Original Research Article

Relationship between self-discipline and study habits among nursing students of Kerala

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Abstract

Introduction: Nursing is a profession that requires a wide range of knowledge to provide high-quality care. A major portion of the knowledge we attained is from the student period. Becoming an effective and successful student requires building certain characteristics into habits and one of these habits is self-discipline. Self-discipline or self-control refers to the ability to control one's feelings. Study habits are the regular tendencies and practices that one depicts during the process of gaining information through learning. There are several factors which affect the self-discipline of nursing students, which are honesty, trustworthiness, adaptive behaviour and genuineness. Study habits are affected by learning motivation, planning for study, effective reading, revision and preparation. The study aimed to find out the relationship between self-discipline and the study habits of nursing students.

Materials and Methods: A correlational research design was employed in this study. A total of 200 undergraduate nursing students were selected using a convenient sampling technique. Data was collected using a socio-demographic data sheet, a self-discipline rating scale to assess the self-discipline of nursing students, and a study habits rating scale to evaluate their study habits.

Results: The analysis of study habits among nursing students revealed that out of 200 participants, 61% of the nursing students had average study habits, 29% had good study habits, 8% had poor study habits, and only 2% exhibited excellent study habits. In terms of self-discipline, the findings indicated that about 2% of nursing students demonstrated very good self-discipline, 34% had good self-discipline, 53% showed average self-discipline, and 12% of had poor self-discipline. The study revealed a moderate positive correlation [r-0.54, P-0.00001] between self-discipline and study habits among nursing students.

Conclusion: Academic achievement is a significant concern for students, and two major factors contributing to this achievement are good study habits and self-discipline. Without a clear foundation of discipline to guide the development of the profession, it is easy for the students to lose their way. The study found that the relationship between study habits and self-discipline tends to be directly proportional when self-discipline increases, study habits improve, and conversely, when self-discipline decreases, study habits also decline. Therefore this study recommends that students focus on improving their self-discipline, as gains in self-discipline are closely linked to better study habits; educators should pay more attention to students who exhibit poor study habits.

Keywords: Self-discipline, Study habits, Nursing students.

1. Introduction

Self-discipline is one of the most important and valuable concepts, that everyone should recognize. Individuals differ from one another based on various factors, including their communities, categories and backgrounds.[1] Nursing students are those individuals enrolled in a professional nursing or a vocational nursing educational program at a nursing college affiliated with a university. Study habits refer to actions such as reading, taking notes, and participating in study groups that students perform regularly and consistently to facilitate learning. To have effective study sessions and achieve success, students must learn to combat unproductive urges and surround themselves with positive support. Self-discipline involves the ability to control oneself, work hard, and behave consistently in a specific way without needing external guidance. Students who possess high self-discipline tend to achieve better academic achievements compared to their less disciplined peers.

In a study done by Timila Manadhar and Premila Shrestha on the relationship between self-discipline and

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study habits among nursing students in Bhaktapur, Nepal, it was found that 3rd year nursing students scored significantly better than 1st and 2nd year students in both self-discipline and study habits. This suggests that 3rd year students are more self-disciplined and have better study habits than their junior counterparts. The correlation between self-discipline and study habits was measured at 0.524, indicating a moderate positive correlation. Consequently the study recommends that students focus on improving their self-discipline as gains in self-discipline are closely linked to improvement in study habits.[2]

In a study conducted by E.K Lieli and M.Chehrzad on the relationship between study habits and academic performance among medical science students, the results indicated that the students had relatively good or average study habits. The study habits score was found to predict 6.8% of the variation in academic performance. Moreover, due to the significant relationship between study habits and academic performance, educational administrators and planners can enhance student's study habits by including appropriate educational content, particularly in note-taking and effective reading strategies, thus improving their academic performance.[3]

