

The Mediating Role of Workplace Gaslighting Behavior on Professional Identity and Job Enrichment among Nursing Interns' Students

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Abstract:

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation which causes someone to question their perceptions, memories, or sense of reality, and gain control or avoid accountability. Through job enrichment, as offering greater autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for growth, nurses can rebuild confidence, strengthen their identity, and foster supportive and empowering work environment. This study aims to assess the mediating role of workplace gaslighting behavior on professional identity and job enrichment among nursing interns' students. The study employed a correlational descriptive cross-sectional research design. 246 nursing interns' students in academic year 2024/2025 participated in this study. The study took place at Mansoura Main University Hospital. The data was collected over three months in 2025 by using four **tools**: Student's Socio Demographic and Academic Profile, Gaslighting Work Behavior Questionnaire (GWQ), Professional Identity Questionnaire and Job Enrichment Questionnaire. **Results**: The majority of the studied sample (78.8%) have low gaslighting behavior levels, less than half of them (44.7%) have high professional identity levels, and more than half (54.4) of them have high levels of job enrichment. **Conclusion**: Gaslighting behavior was significantly negatively correlated with both professional identity and job enrichment, while professional identity and job enrichment were significantly positively correlated. Additionally, professional identity and job enrichment were significant independent predictors for nursing interns workplace gas lighting behaviors. **Recommendation**: Encourage experienced nurses to guide interns in developing their roles and responsibilities. Engage in self-reflection to understand personal values, strengths, and areas for growth in professional identity.

Keywords: Job Enrichment, Nursing Interns, Professional Identity & Workplace Gas lighting Behavior.

Introduction:

The Intern ship year provides an invaluable opportunity for novice nurses to apply their classroom learning in real-world settings. Under the guidance of experienced practitioners, interns engage in direct patient care, enabling them to refine their technical abilities while understanding the complexities of health care environments. Nurse interns, typically students in advanced stages of their nursing education, undertake clinical placements in various healthcare environments, including hospitals, outpatient clinics, and long-term care facilities (Lillekroken et al., 2024).

The transition from student to intern is a significant milestone in a nursing career. Interns are afforded the opportunity to work under the supervision of experienced registered nurses (RNs) and other healthcare professionals, which provides a platform for mentorship and skill development. This environment fosters not only clinical competence but also psychological and emotional readiness to navigate the complexities of patient care (Zhang, et

al., 2024). Nursing interns learn to perform essential nursing tasks, such as administering medications, monitoring vital signs, and assisting with daily living activities while also honing their critical thinking skills, which are paramount in high-stress settings (Young, 2024).

Among the numerous challenges faced by nursing professionals, the phenomenon of workplace gaslighting behavior among nursing interns warrants critical examination. Gas light refers to a form of psychological manipulation in which one individual seeks to make another doubt their perceptions, experiences, or understanding of reality (Graves & Samp, 2021). Workplace gaslighting, a form of psychological manipulation that seeks to make individuals question their perceptions, experiences, and feelings, can be particularly detrimental in a high-stakes environment such as healthcare (Ng, et al., 2024).

Workplace gaslighting behavior manifests in various forms within professional settings, particularly in the high-pressure environment of nursing. For nursing

interns who often find themselves at the intersection of education and practice, the risk of encountering gaslighting is heightened. Interns' may experience gaslighting from superiors, colleagues, or even patients, and the consequences can be profound and far-reaching (Liu et al., 2024).

The workplace gaslighting behavior can stem from several sources, including supervising nurses, medical staff, or even patients and their families. Nursing interns often caught between their inexperience and the high expectations placed upon them, may find themselves in precarious positions where they encounter dismissiveness or contempt from more seasoned practitioners. This behavioral pattern can foster a culture where questioning one's abilities becomes routine, creating an environment where nurse interns struggle to build confidence in their skills and judgment (Hackett, 2024).

Common manifestations of workplace gaslighting behavior include dismissive remarks about an intern's competence, undermining their confidence in clinical skills, or denying events or conversations that have occurred. For instance, a preceptor might consistently critique an intern's performance without acknowledging their improvement, while simultaneously claiming that the intern has not demonstrated sufficient understanding of nursing principles (Kealy, 2024). Such a pattern not only erodes the intern's self-esteem but also instills a pervasive sense of self-doubt, questioning their motivations and ability to succeed in their chosen profession (Espinoza, 2024).

In combating the prevalence of workplace gaslighting behavior among nursing Interns, healthcare institutions should prioritize the creation of a culture that encourages constructive feedback, respect, and collaboration. One actionable strategy is the implementation of structured mentorship programs, where experienced nurses guide interns through their formative stages. These mentors can serve as liaisons between interns and their supervisors, providing a safe space for interns to express their concerns and seek guidance about their experiences (Archuleta, et al., 2024).

The effects of workplace gaslighting behavior extend beyond immediate emotional discomfort; they have profound implications for the professional development of nursing interns. Gaslighting disrupts this growth trajectory, resulting in several adverse outcomes. It can lead nurse interns to second-guess their skills and knowledge, creating a pervasive sense of imposter syndrome. Workplace gaslighting behavior poses a significant threat to the professional identity formation of nurse interns. It leads to a profound impact on their self-efficacy and overall mental well-being (Camacho-Reyes, 2023).

