

ASSESSING LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM AMONG NURSES AND NURSING INTERNEE IN CRITICAL CARE AREA AT TEACHING HOSPITAL OF SWABI, KPK

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Abstract

Background: Self-esteem, an individual's subjective evaluation of their own worth, significantly influences mental health, motivation, and overall quality of life. Both excessively high and low self-esteem can be detrimental. This study aimed to assess the level of self-esteem among nurses and nursing interns working in the critical care area of teaching Hospital of Swabi, KPK, and to explore potential work-related factors influencing their self-perception.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study design was employed to determine the self-esteem levels of nurses and nursing interns at teaching hospital of Swabi. Convenient sampling was used to recruit 59 participants who completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a 10-item questionnaire assessing positive and negative self-perceptions. Data analysis involved calculating frequencies, percentages, and identifying associations between self-esteem levels and work-related factors.

Results: The study revealed that the majority of participants (75.99%) exhibited high self-esteem, while 20% showed normal self-esteem levels. A smaller proportion (3.66%) indicated low self-esteem. Work shift patterns and ward assignments, particularly the emergency department, were identified as factors potentially affecting self-esteem levels.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that most nurses and nursing interns at BKMC Swabi have a positive perception of their self-worth. However, the identification of work shift patterns and ward assignments as influencing factors underscores the need for workplace interventions and support mechanisms to foster and maintain self-confidence among nursing professionals in this critical care setting.

INTRODUCTION

Background:

Self-esteem is fundamentally defined as an individual's deeply felt sense of personal worth or

value. In simpler terms, it reflects the extent to which a person holds themselves in regard, loves, and respects themselves, irrespective of their current

circumstances (1). This intrinsic perception of self-worth plays a pivotal role in various aspects of an individual's life, significantly impacting their motivation levels, mental well-being, and overall standard of living (2). A healthy level of self-esteem is crucial for maintaining a balanced psychological state, acting as a buffer against the detrimental effects of both excessively high and problematically low self-esteem. Understanding one's unique self-esteem level is therefore essential for achieving a personal equilibrium that promotes well-being (3).

In the context of healthcare, particularly among nurses, self-esteem emerges as a critical factor influencing their temperament and professional conduct (4). It essentially determines an individual's perceived value and represents a subjective assessment of one's own worth. Research suggests that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with improved resilience to stress, a particularly important attribute for healthcare professionals working in demanding environments (3). The self-esteem scale serves as a tool to measure an individual's perceived worth across a spectrum, with high scores indicating a positive self-evaluation and low scores signifying negative self-esteem. For nursing students, maintaining healthy self-esteem during clinical placements is especially vital as it directly affects their ability to navigate the inherent challenges and responsibilities within a healthcare setting. Clinical placement encompasses the physical environment and the personnel involved in the teaching and supervision of healthcare workers, including both nurses and nursing students (5).

Absolute self-esteem, characterized by a stable recognition of one's achievements, whether physical or spiritual, can be a positive attribute, though it carries the potential risk of fostering self-conceited superiority (6). Conversely, low self-esteem can lead to a deficiency in self-assurance, a tendency to question one's judgment, and a resultant loss of credibility. It is essential to recognize the significant role of self-esteem in effective stress management and the overall sense of self-worth. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to employ more proactive coping mechanisms when faced with adversity (7).

Self-worth is particularly crucial for medical professionals, as students' responses to challenges are often contingent upon their preexisting sense of self-

worth. Students with high self-worth typically exhibit greater confidence, demonstrate excellence in diverse settings, and actively engage in adapting to new behavioral expectations (6). In contrast, students grappling with low self-esteem often express negative opinions and display a lack of enthusiasm when confronted with novel situations. Fundamentally, self-esteem embodies a sincere, appropriate, and consistent understanding of one's inherent worth, a quality that is indispensable for students across various academic and professional environments (8). A cross-sectional study involving 300 nursing students at the University of Mosul, Iraq, in 2015, revealed that final-year students reported higher levels of self-esteem compared to their junior counterparts (9). In 2017, research conducted at the University of Korea, with a sample of 173 nursing students, indicated that students' self-esteem was significantly and positively influenced by their communication abilities (10). This study also suggested that communication ability partially mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem. A cross-cultural investigation comparing Thai and UK nursing students found no statistically significant difference in the mean self-esteem scores between the two groups (11).

High self-esteem has been consistently linked to better coping mechanisms in high-stress professions such as nursing. Identifying the various factors that influence self-esteem can pave the way for the development of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing resilience and job satisfaction among nursing professionals, ultimately ensuring that nursing students are better prepared to navigate the challenges of both their academic and professional journeys. (12). A study conducted in Malaysia found no significant correlation between students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and self-esteem. It also reported a weak negative correlation between academic performance and self-esteem and identified no influence from demographic variables on self-esteem. Understanding self-esteem among undergraduate nursing students is paramount as it impacts their academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being, thereby enabling educators to provide more effective and targeted support (13).

