

Self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills of nursing students

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine the self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills for nursing students. The data was collected by questionnaires from 153 nursing students. This study showed that self-direction in learning has positive relation with interpersonal skills. The findings suggest that increased self-direction in learning assist nursing students to adopt interpersonal skills. Based on the results, self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills of nursing students was discussed.

Keywords: self-direction in learning, interpersonal skills, student

1 Introduction

Changes in health care systems, shortened lifespan of relevant information, and increased complexity of clinical practice make it vitally important for nurses to retain competency by continuing to learn and develop throughout their careers [1]. Self-direction in learning has been advocated for the efficient and effective training of medical students, residents, practicing doctors, nurses and other health care professionals [2-3].

Highly-developed interpersonal skills are an important component of health professional competence, and are therefore considered mandatory for any graduate entering the nursing. Interpersonal skills are linked to human interaction and contribute substantially to establishing a high quality caring relationship with patients [4].

The main objectives of this research were to study the relationship between self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills of nursing students.

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2 Method

2.1 Study design

This study assesses the relationship between the self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills in nursing students.

2.2 Sampling and data collection

One hundred fifty three nursing students at a university in D city took part in this study. Data were collected using face to face interview with a structured questionnaire. The participant in this study, who consented to participate, understood the purpose of this study, and had the complete capacity to verbally communicate in Korean.

2.3 Instruments

Self-direction in learning: In order to determine the self-direction in learning, a tool of the 11 questions was used which was developed by Shin [5]. 5-point Likert scale was used. Higher score means positive perception of self-direction in learning.

Interpersonal skills: In order to determine the interpersonal skills, a tool of the 10 questions was used which was developed by Noh [6]. 7-point Likert scale was used. Higher score means positive perception of interpersonal skills.

2.4 Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS Win 15.0 program. Descriptive statistics was determined for all demographic variables. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were used to estimate internal consistency and reliability of the tools. Self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills is analyzed using descriptive statistics. Pearson's correlations were performed in order to identify the degree of relations of variables. General statistical techniques were used to analyze the data based on an alpha level of .05

3 Results

3.1 Self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills levels

Respondents included 153 college students which aged 17-23 years. The mean age was 18.97 years (SD=.73). The sample was predominantly female (86.9%). The descriptive statistics for the nursing students' self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills were done. The mean score for the self-direction in learning was 3.44(SD=.44) on a scale of 1-5. The score of interpersonal skill was 5.19(SD=.72) on a scale of 1-7.

3.2 Correlation between self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills.

The overall mean self-direction in learning score was correlated with the mean interpersonal skill scores ($r=.450$ at $p<.001$). Each of the interpersonal skill factors was significantly correlated with self-direction in learning (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation between self-direction in learning and interpersonal skills

| Communication | Interpersonal skills | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | Collaborated problem-solving | Conflict management |
| | $r(p)$ | $r(p)$ | $r(p)$ |
| Self-direction learning | .422(<.001) | .280(<.001) | .408(<.001) |

4 Discussion

In this study, the self-direction in learning has positive relationship with interpersonal skills. These results which confirm the foresees of the present research and conforms to the results and necessities of findings of previous research in relation with self-direction in learning [1][2].

In summary, the results of research showed that it is important that nursing educators develop a curriculum and classroom techniques that foster self-direction in learning to enhance interpersonal skills. Data from this study can be used to further develop self-direction in learning in nursing students and to improve teaching and learning methods. Further research should follow the development of nursing students' self-direction in learning abilities over their academic years as well as their lifelong careers.

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