The concept of professional identity encompasses the beliefs, values, and behaviors that shape the practice of nursing. Professional identity represents an individual's understanding of their role within a particular field (Kellar, et al., 2020). It encompasses an individual's self-concept as a nurse. The shaping of professional identity in nurse interns is a multifaceted process influenced by educational experiences, workplace environments, mentorship, and the broader socio-cultural context in which healthcare operates (Vabo, et al., 2022).

There are four dimensions of nurse interns' professional identity, including knowledge acquisition, the shaping of values and ethics, the influence of mentorship and peer relationships, and the integration of practical experience and reflection. One of the primary dimensions of professional identity for nurse interns is the acquisition of knowledge and technical skills. Nurse interns are mandated to engage in extensive theoretical and practical training, which equips them with the foundational competencies required in nursing practice (Zhou, et al., 2024).

Another significant dimension is the shaping of values and ethics inherent to the nursing profession. The ethical framework that guides nursing practice is of paramount importance and encompasses principles such as beneficence, non-maleficence, and respect for autonomy. Furthermore, mentorship and peer relationships significantly shape the professional identities of nurse interns. Lastly, the integration of practical experience and reflection plays a pivotal role in the evolution of nurse interns' professional identity (Poreddi, et al., 2021).

The development of a strong professional identity and the pursuit of job enrichment are intrinsically linked for nursing intern students. As they navigate the complexities of their roles within healthcare settings, they must engage actively in both their professional identity formation and the quest for enriching experiences (Ding, et al., 2024).

Job enrichment refers to the process of enhancing a role's responsibilities, autonomy, and opportunities for personal growth. This concept is particularly relevant in the context of nursing interns' roles, where students transition from theoretical learning to practical application in clinical settings (Mac-Ozigbo & Daniel, 2020). It entails the process of enhancing a role by increasing its intrinsic motivation factors, such as autonomy, responsibility, and opportunities for personal growth (Tumi, et al., 2022).

Several factors contribute to the effective implementation of job enrichment among nurses, influencing their commitment, motivation, and overall job satisfaction. Job enrichment is influenced

by several key factors, including organizational support, conducive work environments, effective communication, and opportunities for professional development. By addressing these factors, healthcare organizations can create a workplace that not only enhances nurse satisfaction and engagement but also ultimately leads to improved patient care outcomes (Karaferis, et al., 2022).

Implementation of job enrichment strategies can take various forms such as encouraging participation in decision-making processes, fostering collaborative work environments, and providing avenues for skill development. Empowering nurses to have a voice in their work settings not only elevates their sense of ownership but also contributes to a more engaged and committed workforce (Zamiri, & Esmacili, 2024).

Significance of Study

In the contemporary healthcare environment, professional identity and job enrichment are pivotal elements that influence the overall performance and well-being of nursing students, particularly interns at esteemed institutions as Mansoura University. Nursing interns subjected to gas lighting experiences increased levels of stress, anxiety, and frustration, leading to disengagement from their responsibilities. The resulting emotional toll can diminish their professional motivation and impede their ability to derive satisfaction from their work. In an environment rife with manipulation and uncertainty, the opportunities for meaningful engagement and professional growth are diminished, ultimately hindering job enrichment (Atta, et al., 2024).

The negative impacts of gaslighting behaviors underscore the importance of creating supportive learning and working environments that encourage the development of a resilient professional identity while facilitating job enrichment. Addressing the challenges posed by gaslighting is paramount to nurturing the next generation of nursing professionals, ensuring they emerge not only as competent practitioners but also as individuals equipped with a strong sense of professional identity and satisfaction in their roles (Hussain, 2024). Addressing the insidious nature of workplace gaslighting is essential for promoting a sustainable and thriving healthcare environment, wherein nursing interns can confidently cultivate their professional identities and achieve meaningful job enrichment. So, the aim of current study is to assess the mediating role of workplace gaslighting behavior on professional identity and job enrichment among nursing interns students.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to assess the mediating role of workplace gaslighting behavior on professional

identity and job enrichment among nursing Interns' students.

Research Questions:

- Q1:** What are the levels of workplace gaslighting behavior among nursing internship students at Main Mansoura University Hospital?
- Q2:** What are the levels of professional identity among nursing interns students at Main Mansoura University Hospital?
- Q3:** What are the levels of job enrichment among nursing interns students at Main Mansoura University Hospital?
- Q4:** Are there correlations among total levels of workplace gaslighting behavior, professional identity, and job enrichment?
- Q5:** Does workplace gaslighting behavior have mediating role in the relation between professional identity and job enrichment?

Method:

Design:

Descriptive correlational research design was used to conduct this study. A descriptive correlation research design is a statistical procedure used to measure and describe to measure the relationship or association between variables (Fischer, et al., 2023).

