TO ASSESS SELF-ESTEEM LEVELS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Background: Self-esteem is a core psychological construct that reflects an individual's overall subjective evaluation of their own worth. It plays a critical role in shaping mental health, motivation, interpersonal relationships, and academic achievement

Objectives: To assess the level of self-esteem and identify socio-demographic factors associated with self-esteem among nursing students

Methods: A cross-sectional research design was selected and conducted with 121 undergraduate students of nursing students at Jesus and Mary Institute of Nursing and St. James Institute of Nursing Karachi. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) validated questionnaires was used to collect data.

Results: The study findings showed that (33.1%) nursing students had normal self-esteem levels, and (66.9%) had low self-esteem. Analysis of Self-esteem about socio-demographic variables revealed an insignificant association with age, gender, residence, academic level, job status and substance use. No statistically significant relationship was found between self-esteem levels and age. ($r = 0.005$; $n = 121$; p-value=0.957)

Conclusion: The findings of the current study indicate that the majority of nursing students exhibited low levels of self-esteem. There were no significant differences in self-esteem scores between junior and senior nursing students. Additionally, socio-demographic variables such as gender, academic year, residence, job status, and substance abuse status did not significantly affect self-esteem levels. These results highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance the self-esteem of nursing students, recognizing their crucial role as the future of the nursing profession.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is an important psychological concept that refers to an individual's overall subjective assessment of their self-worth. In the context of nursing education, self-esteem plays a vital role as it enhances clinical competencies, supports academic performance, and contributes to the development of a strong and confident personality. Moreover, high self-esteem aids in clinical decision-making, strengthens critical thinking abilities, and improves emotional intelligence, all of which are essential qualities for nursing professionals. A longitudinal study conducted over four years demonstrated that

nursing education has a positive impact on students' self-esteem and emotional intelligence. The findings suggest that as students' progress in their education, increased exposure to clinical practice and patient care responsibilities helps build their confidence and emotional maturity [1]. Conversely, some research has revealed a concerning trend: a significant number of nursing students suffer from low self-esteem, which is closely linked to higher levels of academic stress [2]. For instance, a study conducted among first-semester nursing students in Indonesia identified several early challenges—such as the transition from high school to a demanding professional program—that adversely affect students' self-esteem and contribute to elevated stress levels. Another important factor influencing self-esteem is the presence of social intelligence and empathy. Research has shown a positive relationship between these traits and self-esteem among undergraduate nursing students [3]. Social intelligence and empathy not only enhance interpersonal interactions with peers, instructors, and patients but also strengthen students' sense of self-worth and professional identity [4].The results of cross-sectional study consisted of 478 university students revealed that the amount of physical activity was positively correlated with self-esteem levels [5].The research studies regarding social media and self-esteem have showed that low self-esteem was found to be associated with social media addiction. The findings of studies also revealed that intensity of Facebook usage was higher for groups with lower self-esteem. Similarly, several other researchers have reached the conclusion that addictive social media usage relates to lower self-esteem [6].The results of the cross-sectional survey revealed that 21% of students had low self-esteem. No significant differences were found among different groups of students. Additionally, a weak association was observed between emotional intelligence and self-esteem [7]. A cross-sectional study, with a sample of 264 students from two universities in Brazil revealed that majority of the nursing students were found to have moderate self-esteem with a mean score of 23.48 [8]. A correlational study in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, explored the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among 185 nursing students. The majority (91.9%) had average self-esteem, and no significant correlation was found between self-esteem

and academic performance [9]. A cross-sectional study in Indonesia assessed 300 first-semester nursing students and found that self-esteem had a significant relationship with quality of life (p=0.010) [10].The research study conducted on 390 nursing students at a foundation university in Istanbul revealed that professionalization and socialization processes greatly affect nursing students' self-esteem [11]. The findings regarding self-esteem among nursing students in Charsadda, Pakistan, revealed that 48.5% of the students had moderate self-esteem, 43.9% had high self-esteem, and 7.6% had low self-esteem. Demographic variables such as age and family background were found to be significantly associated with self-esteem [12]. The objective of current study is to assess the level of self-esteem among undergraduate nursing students**.**

Methods

A cross-sectional research design was employed in the current study. The research was conducted at Jesus and Mary Institute of Nursing and Allied Sciences and St. James Institute of Nursing and Health Sciences, located in Karachi, Pakistan. The target population consisted of undergraduate nursing students. A convenient sampling technique was used to recruit participants. The sample size was calculated using OpenEpi software, based on the formula for one sample proportion. Assuming a prevalence of normal self-esteem at 88.4% [13], with a 95% confidence interval, 80% power, a 5% margin of error, and an estimated population size of 500, the required sample size was calculated to be 121 participants. The study was conducted between April and May 2025.Inclusion criteria involves nursing students enrolled in BSN program and willing to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria consist of students from other nursing programs, students who were suffering from any psychiatric illness. Study parameters consist of independent variables such as Age, Gender, Academic level, Degree program, Resident, Job Status, Substance abuse, while Self-esteem score was dependent variable. Permission was obtained from the principals of both institutes. Informed consent was taken from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the study. A Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale comprises of 10 items was used to collect data. Data were analyzed using

SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic information. Independent t-test and Pearson's correlation were applied to analyzed data.

