



ASSESSMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT AS PERCEIVED BY NURSING STUDENTS – A MIXED METHOD RESEARCH

Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Empowerment is the process of gaining confidence, strength, and the capacity for self determination. The empowerment of a person or group of people is the process of giving them power and status in a particular situation. **Aim:** The present study aimed to assess the opportunities and challenges towards empowerment as perceived by students. **Methods:** A mixed method research study was conducted among 206 nursing students undergoing B.Sc Nursing and DGNM program in the academic year 2022-23. The samples were selected by Nonprobability convenient sampling technique for quantitative data collection. Among 206 students, twelve students, 2 from each year of study were selected using purposive sampling technique for qualitative data collection. by non-probability purposive sampling technique. Self-reporting and focus group discussion was used for quantitative and qualitative data collection respectively. **Results:** The study results revealed that majority 154(75%) of the samples perceived high level of empowerment. Thematic analysis revealed four themes related to opportunities and three themes related to challenges. **Conclusion:** Innovative and collaborative Teaching Methods, Versatile Co-curricular Activities, Hands-on Clinical Experiences and Mentorship were perceived as opportunities, Negative Perception about a Student by the Educator, Fear and Low Confidence, Language Barrier were perceived as challenges by students towards self empowerment.

KEYWORDS

Empowerment, opportunities, challenges

INTRODUCTION

Empowered people exhibit a growth mindset, and are comfortable in learning and developing their abilities. Empowered nursing students are more likely to recognize the meaningfulness of the course, feel more sense of self-efficacy and competence to complete the tasks.

Al-niarat, T & Abomoghli, F (2023) in their study highlighted that there is a strong relationship between undergraduate nursing students' perception of empowerment and their academic satisfaction. The educational institutions play a major role in empowering nursing students.

Student Advocacy and Leadership Training program (SALT) was an initiative by the State Nursing Council for empowerment of nursing students. Despite the voluminous efforts by all concerned to empower nursing students, it is imperative to know how the students perceive all these favorable circumstances.

Statement Of The Problem

A study to assess the opportunities and challenges towards empowerment as perceived by students in a selected Nursing College, Chennai.

Objectives Of The Study

1. To assess the empowerment as perceived by students
2. To identify the opportunities and challenges as perceived by students towards empowerment
3. To associate the demographic variables with the extent of empowerment perceived by students

MATERIALS & METHODS

A mixed method approach - explanatory sequential research design (Quantitative – qualitative) was used for this study. The sample included 206 nursing students undergoing B.Sc Nursing and DGNM program in the academic year 2022-23 at VHS-M.A. Chidambaram College of Nursing. Nonprobability convenient sampling technique was used for quantitative data collection. Among 206 students, twelve students, 2 from each year of study were selected using purposive sampling technique for qualitative data collection. After obtaining approval from the research committee in the college, content validity was obtained from the experts and the reliability of the tool was checked by split half method and the score was $r = 0.84$. Assent from students and Informed consent from students and parents were obtained. Privacy and confidentiality were ensured. Self-reporting and focus group discussion was used for quantitative and qualitative data collection respectively. The tool for Quantitative data collection consists of three parts such as Part I –Structured questionnaire to

assess the demographic data.

Part II - Checklist to assess the empowerment perceived by students. It consisted of 50 items with YES (1) and No (0) options. The items were categorized under three headings, such as Empowerment in Classroom Learning (16 items), Empowerment in Clinical Learning (22 items) and Empowerment in Essential Qualities of a Nurse (12 items). The maximum score was 50 and the minimum score was 0. Based on the scores, the level of empowerment perceived by the students was classified as high ($\geq 75\%$), moderate (50- 75%) & low ($< 50\%$).

Tool for qualitative data collection: An interview schedule consisted of 10 semi structured open-ended questions to elicit responses on opportunities and challenges was used. One of the researchers transcribed the whole discussion and the entire conversation was audio taped. It took 60 minutes to complete the interview. Quantitative Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed using Graneheim and Lundman's content analysis approach.

RESULT

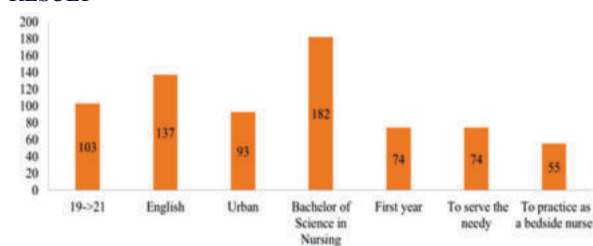


Figure 1.1: Interpretation Of Demographic Variables Of Students

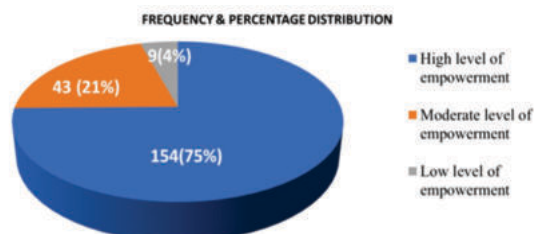


Figure 1.2: Students' Perception Of Level Of Empowerment

Students' Perception Of Level Of Empowerment

90-95 % of the Students Felt Empowered to,		
Class room Learning	Clinical Learning	Essential Qualities of a Nurse
- to utilize resources - share their experiences and knowledge - apply the nursing knowledge gained in the classroom to practical scenarios - update their knowledge	- influence patients with their communication skills - record nursing actions performed by them - provide patient-centred care, prioritizing patient's needs - observe and participate in a variety of clinical experiences - perform clinical skills with the information and resources provided - participate in decision-making during patient care - ask questions during clinical practice	- exercise effective verbal and written communication - demonstrate honesty in dealings with patients and other health care team members

Opportunities & challenges perceived by nursing students towards empowerment

Thematic analysis revealed four themes related to opportunities and three themes related to challenges. Participants were enthusiastic in sharing their perception and they were aware of the opportunities and challenges.

