Evaluate Self-Directed Learning Readiness among Undergraduate Nursing Students: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract

Background: Self-directed learning is essential in assisting nursing students, to meet the challenges presented in today's health care environment. Nurse educators can assist nursing students to acquire the skills for self-directed learning.

Objective: The objective of this study was to determine the self-directed learning readiness among undergraduate nursing students in private college of nursing Islamabad, Pakistan.

Method: A descriptive cross sectional study design was conducted by using systematic random sampling. Data was collected from 132 undergraduate nursing students. A self-administered self-directed learning readiness scale was used. Data was analysied through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21.

Results: Participant included 25% male and 60% female students. The mean age of the participants was 20.13+1.25. The overall mean scores on the readiness for self-directed learning tool is 99.60+ 12.01. Moreover, (63, 46.3%) participant scores more than the cutoff value i.e., 150 which shows that participants readiness toward self-directed learning. However, (72, 53.9%) score less than cut off value 150. Finding shows that the mean score in subscale such as self-management, self-control and Desire for learning is (32.30+3.67), (42.67+8.36) and (26.33+ 3.78)

Conclusion : The nursing students 'level of self-directed learning readiness is essential to know in helping them during their studies. The scores shows that students self-directed learning readiness is at higher level. However, teachers' assistance is required to enhance students' self-management skills.

Keywords: Self-directed; Learning; Readiness; Self-management; Self-disciplined; self-regulated

Introduction

In today's era the responsibility for own learning is very much important from what it was in the past. The learning, how to learn has been an essential concept within the field of academia [1] .One of the style of learning is self-directed learning (SDL). Self-directed learning is one among those skills which is critical for students, to become lifelong learners [2]. It is identified that student need to take ownership for their learning and Self-directed learning is essential in assisting such learning requirements [3]. The nursing students need to meet the challenges presented in today's health care environment. It is a process of learning in which learner takes initiative, identify on learning needs, motivate to learn and take actions to fulfill their own learning needs with or without the help of others [4]. The another terms mentioned in literature are learner autonomy, self-regulated learning and independent learning [5].

The primary concern, in this definition of SDL is the fact that, learner takes the initiative to take a learning experience, and the responsibility for completing their learning [3]. However, being as educators it is noted that, when students are directed and provided resources with a planned and structured teaching method, the results are improved but still lacking in self-directness among nursing students. As in nursing education most of the clinical courses need to develop self-directed learning as key skills in their learning process which can enhance the lifelong learning abilities and skills, to become competent nurses [6]. One of fundamental characteristic of SDL is developing a sense of ownership of learning that is closely related to the motivation to learn. According to Reid-Brown [7] the active learning strategies can enhance the motivation to learn that can lead to more deeper learning [8]. This is affected by various factors, for example,

whether the learning goals will meet the learners' needs, whether they perceive the goals as achievable, and how they perceive their own abilities in relation to the goals. Providing opportunities and control for learners to set their learning goals can enhance their motivation [9]. A teacher may inquire the intrinsic motivation of the students that how can they direct their own learning and how can help in that effort because academic motivation is a key for self-directed learner [10]. It will create a workforce with full knowledge and lifelong skills towards the improvement of health care system and a change in an individual self-management.

Self-direction is not necessarily meant that all learning will take place in isolation from others [7]. It depends that how much the learner is interested to learn and able to transfer learning, in the term of both knowledge and study skills, from one situation to another. If the learner readiness is high the learning may be more improved [12]. Few researchers have addressed the issue of student's readiness as self-directed learners. Medical students highlighted that the role of culture and curriculum has impact on students SDL [13,14]. On the contrary a more recent evidence [15] reveals that demographic has no impact on students SDL. Said et al. [16] in their study found that nursing students showed adequate level of readiness towards SDL, so it is considered a positive impact on their future learning. Therefore, self-directed learning comes down to two key elements: autonomy—choosing what one wants to "learn," study, or pursue, and control—choosing how to do so [5]. During COVID-19 period online teaching and learning activities was adopted and SDL is important for the application of such technological advancement in learning [17]. Research on this topic has been mostly done in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Tehran, UK, and few studies in the Pakistan with limited sample size according to the location and type of study. A recent study conducted in Pakistan suggested that SDL need to be taught to students after assessing the students' needs of readiness [17]. Based on the current literature it is indicated that "skill of self-direction in learning is one of the skills that is essential for students to be lifelong learners. Nursing educators can encourage and develop this skill in their students, so that they will be equipped for educational opportunities and challenges beyond their formal education. However, this study will focus on self-directed learning readiness among undergraduate nursing students, that may assist the educators to identify the needs of SDL. This study will provide a base line data for the implementation of student-centered curriculum. The purpose of this study is to determine nursing student's readiness towards self-directed learning.

