Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Empathy among Student Nurses

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Abstract: *Quantitative research approach and non-experimental descriptive, crosssectional research design was used in the study. Simple random (probability) sampling technique was used to select the subjects and the sample size was 220 student nurses. Data was collected by using two standardized tools i.e. Emotional Quotient Self Assessment Scale (EQSA) and Multi Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (MDEES). The conceptual framework for the present research study was based on Imogene M. King conceptual system of Goal attainment theory which is based on Systems, Concepts and Process was published in 1981. Pilot study was done on 24 student nurses to check the reliability and feasibility of the study. Main study was done in the month of December 2104. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Bar diagrams were used to depict the findings. The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study. Majority of student nurses had average level of emotional intelligence and empathy; there was positive relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy. Demographic variables were found to significantly relate to emotional intelligence and empathy of student nurses.*

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Empathy, student nurses

1. Introduction

As a society becomes increasingly complex owing to rapid scientific and technological progress, it needs high capacity manpower to sustain and maintain the pace of progress of the society. For reasons such as this, the concept of intelligence is becoming increasingly important in modern societies. No sphere of life, whether it is education or social and physical science, literature or art etc., has remained uninfluenced by the intelligence. Intelligence not only enables an individual to attain great heights of success in life but also develops in him the ability by which he is well adjusted in his environment and saves himself from becoming its victim. Since we cannot control or modify the hereditary factors, we need to provide the most conducive environmental situations for the proper intellectual development of the children in educational institutions.

We are at the beginning of new century, intelligence and success are not viewed the same way they were before. New theories of intelligence have been introduced and gradually replacing the traditional theory. The whole child/ student has become the centre of concern, not only his reasoning capacity but also his creativity, emotions and interpersonal skills

For a profession that requires not only technical expertise but also psychologically oriented care, knowledge about self in nursing would be crucial for further development and growth of profession (Cowin I, 2001).Why could emotional intelligence be an important factor in nursing? Studies have shown that an emotional intelligent nurse is an individual who can work in harmony with his/her thoughts and feelings.

Empathy is the ability to consider thoughtfully another's feelings while making intelligent decisions. Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs and viewpoints of those around you. People with empathy are good at recognizing the feelings of others, even when those feelings may not be obvious. As a result, empathetic people are usually excellent at managing relationships, listening and relating to others. They avoid stereotyping and judging too quickly and they live their lives in a very open and honest way

Goleman D (1995) suggested that emotional intelligence can predict academic success better than traditional measures of intelligence. Zinder M & Robert RD (2002) correctly pointed out that there has been insufficient research conducted to fully understand the impact that emotional intelligence may have on academic success.

The nursing profession is one service that requires high degree of emotional labor therefore; nurses are expected to display emotions that convey caring, understanding and empathy toward patient and their loved ones.

1.1 Objectives of the study

1) To find out the level of emotional intelligence of student nurses.
2) To assess the level of empathy of student nurses.
3) To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy.
4) To ascertain the relationship of emotional intelligence and empathy with selected demographic variables.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research design

A Non-experimental descriptive, correlational, crosssectional research design.

2.2 Subjects and setting

The sample compromised of total 220 student nurses of college of nursing, CMC, Ludhiana.

2.3 Sampling technique

The sample was selected by probability simple random technique.

2.4 Variables under study

The dependent variables were gender, birth order, year of study, course of study, academic performance, choice of profession, home visits, type of family, sharing of feelings, social get together, sleeping hours, activity in which maximum time is spent and entrance to nursing profession.

2.5 Description of Tool

The tools used in the study are divided into three sections.

Section A: Socio demographic characteristics of the participants in relation to their age, gender, birth order, family income in Rs per annum, type of family, residence, year of study, course of study, academic performance, preference of profession, type of family, home visits, sharing of feelings activity in which maximum time is spent, sleeping hours, attending social get together and entrance to nursing profession.

Section B: Emotional Quotient Self Assessment (EQSA) Scale to assess the level of Emotional intelligence.