Regarding opportunities, the following themes were emerged out.

1. Teaching Methods:

Subtheme 1: Interactive Teaching Methods

- "The use of PPT presentations and videos brought the learning material to life".
- "Guest lecturers from diverse healthcare discipline and language experts broadened our perspectives and improved our knowledge and communication skill".
- "Teachers sharing their practical experiences made us to understand the concepts in a better way".
- "Engaging in online quizzes and gamified learning during lockdown enhanced the joy of learning and it was fun participating".
- "Field trips relevant to various subjects enabled us to observe real-world objects, places and natural events. These visits really improved our outlook".

Subtheme 2: Classroom Participation and Presentations

- "Taking part in classroom teaching, presentations, and procedure demonstrations increased our confidence."

Subtheme 3: Periodic evaluation and special attention

- "Cyclic tests and feedback by teachers helped us to feel empowered. Special attention given by the teachers for the low scorers helped us to improve".

Subtheme 4: Availability of Resources

- "Facilities like library books, journals, computer lab, and internet facilities helped us to
- update".

2. Participation in Co-curricular Activities:

Subtheme 1: Committee Works and Idea Sharing

- "Involvement and working for various committees of SNA, NSS, RRC, YRC, and sharing ideas during committee work increased our confidence."

Subtheme 2: Competition and Achievement

- "Participating in in-house and outdoor competitions and winning prizes improved our spirit".

Subtheme 3: Workshops and training

- "Various social skill training programs organized by SNA, NSS were really helpful to
- harness our qualities".

3. Hands-on Clinical Experiences:

Subtheme 1: Skill Building and Confidence

- "Practicing skills in real-life scenarios and working directly with patients was invaluable for our learning."
- "Clinical instructors' presence, support and encouragement allowed us to perform challenging tasks."
- "Working with medical interns, staff nurses, and technicians in the clinical area increased our skill and confidence."

Subtheme 2: Application of Classroom Knowledge

- "Actually observing and performing on patients whatever learnt in the class room was rewarding and empowering."

Subtheme 3: Demonstration Labs and Fear Reduction

- "Practicing in well equipped skill labs with checklists helped us to

overcome fear and perform without omitting steps of procedure".

Subtheme 4: Emergency Care and Life-saving Measures

- "Providing care to patients with emergency and performing life-saving measures along with others increased our satisfaction and gave a powerful feeling".

4. Mentorship:

Subtheme 1: Supportive Guidance

- "Receiving feedback and advice from the mentors facilitated personal and professional growth".

Subtheme 2: Anxiety Reduction

- "Knowing that there was someone to turn to for guidance reduced our anxiety".

In relation to challenges the following themes emerged out.

Negative Perception about a Student by the Educator

- "Some teachers were biased and their negative perceptions decreased our confidence"
- "Teachers connect our past with the present performance and grade low or moderate even though we give our best".
- "Unfair treatment resulting from stereotyping decreased our morale".

Language Barrier:

- "Because of language difficulty, many a times I stooped expressing my opinion and I felt shy in speaking in Tamil in front of the teachers and students"
- "I feel ashamed and scared to ask and even talk to my teachers, medical students and doctors in the clinical area".
- "My Language led to miscommunication between students and it was difficult for me to overcome".

Fear and Low Confidence:

Subtheme 1: Fear of Authority Figures

- "I feel so nervous around the teachers. Like, I'm afraid to ask questions because I worry they'll think I'm not smart enough".

Subtheme 2: Low Self-Confidence

- "I struggle with my confidence sometimes. It's hard to believe in myself when I see my peers excelling and I feel like I'm falling behind".

Association of the demographic variables with the level of empowerment perceived by nursing students

There was a statistically significant association between level of empowerment and the demographic variables of students such as, medium of instruction at school and the year of study of students at 5% level of significance.

DISCUSSION

This study assessed the empowerment of nursing students and explored their perception towards opportunities and challenges in empowerment. The majority of the students' perception of empowerment was high. Participants expressed that the teaching methods, clinical experience, co-curricular activities and mentorship were the opportunities for their empowerment. This study finding is supported by the studies by Ahn & Choi (2015) and Bradbury.Jones, et al. (2010), Al-Hussaimi, et.al (2011) and Kirk, et al. (2016). Participants stated that negative perception of the teacher, language barrier and fear and low confidence were the challenges in empowerment. Forty one percentage of the students stated that they were not empowered to demand from the teacher what they want and 28% of the students stated that they were not empowered to challenge ideas presented in the class and express difference of opinion with the teacher and 34% to raise voice for patients and 26% to raise voice for issues related to profession. This study finding is supported by the study conducted by Bradbury.Jones, et.al. (2010)

CONCLUSION

Empowerment is the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities. Nursing empowerment means the ability to effectively motivate and mobilize self and others to accomplish positive outcomes in nursing practice Innovative and collaborative Teaching Methods, Versatile Co-curricular Activities, Hands-on Clinical Experiences and Mentorship were perceived as

opportunities, Negative Perception about a Student by the Educator, Fear and Low Confidence, Language Barrier were perceived as challenges by students towards self empowerment. Nursing educational institutions should take initiatives to help students, transform the above challenges into opportunities and to create a empowered nursing society.

Declaration by Authors

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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