Results:

Table 1 provides an overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of a sample of 121 individuals. The mean age of the participants was 23.36 ± 2.83 years. The gender distribution consisted of males (66.9%) and females (33.1%). All individuals were enrolled in the BSN degree program (100%). Regarding academic year distribution, (33.9%) were in the first year and (66.1%) in the third year; no students were selected from the second or fourth years. Furthermore, the majority of students (57.9%) lived with their parents, while (42.1%) lived in hostels. A higher number of students were unemployed (90.9%), while (9.1%) were employed. All respondents (100%) reported no involvement in any form of substance abuse

Table 1: Socio-demographic variables (n=121)

Socio-Demographic Variables	Characteristics	N (%)
Age	23.36 ± 2.83	121 (100)
Gender	Male	81 (66.9)
	Female	40 (33.1)
Degree program	BSN	121 (100)
	Others	0 (0)
Academic year	First year	41 (33.9)
	Second year	0 (0)
	Third year	80 (66.1)
	Fourth year	0 (0)
Resident	Family	70 (57.9)
	Hostel	51 (42.1)
Job Status	Job	11 (9.1)
	Jobless	110 (90.9)
Substance Abuse	Yes	121(100)
	No	0 (0)

The result of table 2 showed that 33.1 % of nursing students had normal self-esteem levels and 66.9 % of nursing students had low self-esteem levels.

Table 2: Level of self esteem

Level of Self-esteem	Percentage	Scores Obtained
Normal self-esteem	33.1%	Above 15
Low self-esteem	66.9%	Below 15

No statistically significant relationship was found between self-esteem levels and age. (r = 0.005; n = 121; p-value=0.957) (Table 3).

Table 3: Correlation between self-esteem and age

	N	r	p-value
SE Levels, Age	121	0.005	0.957

Table 4 presents the results of the association between demographic variables and self-esteem scores. The gender variable did not show a significant association with self-esteem (p = 0.893). Similarly, academic year also showed no significant association (p = 0.445).

Additionally, residence and job status variables were not significantly associated with self-esteem (p = 0.092 and p = 0.796, respectively). Overall, no significant relationships were found between any of the socio-demographic variables and self-esteem

Table 4: Association of demographic variables with self-esteem score

Socio-Demographic Variables	Characteristics	Mean ± SD	N	p-value
Gender	Male	16.47 ± 3.15	81	0.893
	Female	16.55 ± 2.97	40	
Academic year	First year	16.20 ± 3.79	41	0.445
	Third year	16.65 ± 2.67	80	
Resident	Family	16.90 ± 3.51	70	0.092
	Hostel	15.94 ± 2.29	51	
Job Status	Job	16.73 ± 1.67	11	0.796
	Jobless	16.47 ± 3.19	110	

Discussion

The current study showed that 33.1 % of nursing students had normal self-esteem levels and 66.9 % of nursing students had low self-esteem levels. In contrast the study conducted in Nepal showed opposite results, where 95.3% of BSN students had high self-esteem while only 4.7% had low self-esteem. [14]. Our study revealed that no statistically significant relationship was found between self-esteem levels and age. Similar results were found in the study conducted on 426 students, the findings revealed no significant association between self-esteem and age [15].The current study outcomes showed that socio-demographic variables have insignificant association with age, gender, residence, academic level, job status and substance use. In contrast the cross-sectional study conducted in Saudia Arabia revealed the opposite results, the socio-demographic variables resulted in statistically significant correlations with the year of study, physical health, psychological health, and father's education [16]. Additionally the results of the research study showed that gender had no impact on self-esteem levels [17]. Moreover the study conducted on 210 undergraduate nursing students showed that socio-demographic variable such as stress was found to be statistically significant with self-esteem [18]. The study conducted on a sample of 1149 students revealed an association among lower self-esteem and increased anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation [19]. The results of sample of 346 students from Punjab University, Lahore Pakistan showed that significant gender difference was observed, self-esteem was significantly higher in males than females. Logistic regression indicates that age, medium of instruction, family income, student monthly expenditures, GPA and area of residence has direct effect on self-esteem; while number of siblings showed an inverse effect [20].

Conclusion

The findings of the current study indicate that the majority of nursing students exhibited low levels of

self-esteem. Additionally, socio-demographic variables such as gender, academic year, residence, job status, and substance abuse status did not significantly affect self-esteem levels. These results highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance the self-esteem of nursing students, recognizing their crucial role as the future of the nursing profession. Awareness sessions must be conducted among students. Activities must be conducted that increase level of self-esteem among students. A counsellor should be present in institute to help the students to deal with psychological issues. Further research studies should be conducted to see the impact of socio-demographic variables on self-esteem.

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