



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASSESSMENT OF LIFE SKILLS AMONG FIRST YEAR B.SC. NURSING STUDENTS OF SELECTED NURSING COLLEGE, TAMILNADU.

Buveneswari R¹ and Sylvia Juliet².

1. Lecturer, College of Nursing, Jawaharlal Institute of Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Puducherry, India.
2. Professor cum Vice Principal, Sacred Heart Nursing College, Madurai, India.

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Abstract

Life skills are the abilities that help to promote mental well being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. When it comes to life and soft skills, nursing is a field that demands plenty. University students have to manage their time and also look for sources in order to accomplish their assignments; a challenging job to handle, in particular, for first year students. Failure in such condition would lead to poor chances of academic success. A Cross sectional descriptive survey design was used to assess life skills among 40 first year nursing students of selected College of Nursing by using The Life Skills Assessment Scale (Radhakrishnan Nair A, Subasree R and Sunitha Ranjan, 2009). The results revealed that mean life skills score was 369 ± 23 . In relation to global life skills score majority 30 (75%) of them were having average life skills and 2 (5%) of them having very low score in life skills. There was no association between life skills scores and socio demographic variables of students.

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Introduction:-

Growth and development of any nation depends on the growth and development of its people. The skill development process starts when the child is born. Heredity, health and environment influence this natural process of development.^[1]

WHO has defined life skills as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".^[2]

UNICEF defines life skills as "a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills".^[3]

Life skills are used every moment of our lives in various situations like choosing friends/career developing or breaking habits, making and breaking relationship, following discipline, understanding one's needs, solving problems, interacting with teachers and parents. Therefore, life skills are the building blocks of one's behavior and need to be learnt well to lead a healthy, meaningful and productive life.^[4]

Corresponding Author:- Buveneswari R.

Address:- Lecturer, College of Nursing, Jawaharlal Institute of Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Puducherry, India.

Mere academic excellence will not help. Today's youth need a lot of mental strength to cope with challenges and pressure. "Some students may have done extremely well in academics, but we see that a few turn neurotic and break down for small things. Poor tolerance towards criticism, lack of assertiveness and low self-esteem could cause such problems. "Students' Emotional Quotient is as important as their Intelligence Quotient. They have to face pressure not just from peers but also from members of family sometimes. It is important that they are equipped to handle these while in high school. (R. Sathianathan, Director, Institute of Mental Health.)^[5] Life skills learning need not be confined to a specific age or stage in life.

The Ten core Life Skills as laid down by WHO are:

1. Self-awareness
2. Empathy
3. Critical thinking
4. Creative thinking
5. Decision making
6. Problem Solving
7. Effective communication
8. Interpersonal relationship
9. Coping with stress and 10. Coping with emotion^[1]

Nursing is a challenging profession because it requires expertise in a broad range of skills and abilities. Nursing students need Analytical abilities, Psycho-Social-Behavioral Abilities, Physical Abilities, Sensory Abilities, and Emotional Intelligence.^[6]

Students are going through a transitional phase from adolescence to adulthood. They typically view their enrollment in college as an opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills that are necessary to succeed in the workplace and to advance their general knowledge and life skills. University students have to manage their time and also look for sources in order to accomplish their assignments; a challenging job to handle, in particular, for first year students. Failure in such condition would lead to poor chances of academic success. Success for the first year student is more than merely gaining sufficient academic credit to progress to the next year of study, but also involves educational and personal development. In fact, first year students face some certain social issues and undergo a lot of pressure from studies. Negligence in settling the problem, on the one hand, and too much stress gripping students, on the other hand, obviously leads to a situation in which they show more intensely vulnerable to various tensions, compared with other segments of society. Students who enter college unprepared for academic work may not have the coping skills necessary to compensate for the pressure and anxiety that they feel when being challenged. Life Skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning well in the environments in which they live.^[7]

Life skills also improve the self efficacy of nursing students: Nursing students self efficacy is a predictor for their educational progress. Students, who believe that they can be successful in their studies, are more confident.^[8]

Life skills offer the nurse an opportunity to acquire self knowledge, to take a positive approach to self and to develop personal growth and enrichment. Interpersonal skills place emphasis on the individual as a unique person, in the family, group and community. Personal growth and enrichment will support the nurse in pursuit of professional growth. They will enable the nurse to act effectively in relation to other people and to render holistic nursing care by applying life skills while supporting the patient in the pursuit and maintenance of physical, mental, and spiritual health. Life skills empower the nurse to develop and enhance a caring attitude in the nursing of patients. They enable the nurse to listen to beyond what the patient is saying, and to be assertive, manage conflict and make carefully considered decisions. Life skills develop emotional maturity, which includes honesty, openness, loyalty to people, kindness, keeping of promises and confidence.^[9]

