



LEARNING TODAY, LEADING TOMORROW: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE EYES OF NURSING STUDENTS

Hospital Administration

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a vital competency in nursing that ensures quality patient care, effective decision-making, teamwork and professional development. It is particularly important in clinical and military settings where rapid decision-making and efficient coordination are essential. Academic self-efficacy and clinical readiness are key factors influencing leadership development among nursing students. This study aimed to assess academic self-efficacy, clinical readiness and their relationship with leadership qualities among nursing students. This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 120 B.Sc. Nursing students. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising socio-demographic data, Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, Casey-Fink Readiness for Practice Survey and Leadership Style Questionnaire. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that 56.7% of nursing students had moderate academic self-efficacy and 43.3% had high academic self-efficacy. Regarding clinical readiness, 65.83% demonstrated moderate readiness, 33.33% had high readiness and 0.83% had low readiness. Most students demonstrated moderate to high leadership qualities, with stronger democratic leadership traits observed. No statistically significant association was found between academic self-efficacy and leadership qualities ($\chi^2 = 1.07$, $p = 0.9$). However, clinical readiness showed a statistically significant association with authoritarian leadership ($\chi^2 = 34.86$, $p < 0.0001$) and democratic leadership ($\chi^2 = 46.21$, $p < 0.0001$). The study concludes that clinical readiness significantly influences leadership qualities among nursing students. Strengthening clinical exposure and leadership-focused training may enhance leadership competencies and professional preparedness.

KEYWORDS

Leadership, Nursing students, Academic self-efficacy, Clinical readiness, Leadership qualities, Nursing education

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is recognized as a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness and healthcare outcomes. According to the Global Leadership Forecast (2023), there is a 77% global leadership gap, highlighting the growing need for competent leaders across professions.

In nursing, leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring quality patient care, effective decision-making, teamwork and professional development. The World Health Organization (2020) reported that there are 27.9 million nurses worldwide, although only a limited proportion occupy formal leadership positions.

In India, nurses constitute nearly 47% of the healthcare workforce, yet only 10% hold decision-making positions, as reported by the International Council of Nurses (2022). Furthermore, an International Council of Nurses (2021) study found that 75% of nurses believe leadership training should be initiated early in nursing education to develop accountable and visionary future leaders. Evidence also suggests that effective nursing leadership can reduce patient mortality by up to 20%.

The development of leadership competencies among nurses is strongly influenced by both academic self-efficacy and clinical readiness. Academic self-efficacy encompasses confidence, resilience, and problem-solving abilities, whereas clinical readiness reflects competence in patient care, adaptability and critical thinking. Together, these factors contribute significantly to leadership development among nursing students.

Data from the *Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health Journal* indicates that 48% of nursing students demonstrated moderate clinical readiness, while 52% exhibited high clinical readiness, emphasizing the importance of strengthening leadership competencies during nursing education and training.

Need And Scope Of The Study

Leadership is essential in nursing, especially in military settings where quick decision-making and effective coordination are crucial. Understanding how academic and clinical experiences shape leadership among nursing students is important due to limited existing research.

This study assesses the impact of academic and clinical experiences on

leadership development among nursing students and helps identify areas for improving nursing education and training.

Objectives

1. To assess academic self-efficacy among nursing students.
2. To assess clinical readiness among nursing students.
3. To assess the relationship between academic self-efficacy and leadership qualities among nursing students.
4. To assess the relationship between clinical readiness and leadership qualities among nursing students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a quantitative approach with a descriptive cross-sectional research design and was conducted at the College of Nursing. The study population comprised B.Sc. Nursing students who fulfilled the inclusion criteria and were available during the data collection period.

A total of 120 participants were selected using purposive sampling. The study included B.Sc. Nursing students, while 1st year students and those unwilling to participate were excluded from the study.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The tool consisted of socio-demographic data, Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, Casey-Fink Readiness for Practice Survey and Leadership Style Questionnaire. The socio-demographic section included participant characteristics, while the remaining sections assessed academic self-efficacy, readiness for practice and leadership styles among nursing students.

The data collection tool was administered to participants in a standardized manner to ensure uniformity and consistency in responses. All participants received the same questionnaire with identical instructions.

The collected data were organized and analysed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics based on the study objectives.

RESULTS

Demographic Variables of Nursing Students

Study was conducted among 120 nursing students. Most students were aged below 22 years (48.3%), followed by 22–24 years (42.5%). The

majority had completed 12th standard (89.2%). Regarding year of study, 37.5% were in third year, 34.2% in final year and 28.3% in second year. More than half (52.5%) had no formal leadership role, while 28.3% were batch committee representatives. Most students (80.8%) had not attended any leadership workshop.

Academic Self-Efficacy and Clinical Readiness Among Nursing Students

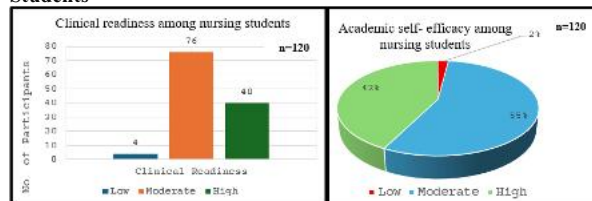


Fig 1: Distribuion of Academic Self-Efficacy and Clinical Readiness among Nursing Students

The findings revealed that 56.7% of nursing students had moderate academic self-efficacy, while 43.3% had high academic self-efficacy. Regarding clinical readiness, the majority (65.83%) demonstrated moderate clinical readiness, 33.33% had high clinical readiness and only 0.83% showed low clinical readiness.