Setting:

This study was conducted at all inpatient units at Main Mansoura University Hospital with total bed capacity (1860). Mansoura University Hospital, a prominent healthcare institution in Egypt, plays a pivotal role in the education and training of nursing interns. This hospital serves comprehensive range of health service at delta region. It contains eight floors which consists of units for general medicine, general surgery, orthopedic, dialysis, neuro-surgery, operating rooms for general surgery, obstetric and gynecological department and antenatal care units.

Participants:

The participants of this study included a sample of nursing interns of Nursing Faculty at Main Mansoura during the time of data collection. Based on the total number of nursing interns in the academic year 2024-2025 was (1700) nursing interns, Steven Thompson equation (Thompson, 2012) used to calculate the sample size based on the next formula:

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1-p)}{\left[N-1 \times \left(d^2 \div z^2 \right) \right] + p(1-p)}$$

Where, n= sample size, N: Population size (1700), Z: Confidence interval at 95% (1.69), d: Error proportion (0.05), p: Probability (50%). Based on the formula, the total sample size required for the study is = 246 nursing interns in academic year 2024/2025.

Study Variables

- **Dependent variable:** Professional identity
- **Independent variable:** Job enrichment
- **Mediating variable:** Workplace gaslighting behavior.

Tools of data collection:

Four tools were used to collect data for this study:

Tool (1): Student's Socio Demographic and Academic Profile: Includes personal characteristics of nursing internship students such as age, gender and work experience, attendance of work shop related to professional identity.

Tool (2): Gaslighting Work Behavior Questionnaire (GWQ): It was developed by (Kukreja & Pandey., 2023) to measure gaslighting behaviors specifically in workplace. It contains 12 items divided into two key dimensions of gaslighting: trivialization (7 items) and affliction (5 items). Each question included a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from (1) = never, to (5) = always). Therefore, the levels of gaslighting work behavior :

"High level" if the percent $\geq 75\%$

- "Moderate level" from 60% to less than 75%

- "Low level" $< 60\%$

Tool (3): Professional Identity Questionnaire: It was developed by (Sharbaugh, 2009) and revised by the researchers to assess professional identity. It is composed of 24 items categorized under two domains as personal dimensions (15 items) as "Nursing is a part of me" and "The work in nursing suits me" and "proud to be nurse". Interpersonal Dimensions (9 items); as "Feel respected by my nursing colleagues" promote the positive aspects of nursing, there are 7 items are reversed coded, these included items (5, 9, 11,12,17,19, and 24). Answers were assessed by using a five - point likert scale that rating nursing personnel's response as (1) strongly disagree,(2) disagree,(3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. The scale is reversed with negative items. Levels of Professional Identity are:

- High level: if the total score was equals or more than 75%

- Moderate level: if the total score was equal or more than less 60 to less than 75%.

- **Low level: if the total score was less than 60%**

Tool (4): Job Enrichment Questionnaire: The questionnaire was developed by (Kanungo, 1982) and modified by (Hussein, et al., 2022) to assess levels of job enrichment as reported by nursing Interns' students. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items categorized in main six dimensions namely: 1- Skill variety, 2- task identity, 3- task significance, 4- autonomy, 5- feedback tasks and 6- interaction. Every dimension contains (5 items). Nursing interns students responses measured by a 5 point likert scale as (1) = strongly disagree to (5) = strongly agree. As

well as for the total scores that reveal the levels of job enrichment were classified as the following:

- "High job enrichment level" if the percent $\geq 75\%$

- "Moderate job enrichment level" from 60% to less than

- "Low job enrichment level" $< 60\%$

Validity:

Study tools were tested for face and content validity by jury of five experts in nursing academic field; from Universities of (Mansoura, Ain shams, and Fayoum University) accordingly the necessary modifications were done. Correctness, simplicity, relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness were all evaluated as part of the instruments' validity.

Reliability of the study tools:

Cronbach's alpha was applied to assess the internal consistency of the study tools, which needed to be at least 0.5 and preferably over 0.7 using Cronbach Alpha test and was for Tool I ($\alpha=0.906$), Tool II ($\alpha=0.899$) and Tool III ($\alpha=0.902$) which indicated high reliability.

Pilot study:

A pilot study was carried out on 10% of total nursing Interns' (25 nursing interns' students) to test the clarity, and feasibility of the questions and whether they were understandable, and to determine the time needed to fill questions. All nursing Interns' students) who shared in the pilot study was excluded from the study sample.

Field work:

Once official permission obtained by using the proper channel of communication from the director of Main Mansoura University Hospital, the questionnaire sheet distributed to intern nurses. The aim of the study and how to fill out the questionnaire sheets explained by the researchers, returning the questionnaires act as an indicator of acceptance of intern nurses to participate in the study, and intern nurses have the right to withdraw at any time during the study. All participants assured about the confidentiality of the collected data and the privacy of the study.

Process of data collection was done in one months from the mid of February to the mid of March 2025, the researchers collected data from participants by distributing the three sheets of data collection which were mentioned above in details. This was performed in between intern nurses' tasks when available in three days per week. The completed forms were timely collected and reviewed to ensure no information was missing.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Mansoura University. Official permission to conduct the study will be obtained from the responsible administrator of Main Mansoura University Hospital. Written informed consent was obtained from staff nurses who accept to participate in the study after explaining the nature and aim of the study. All participants informed that participation is voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants assured about the confidentiality of the collected data and the privacy of the study sample will be assured at all phases of the study. The results will be used as a component of necessary research. As well as it will be used for future publication and education.

