Assessment of Knowledge Regarding Communication Skills of Nursing Students Studying in a College of Nursing Islamabad, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study explores the knowledge of communication skills among nursing students. The aim of the study was to assess the knowledge of student nurses regarding communication skills and to explore the relationship between gender/age and knowledge of student nurses regarding communication with patients, and to evaluate the psychometric properties of a self-assessment questionnaire.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted on 100 randomly selected nursing students using a self-reported questionnaire. It was carried out from January 2023 to March 2023 involving nursing students who were studied at Aman Medical Institute (AMI), College of Nursing, Islamabad. The questionnaire was comprised of 20 statements with the categorization of 5. Collected data were analysed through frequency and percentage.

Results: After applying the chi-square test p-value is 0.05. the results showed that there is a significance in age and gender related to communication skills. Pearson's R value is -0.19 and Spearman Correlation value is also -0.19. there is a relationship between gender/age and knowledge of nurses regarding communication.

Discussion: The study results show that most of the nursing students have good awareness regarding communication skills that is 98% and 2% students out of 100 have poor awareness regarding communication skills. According to the study, with age and knowledge of student nurses regarding communication skills p-value is 0.04, it concluded that results were significant according to age. It means that there is a relationship between age and knowledge of nursing students.

Keywords: Assessment; Knowledge; Nursing; Students; Communication; Skills; Age; Gender; Awareness.

1. Introduction

Language in communication is necessary for medical and nursing professions even with all staff working and students in college environments, it is a very important concept in all aspects of life. As a result, if nurses and health care teams communicate in a therapeutic way, the best results can be achieved with ease. In the process of communication, student nurses should make sure that their class fellows get the message by utilizing a variety of tactics, such as setting clear expectations, asking pointed questions, and repeating what they have said. If the information provided among the team members improves attaining team, and organizational objectives, communication can be achieved. Good listening means not only understanding the words or the information but also understanding the emotions, and feelings of others (Mohamed, A.S., et al. 2019).

Good communication is one of the many skills sets that nursing students must acquire to be proficient in their industry. The results of the CSAS indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the student's self-efficacy in terms of communication skills. Now a days through understanding of medical management, communication abilities, ethical and legal concerns, end-of-life care, and teamwork nursing students will gain confidence in their communication knowledge and skills (Steckler, R. 2012).

A descriptive study involved 413 nursing school students and 170 nurses who worked at two private hospitals and a university hospital in Istanbul. Data gathering instruments were the Nurse Information Form, Student Information...
Form, Problem Solving Inventory (PSI), and Interpersonal Relationship Dimensions Scale (CIAS). It was discovered that nurses and nursing students’ problem-solving and communication skills were average. The mean PSI scores of nurses were found to be higher than those of students (p = 0.01), as were the mean CIAS scores for nurses (p = 0.01) and the PSI nurse’s Empathy sub-dimension (p = 0.01). While nursing students’ problem-solving abilities were found to be superior to those of nurses', the other's communication abilities were shown to be better (Gulistan's Basar, 2015).

A study conducted in Ghana revealed that the English language may not be as natural to students as it was two decades ago. There is some indication that usage standards are declining when it comes to the ability to speak clearly and to follow basic grammar norms. As evidenced by numerous examination results, the standard of language and communication abilities inside the educational system has been declining over time and has now reached dangerous proportions. The intention is for students' writing to represent the abilities they have learned from the Communication Skills course after studying it for at least one semester. The learners' inability to write properly and demonstrate their mastery of the CS programmed could be attributed to a number of factors. This may include the academic background of the admitted students, the communication skills course instructors' expertise, their credentials, the students' attitudes and perceptions, the learning environment, and the instructional strategies used (Asemanyi, A.A. 2015).