Section C: Multi Dimensional Emotional Empathy (MDEE) scale.

2.6 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was done by 8 experts from various field of nursing. The reliability of the tool was established by Karl Pearson's co-efficient of correlation and Spearman's Brown Prophecy formula

2.7 Data Analysis

Analysis of data was done in accordance with the objectives. Data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics mean, mean percentage, frequency and standard deviation were used for describing the distribution of emotional intelligence and empathy of student nurses according to their demographic characteristics.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Sample Characteristics

S. no	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age in years a. <20 b. 21-23 c. >24	112 99 9	50.91% 45% 4.09%
2.	Gender a) Female b) Male	167 53	75.91% 24.09%
3.	Birth order a) 1 b) 2 c) >3	103 86 31	46.82% 39.09% 14.09%
4.	Family income in Rs per annum a) <1,00000 b) >1,00000	127 93	57.73% 42.27%
5.	Type of family a) Nuclear b) Joint c) Extended	178 40 2	80.91% 18.18% 0.91%
6.	Residence a) Urban b) Rural	174 46	79.09% 20.91%
7.	Course of study a) GNM b) B.Sc	102 118	43.36% 53.64%
8.	Year of Study a) First b) Second c) Third d) Fourth	77 59 54 30	35% 26.82% 24.55% 13.64%
9.	Academic Performance a) >80 b) 75-79 c) 70-74 d) $\leq$ 73	31 71 70 48	14.09% 32.27% 31.82% 21.82%
10.	Preference of Profession a) Own Choice b) Parents/Relatives choice	131 89	59.55% 40.45%
11	Are you a; a) Hosteller b) Day scholar	120 100	54.55% 45.45%
12	How often do you visit home a) Every week b) Once a month c) After 6 months	6 81 33	2.73% 36.82% 15%
13	With whom do you share your feeling a) Parents b) Friends c) Siblings	82 117 21	32.27% 53.18% 9.55%
14	Do you like social get together a) Yes b) No c) Sometimes	121 16 83	55% 7.27% 37.73%
15	How many hours do you sleep at night a) 7-8hrs b) 6-5hrs c) <5hrs	120 88 12	54.55% 40% 5.45%
16	In which activity do you spend more time a) Recreational activity b) Group activity c) Talking on the phone d) Busy with own work e) Sleeping	38 39 28 73 42	17.27% 17.73% 12.73% 33.18% 19.09%
17	Do you think your entrance to nursing profession was a) By chance b) God's blessing c) Parents hard work d) Own hard work	14 170 22 14	6.36% 77.27% 10% 6.36%

Above table revealed that majority of student nurses were in the age group 21-23 years, and were females, having family income >10000, were in the birth order 1 and $\geq$3 and belonged to nuclear family from urban area. Majority of students were from 1st years and who scored 70-74% and had chosen the profession by their own choice they visited home every month and liked social get together. Majority of students were hostellers, shared their feelings with their friends, utilized their leisure time in their own work, and believed that their entrance to nursing profession was God's blessing.

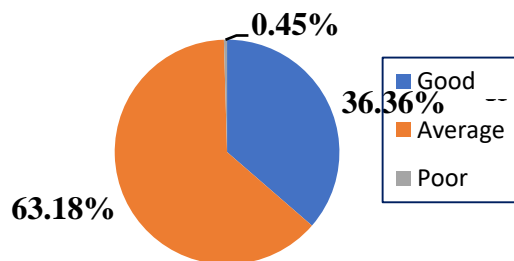### 3.2 Assessment of level of emotional intelligence among student nurses

Figure1: Percentage distribution of student nurses according to level of Emotional Intelligence

The pie diagram depicts that majority (63.18%) of student nurses had average emotional intelligence, (36.36%) had good emotional intelligence and (0.45%) had poor emotional intelligence.

Hence, it is concluded that average emotional intelligence was observed among student nurses.