Statistical analysis:

Data entry and statistical analysis were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 21.0. The categorical variables were represented as frequency and percentage. Continuous variables were represented as mean, and standard deviation. Independent t-test was used to test the difference between two means of continuous variables. ANOVA test was used to test the difference between more than two means of continuous variables. Pearson correlation analysis was used for assessment of the interrelationships between studied variables. Multiple Linear inner regression analysis was used to assess the mediation effect. Statistical significance was denoted by P values less than 0.05.

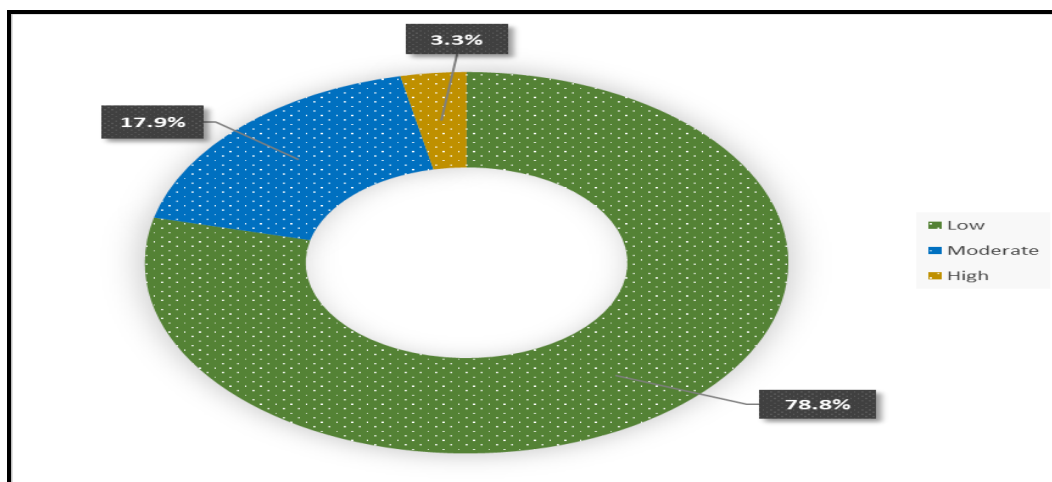
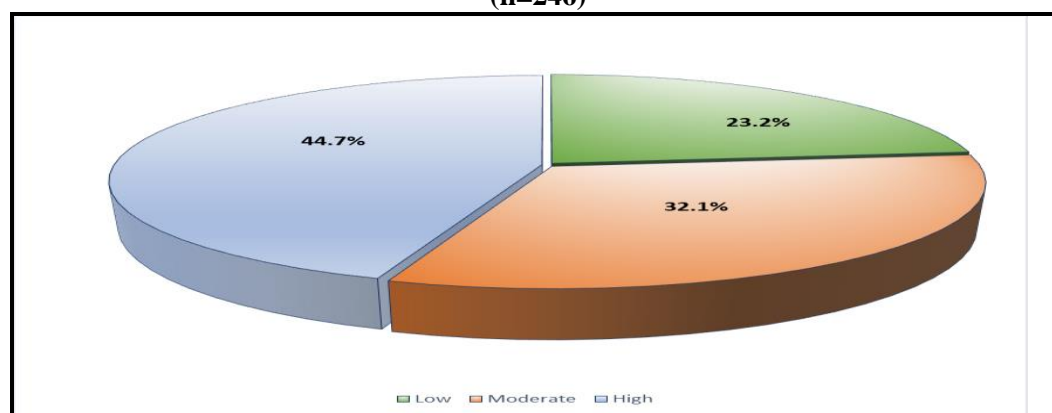
Results

Table (1):Personal characteristics of the studied nursing interns students (n=246)

| Variables | No. | % |
|---|------------|------|
| Age in Years | | |
| 20 – 23 years | 235 | 95.5 |
| 24 years and more | 11 | 4.5 |
| Mean ± SD | 21.71±1.57 | |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 76 | 30.9 |
| Female | 170 | 69.1 |
| Marital status | | |
| Single | 200 | 81.3 |
| Married | 46 | 18.7 |
| Department | | |
| Pediatric | 61 | 24.8 |
| Adult ICU | 67 | 27.2 |
| Surgical ICU | 49 | 19.9 |
| OR | 25 | 10.2 |
| Neonate | 19 | 7.7 |
| Dialysis | 14 | 5.7 |
| CCU | 11 | 4.5 |
| Attendance of work shop related to professional identity | | |
| Yes | 207 | 84.1 |
| No | 39 | 15.9 |