In another study conducted by Jinta Samuel, R.Deenajothy on the study habits of B.Sc nursing students in SRM College of Nursing Kattankullathur, it was found that out of 100 students, 82 displayed good study habits while 18 exhibited bad study habits. This implies that high achievers tend to have better study orientation compared to their low-achieving counterparts. Specifically, high achievers scored well in several subcategories, including study attitudes, work methods, and self-discipline. The study highlighted the importance of self-discipline and proper self-control, alongside good study habits, in enhancing academic performance and reducing stress.[4]

The B.Sc nursing program aims to enable the students to develop self-discipline, which is essential for improving the study habits necessary for their practice at this level. Several factors influence study habits, such as the learning environment, inner motivation, interest of the individual and time management. Self-discipline is influenced by adaptive behaviour and an individual's core values. Given these insights, the investigators felt it was necessary to assess study habits, self-discipline and the relationship between self-discipline and study habits among nursing students. Thus we planned to conduct the study.

2. Materials and Methods

A quantitative research approach with a correlational research design was employed in this study. The study was conducted in Ernakulum, Kerala, with a sample of 200 undergraduate nursing students from the Ernakulum district. The data was collected in November 2023. The study participants were selected using a convenient sampling method from 3 different nursing colleges in Ernakulum district, Kerala. Subjects were explained about the purpose of the study and assured that the data collected would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Informed consent for the study was obtained from the participants.

2.1. Tools for data collection

The tool comprised a socio-demographic data sheet, a self-discipline rating scale and a study habits rating scale.

Tool 1 consisted of two sections; section A and section B.

Section A: This included demographic data including age, year of study, hours taken for the self-study, type of scholar, attendance, resources commonly used for study, and time spent in the library.

Section B: This included a study habits rating scale prepared by the investigators to assess the study habits of nursing students.

The rating scale on the study habits of nursing students consists of 43 items. Each Item was rated on a four-point scale (never, sometimes, often and always). The items cover four aspects; such as 9 items from learning motivation, 11 items from planning for study, 11 items from effective reading, and 12 items from preparation and revision. The maximum score possible was 172 and the minimum score possible was 43. The scores were interpreted as excellent (172-146), good (145-120), average (119-95), poor (94-69) and bad (68-43). A higher score corresponds to excellent study habits. The validity and reliability of the tool were established. The CVI index for section B was 0.98. The stability measure of section A (socio-demographic data sheet) was 100%, and section B (study habits rating scale) was established, and the coefficient of correlation was found to be 0.74. Hence the tool was found to be valid and reliable.

2.2. Tool 2: Self-discipline rating scale

The self-discipline rating scale was prepared by investigators to assess the self-discipline of nursing students.

The rating scale to assess the self-discipline of nursing students consists of 29 items. Each item was rated on a four-point rating scale (never, sometimes, often, and always). The rating scale includes four aspects: 7 items for honesty, 6 items for trustworthiness, 7 items for adaptive behaviour and 9 items for genuineness. The maximum score possible was 116 and the minimum score was 29. To reduce the effect of acquiescence in responses three items were valued negative. The scores from the tool were interpreted as very good (100-116), good (82-99), average (65-81), poor (47-64) and very poor (29-46). The validity and reliability of the tool were established. The CVI index for tool 2 was 0.98. The stability measure of tool 2 (self-discipline rating scale) was established, and the coefficient of correlation was found to be 0.70. Hence the tool was found to be valid and reliable.

2.3. Data collection process

The study was conducted at three selected nursing colleges in Ernakulum. Formal permission was obtained from the principals of each college. Data was collected from 200 students who met the inclusion criteria, after obtaining informed consent. The data collection took place in a classroom setting by the researchers using appropriate tools.

3. Results

3.1. Socio-demographic data

Table 1 showed that majority (97%) of nursing students were female and only 3% were male, 55% were in the age group of 22-23years and 45% were in the age group of 20-21years. Based on the type of scholar 88%of nursing students were hostellers and 12% were day scholars.