Methodology

A descriptive cross sectional study design was used. The study population consisting of Baccalaureate undergraduate students (BSN-I and BSN-II). The study was conducted from February 2022 to June 2022. Systematic random sampling technique was used. The required sample size was 132 calculated by using open epi. keeping the 95% confidence level. A self-administered questionnaire was used. The self-directed learning readiness scale consisted of three components that is self-management, desire for learning, self-control. The internal consistency for each component was estimated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The reported value of Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the total item pool is 0.924. On the self-management subscale 0.857, the desire for learning subscale was 0.847 and the self-control subscale was 0.830 [18]. Data was collected by the program sectary. Participant first filled the demographic sheet and then provide data on self-readiness scale. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis of data. Data collection have done after getting approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). A written inform consent has been taken from the participants.

Result

Data was entered into SPSS version 21 yielding the descriptive statistic mean, standard deviation and frequencies. Participant included 25% male and 60% female students. The mean age of the participants was 20.13 ± 1.25. (Table 1). The overall mean scores on the readiness for self-directed learning tool is 99.60 ± 12.01(Table 2). Moreover, (63, 46.3%) participant scores more than the cutoff value i.e., 150 which shows that participants readiness toward self-directed learning (Table 3). However, (72, 53.9%) score less than cut off value 150. Finding shows that the mean score in subscale such as self-management, self-control and Desire for learning is (32.30 ± 3.67), (42.67 ± 8.36) and (26.33 ± 3.78) (Table 2).

Majority of the participants express that they are able to solve the problem using a plan (88, 56%) and prioritize their work (103, 65%). Moreover, more than half of the participants express that they prefer to plan for their learning (110, 70%), and try to remain systematic in their learning (112, 71%). In addition, result revealed that participants set specific time for study (97, 62%) and remain strict to their time frames (97, 61%). Furthermore, majority of the participants shows that they are self-discipline, (110, 70%), methodological (87, 55%), confident in searching new information (113, 86%) and trusted to pursue their own learning (113, 72%). However, many of the participants are not able to manage their time well (49, 31%) and same number of students said they remain disorganize (49, 31%) (Table 3). Finding in the sub points of self-control revealed that participants were able to focus on problem116 (73%) and set their learning goals 103(66%). Moreover, they are responsible 110(70%), responsible for their own action and decisions 100(63%), make decision for themselves 112(71%), and aware about their limitations 108(69%) and same number having high belief in their learning 110(70%). Almost equal number of participants have high expectation 100(64%) and standards103 (66%).

Table 1: Means, standard deviation and frequencies of demographic data.

Variables	Mean	SD
Age	20.13	1.25
	Categories	**F, %**
Gender	Male	39(24.8%)
	Female	95(60.5%)
Semester	Semester I	36(22.9%)
	Semester II	32(20.4%)
	Semester III	36(22.9%)
	Semester IV	31(19.1%)

Table 2: Overall mean and standard deviation of subscale.

Subscales	N	Mean	S. D
Self-management	135	32.3	3.67
Self-Control		42.67	8.36
Desire for learning		26.33	3.78
Overall		99.6	12.01

Table 3: Overall scoring of the participant on SDL tool.

Grades	N	F	%
Total Scores less than 150	135	72	53.90%
Total Scores more than 150		63	46.30%

Participants are interested to evaluate their performance 106 (67%) and prefer their own criterias113 (72%). Majority of the students disagree that they are not having control on their life 89(57%). In the desire for learning scale majority of the participants shows that they learn from their mistakes (109, 69%), they are open to new ideas (97,62%), know their need for learning (92,59%) and want to learn the new information (99(63). They are enjoying learning new information (105, 67%) and equivalent number of participants express that they gather facts for making decision (105, 67%). They try critical evaluate new ideas (84, 53%) and evaluate their performance (109, 69%). More than half of the students disagree that ask for assistant in case of any problem which could not be solved by them (59, 37%) and equivalent number of participants disagree that they are not enjoying the study (77, 49%) (Table 4).

Table 4: Evaluation of self-management, self-control, and desire for learning among Nursing students.

S#	Tool subscale	Agree f, %	Neutral f, %	Disagree f, %
	Self-Management			
1	I solve problems using a plan	88(56)	14(9)	33(21)
2	I prioritize my work	103(65)	12(7.6)	20(13)
3	I do not manage my time well	49(31)	23(14)	63(40)
4	I have good management skills	87(55)	25(16)	23(15)
5	I set strict time frames	97(61)	16(10)	22(14)
6	I prefer to plan my own learning	110(70)	9(6)	16(10)
7	I am systematic in my learning	112(71)	15(10)	8(5)
8	I am confident in my ability to search out information	113(86)	7(4)	15(10)
9	I set specific times for my study	97(62)	16(10)	22(14)
10	I am self-disciplined	110(70)	12(7)	13(8)
11	I am disorganized	49(31)	23(15)	63(40.1)
12	I am methodical	87(55)	28(18)	19(12)