Table (2): Mean Scores of Workplaces Gaslighting Behavior, Professional Identity and Job Enrichment among Nursing Interns Students (n=246)

| Variables | No. Items | Mean \pm SD | Range | Mean % |
|---|-----------|--------------------|----------|--------|
| Gaslighting Behavior dimensions | | | | |
| Trivialization | 7 | 13.85 \pm 6.06 | 7 – 30 | 46.2 |
| Affliction | 5 | 11.39 \pm 5.00 | 5 – 25 | 45.6 |
| Total gaslighting behavior score | 12 | 25.24 \pm 10.57 | 12 – 60 | 42.1 |
| Professional Identity dimensions | | | | |
| Personal identity | 15 | 54.8 \pm 14.27 | 15 - 75 | 73.1 |
| Interpersonal identity | 9 | 30.23 \pm 7.11 | 9 - 45 | 67.2 |
| Total professional identity score | 24 | 85.04 \pm 20.47 | 24 - 120 | 70.9 |
| Job Enrichment dimensions | | | | |
| Skill variety | 5 | 19.89 \pm 4.78 | 5 -25 | 79.6 |
| Task identity | 5 | 18.68 \pm 5.34 | 5 -25 | 74.4 |
| Task significance | 5 | 20.86 \pm 5.3 | 5 -25 | 83.4 |
| Autonomy | 5 | 17.76 \pm 5.47 | 5 -25 | 71.1 |
| Feedback tasks | 5 | 18.75 \pm 4.89 | 5 -25 | 75.0 |
| Interaction | 5 | 17.90 \pm 5.89 | 5 -25 | 71.6 |
| Total job enrichment score | 30 | 113.83 \pm 28.08 | 30 - 150 | 75.3 |

**Figure (1): Total levels of Workplaces Gaslighting Behavior among Nursing Interns Students (n=246)****Figure (2): Total levels of Professional Identity among Nursing Internship Students (n=246)**

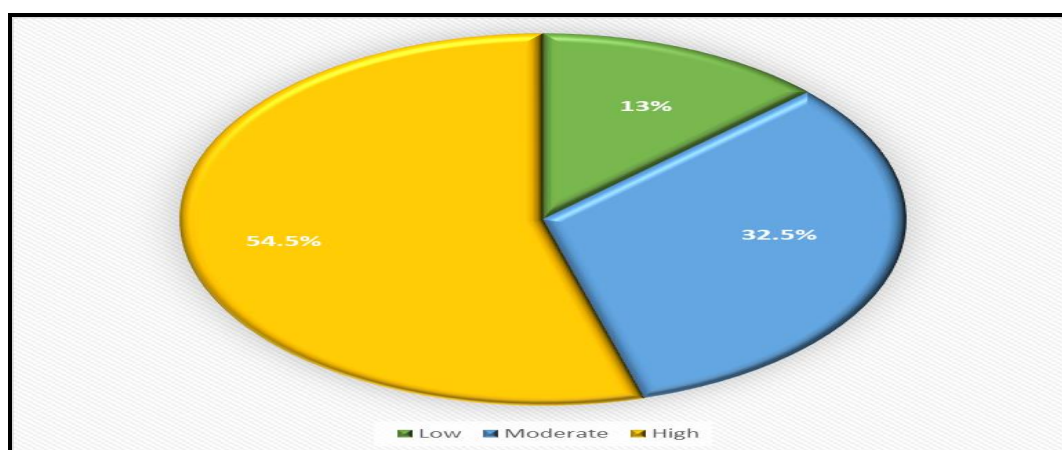


Figure (3): Total levels of Job Enrichment among Nursing Interns Students (n=246)

Table (3): Correlation between Workplaces Gaslighting Behavior, Professional Identity and Job Enrichment and Personal Characteristics of Nursing Interns Students (n=246)

| Variables | Gaslighting Behavior | Professional Identity | Job Enrichment |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Age in Years | | | |
| 20 – 23 years | 24.99±10.41 | 84.11±20.25 | 112.7±28.09 |
| 24 years and more | 30.64±12.91 | 104.82±14.8 | 138±13.52 |
| t test / P value | 1.739 / 0.083 | 3.347 / 0.001** | 2.967/ 0.003** |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 24.93±10.15 | 82.41±21.76 | 110.26±31.33 |
| Female | 25.38±10.77 | 86.21±19.82 | 115.43±26.44 |
| t test / P value | 0.307 / 0.759 | 1.349 / 0.179 | 1.335 / 0.183 |
| Marital status | | | |
| Single | 25.61±10.66 | 83.21±20.73 | 112.18±29.13 |
| Married | 23.67±10.1 | 92.98±17.33 | 121.04±21.8 |
| t test / P value | 1.118 / 0.265 | 2.965 / 0.003* | 2.323 / 0.023* |
| Department | | | |
| Pediatric | 24.18±10.74 | 78.95±21.85 | 106.48±29.9 |
| Adult ICU | 26.06±10.36 | 89.07±18.41 | 121.55±22.88 |
| Surgical ICU | 24.55±10.53 | 86.29±20.3 | 112.86±27.28 |
| OR | 25.96±11.24 | 82.08±21.25 | 108.24±33.97 |
| Neonate | 22.11±9.36 | 87.32±13.35 | 117.11±20.27 |
| Dialysis | 26.29±9.78 | 94.79±15.04 | 124.07±24.91 |
| CCU | 31.73±11.62 | 79±30.63 | 106±39.58 |
| F test / P value | 1.223 / 0.295 | 2.245 / 0.040* | 2.282 / 0.037* |
| Attendance of work shop related to professional identity | | | |
| Yes | 24.89±10.4 | 87.76±19.3 | 116.98±27.13 |
| No | 27.1±11.36 | 70.59±20.64 | 97.15±27.48 |
| t test / P value | 1.199 / 0.232 | 5.039 / <0.001** | 4.177<0.001** |