Table 2 reveals that about (34%) were 4th year, 33% were from fourth semester and 33% were third year. It also shows that majority (97%) of nursing students secured 80% of minimum attendance in the current year and 3% of students did not have the specified minimum attendance, and most (97%) of nursing students had attended demonstration and 3% didn't attended demonstration classes. The data revealed that 56% of the subjects studied for two hour on a day, 26% studied for 3 hours a day, 11% studied for 4 hours a day and 7% studied for more than 5 hours, and a majority (82%) used textbooks, 18% used online learning platform for study, 51% spent 1-2 hours in library, 39% spent less than one hour, 6% spent 3-4 hours and only 4% spent 5 or more hours, in the library.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of nursing students based on gender, age and type of scholar (N-200)

Demographic variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	06	03
Female	194	97
Others	00	00
Age		
20-21	90	45
22-23	110	55
>23	00	00
Type of scholar		
Day scholar	23	12
Hosteller	177	88

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of nursing students based on selected demographic variables. (N-200)

Demographic variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Year of study		
3rd semester	00	00
4th semester	67	33
3rd year	66	33
4th year	67	34
Minimum of 80% attendance		
Yes	195	97
No	05	03
Attended demonstration class prior to practical experience		
Yes	194	97
No	06	03
Hours taken for study on a day		
2 hour	112	56
3hour	53	26
4 hour	21	11
Above 5 hour	14	07
Resources commonly used for study		
Online learning platform	35	18
Textbooks	165	82
Time spent in library		
<1 hr	77	39
1 hr -2 hr	103	51
3 hr -4 hr	13	06
5 hr or more	07	04
Never	00	00

3.2. Study habits of nursing students

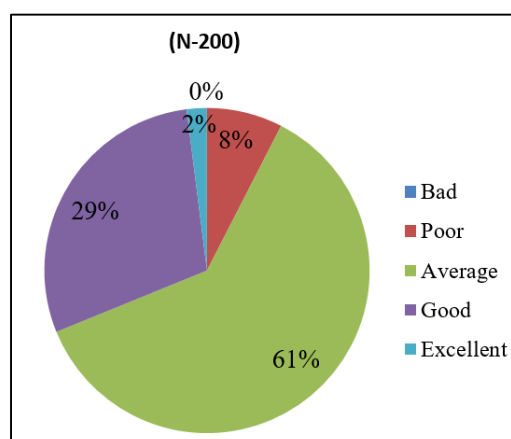It is presented in **Figure 1** and **Table 3**.

Figure 1: Pie diagram showing percentage distribution based on the grading of study habits scores of B.Sc nursing students

Figure 1 showed that, 61% of the nursing students had average study habits, 29% had good study habits, 8% had poor study habits, only 2% of nursing students had excellent study habits and none of them had bad study habits.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of nursing students based on the four subareas of study habit rating scale. (N-200)

Grading of area wise study habit rating scale	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Learning motivation		
Excellent	33	17
Good	90	45
Average	73	36
Poor	03	01
Bad	01	01
Planning for study		
Excellent	07	04
Good	64	32
Average	112	56
Poor	17	08
Bad	00	00
Effective reading		
Excellent	03	02
Good	38	19
Average	115	57
Poor	44	22
Bad	00	00
Revision and preparation		
Excellent	05	03
Good	29	14
Average	115	57
Poor	49	25
Bad	02	01

Table 3 shows that 45% had good motivation to learn, 36% of had average motivation, 17% had excellent motivation to learn and 01% each had poor or bad motivation. It was found that 56% had average plan for their study, 32% had good and 04% had excellent plans whereas 08% were found to have poor plan for study. While analyzing the reading habit, it was found that 57% had average reading habit, only 19% had good revision and 02% had excellent reading habit, whereas 22% had poor reading habit. It was also found that 57% of nursing students had an average preparation and revision being done, only 14% did a good and 03% had an excellent preparation and revision done, 25% did a poor revision and 01% was bad in revision and preparation for study.

