Little is known about the influence of intrapersonal characteristics on work performance and caring behaviors. The proposed model (figure 1) explains relationships between study variables.

![Figure 1](image)

**Aim of the study**
To examine the influence of selected intrapersonal characteristics of professional nurses on their work performance and caring behaviors.

**DESIGN**
A cross-sectional survey of eight hospitals in the public and private sector of the Gauteng province of South Africa.

**Participants**
Sample of 218 nurses (2 public sector nurses; 1 private sector nurse) from: • Random selection of four hospitals from one selected private hospital group; and one national, one provincial and three district hospitals in public sector. • All wards providing adult medical-surgical care and all professional nurses working there. Random selection of 116 patients (≥ 18 years, 24 hours hospitalization, able to speak and write, not in discomfort) from same wards.

**Methods**
Six self-report instruments completed by nurses: • evaluating work performance (6 Dimension Scale of Nursing Practice [6-DSNP]) • professional values (Nurse Professional Values Scale-Revised [NPVS-R]) • personality (Core Self Evaluation Scale [CSES]) • emotional intelligence (Situation Test of Emotion Management [STEM]) • empathy (Empathy Quotient [EQ]) • job involvement (Kanungo Job Involvement). One self-report instrument completed by patients: • nurses’ caring behaviors (Caring Behaviours Inventory [CBI]) translated into Afrikaans, isiZulu and Sesotho.

Ethics approval obtained from the University Ethics Committee, participating institutions, nurse and patient respondents.

**Data collection**
Data collection: September 2013 and March 2014 in collaboration with nursing managements.

**Statistical analysis**
Descriptive and inferential statistics were generated using SPSS 21, factor analysis, effect size analysis and structural equation modelling.

**RESULTS**
Descriptive statistics
Demographics of nurse and patient respondents
Only nurses’ gender and patients’ educational level had an effect on work performance and caring behaviours.

**Nurses’ intrapersonal characteristics**
- Strong professional value orientation: nurses more satisfied with work and lives, experience less conflict, cope better with challenges.
- Moderately high emotional intelligence: ability to regulate emotions optimally.
- Moderate to high level of empathy: apply an empathetic approach in care provision.
- Moderate level of job involvement: level of participation in their work.

**Patient perceptions of nurses’ caring behaviors**
High values: patients regard nurses as knowledgeable, skilled and respectful providing patients with a sense of security even though their perceptions of nurses’ willingness to assist and engage with patients had lowest score.

**Relationships between variables**
**Influence of demographics on work performance and caring behaviors**
- Gender of nurses: females were better with interpersonal relations and communication than males (p=0.037; df=1;08).
- Academic qualifications of patients: negative relationship indicate that patients with higher qualifications are less positive about the care they receive (r = -0.27 – 0.32).

**Relationship between intrapersonal characteristics and work performance**
Professional values are significantly related to work performance of nurses with moderate importance in practice.

**Relationship between intrapersonal characteristics and caring behaviors**
- Caring behaviors had moderately important relationship with activism, trust, professionalism and justice.
- Caring behaviors had moderately important relationship with activism and professionalism.
- Job involvement had moderately important relationship assurance and respect.

**Practice recommendations**
- The final model with the variables that influence work performance.
- Importance of professional values as predictor for the dimensions of work performance to two of any other predictor that can be added to the equation on a 10% level of significance.

**CONCLUSION**
Demographics had limited influence.
- Professional values only the intrapersonal characteristic with a statistically significant, positive relationship of practical importance with work performance and caring behaviors.
- High professional values orientation among nurses had 90% probability to positively influence their work performance and caring behaviors.
- Leadership, critical care and professional development dimensions had a negative relationship with work performance.

**REFERENCES**

**Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**
- The final model with the variables that influence work performance.
- Importance of professional values as predictor for the dimensions of work performance to two of any other predictor that can be added to the equation on a 10% level of significance.

**LIMITATIONS**
- Non-random sampling limited generalization of results.
- High ratings of work performance restricts range and possible correlations with other variables.
- Participation of patients may have been biased if only positive patients have participated.