A study conducted in Malaysia revealed that the three primary categories as the causes of the communication gap between nurses and doctors. The three categories include work environment qualities, graduate nurse attributes, and attributes related to nursing training. The entry standards for students recruited into the nursing program, the undergraduate training procedure, and the evaluation of student nurses are among the characteristics of nurses training. Nine characteristics made up the graduating nurse. 41% doctors assumed that nurses though had not proper qualification but they competent in their work. But almost 60% they had attitude problems. 29% doctors said that we speak easily in English but nurses felt difficulty in understanding English. 29% doctors assumed that young nurses lack assertiveness. 24% participants said that nurses due to stress lack inter-professional communication. The components include a post-registration thirst for knowledge, medical English proficiency, self-assurance, stress management abilities, critical thinking, and clinical judgement abilities, perceived power on the authority of doctors, passion for work, time management abilities, as well as stress and individual factors for nurses. Nurse workload and nurse collaboration were among the characteristics of the work environment (Kunjukunju, A., and Ahmad, A. 2018). Another study conducted in Jordan showed that communication is the process of creating and transferring information between two or more individuals, and it is essential for nurses to provide high-quality and safe healthcare services to patients. 64.4% of the sample's participants were female. The problem-solving scale's mean overall score was 96.63 (SD: 16.99). Moreover, effective communication skills are necessary to enable nurses to convey their expertise and demonstrate it in practice. Earlier research suggested a connection between effective communication skills and the capacity for problem-solving among nursing students. In an effort to better comprehend both problem-solving and communication skills, nursing students' problem-solving and communication skills will be examined. This will provide nursing education the chance to advance (Zyoud, A.H., Hamdan, K.M., et al. 2022).
Another study conducted in Lahore Pakistan explored those 168 nurses participated in the study, of whom 108 (64.3%) were in the non-exposed group and 60 (35.7%) were in the exposed group. The average age of nurses was still 18.46 years. The pupils' most recent exams' average grade points were also noted, and a mean GPA of 3.26 was discovered. The question addressing the benefits of communication skills familiarizing team work had the highest mean score of 3.68. Comparatively speaking, students who are exposed to the topic of communication skills in higher levels are more aware of its significance, lessons, and advantages (Bano, T., et al. 2020).

Another study in Pakistan stated that Language, religion, gender, education, culture, values, and patient socioeconomic status are just a few of the communication hurdles that can make it difficult for nurses and patients to interact effectively. Effective communication will lessen the suffering and have a beneficial and healthy effect on the client's recovery. Language, cultural behavior patterns, and value disparities between the nurse and the patient might exacerbate communication hurdles in healthcare caused by gender, education, and socioeconomic position gaps. Due to cultural influences and the hierarchical structure of the society, there may be such variation in attitudes and behaviors in various situations (Rubina., Aftab, E., et al. 2021).

1.1. Objectives of the study

- To assess knowledge of student nurses regarding communication skills who were studied at college of nursing, Islamabad.
- Is providing awareness regarding effective communication and its importance at academic level. It aimed that how nursing students share their ideas, feelings and knowledge to obtain better results and performance.
- To assess how age factor impact skills of nursing working in hospital.
- To assess impact of gender on knowledge and skills of nurses regarding communication.

1.2. Study Questions

What is the level of knowledge of student nurses regarding communication skills?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Design

It was Descriptive cross-sectional study design.

2.2. Study Setting

The study was conducted in Aman Medical Institute, college of nursing, Islamabad.

2.3. Study Population

The nursing students BSN who was studying at a college of nursing Islamabad.

2.4. Sample Size

The target population in this study was undergraduate nursing students enrolled in the nursing program. In AMI, college of nursing there were 100 nursing students enrolled in session 2021–2022. Using Rao soft’s sample size calculator, the sample size was determined, with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%. 100 nursing students comprised the minimum necessary sample size.
2.5. Sampling Design

Non-probability convenient sampling.

2.6. Sample Selection

2.6.1. Inclusion Criteria

- Nursing students who were studying at College of Nursing, Islamabad.
- Those student nurses who were agreed to take part in the study.
- Student Nurses of GBSN session 2021-2022.

2.6.2. Exclusion Criteria

- Nursing students who weren’t willing to participate in study.
- Nursing students of other classes.

2.7. Data Collection

All subjects were included in the study according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inform consent was obtained and proper explanation was be given to the participants. The data was be collected by using self-structured questionnaire. All the required information was be collected according to the Performa. After data collection it was be entered to SPSS software version IBM-23 for appropriate analysis.

2.8. Data Analysis

Data analysis is the most important part of a research to depict the real picture of information. The data was be analyzed by SPSS Software version IBM-23 for the proper analysis.

The questionnaire contains 20 questions that uses Likert scale to measure positive and negative views of the participants about the given topic. Each statement explained clearly. The elements that support the scale were identified through factor analysis.

2.9. Variables

2.9.1. Demographic Variables

- Age
- Marital status
- Education

2.9.2. Ethical considerations

- Before beginning the questionnaire, participants in the study were asked to review the consent statement.
- Students were informed that the study caused no harm to them.
- Confidentiality was maintained to protect the ethical rights of participants.
- Students were advised that participation in the study was entirely optional and that they had the right to discontinue it at any time with no consequences.
3. Results

3.1. Socio Demographic Data of Participants

Table 1. Participant’s Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Male/female ratio graph]

Figure 1. Gender of the participants

It shows that 64% students are male who participated in the study and 36% participants are females.

Table 2. Other demographic variables of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table explores that all participants are Muslims.

Table 3. Age of the respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of the respondent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows that all participants included in the study having the differences in age, nursing students which belong to 15-17 age group that are 12 out of 100, nursing students having the age b/w 18-20 are 30, 21-23 age of nurses are 25% and 24-26 years of age of the student nurses are 33%. It showed that most of the students are 18-26 years of age.