Leadership Qualities among Nursing Students

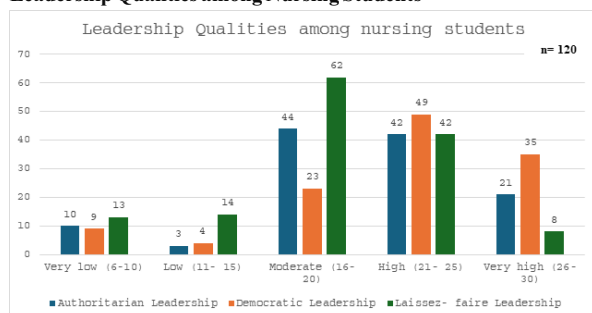


Fig 2: Distribution of Leadership Qualities among Nursing Students

The findings showed that the majority of students demonstrated moderate to high leadership qualities across all leadership styles. In authoritarian leadership, 44% showed moderate and 42% high leadership qualities. In democratic leadership, 49% showed high and 35% very high leadership qualities, indicating stronger democratic leadership traits. In laissez-faire leadership, 52% demonstrated moderate and 38% high leadership qualities.

Association between Academic Self-Efficacy and Leadership Qualities

Clinical readiness	Leadership styles			Chi-square (χ^2)	p-value
	Authoritarian	Democratic	Laissez-faire		
Low					
Moderate	0	43	19	11.78	0.003
High	10	63	65		

Association between Academic Self-Efficacy and Leadership Qualities

The association between academic self-efficacy and leadership qualities was analysed using chi-square test. The findings revealed no statistically significant association between academic self-efficacy and democratic leadership qualities ($\chi^2 = 4.04$, $p = 0.40$) and laissez-faire leadership qualities ($\chi^2 = 5.11$, $p = 0.28$). Overall, academic self-efficacy was not significantly associated with leadership styles ($\chi^2 = 1.07$, $p = 0.9$).

Association between Clinical Readiness and Leadership Qualities

The association between clinical readiness and leadership qualities was analysed using chi-square test. The findings revealed a statistically significant association between clinical readiness and authoritarian leadership qualities ($\chi^2 = 34.86$, $p < 0.0001$) and democratic leadership qualities ($\chi^2 = 46.21$, $p < 0.0001$). Students with higher clinical readiness demonstrated better leadership qualities.

The study findings suggest that nursing students had moderate to high academic self-efficacy, clinical readiness, and leadership qualities.

Academic self-efficacy showed no significant association with leadership styles. However, clinical readiness demonstrated a strong statistically significant association with leadership qualities, highlighting its important role in leadership development among nursing students.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study revealed a statistically significant association between clinical readiness and leadership qualities among nursing students. Significant associations were observed with authoritarian leadership ($\chi^2 = 34.86$, $p < 0.0001$) and democratic leadership ($\chi^2 = 46.21$, $p < 0.0001$), indicating that students with higher clinical readiness demonstrated better leadership qualities.

These findings are consistent with studies by Mohammed Qtait, which reported that interventions to improve nurses' leadership should address cognitive, interpersonal and psychological factors, including emotional intelligence, empowerment and critical reflexivity. Similarly, the present study highlights the importance of clinical readiness in leadership development.

The findings also align with studies by Eduardo Salas et al. and Richard Clarke & Robert Horton, which suggest that effective leadership in structured clinical settings improves decision-making, adherence to protocols and overall performance. In the present study, students with higher leadership scores demonstrated greater clinical readiness.

However, previous studies by Joan Giltinane and Mona Al-Yami & Roger Watson caution that excessive reliance on authoritarian leadership may limit critical thinking and adaptability. This indicates the need to balance directive leadership with autonomy during nursing education.

Overall, the findings suggest that leadership qualities, particularly authoritarian and democratic leadership traits, play a significant role in improving clinical readiness among nursing students and contribute positively to preparedness for professional nursing practice.

Strengths: Use of standardized tools; Focus on both academic self-efficacy and clinical readiness; Comprehensive assessment of leadership styles.

Limitations: Single-institution study; Small sample size limiting generalizability.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations

The study highlights the important role of clinical readiness in developing leadership qualities among nursing students. Strengthening clinical exposure, practical training and leadership-focused learning can enhance decision-making, teamwork and professional preparedness.

Leadership training should be integrated early into nursing education through workshops, simulation-based training and clinical practice opportunities. Further studies with larger samples and multiple settings are recommended to improve generalizability and explore additional factors influencing leadership development.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that nursing students demonstrated moderate to high levels of academic self-efficacy, clinical readiness and leadership qualities. While academic self-efficacy showed no statistically significant association with leadership styles, clinical readiness demonstrated a strong and significant association with leadership qualities, particularly authoritarian and democratic leadership styles. The findings highlight that clinical readiness plays a crucial role in leadership development among nursing students. Strengthening clinical exposure and leadership-focused training during nursing education may enhance leadership competencies and better prepare future nurses for professional roles in both military and civilian healthcare settings.

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