Table (4): Correlation between Workplaces Gaslighting Behavior, Professional Identity and Job Enrichment among Nursing Interns Students (n=246)

| Variable | Total gaslighting behavior | | Total professional identity | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | R | P | R | P |
| Total professional identity | -0.623 | <0.001** | 1 | |
| Total job enrichment | -0.685 | <0.001** | 0.776 | <0.001** |

| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|----------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | P | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| (Constant) | 57.040 | 2.163 | | 26.367 | <0.001** | 52.779 | 61.301 |
| Total professional identity | -0.119 | 0.037 | -0.231 | -3.176 | 0.002** | -0.193 | -0.045 |
| Total job enrichment | -0.190 | 0.027 | -0.506 | -6.970 | <0.001** | -0.244 | -0.137 |

a. Dependent Variable: Total gas lighting behavior

R²=0.490, F= 116.897, P=<0.001**

Table (1): According to the table, a total studied interns nurses was 246. This table showed that majority of the studied internship nurses (95.5%) are between 20 and 23 years with mean age 21.71 ± 1.57 years. Females represent a larger proportion (69.1%) of the group compared to males (30.9%). In terms of marital status, most students are single (81.3%).

Regarding departmental assignment, the students were distributed across several specialties, with the highest percentages in Adult ICU (27.2%) and Pediatrics (24.8%), followed by surgical ICU (19.9%). Smaller proportions were placed in operating room (10.2%), neonatal unit (7.7%), dialysis (5.7%), and CCU (4.5%). Notably, a significant majority of students (84.1%) had attended workshops related to professional identity.

Table (2): This table shows mean scores of workplaces gas lighting behavior, professional identity and job enrichment among nursing interns students. Regarding, gaslighting behaviors, it showed moderate levels of perceived gaslighting behaviors, with the total mean score (25.24 ± 10.57) of the maximum possible score. Specifically, students reported trivialization (13.85 ± 6.06), and affliction (11.39 ± 5.00).

Regarding professional identity, this table also showed that students have a relatively strong sense of professional identity, with an overall mean score (85.04 ± 20.47). Among its dimensions, personal identity (54.8 ± 14.27) was slightly stronger than interpersonal identity (30.23 ± 7.11), suggesting students are more confident in their internal perception of being a nurse than in their professional

interactions. In terms of job enrichment, scores were high across all dimensions, with a total job enrichment mean score of (113.83 ± 28.08). Notably, task significance scored the highest with mean score (20.86 ± 5.3), indicating that students feel their roles are meaningful, while interaction (17.90 ± 5.89) and autonomy (17.76 ± 5.47) were the lowest, which might suggest areas where internship programs could be enhanced to provide greater independence and collaborative opportunities.

Figure (1): Displays the total levels of workplace gaslighting behavior. The figure reveals that the majority of intern students (78.8%) experienced low levels of gaslighting behavior in their clinical settings. A smaller portion (17.9%) reported moderate levels, suggesting some exposure to undermining or manipulative behaviors that could interfere with their learning or professional development. Only 3.3% of students encountered high levels of gaslighting.

Figure (2) illustrates the total levels of professional identity among nursing interns students.

The figure reveals that less than half of students (44.7%) demonstrated a high level of professional identity. Meanwhile, 32.1% of students scored at a moderate level, and 23.2% fell into the low level.

Figure (3) presents the total levels of job enrichment as experienced by nursing interns students. The figure shows that more than half of students (54.5%) reported a high level of job enrichment. Additionally, 32.5% of students experienced a moderate level of job enrichment, while a smaller portion (13%) reported a low level.

Table (3): Explores the relationship between personal characteristics.

Age: Students aged 24 years and older reported significantly higher professional identity with mean score (104.82 ± 14.8) and job enrichment scores (138 ± 13.52) compared to younger peers. Interestingly, this group also experienced more gas lighting (30.64 ± 12.91), but the difference wasn't statistically significant ($P=0.083$). As regards to gender, there were no statistically significant differences between males and females across the three measured variables, indicating similar perceptions of gaslighting behavior, professional identity, and job enrichment. Marital Status: Married students scored significantly higher in both professional identity (92.98 ± 17.33) and job enrichment (121.04 ± 21.8) compared to singles, possibly due to higher responsibility levels or maturity. However, there was no significant difference in gaslighting experience ($P=0.265$).

Department: There was a statistically significant relationship between the department of training and both professional identity ($P=0.040$) and job enrichment ($P=0.037$). For instance, students in Dialysis and Adult ICU scored the highest in job enrichment and professional identity, suggesting these departments may provide more meaningful, engaging, or autonomous work. No significant variation in gaslighting behavior was found among departments ($P=0.295$).