3.3. Self-discipline of nursing students

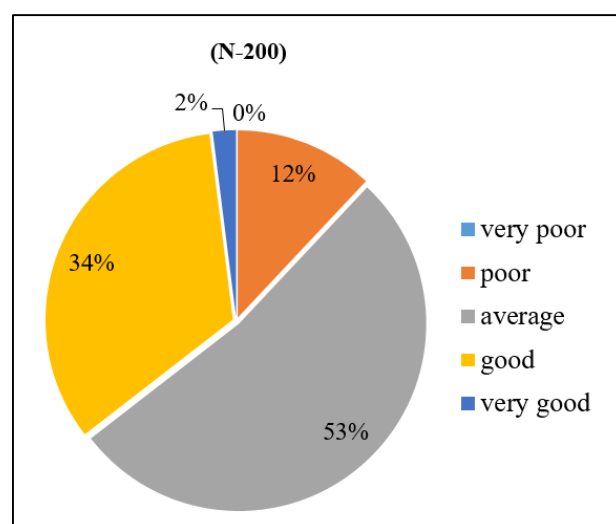It is presented in **Figure 2** and **Table 4**.

Figure 2: Pie diagram showing percentage distribution based on the grading of scores self-discipline of B.Sc Nursing students

Figure 2 showed that about 2% of nursing students had very good self-discipline, 34% of nursing students had good self-discipline, 53% had average self-discipline, 12% of nursing students had poor self-discipline and none of them had very poor self-discipline.

Data presented in **Table 4** shows that most of the nursing students (45%) were good in being honest, 39% were average, 12% were very good and 04% were found to be poor with regard to honesty. Most of the students (46%) were found to be trustworthy, 31% were average, 12% were poor, 10% were very good, where as 01% was found to be very poor for trustworthiness. It was found that 30% were good and 31% were very good in having adaptive behavior, whereas 27% were average, 10% were poor and 02% were very poor with adaptive behavior. Most of the nursing students 41% were average in being genuine, 28% were good and 18% were very good but it was also found that 12% were

poor and 01% was very poor in relation to the quality of genuiness.

Table 4: Area wise frequency and percentage distribution of four aspects of self-discipline rating scale. (N-200)

Grading of area wise self-discipline rating scale.	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Honesty		
Very good	24	12
Good	90	45
Average	78	39
Poor	08	04
Very poor	00	00
Trustworthy		
Very good	19	10
Good	92	46
Average	63	31
Poor	25	12
Very poor	01	01
Adaptive Behaviour		
Very good	62	31
Good	61	30
Average	54	27
Poor	19	10
Very poor	04	02
Geniuness		
Very good	37	18
Good	56	28
Average	82	41
Poor	23	12
Very poor	02	01

3.4. Relationship between self-discipline and study habits among nursing students

H1: There is a significant relationship between self-discipline and study habits of nursing students.

Table 5: Mean score, correlation coefficient and level of significance between self-discipline and study habits among B.Sc nursing students. (N=200)

Items	Mean score	Correlation coefficient (r)	P -value
Study habits	115.53	0.54*	0.00001
Self-discipline	81.01		

(P - 0.05 level)

Data presented in **Table 5** reveals that obtained r value of 0.54 (p<0.00001) was found to be significant, hence it indicates that there exists a significant relationship between study habits and self-discipline among B.Sc nursing students. The r value of 0.54 indicates a moderate positive correlation between two variables which indicates that when one variable tends to increase the other variable also increases and vice versa.

In the present study, relationship between self-discipline and study habits that tends to move in the same direction which means when self-discipline increases, study habits increases and when self-discipline decreases, study habit also decreases.

4. Discussion

In the present study, 45% of the students were in the age group of 20 -21 years, while 55% of the students were in the age group of 22-23 years. Based on the residence, most (88%) of the students are hostlers, and 12% of them are day scholars. About the year of study, 34% of the students studied in the 4th year, 33% of the students are in the 3rd year and 33% of them studied in the 4th semester.

