfaction and reduce burnout, which is common in healthcare professions^[10].

Research by Cooper *et al.* (2022) found that emotional intelligence significantly impacts pharmacists' ability to handle conflicts in interactions with patients or other healthcare team members. Thus, pharmacists with good emotional intelligence tend to be more adaptive and

capable of resolving issues effectively, both in inpatient services and in the workplace^[11].

In pharmaceutical services at pharmacies, the interaction between pharmacists and patients is not limited to the technical aspects of dispensing medications but also encompasses psychological and emotional aspects that influence the success of treatment. Therefore, developing emotional intelligence in pharmacists is a key factor in improving the quality of services in pharmacies^[12].

METHODS

This study design was descriptive-analytic quantitative in nature, aiming to reveal the phenomenon of low consumer satisfaction with pharmaceutical services in pharmacies using a survey approach. The study was conducted in pharmacies across four regions of Banjarmasin City. The research sample was determined based on inclusion criteria, namely pharmacists who are present at the pharmacy at least twice a week and provide direct pharmaceutical services to patients.

Data collection in this study utilized a questionnaire developed by Rahem (2006)^[13], consisting of 20 statement items about emotional intelligence. The scoring system ranged as follows: always = 1, often = 2, sometimes = 3, rarely = 4, and never = 5. The questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.881. This study received ethical approval under the number 256/UMB/KE/XII/2021.

RESULTS

This discussion explains the level of emotional intelligence among pharmacists in pharmacies in Banjarmasin City. The following elaborates on the characteristics of pharmacists in pharmacies in Banjarmasin City.

Based on the study results by gender, it was found that female pharmacists had a higher emotional intelligence score (mean=68.0) than male pharmacists (mean=66.7), although the difference was not statistically significant (p-value=0.52). While the findings indicate that females have higher emotional intelligence than males, the difference is not significant. This aligns with Nyiagani (2021), which also found no significant difference in emotional intelligence between genders. This is because both genders have similar self-actualization needs, giving them equal opportunities for growth and development^[14].

Based on age, pharmacists aged 30-49 years (mean=68.8) demonstrated higher emotional intelligence compared to those aged 21-29 years (mean=67.4), with a p-value of 0.25. According to Salovey and Meyer (2000), emotional intelligence increases with age and experience, similar to other cognitive abilities. This finding aligns with previous studies^[15].

Based on work experience, pharmacists with 5-10 years of experience (mean=70.3) had higher emotional intelligence levels compared to those with less than 5 years of experience (mean=65.0), with a statistically significant p-value of 0.00. This indicates a significant difference. Longer work experience can enhance a person's emotional intelligence. A study by Rizqiandrie Zakie Aulia and Slamet Widodo (2024) also found that longer work experience can improve emotional intelligence and employee performance. They concluded that employees with longer work experience possess better emotional intelligence and are more prepared to handle work-related pressures^[16].

Based on the frequency of attendance at the pharmacy, pharmacists who are more frequently present at the pharmacy have higher emotional

intelligence (mean=70) compared to those who are rarely present (mean=65), with a p-value of 0.78, indicating no significant difference. More frequent social interaction can enhance emotional intelligence. A study by Lopes et al. (2006) found that workers with higher emotional intelligence tend to have better interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Frequent social interactions at work contribute to improved emotional intelligence skills^[17].

Based on income levels, pharmacists earning >IDR 5,000,000 have higher emotional intelligence (mean=69.8) compared to those earning <IDR 5,000,000 (mean=67.4), with a p-value of 0.47. Higher-income levels are associated with better emotional intelligence.

Based on pharmacy ownership status, pharmacists who own their pharmacy have higher emotional intelligence (mean=70.1) compared to pharmacists who do not own the facility (mean=66.2), with a p-value of 0.64. Individuals who have greater control over their work environment tend to exhibit higher emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence Levels of Pharmacists

Based on the study results, the emotional intelligence levels of pharmacists in pharmacies in Banjarmasin City were found to be predominantly moderate, with 23 pharmacists (76.7%) falling into this category. However, 4 pharmacists (13.3%) were identified as having low emotional intelligence, and only 3 pharmacists (10%) exhibited high emotional intelligence. This is attributed to various factors such as high workloads, lack of social support, and environmental pressures in the workplace, which can affect pharmacists' ability to manage their emotions.

Previous research supports these findings. For example, a study by Shankar et al. (2011) revealed that pharmacists often

face significant work-related stress that can impact their emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence plays a critical role in reducing stress and enhancing job satisfaction among pharmacists^[18].

Stressful situations and interpersonal challenges in daily practice highlight the importance of social skills and empathy, which are key components of emotional intelligence^[7]. Considering that strong emotional intelligence can improve communication effectiveness and workplace relationships, educational institutions and professional organizations must focus on developing these skills in curricula and training programs for pharmacists^[9].

Research by McNulty (2019) and He (2021) showed that pharmacists with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to understand patient needs and manage interpersonal relationships, contributing to improved healthcare outcomes. Pharmacists with high emotional intelligence tend to perform better at work and handle stressful situations more effectively^[19].

Developing emotional intelligence in pharmacy education can enhance communication skills and patient satisfaction, leading to higher-quality services. Various studies have demonstrated the positive impact of emotional intelligence on patient-pharmacist relationships and collaboration within healthcare teams^[20].

These findings suggest that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in improving the quality of pharmaceutical services. A moderate level of emotional intelligence is prevalent among the pharmacists in this study, which indicates the potential for further development in emotional intelligence, particularly through targeted training programs.

Effective interventions, such as emotional intelligence training, social support, and stress management programs,

are essential for improving pharmacists' emotional intelligence and workplace well-being. By enhancing their emotional intelligence, pharmacists can better manage workloads and provide higher-quality care to patients.

This study has several limitations that must be considered. Firstly, the research was conducted only in Banjarmasin with a small sample size of 30 pharmacists, which limits the generalizability of the results to other regions or a larger population of pharmacists. The study did not explore other factors influencing emotional intelligence, such as specific professional training or personal life circumstances. The use of a cross-sectional design also means that it is not possible to establish causal relationships between emotional intelligence and the quality of pharmacy services. Future research with a larger, more diverse sample across multiple regions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence levels among pharmacists.

CONCLUSION

The study found that pharmacists in Banjarmasin with more than 5 years of experience had higher emotional intelligence, while gender, age, and attendance frequency showed no significant differences. Pharmacists with higher incomes and those owning their pharmacies also tended to have better emotional intelligence. The majority (76.7%) of pharmacists exhibited moderate emotional intelligence, with 10% displaying high emotional intelligence. These results highlight the need for emotional intelligence development through training and improved working conditions to enhance the quality of pharmaceutical services in pharmacies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to God Almighty, the author's parents, academic advisors, and friends who have helped and supported the author throughout the research process until its completion.

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