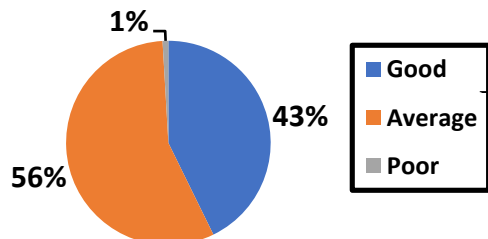### 3.3 Assessment of level of empathy among student nurse

Figure2: Percentage distribution of student nurses according to the level of empathy

Figure 2 indicates that majority of the student nurses had average (56.36%) empathy to good (42.73%) level of empathy and only (0.91%) of student nurses were in poor level of empathy.

Therefore, it may be revealed that very few students were non-empathetic.

3.4 Relationship of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Empathy among student nurses

The relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy of student nurses was "r" = 0. 435. Thus it was statistically proven that there is significant positive but weak relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy at p<0.05 level. This shows that if emotional intelligence score increases empathy score also increases and vice versa. Therefore, it may be said that subjects were emotionally intelligent as well as empathetic.

Hence, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence and empathy are interdependent and interrelated.

3.5 Relationship of emotional intelligence and empathy with selected demographic variables.

The study revealed that there was significant association of emotional intelligence and empathy only with selected variables i.e. Year of study, students attending social get together, sleeping hours, activities of student nurses and choice of profession, rest other variables had no significant impact on the level of emotional intelligence and empathy.

4. Discussion

Assessment of level of emotional intelligence among student nurses.

The present concluded that majority (63.18%) student nurses had average emotional intelligence, (36.36%) had good emotional intelligence and (0.45%) had poor emotional intelligence. The findings revealed that average emotional intelligence was observed among student nurses. These findings were supported by Nirmala J (2010), Duygulu S et al. (2011) who found that the students had average emotional intelligence. Furthermore, to support the findings in the study by Jean M & Fruh MS (2005), Benson G & Jenny P (2009) the mean score of emotional intelligence falls into the average level of emotional intelligence, indicating an adequate level of emotional capacity and functioning.

Assessment of level of empathy among student nurses

The study revealed that majority (56.36%) student nurses had average to good (42.73%) level of empathy and only (0.91%) of student nurses were in poor level of empathy thus it was concluded that very few student nurses were non-empathetic. These findings were supported by Roopa C & Joseph C (2007) who conducted a study on empathy on military medical students and found out that the level of empathy as revealed by the group, as a whole was average indicating a tendency of wanting to create a favorable impression on others.

According to the third objective i.e. to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy: in the present study the findings revealed that there was statistically significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and empathy at p< 0.05 level. Thus, it was found that emotional intelligence and empathy are interdependent and interrelated. According to the findings of the domains of emotional intelligence and empathy in the present study, it was concluded that there was significant relationship between the domains of emotional intelligence and empathy except responsive crying (RC) and emotional attention (EA). A study conducted by Faye A, Kalra G et al. (2011) i.e. study of emotional intelligence and empathy on medical postgraduates supported the findings i.e. there was statistically significant correlation found in those who

students who scored high in self-awareness and empathy and also scored better in appreciation of Suffering in others and Positive sharing. Subjects having good Self-control had negative correlation with responsive crying. The findings were also supported by Bee Hong K (1999) who found significant relationship between all the areas of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and self-competence) in final grade students.

According to the fourth objective i.e. to ascertain relationship of emotional intelligence and empathy with selected variables i.e. gender, birth order, year of study, course of study, academic performance, choice of profession, home visits, type of family, sharing of feelings, social get together, sleeping time, activity in which leisure time is spent and entrance to nursing profession.

5. Conclusion

In the present study the researcher concluded that majority (63.18%) student nurses had average emotional intelligence and majority (56.36%) had average level of empathy and it was found out that emotional intelligence and empathy are related that is if emotional intelligence increases empathy also increases and vice versa.

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