

Emotional intelligence among nursing students of a government campus in eastern Nepal

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Abstract

Background: Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognise one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and others. It is important to identify the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students for effective nursing leadership and quality nursing care.

Objective: To assess the level of emotional intelligence of nursing students.

Methods: A cross-sectional, analytical research design was used to assess the level of emotional intelligence among 132 nursing students at Biratnagar Nursing Campus, Nepal. Data were collected by census method using self-administered structured questionnaire from 2018-05-13 to 2018-05-27. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test. Descriptive and inferential statistics (Chi-square test) was analysed to find out the association between emotional intelligence and demographic variables.

Results: The findings showed that 96 (72.7%) of the respondents were from the 15 to 18 years age group. Similarly, 104 (78.8%) of the respondents had joined nursing education by their own choice. This study showed the majority 108 (81.8%) had a high level of emotional intelligence and 24 (18.2%) had a moderate level of emotional intelligence. There was no association between student's level of emotional intelligence and their demographic variables.

Conclusion: The participating nursing students had high levels of emotional intelligence. Owing to growing complexity in the healthcare environment and increasing expectations of clients in today's competitive health care marketplace, the nursing students should be provided with emotional intelligence training and concepts should be incorporated into the nursing curriculum.

Key words: Emotional intelligence; Nursing student.

INTRODUCTION

Emotions are complex psychological reaction patterns, involving behavioural and physiological

elements, to personally significant events.¹ According to Wechsler, intelligence is the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to think rationally, to act purposefully and to deal effectively with the environment.^{2,3} A study conducted in Butwal, Nepal showed that about 46% of the students were normal and about 15% had a high level of emotional intelligence (EI).⁴ Likewise, Joshi et al., stated that the overall emotional intelligence was not good and students are not aware of themselves, their emotions, strengths and weaknesses.⁵

Nurses use their emotional intelligence in diagnosing the individual from a humanistic and holistic perspective, which are the basic philosophy of nursing. Nurses who have high emotional intelligence also have high interpersonal communication skills and should be able to maintain effective communication with their colleagues and other health professionals and with the individual they care for.^{6,7}

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Literature showed that the emotional intelligence among nursing students ranges from moderate to high and only limited studies have been conducted on emotional intelligence among nursing students in our country's context. The objective of the study is to assess the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students of Biratnagar Nursing Campus.

METHODOLOGY

A analytical, cross-sectional study was used to assess the emotional intelligence among nursing students of Biratnagar Nursing Campus. Data were collected by self-administered and structured questionnaire from 132 students of proficiency certificate level (PCL) first, second, and third year, using census method from 2018 May 13 to 2018 May 27. Before conducting the study, approval was taken from Research Management Committee of Biratnagar Nursing Campus (Ref. 417/074/075). Written informed consent was taken from each respondent.

Tools were divided into two distinct parts: Part I: This part consisted of information related to personal and socio-demographic factors (age, religion, type of family, father's educational status, father occupation, mother's educational status, mother's occupation, diet, sleep, exercise, health problem); Part II: Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), a valid tool was adopted. It was originally developed by Slavery and Mayer 1990 then it was modified by Schutte et al., 1998. SSEIT was adapted and is in English language. In validation studies, the test demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.90) and acceptable test-retest reliability (0.73) as well as excellent construct, predictive, and discriminant validity.⁸ The scale consisted of 33 items, which were rated on a five-point Likert scale that ranges from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree". There were three negative statements (5, 28, and 33) which were scored reversely. The total SSEIT score ranged from 33 to 165. The respondent was considered to have low EI (33 to 77), moderate EI (78 to 121), and high EI (122-165).⁹

Adopted tool was permitted free to use for research and clinical purposes by authors.⁸ The elements of informed consent were explained to respondents such as purpose and methods, expected duration of the participation, payment/ reimbursement, voluntary participation/ withdrawal along with the potential risks and benefits. Privacy and confidentiality of information of all the respondents was maintained. For this unique identification number (Id. no.) was given in questionnaire while collecting information and the responses were

coded. The obtained information was used for this study only and stored with researcher in a locked cabinet.

Respondents participated voluntarily in the study. They were given freedom to discontinue their participation at any point during the data collection period. Each individual was given 30-35 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. Bias was minimised by asking the respondent to fill the form in given time. They were not allowed to take the questionnaire home. To prevent response bias, the questionnaire contained both positive and negative responses and were scored accordingly. Likewise, the emotional intelligence was measured using Likert's scale and treated as ordinal data.

Collected data were checked daily for its completeness. All the data was kept in order for editing and coding. In case of discrepancies, corrections were made after reviewing the original questionnaire form. Data processing was done by using computer Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics for Windows, version 16.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Ill., USA). Descriptive analysis mean and standard deviation was used. In inferential analysis, tests of significance like Chi-square were used to find the association between level of EI and demographic variables. The level of significance was set as $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

This study reveals that among 132 respondents, 96 (72.7%) of the respondents were from 15 to 18 years' age group. Among them 45 (34.1%) respondents were from proficiency certificate level third year while 44 (33.39%) and 43 (32.6%) were from PCL first and second year respectively. Likewise, 73 (55.3%) were of Brahmin/Chhetri caste group followed by Janajati caste group 49 (37.1%). Similarly, 106 (80.3%) of the respondents belonged to nuclear families. Likewise, most of the respondents 113 (85.6%) had slept more than six hours and 120 (90.9%) were non-vegetarian. Similarly, 104 (78.8%) of the respondents had joined nursing education by their own choice. Most of the respondents 114 (86.4%) didn't have any health problems.