The study is consistent with the descriptive study conducted by Anju Narayanan et al., in final year B.Sc nursing students of Yenapoya College of Nursing Mangalore to assess the study habits among nursing students. The study revealed that overall; the subjects had moderate study habits (Mean % 67.15) with a mean of 34.79± 5.8. There was a significant association between study habits & age and type of stay.[5]

The analysis of study habits among nursing students revealed that among 200 subjects, 61% of the nursing students had average study habits, 29% had good study habits, 8% had poor study habits and only 2% of nursing students had excellent study habits.

The study is consistent with the descriptive study conducted by Reguraham R, et al., results showed that only a minority of students (6%) have very good study habits, whereas 76.4% of students have good study habits and 17.6% of the students have average study habits.[6]

The study conducted by Princy K.E et al. to assess the study habits and academic performance of the nursing students revealed that 33% of the students had good study habits, 47% had average study habits, 20% had poor study habits.[7]

The study conducted to assess the relationship between study habits and academic achievements among nursing students in selected nursing colleges of Navi Mumbai showed that the majority (67.8%) of the students had good study habits, followed by 22.4% having average study habits, 11% of students having excellent study habits and only 5.9% of the students having unsatisfactory study habits.[8]

In the current study, 45% had good learning motivation, and only 1% had poor learning motivation. Many of the factors, such as competitive spirit, external rewards, and enthusiasm, affect learning motivation among nursing students. These findings were consistent with another study conducted by Jessica Ham and Pi-Ming Yeh related to "factors affecting academic motivation in undergraduate nursing students" which shows that intrinsic motivation and

its associated psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and social support) and copying were more influential than extrinsic motivation. The study recommended that faculty can encourage autonomous activities in the classroom and provide positive feedback to increase student competence and academic motivation.[9]

In the present study, while assessing revision and preparation, 25% of the students had not developed effective revision or repetition of learned subjects, which led to a decrease in academic performance. These findings were consistent with the study conducted by Dylan Jape, Jessie Zhou and Shane Bullock in the "Spaced Repetition Approach to Enhance Medical Students Learning and Engagement in Medical Pharmacology" revealed that only 50% of students engage in ongoing revision and it recommends that strategic and personalized resources such as tables, diagrams, explanatory videos and summary guides can help to reinforce learning and better retention so it should be exercised.[10]

In the present study, 2% of the students had very good self-discipline, 34% of the students had good self-discipline, 53% of students had average self-discipline, 12% of the students had poor self-discipline, and none of them had very poor self-discipline. There were four areas and 29 segments in the self-discipline rating scale. The areas are honesty, trustworthiness, adaptive behaviour and genuineness.

Similar results have been reported in a study to assess the self-discipline and study habits among nursing students at Bakhtapur, Nepal. The range of self-discipline of PCL 1st year students was found to be 90- 111 with an average of mean 103.38, the range of self-discipline of PCL 2nd year students was found to be 111-117 with an average of mean 114.21, the range of self-discipline of PCL 3rd year students was found to be 118-138 with an average of mean 124.432.[2]

A study was conducted by A Said et al., to assess the effects of examination of self-directed learning readiness among baccalaureate nursing students in Peshawar, Pakistan. The overall mean score on Fisher's 40 items self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) scale was 153 ± 25, the mean score on the self-management subscale was 48 ± 8.4, and the mean score of students on self-control subscale was 58.2 ± 11 while the mean score on the desire for learning subscale was 47 ± 8. About 60% (n=55) of students scored 150 and above which is an acceptable level of readiness for SDL on a scale ranging from score 40- 200.[11]

The present study shows that most of the nursing students (45%) were good at being honest, in terms of not coping during the tests, having no habit of writing hidden notes, and refers books for assignments, 39% were average, 12% were very good and 04% were found to be poor about honesty.