Workshop Attendance: This was the most influential factor. Students who attended workshops on professional identity had significantly higher scores in both professional identity ($P<0.001$) and job enrichment ($P<0.001$). They also reported slightly lower gaslighting behavior, though the difference was not significant ($P=0.232$). This strongly suggests that such workshops play a vital role in strengthening identity and enhancing workplace engagement.

Table (4): This table reveals that total Professional Identity and total Job Enrichment were a significant independent predictors for Workplaces Gas lighting at p value ($0.002^{**}, 0.001^{**}$) respectively and responsible for 49% of ($R=0.490$) workplaces Gas lighting. The multivariate regression analysis reveals that both professional identity and job enrichment significantly influence the level of perceived gaslighting behavior among nursing internship students. Specifically, professional identity has a negative association with gas lighting behavior ($B = -0.119$, $P = 0.002$). Moreover, job enrichment shows an even stronger negative impact on gaslighting behavior ($B = -0.190$, $P < 0.001$), meaning that students who find their internship roles meaningful, engaging, and well-supported are significantly less likely to report gaslighting. The

model explains 49% of the variation in gaslighting perceptions ($R^2 = 0.490$), underscoring the importance of fostering both identity development and enriching clinical experiences.

Discussion

This study revealed that the majority of students experienced low levels of gaslighting behavior in their clinical settings, and smaller portion reported moderate levels. The prevalence of low levels of gaslighting behavior among students in clinical settings aligns with the broader understanding of gaslighting as a subtle and often underreported form of psychological manipulation. Gaslighting is characterized by its insidious nature, making it difficult to detect and quantify, which may contribute to the perception of low levels of occurrence in certain environments. This form of manipulation can have significant psychological impacts, even if not overtly recognized by those experiencing it. The subtlety of gaslighting makes it challenging to detect, which may explain why many students report low levels of such behavior (Christensen & Evans-Murray, 2021).

Another justification for this result is that some individuals may tolerate such behavior due to fear of job loss, work identity or financial insecurity, complicating efforts to address the issue effectively (Clark, 2023). Conversely to this result, a study involving 594 nurses reported moderate levels of workplace gaslighting, indicating that this behavior is common in nursing settings (El-Sayed et al., 2025). Likewise, (Atta et al., 2024), found moderate levels of both gaslighting and mobbing behaviors among nurses in various healthcare settings in Egypt. This indicates that these negative workplace behaviors are present and potentially affecting many nurses' work environments.

Regarding professional identity, this study revealed that the largest proportion of students, nearly half of them demonstrated a high level of professional identity. Meanwhile, about third of students scored at a moderate level, and less than one quarter fell into the low level. This may be due to the nurses believed in their abilities and roles in patient plan of care and quality health services. Most nurses are proud to be nurses, and nursing is meaningful to them. The importance of professional identity is lifelong, shaped by traits, conventions, and values, and is influenced by clinical learning experiences. This finding could be also due to the changes that occurred in the nursing profession over the last years as society's attitude and perception toward nursing become more positive in Egypt and worldwide especially after the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, naturally affecting nursing

students' interns, and nurses' professional identity, (Gadallah, et al. 2024) .

This study finding is congruent with Hussien et al. (2021), who indicated that at least half of nursing interns had a high level of professional identity, this findings supported by Abdeltwab, et al. (2024) who revealed that more than half of the studied nursing personnel had a high level of professional identity, followed by more than one third of them had a moderate level, while the minority had a low level. Also, Zhang et al. (2024), showed that the total score for professional identity among 682 nursing interns was a medium-high level. Moreover, Peng et al. (2023), confirmed that, a moderate to high level of professional identity among nurses in china .

However, this finding of this study was incongruent with Elhanafy & Saleh (2018) who study professional identity among nurses at Mansura University Hospital in Egypt and found that more than half of the staff nurses had low professional identity levels, more than one third of the nurses have moderate professional identity level and only (6.5%) have high professional identity level.

In terms of job enrichment, the current study revealed that more than half of the study sample, had a high level of job enrichment, Additionally, about one third of them experienced a moderate level of job enrichment, while a smaller portion reported a low level of it. This result aligns with, Abd Elrahim et al., (2024) who revealed that, the majority from nursing staff have moderate level regarding total job enrichment, followed by (21.7%) have high level then (8.2%) have low level. This may result from the undergone transformation of hospitals; there is a redesigning of jobs in a way that increases the opportunities for nurses to experience feelings of responsibility, achievement, growth, and recognition. In addition, there are more sufficient freedom to nursing staff in deciding about work methods, pace, sequence, increased responsibility, encourage participation, providing feedback to the employees, nursing supervisors make the nursing staff understand how tasks contribute to a comprehensive high-quality care adequate benefits to the employees. Additionally with management support via providing extrinsic and intrinsic rewards and adequate welfare measures to the employees to the employees depending upon their motivational patterns, staff should perceive that management is sincere and caring about them .