Similarly, most of the respondents 108 (81.8%) had high levels of emotional intelligence and 24 (18.2%) had moderate levels of emotional intelligence. Likewise, there wasn't any significant association between socio-demographic variables with level of emotional intelligence as p-value for each of them was more than 0.05.

Table 1: Level of emotional intelligence among nursing students (n =132)

Level of emotional intelligence	n (%)
High	108 (81.8)
Moderate	24 (18.2)
Low	-

Table 2: Association between level of emotional intelligence with socio-demographic variables (n=132)

Variables	level of emotional intelligence		p-value
	High f (%)	Moderate f (%)	
Age			
15-18 years	78 (59.1)	18 (13.6)	1.00
≥18 years	30 (22.7)	6 (4.5)	
Type of family			
Nuclear	87 (65.9)	19 (14.4)	1.00
Joint	21 (15.9)	5 (3.8)	
Sleep			
≥ Six hour	92 (69.7)	21 (15.9)	1.00
< Six hour	16 (12.1)	3 (2.3)	
Diet			
Vegetarian	10 (7.6)	2 (1.5)	1.00
Non- vegetarian	98 (74.2)	22 (16.7)	
Exercise			
Everyday	10 (7.6)	4 (3.0)	0.282
Not everyday	98 (74.2)	20 (15.2)	
Joined nursing education by own choice			
Yes	85 (64.4)	19 (14.4)	1.00
No	23 (17.4)	5 (3.8)	

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that most of the respondents 96 (72.7%) were from the age group of 15 to 18 years which is supported by the study in which 80.5% of the respondents had their ages ranged between 16 and 18 years old.¹⁰ In the present study it was found that 106 (80.3%) of the respondents belonged to the nuclear family and 26 (19.7%) belonged to the joint family. The findings of study in Butwal also revealed that the majority of the nursing students (82.9%) belonged to nuclear families and only 17% belonged to joint family.⁴ In the current study, the majority of the respondents 113 (85.6%) had slept more than six hour which is supported by the findings of the study conducted in Pune which showed 70% of the respondents slept more than six hours.¹¹ Similarly the study revealed that the majority of the respondents 120 (90.9%) was

non-vegetarian. This is in the same line with the study where the maximum proportion was non-vegetarian (93.27%).⁴ In this study 118 (89.4%) of the respondents didn't exercise everyday which is contradictory with the findings of the study which showed only 38% of respondents were not performing exercise everyday which might be due to more awareness to health as they were in higher educational level (Bachelor in Nursing).¹¹ Similarly, the findings of the study showed that most of the respondents 104 (78.8%) joined nursing education by their own choice which is similar with the findings of the study which showed 75.3% of respondents joined nursing education by their own choice.¹¹

The finding of the study showed that most of the respondents 108 (81.8%) had high level of emotional intelligence which is similar with the findings of the study conducted in Iran which showed mean EI score 109.09 indicating high level of EI.¹² Similarly, the finding of the present study is consistent with the findings of the study which showed that more than half of the studied students had moderate levels of emotional intelligence.¹³ In the same line the findings of the study among baccalaureate students at the Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University indicated that the majority of the studied students in the four semesters had moderate levels of EI.¹ Likewise, the findings of this study was congruent with the descriptive correlational study in a University showed that the mean score for emotional intelligence was 0.53, SD± 0.06 indicating moderate emotional intelligence.¹⁴ Whereas study conducted by Sinha et al., showed that about 46% of the students had normal and about 15% had high level of emotional intelligence (on the basis of lower and upper limit of total percent score of emotional intelligence at 95% confidence interval)⁴ while result of the present study is contradictory with the findings of the study showed the overall emotional intelligence average to poor.⁵ Similarly, a study carried out at the Faculty of Nursing, Kafrelsheikh University, Egypt showed that the majority of students had average emotional intelligence and found EI increases with academic performance.¹³

The findings of the current study found that there were no association between emotional intelligence scores of the nursing students and demographic variables such as age, type of family, parent's educational status which is supported by the findings of the study conducted in Butwal which also showed they were not statistically significant with the overall emotional intelligence score (p-value = 0.164, 0.508, 0.128, 0.993, 0.194, 0.111, 0.629, and 0.060 respectively) whereas diet was found to be statistically associated with emotional intelligence of the nursing students (p-value = 0.002)⁴ but it contradicts with

the findings of the study showed there was a statistically significant difference ($p=0.006$) between the mean of emotional intelligence scores of the respondents and the level of their fathers' education.¹⁵ Based on the present study findings, there was no association between students EI and exercise which is supported by the findings of the study in which EI is not associated with Physical exercise ($p\text{-value} = 0.109$).¹¹ Similarly, present study findings showed that there was no association of EI score with sleep and joined nursing education by own choice which is contradicts with the previous study showed the variables like sleep, recreation and choice of profession were significantly associated with EI ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$) which might be due to different research setting as the study was conducted in nursing college from Pune city, India.¹¹

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the present study, it can be concluded that the participating nursing students

had high levels of EI. Furthermore, there was no association between student's EI and their demographic characteristics. Owing to growing complexity in the health care environment and increasing expectations of clients in today's competitive health care marketplace it is essential to do more research in this area on a large scale. Likewise, comparative study can be done between Proficiency Certificate Nursing students and Bachelor of Nursing Science.

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