These findings were consistent with a descriptive study done by Cecilia J. TheartIlze Smitthat reported that academic dishonesty was a reality in nursing education. Cheating associated with plagiarism and assignments was identified as the main problem area. The study reports that peer pressure made respondents more willing to assist friends with their assignments illegally (49%) than to allow them to copy their assignments (19%), or let friends copy their answers in tests or examinations (15%). This may be related to the notion that students regard certain forms of academic dishonesty as more serious than others. The study recommends the development and implementation of a code of honour and comprehensive academic integrity policies at the nursing education institution, with practical measures aimed at combating cheating in tests and examinations.[1211]

The study conducted by Anoopa KR, et al., on academic integrity among nursing students at Bishop Benziger College of Nursing, Kollam. Shows that a negligible percentage (24% & 16%) of participants reported that they have observed colleagues clarifying answers with other students during exams and taking prohibited notes/chits along with them to copy during exams, and only (12%) have noted that their colleagues had prior knowledge about the exam case during practical exams more than once respectively.[1312]

Among trustworthy, most of the students (46%) were scored as good for trustworthiness, 31% were average, 12% were poor, and 10% were very good, whereas 01% was found to be very poor for trustworthiness. The present study is consistent with a study conducted on the importance of professional values from nursing students' perspective revealing a high mean total of professional values from the nursing students' perspective. The study shows that the most important values identified by students were "maintaining confidentiality of patients", "safeguarding patients' right to privacy," and "maintaining competency in the area of practice." Other factors, such as educator's insufficient emphasis on them, time limitations to promote these values, and negative attitudes of students toward these values, also affect their behavior.[14]

In the present study, it was found that 30% were good and 31% were very good in having adaptive behaviour, whereas 27% were average, 10% were poor, and 02% were very poor with adaptive behaviour.

A study conducted by Simon Akwasi, et al. to assess the influence of an adaptive coping behaviour of stress among nursing students at Advent University Philippines revealed that nursing students have a high stress level and a corresponding high adaptive coping behavior. The coping behaviour of nursing students showed a significant difference in terms of year of study and residential status.[15]

In the present study, the result showed that there is a significant relationship between self- discipline and study habits among nursing students as the obtained 'r' value computed by using Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation is 0.54, and it indicates a moderate positive correlation.

The present study is consistent with a study conducted on the Relationship between self-discipline and study habits among nursing students at Bhaktapur, Nepal.[2] This study revealed a moderate positive correlation between self-discipline and study habits, which suggests that students with higher self-discipline will have fairly higher scores in study habits. The correlation coefficient variable is 0.524.

4.1. Strengths and limitations of the study

The study helps to find out the correlation between self-discipline and study habits among nursing students. The major limitations of the study were Sample may not be a true representation of the population as an equal number of subjects was not taken from each batch (fourth semester, third year and fourth-year B.Sc nursing students) from each college, the self-rating was used for data collection, which requires the subjects to be genuine and honest in their response to various items.

5. Conclusion

The present study was conducted to assess the relationship between self-discipline and study habits among nursing students. The investigators took 200 subjects and the data were collected and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study result showed that 61% of the students had average study habits, 29% of the student had good study habits, 8% had poor study habits, 2% had excellent study habit and none of them had bad study habits. Concerning self-discipline, 53% of the students had average self-discipline, 34% had good self-discipline, 12% had poor self-discipline, 2% had very good self-discipline and none of them had very poor self-discipline. It also showed that the majority of the students had average study habits and self-discipline. Becoming an effective and successful student involves building certain characteristics into habits and one of these habits is self-discipline. To have an effective study session and subsequently become successful, students need to realize the importance of self-control.

These study findings were similar to the present study in that the subjects who had more self-discipline had good study habits. Some findings were contradictory to the present study that the subjects who spend more time in the library and those who have more attendance have good study habits. Hence the study recommends that students focus on being more self-disciplined as the scores of self-discipline extend almost equally to scores of study habits.

6. Source of Funding

None.

7. Conflict of Interest

None.

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