Quasi experimental one-group pretest and post-test study conducted on effect of life skills on emotional reactions among medical students of Maragheh Islamic Azad University, of whom 40 nursing and midwifery students were selected through purposive sampling method. Findings showed that life skills education causes emotional reactions of students (anxiety, depression, and stress) to decrease.^[10]

A quasi experimental study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of instruction of academic and life skills on the 170 freshmen academic achievement. The results showed that the students who had received academic and life

skills training gained significantly higher scores in life skills and academic achievement than those with no training. The study concluded that assessing and meeting student's life skills and academic achievement needs, especially in the first year of their study is very essential. [7]

Materials and methods:-

A Cross sectional descriptive survey design was used. All the first year B.Sc Nursing students of selected nursing college, Tamilnadu were the population of the study. By using convenience sampling technique 40 first year B.Sc. Nursing students who met the inclusion criteria were selected as samples. Data collection tool consisted of two parts. **Part 1:-** Consisted of Socio demographic variables of first year B.Sc Nursing students (age, sex, education & occupation of parents, medium of instruction in higher secondary education, place of stay, No. of siblings, type of family, use of leisure time, family monthly income, marital status).

Part 2:- Life Skills Assessment Scale

The Life Skills Assessment Scale was developed by Radhakrishnan Nair A, Subasree R, Sunitha Ranjan in the year 2009. The multi dimensional Life Skills Assessment scale consists of 100 items in the form of statements in built with a 5-point scale for the respondents to check the appropriate response which is most descriptive of him/her viz., Always true of me -5, Very true of me -4, Sometimes true of me -3, Occasionally true of me -2, Not at all true of me -1, It has both positive and negative items. The scores obtained under each dimension represents the level of life skills in the respective domain and summation of all the score obtained under each of the 10 dimensions would evolve as a global score for life skills. The Maximum score is 500 and minimum is 100 and the global life skills scores were further arbitrarily classified as very high (above 417), high (387-417), average (325-386), low (293-324) and very low (below 293). [3]

Data was analyzed using both descriptive (frequency and percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi-square test). All statistical analysis was carried out at a 5% level of significance.

Ethical Clearance:-

Permission was obtained from the Principal of selected nursing college. Informed consent was obtained from every participant after a brief explanation regarding the study. Confidentiality was maintained during the data collection.

Results and Discussion:-

Results in relation to socio demographic variables of students:-

With regard to socio demographic variables majority (75%) of them were in the age group of 18 years, 95% of them were females. 85% of them were days scholar, 25% of them were having more than 5 friends. 40% of students reported that their hobby was to listen to music and majority (92.5%) of them were not having any history of physical illness and 75% of students parents were staying together and belongs to nuclear family (72.5%). In relation to educational status of parents 32.5% of parents were having no formal education. Majorities (57.5%) of fathers were employed and 70 % of mothers were unemployed. 80% of students family monthly income was below Rs. 10000, 40% of them were having two siblings and 85% of them from rural area. 70% of students medium of instruction was English in school. With regard to reason for choosing nursing course 97.5% of them reported that they have joined because of their own interest.

Table 1:- Mean, standard deviation and range of life skills scores of first year B.Sc. Nursing students. n=40.

Variable	Mean	SD	Range
Life skills	361	±23	299 - 432

The Table 1 represents the mean life skills scores of nursing students. The mean was 361 ±23, it indicate that they were having average life skills scores.

Table 2:- Mean, standard deviation of ten life skills scores of first year B.Sc. Nursing students n=40

Life skills	Mean	SD
Self awareness	42	5.4
Empathy	40	4.3
Effective communication	33	4.3
Interpersonal relationship	38	5.1
Creative thinking	29.6	4.6
Critical thinking	37.8	4.7

Decision making	37.8	4.7
Problem solving	35	6.1
Coping with emotion	37	5
Coping with stress	27.8	5.1

Table 3:- Frequency, percentage distribution of levels of global and individual life skills scores of first year B.Sc. Nursing students
n=40