Self-esteem represents a fundamental aspect of an individual's identity, shaping their confidence, approach to work management, and the respect they hold for themselves and others. It can be broadly categorized into four key dimensions: personal self-esteem, social self-esteem, academic self-esteem, and parental self-esteem. Personal self-esteem refers to an individual's understanding of their own inherent value, while social self-esteem pertains to their perception of their relationships with others (14). Academic self-esteem reflects an individual's self-assessment of their academic abilities. A healthy sense of self-esteem can foster self-confidence, facilitate positive socialization, and contribute to the development of good interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, it significantly influences professional behavior and serves as a necessary parameter for the holistic development of one's personality and professional identity. (15) Nursing, as a profession demanding sound mental health, necessitates a strong sense of self-esteem during the process of professional socialization. Self-esteem is crucial for both student and clinical nurses, as it underpins their ability to communicate effectively with clients and other healthcare professionals, thereby fostering a therapeutic environment conducive to patient care (16).

Ultimately, self-esteem contributes to good emotional health and the overall well-being of an individual. It also exerts a significant impact on one's motivation, as individuals with a healthy and positive self-perception understand their worth and are more likely to pursue their goals. Moreover, self-esteem influences the decision-making process, interpersonal relationships, and an individual's potential and results by fostering feelings of inspiration and the courage to undertake new challenges (17).

Nurses and nursing interns at teaching hospital of Swabi may experience fluctuations in their self-esteem due to the inherently demanding nature of their work. This study aims to identify the current self-esteem levels among these healthcare professionals and to explore work-related factors that may influence their self-perception.

Methodology:

This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at teaching hospital of Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

Pakistan, to assess self-esteem levels among bedside nurses and nursing interns. The target population included all nurses and interns involved in direct patient care, while those in administrative roles or non-nursing staff were excluded. A convenient sampling technique was used to recruit participants based on their availability and willingness to participate. Using OpenEpi software, a sample size of 59 was calculated with a 90% confidence level and an assumed 50% prevalence from a total population of 130.

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), a validated 10-item Likert scale designed to measure global self-worth. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and provided written consent. Each respondent completed the questionnaire in approximately 15–20 minutes. Self-esteem scores were categorized as low, normal, or high based on standard cut-off values.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the prevalence of self-esteem levels and assess associations with variables such as ward assignment and work shift patterns. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the Quaid-e-Azam Institute of Nursing Swabi. Confidentiality and voluntary participation were ensured throughout the research process, with data securely stored and access limited to the research team.

Result:

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distributions of the socio-demographic variables among the 59 nurse participants. The majority of the participants were male (73%), while females constituted 27% of the sample. The most prevalent age group was 20-30 years (53.33%), followed by the 31-40 years age group (41.66%). In terms of nursing experience, the largest proportion of participants had 6-10 years of experience (37%), with 30% having 1-5 years of experience and 22% having less than 1 year of experience. Regarding educational qualification, Bachelor's in Nursing (BSN) was the highest qualification for 56.66% of the participants, while 40% held a Diploma in Nursing, and only 1.66% had a Master's in Nursing (MSN). When asked about

which work nature affects self-esteem, 44.06% reported the morning shift, 11.86% reported the evening shift, and 42.37% reported the night shift. Regarding which ward affects the level of self-esteem,

the emergency department was most frequently cited (52.54%), followed by the ICU (23.72%), NICU (13.59%), and CCU (10.16%).

Gender		
Male	44	73 %
Female	15	27 %
Age group(years)		
20 -30 years	32	53.33 %
31-40 years	25	41.66 %
41-50 years	2	3.33 %
51-60 years	0	0.00 %
above 60 years	0	0.00 %
Years of nursing experience		
Less than 1 years	13	22%
1-5 years	18	30 %
6-10 years	22	37 %
11-15 years	6	10 %
Educational Qualification		
Diploma in Nursing	24	40 %
Bachelor's in Nursing (BSN)	34	56.66 %
Master's in Nursing (MSN)	1	1.66 %
Which work nature affects the self-esteem?		
Morning shift	26	44.06 %
Evening shift	7	11.86 %
Night shift	25	42.37 %
Which ward affect level of self-esteem?		
ICU	14	23.72 %
CCU	6	10.16 %
NICU	8	13.59 %
Emergency department	31	52.54 %

Table.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Categorical distribution of self-Esteem

The frequency, percentage distribution, and grading of self-esteem among the nurse participants. The findings indicate that a significant majority (75.99%) of the participants exhibited high self-esteem. Twenty percent demonstrated normal self-esteem levels,

while a small proportion (3.66%) indicated low self-esteem. These results suggest that most of the nurses and nursing interns in this study had a positive perception of their self-worth, although a few showed signs of diminished self-esteem as shown in Table.2

Table.2 Self-esteem categories

Self-esteem categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Normal self esteem	13	20%
High self esteem	43	75.99 %
Low self esteem	3	3.66%