The present finding agreed with (Saleh, et al., 2022) they founded that nurses had high level of job enrichment. In the same line with (Atalla et al., 2024), revealed that the nurses reported high levels of both job enrichment and job embeddedness. This indicates that many nurses felt their jobs were fulfilling and that they were committed to their

organization. Similarly, (Hussein et al., 2022) mentioned that more than half of the nurses indicated that their level of job enrichment was moderate. This suggests that nurses feel somewhat fulfilled in their roles.

This study found that there is a strong negative correlation between workplace gaslighting behavior and professional identity, indicating that increased perceptions of gaslighting correspond with a diminished sense of professional identity among students. This toxic or manipulative behavior undermines self-perception and confidence, particularly in clinical environments. This is consistent with Clark, (2023) who mentioned that workplace gaslighting significantly influences the professional identity of nursing interns by undermining their confidence and altering their perceptions of reality. This psychological manipulation can lead to confusion, self-doubt, uncertainty of one's mental stability, and causing them to feel uncertain about their capabilities and roles within the nursing environment, which are detrimental to the development of a strong professional identity, and negatively impact the workplace culture.

Furthermore, there is a strong negative correlation between gaslighting behavior and job enrichment, suggesting that when students feel psychologically manipulated or undermined, they are less likely to feel motivated, autonomous, or engaged in their tasks. The negative correlation between gaslighting behavior and job enrichment can be attributed to several psychological mechanisms that undermine employee motivation and well-being. Gaslighting, characterized by psychological manipulation, leads to diminished self-confidence and increased mental health issues, which directly affect job satisfaction and performance (Westover, 2024)

In the same line Farid et al., (2024), indicated that gaslighting negatively affects work motivation, which is crucial for job enrichment. Employees subjected to gaslighting may feel less embedded in their roles, reducing their willingness to pursue enriching job experiences. Likewise, Gaslighting contributes to a toxic workplace environment, which can stifle creativity and collaboration, essential components of job enrichment (El-Sayed et al., 2025). In addition, Gaslighting creates a pervasive sense of self-doubt in victims, causing them to question their perceptions and abilities; this manipulation erodes trust in one's skills, leading to decreased motivation and engagement in job enrichment activities (Klein et al., 2023)

Finally, there is a very strong positive correlation between professional identity and job enrichment. The strong positive correlation between professional

identity and job enrichment suggests that individuals who possess a well-defined professional identity and feel more professionally grounded tend to feel more enriched in their job roles and are likely to experience greater job satisfaction and engagement. This relationship is characterized by enhanced task variety, significance, autonomy, and feedback, which are essential components of job enrichment (Salau et al., 2014). Key elements of job enrichment, such as task significance and autonomy, contribute to a more fulfilling work experience, reinforcing the connection between professional identity and job satisfaction (Whittington et al., 2017). This is consistent with Le, (2024) who mentioned that a strong professional identity positively predicts job engagement, suggesting that individuals who feel connected to their profession are more likely to engage deeply in their roles. Conversely, while a strong professional identity can enhance job enrichment, it is essential to recognize that not all individuals may experience this correlation equally. Factors such as organizational culture and personal circumstances can influence the degree to which professional identity impacts job enrichment.

Conclusion

The present study concluded that the majority of interns students experienced low levels of gaslighting behavior in their clinical settings as well, that less than half of them demonstrated a high level of professional identity. In addition to, more than half of the interns reported a high level of job enrichment. Also, there was a strong negative correlation between workplace gaslighting behavior and professional identity. Furthermore, there was a strong negative correlation between gaslighting behavior and job enrichment. Also, there was a very strong positive correlation between professional identity and job enrichment. Finally, total professional identity and total job enrichment were significant independent predictors for workplaces gas lighting behaviors among nursing interns.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

Recommendations for hospital:

- Implement initiatives that promote respect and teamwork among staff to minimize gaslighting behaviors.
- Regular team-building activities can enhance relationships and reduce workplace toxicity.
- Provide mentorship programs and workshops focused on professional identity formation.
- Encourage experienced nurses to guide interns in developing their roles and responsibilities.

- Create more varied and meaningful tasks for nursing interns. Allow them to participate in decision-making processes and encourage autonomy in their clinical duties to enhance job satisfaction.
- Provide training sessions for all staff on recognizing gaslighting behaviors and appropriate interventions.

Recommendations for nursing students:

- Engage in self-reflection to understand personal values, strengths, and areas for growth in professional identity.
- Seek feedback from mentors and peers to enhance self-awareness.
- Take initiative to engage in diverse clinical experiences and seek additional responsibilities that align with interests.
- Practice expressing thoughts and concerns clearly and confidently. This will help you address any negative behaviors you may encounter and foster a healthier work environment.

Recommendations for further research:

- Investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at reducing gaslighting behaviors and enhancing professional identity and job enrichment in clinical settings.
- Explore how factors such as diversity, inclusion, and team dynamics affect the experiences of nursing interns with gas lighting behaviors and their professional identity development.
- Investigate how different leadership styles within clinical settings impact the prevalence of gaslighting behaviors and the professional development of nursing interns.

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