Life skills	Very high		High		Average		Low		Very low	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Self awareness	3	7.5	17	42.5	18	45	1		1	2.5
Empathy	-	-	5	12.5	31	77.5	4	10	-	-
Effective communication	4	10	11	27.5	21	52.5	4	10	-	-
Interpersonal relationship	-	-	1	2.5	29	72.5	6	15	4	10
Creative thinking	-	-	5	12.5	29	72.5	5	12.5	1	2.5
Critical thinking	-	-	1	2.5	27	67.5	11	27.5	1	2.5
Decision making	-	-	7	17.5	29	72.5	4	10	1	2.5
Problem solving	-	-	8	20	25	62.5	5	12.5	2	5
Coping with emotion	-	-	7	17.5	24	60	8	20	1	2.5
Coping with stress	1	2.5	10	25	22	55	6	15	1	2.5
Global	-	-	4	10	30	75	4	10	2	5

Fig 1:- percentage distribution of Global life skills scores of first year B.Sc. Nursing Students

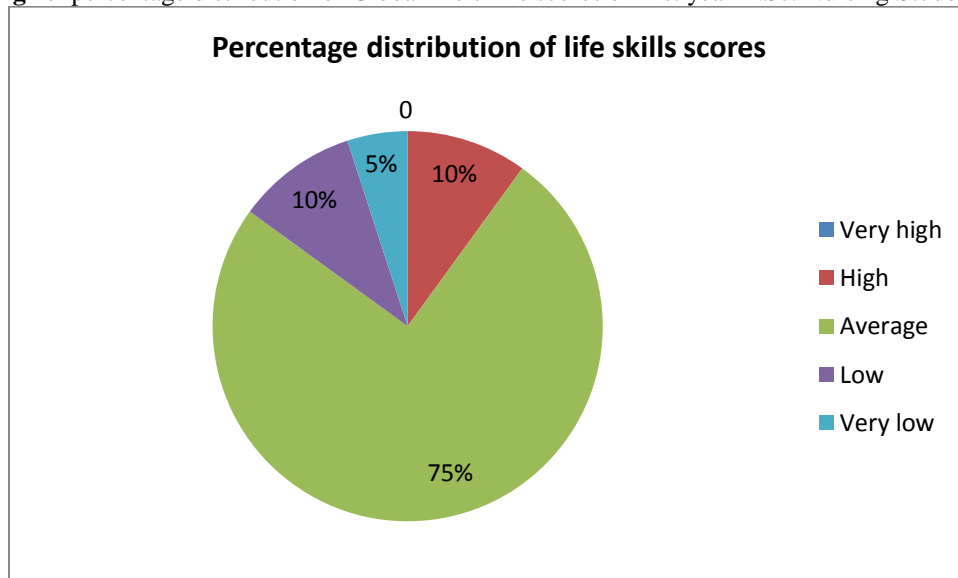


Table 3 and figure 1 reveals that majority 30 (75%) of nursing students were having average life skills scores, 2(5%) of them were having very low life skills scores.

The study conducted by Sandhu Rakesh [2014] reveals that that majority of the students have just average level of life skills which are not adequate. ^[11]

This results supported by the study conducted by Dimitrios E. Papageorgiou, Anna Kavga [2009] on evaluation of life skills in students of nursing students showed that students have a medium to large need for improvement in a percentage 42.9% (61 students) at the emotional sector (comprehension of emotions importance, expression of sentiments and, discovery of existence and regulation of negative emotions), 32.2% (47 students) in the sector of thought (structured frame of thought, growth of perceptions or attitudes, decision making), 31% (45 students) in the sector of relations (facility of creating relations, confrontation of conflicts, abilities of roles reception), 41.3% (59 students) in the sector of study, 32.7% (47 students) in the sector of professional settlement/confrontation of

unemployment (comprehension of abilities to apply for a job, presentation of themselves in written, confrontation of transient stages at work), 30.7% (44 students) in the sector of leisure time (positive evaluation of leisure time, evaluation of personal interests, energetic attendance in activities) and 35.1% (50 students) in the sector of health (consumption of nutritious components, consumption of alcohol, narcotic substances uptake, maintenance of a fit state).^[12]

The study conducted by Prajina.P.V and Godwin.J.Prem Singh on life skills in relation to academic achievements of tribal children also reveals that more than half of the respondents (60%) possess average life skills and only few (2%) have high life skills scores.^[13]

The study results also showed that there is no association between life skills and socio demographic variables of first year nursing students.

Conclusion:-

The study concluded that majority of first year nursing students 30(75%) were having average life skills scores. They need some mode of training to enhance their life skills.

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Conflict of interest:-

"The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests".

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