13	I can be trusted to pursue my own learning	113(72)	15(10)	7(4)
Self-Control				
1	I am able to focus on a problem	116(73)	13(8)	6(4)
2	I prefer to set my own learning goals	103(66)	20(13)	12(8)
3	I am responsible	110(70)	15(9)	10(6)
4	I have high personal expectations	100(64)	14(9)	21(13)
5	I have high personal standards	103(66)	24(15)	8(5)
6	I have high beliefs in my abilities	110(70)	12(8)	13(8)
7	I am aware of my own limitations	108(69)	13(8)	14(9)
8	I am logical	83(53)	27(17)	25(16)
9	I evaluate my own performance	106(67)	17(11)	12(7)
10	I prefer to set my own criteria on which to evaluate my performance	113(72)	13(8)	9(6)
11	I am responsible for my own decisions/actions	100(63)	16(10)	19(12)
12	I can find out information for myself	110(70)	16(10)	9(6)
13	I like to make decisions for myself	112(71)	11(7)	12(7)
14	I prefer to set my own goals	118(75)	12(7)	5(3)
15	I am not in control of my life	29(18)	17(11)	89(57)
Desire for Learning				
1	I need to know why	92(59)	12(7.6)	31(20)
2	I critically evaluate new ideas	84(53)	25(16)	26(16)
3	I learn from my mistakes	109(69)	3(1.9)	23(15)
4	I am open to new ideas	97(62)	14(9)	24(15)
5	When presented with a problem I cannot resolve, I will ask for assistance	50(32)	26(16)	59(37)
6	I do not enjoy studying	37(24)	21(13)	77(49)
7	I have a need to learn	78(50)	25(16)	32(20)
8	I enjoy a challenge	94(60)	18(11)	23(14)
9	I want to learn new information	99(63)	14(9)	22(14)
10	I enjoy learning new information	105(67)	11(7)	19(12)
11	I like to gather the facts before I make a decision	105(67)	15(10)	15(10)
12	I like to evaluate what I do	109(69)	17(11)	9(6)

Discussion

Self-directed learning is a key to acquiring the new knowledge and skill. As one of the attributes of SDL is independent learning. The study yield that many of the participants are independent learners because they show high score of self-directed learning readiness. However, mostly responses show less scores to self-directed learning. On the contrary students may rate themselves high for SDL during early years of studies as compared to senior levels [19]. Learners set their goal, timeframe, structure, and activities for their learning. Taking the responsibility of their own learning and progress help them to move further in their learning cycle [[20]. However, many factors help the students to become the self-directed learners such as innovative teaching and learning strategies, grades, teacher feedback, internal or external motivation and online teaching tools may also impact to enhance the student's independency in learning. These results were supported by a study conducted in Saudi Arabia during COVID-19 pandemic, mentioned that students felt more independent in their studies after online classes [21].

The current study shows that majority of the students are managing themselves well. They develop a plan to remain systematic in their learning, which facilitate them to remain confident, methodological, and self-disciplined. Literature says that planning can help to know the outcome of a task, that can improve students learning [22]. It also enhances their problem-solving ability. However, many of the students shows lack of self-management skills, which may impact negatively in self-management ability and learning. This might be because of different factors. Institutions can develop strategies to find out the reasons of lacking in self-management [23]. Some factors mentioned in literature are online culture, more social engagement and lack of parents supervision may impact on students self-management skills [23].Noteworthy, majority of the students have

responsible for own learning and want to know new information, which show a positive attitude and students' strength about learning. Educators can utilize innovative strategies in classroom and motivate students further for deep learning [24]. Self-control is a cornerstone for the readiness to self-directed learning. Self-control practices enhance the learning by increasing the motivation and adherence to goal [25].

In addition, many participants express that they mainly focus on a problem, make effective decisions and aware of their problem. Focus on particular problem can lead to effective because during that students can explore more information which can assist to solve the problem and enhance the students critical thinking and learning [26] debate has continued among researchers and instructors regarding the influence of Problem-Based Learning (PBL). Moreover, participant seems more interested to evaluate themselves. In current finding some students shown that they learn from their mistakes and enjoy learning, which seems a very positive attitude towards SDL because learning from mistakes can assist in future direction and show a path to grow more. On the other side some students think that it is not true as they don't enjoy learning. It shows that these students are more dependent on teachers so it can be done by facilitating them by providing feedback, overcome the learning deficiency and to think critically and motivate them to become self-directed learners [2].

Conclusion

In nursing education self-directed learning has very significant role to become lifelong learners. In current era students seem more interested to learn new things as exploring by them themselves still teachers can coach them and indulge the skills of self-directed learning. The teachers can include self-directed learning strategies during planning of curriculum. So gradually, students can adopt the habit of self-directed learning.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the content and writing of this Research paper

Statements and Declarations

The authors have no conflicts of interest and no financial interest related to the submitted of work for publication.

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