The frequency and percentage distributions of the respondents' answers to each of the 10 items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. A significant proportion of respondents **strongly agreed** (70.00%)

or **agreed** (28.33%) with the statement "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself." Regarding negative self-perceptions, 53.33% agreed and 45.00% strongly disagreed with the statement "At times I

think I am no good at all." For positive self-qualities, 33.33% strongly agreed and 55.00% agreed that they have a number of good qualities. A majority of participants felt capable, with 31.67% strongly agreeing and 51.67% agreeing with "I am able to do things as well as most other people." Concerning feelings of pride, 51.67% disagreed and 8.33% strongly disagreed with "I feel I do not have much to be proud of." Similarly, for feelings of uselessness, 45.00% disagreed and 8.33% strongly disagreed with "I certainly feel useless at times." A substantial

58.33% agreed and 20.00% strongly agreed with "I feel that I'm a person of worth." Regarding self-respect, 50.00% agreed and 38.33% strongly agreed with "I wish I could have more respect for myself." For perceptions of failure, 50.00% disagreed and 8.33% strongly disagreed with "All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure." Finally, a large majority (56.67% agreed and 40.00% strongly agreed) reported taking "a positive attitude toward myself" as shown in Table.3

Table.3 Frequency and distribution of respondents

s.no	Questions (10 item)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	42 (70.00%)	17 (28.33%)	1 (1.67%)	0 (0.00%)
2	At times I think I am no good at all.	32 (53.33%)	27 (45.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.67%)
3	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	20 (33.33%)	33 (55.00%)	7 (11.67%)	0 %
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	19 (31.67%)	31 (51.67%)	8 (13.33%)	2 (3.33%)
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	9 (15.00%)	15 (25.00%)	31 (51.67%)	5 (8.33%)
6	I certainly feel useless at times.	13 (21.67%)	15 (25.00%)	27 (45.00%)	5 (8.33%)
7	I feel that I'm a person of worth.	12 (20.00%)	35 (58.33%)	13 (21.67%)	0.00%
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	23 (38.33%)	30 (50.00%)	4 (6.67%)	3 (5.00%)
9	All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.	14 (23.33%)	11 (18.33%)	30 (50.00%)	5 (8.33%)
10	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	24 (40.00%)	34 (56.67%)	1 (1.67%)	1 (1.67%)

Discussion

The primary finding of this study is that the majority of nurses and nursing interns working in the critical care settings reported high levels of self-esteem. This suggests a generally positive self-regard and a strong sense of self-efficacy among these healthcare professionals operating in a high-stakes environment. This observation aligns with some previous research suggesting that healthcare professionals in demanding roles often develop resilience and robust self-concepts as a consequence of the nature of their work.

However, the presence of 3.66% of participants with low self-esteem warrants attention. This finding indicates that certain aspects inherent to critical care work may contribute to lower feelings of self-worth in a subset of nursing professionals. This trend is consistent with studies that have explored the impact of stress and burnout among critical care nurses. Specifically, the study's findings point towards work shift patterns, particularly night shifts, and specific ward assignments, most notably the emergency department, as factors potentially influencing self-

esteem negatively. This observation mirrors the findings of (14), who reported that nurses working irregular hours often experience increased stress levels, which can subsequently impact their self-esteem. The demanding and often unpredictable nature of work in the emergency department, coupled with the emotional intensity of critical care, may contribute to heightened stress and potential erosion of self-esteem for some individuals.

When comparing these findings to a study on nursing interns in similar setting (18), the overall level of self-esteem among the critical care nurses appears to be comparatively higher. This could potentially be attributed to factors such as institutional support mechanisms, the level of professional training and experience, or a strong emphasis on team dynamics within the institution that may contribute to enhanced morale and self-confidence among the staff (19).

The high percentage of nurses with a Bachelor's degree in Nursing (BSN) in the study sample (56.66%) might also be a contributing factor to the overall high self-esteem levels. Education and

professional development can empower nurses with the knowledge and skills necessary to handle challenging situations, potentially boosting their self-confidence and self-worth.

The self-reported nature of the data collected through the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a crucial methodological consideration. While this is a widely used and validated tool, self-report measures are susceptible to biases such as social desirability bias, where participants may present themselves in a more positive light than they genuinely feel, or a reluctance to openly acknowledge feelings of low self-esteem. This potential bias should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

The relatively small sample size of 59 participants also limits the generalizability of the findings to the entire population of nurses and nursing interns working in critical care settings. A larger and more diverse sample would enhance the robustness and representativeness of the results. Furthermore, while the study explored the influence of work shifts and ward assignments, it did not delve into other potentially significant variables such as work-life balance, personal life stressors, organizational support, and leadership styles, which could also impact self-esteem. Future research could benefit from incorporating these additional factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of self-esteem in this population.

Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the self-esteem levels of nurses and nursing interns working in the critical care area of Bacha Khan Medical Complex Swabi. The key finding is that the majority of participants reported high self-esteem, indicating a generally positive self-perception and sense of self-worth within this group. However, the study also identified that work shift patterns, particularly night shifts, and ward assignments, especially the emergency department, appear to be factors that can influence self-esteem levels. The small proportion of participants exhibiting low self-esteem underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing potential vulnerabilities within this professional group. Ultimately, the findings emphasize the critical need for healthcare organizations to proactively address workplace dynamics and implement effective

support mechanisms to foster and maintain self-confidence among their nursing professionals, particularly those working in demanding critical care environments.

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