Table 4. Marital status of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Knowledge Level of Students Regarding Communication Skills

Table 5. Assessment Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication level</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good awareness Communication</td>
<td>If the respondents give 67-99.9% answers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average awareness Communication</td>
<td>If the respondents give 33-66% answers from the structured questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor awareness Communication</td>
<td>If the respondents give &lt; 33% answers from the structured questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Communication Level of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Communication Skills</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-66</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-100</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Communication level of the participants

The study results show that most of the nursing students have good awareness regarding communication skills that is 98% and 2% students out of 100 have poor awareness regarding communication skills.

Table 7. Cross tab: Age Vs Knowledge of Communication skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross tab: Age Vs Knowledge of Communication skills</th>
<th>Knowledge of Communication skills</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1-33</td>
<td>67-100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 7 showed that after cross-tabulation with age and knowledge of nurses regarding communication skills p-value is 0.04, it concluded that results were significant according to age. It means that there is a relationship between age and knowledge of nurses.
Figure 4. Cross tab: Age Vs Knowledge of Communication skills

Table 8. Cross tabulation: Gender * Knowledge of Comm. skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross tabulation: Gender* Knowledge of Comm. skills</th>
<th>Knowledge of Comm. skills</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-33</td>
<td>67-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 8 showed that after cross-tabulation with gender and knowledge of nurses regarding communication skills, it concluded that males had more knowledge regarding communication skills (Ck) that was 64% and females who had good knowledge were 34% and some of the nursing students also had average level knowledge regarding communication skills.

Table 9. Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymptotic Standardized Error*</th>
<th>Approximate Tb</th>
<th>Approximate Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interval by Interval</td>
<td>Pearson's R</td>
<td>-.190</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>-1.921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal by Ordinal</td>
<td>Spearman Correlation</td>
<td>-.190</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>-1.921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After applying the chi-square test p-value is 0.05. the results showed that there is a significance in age and gender related to communication skills. Pearson's R value is -0.19 and Spearman Correlation value is also -0.19. there is a relationship between gender/age and knowledge of nurses regarding communication.

4. Discussion

A descriptive study in Istanbul showed that nurses and nursing students' problem-solving and communication skills were average. The mean PSI scores of nurses were found to be higher than those of students (p = 0.01), as were the mean CIAS scores for nurses (p = 0.01) and the PSI nurse's Empathy sub-dimension (p = 0.01). While nursing students’ problem-solving abilities were found to be higher than to those of nurses’ communication abilities (Gulistan's Basar, 2015).

According to the results of the current study, nursing students developed a grasp of nursing knowledge and abilities based on the perspective of the communication skills. The study results show that most of the nursing students have good awareness regarding communication skills that is 88%. 10% students have average level awareness regarding communication and 2% students out of 100 have poor awareness regarding communication skills.

Students’ understanding was increased through reflections and conversations, such as those that took place in small study groups. They reflected collectively and learned from one another during the group talks. (Steckler, R. 2012).

According to the results, after cross-tabulation with age and knowledge of nurses regarding communication skills p-value is 0.04, it concluded that results were significant according to age. It means that there is a relationship between age and knowledge of nurses. After cross-tabulation with gender and knowledge of nurses regarding communication skills, it concluded that males had more knowledge regarding communication skills (Ck) that was 64% and females who had good knowledge were 34% and some of the nursing students also had average level knowledge regarding communication skills. The results showed that there is a significance in age and gender related to communication skills. Pearson’s R value is -0.19 and Spearman Correlation value is also -0.19. there is a relationship between gender/age and knowledge of nurses regarding communication.

The students’ openness to sharing knowledge, however, differed. While some students were open to criticism and conversation, other students were more hesitant to share. Teachers must therefore closely monitor class discussions and provide ongoing assistance to study groups. We contend that students should be given instructions and guidance regarding the subjects to be learned and discussed in order to improve learning in groups of nursing students.

5. Conclusion

Students could expand their knowledge of communication skills and discover novel insights and then their learning became meaningful. Improved self-awareness, which enabled them to concentrate more throughout studying. The nursing students were also able to think critically and use reflective thinking in their communication. The nursing education introduction might affect how well students learn. This may even have an impact on how students learn in their upcoming nursing career. Students must understand the purpose of the communication that teachers and students use. We encourage instructors to develop meaningful instruction that emphasizes students' communication abilities.
6. Recommendations

- The reconstructed nursing curriculum and the didactic strategies should be evaluated by nurse educators to verify the teaching strategies regarding communication.
- Nurse educators should be promoting supporting and encouraging interaction with students.
- Nurse educators must focus on teaching and advising on interpersonal communication.
- Nurse educators should encourage the students in participation and expression of thoughts and knowledge in small groups.

Source of Funding

This study has not received any funds from any organization.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Consent for Publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

Authors’ Contribution

All the authors took part in data collection, literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing.

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