



Employability Skills of Novice Nurses

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Abstract

Employability skills play a pivotal role in the success of graduates as they transition into workforce and embark on their professional journeys. Having employability skills are essential for novice nurses to provide care for patients. Employability skills have direct effects on the safety and health of patients, lack of it may result in medical mistakes. This point of convergence of this study was on identifying the employability skills of novice nurses through the perspective of nurse administrators, nursing supervisors, and ward in-charges. The study involved the development of novice nurse's employability skill inventory which was utilized to assess the perceived employability skills of 70 samples from tertiary care hospitals in Bengaluru. Non probability convenient sampling technique was used to select the samples for the study. The findings revealed that 31.7% of the novice nurses were perceived to be good in

communication skills. Most of them were poor in basic clinical nursing tasks (31.45%) and patient safety (24.3%). However, they often struggle with critical thinking and problem solving (87.1%), patient education (92.9%), technology use (88.6%) and infection control practices (78.6%). The nurse administrators perceived that majority of novice nurses exhibited poor employability skills, only few displayed very good employability skills and none found to possess excellent employability skills. Assessing the skills can help identify areas that need improvement, reducing the risk of errors and adverse events. This information can guide the development of tailored training and mentoring programs to help novice nurses to advance their profession.

Keywords: Novice nurses, employability skills, clinical learning environment, theory and practice gap.

Introduction

Employability skills, often denoted as “soft skills” or “job readiness skills”, constitute a repertoire of non-technical proficiencies, qualities, and attributes pivotal for triumph in the professional sphere. Their significance contributes to patient care and overall efficacy in workplace.

Novice nurses, those with limited practical experience, encompassing recent graduates from the initial and secondary years of clinical exposure, novice nurses collectively comprise over 10% of nursing staff within healthcare institutions.⁽¹⁾

This study underscores the imperative for nurse administrators, nurse educators, and healthcare institutions to meticulously assess the current landscape of employability skills among novice nurses. Adequate preparation and hands-on practical experiences will enable novice nurses to be competent in providing safe and effective care.

Aligning nursing education programs with workforce demands becomes paramount, ensuring that graduates are equipped with indispensable skills for seamless integration into the nursing profession. The assessment of employability skills in novice nurses not only refines curricula and teaching methodologies but also enables targeted interventions to enhance the practical skills during this critical phase of professional transition⁽²⁾.

Methods

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a descriptive exploratory research design to assess the nurse administrator’s perception regarding employability skills of novice nurses. The study was conducted in tertiary care hospitals of Bengaluru. Following an extensive literature review and expert consultations, the novice nurses employability skill inventory was developed. This instrument, presented as a four-point

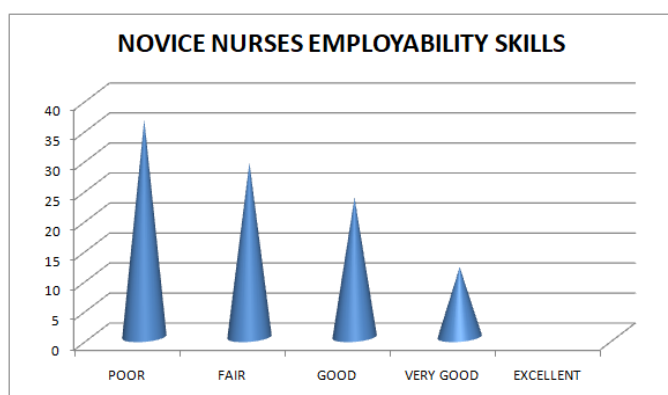
likert scale, encompasses two sections: section A and section: B. Section A consisted of socio-demographic variables and section B consisted of eight domains of employability skills, including basic clinical nursing skills, knowledge of patient safety, infection control, patient education, technology use, critical thinking and problem solving skills, personality and soft skills, and communication skills. The validity and reliability of the tool was established ($\alpha = 0.95$). Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethical committee of the institution. The study participants who were referred to as nurse administrators were nursing superintendents, deputy nursing superintendents, assistant nursing superintendents, nurse supervisors and ward in-charges. Non-probability convenient sampling was employed. The subjects were briefly explained about the purpose of the study. A total number of 70 participants were selected.

Results

Among 70 study participants a significant proportion, 50.7% of the respondents held the role of ward in-charges and a substantial majority that is 78.6% of them had a clinical tenure exceeding 15 years . 91.3% of the respondents were primarily engaged in close supervision, training and overseeing infection control practices. All the respondents spent approximately more than 3 hours per day in supervising and educating staff nurses. With respect to overall employability skills, the majority (36.2%) of novice nurses exhibited poor employability skills, with 29.0% displaying fair skills. Only 11.6% demonstrated very good employability skills, and none exhibited excellent skills. With regards to specific skill domains the nurse administrators stated that novice nurses performed inadequately in critical thinking and problem solving skills(33.2%), patient education(33.7%), technology use(33.25%),and infection control practices(33.93%), with mean percentages below 40%.In

contrast they fared relatively better in knowledge of patient safety(40.05%), personality and soft skills(42.7%), and basic clinical nursing skills(45.5%), although mean percentages remained below 45%.communication skills were a notable strength, with a mean percentage of 59.5%. The study concluded that the nurse administrators perceived that novice nurses are very poor at critical thinking and problem solving skills , patient education , infection control practices and technology use. Whereas the novice nurses seemed to perform better in basic clinical nursing skills, knowledge of patient safety and personality and soft skills. The novice nurses are good in communication skills

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of subjects in terms of novice nurses employability skills



Discussion

The discernment of employability skills among novice nurses is crucial for the enhancement of health care quality and the evolution of nursing education programs. In our study, the nurse administrators found novice nurses exhibited pronounced deficiencies in critical thinking and problem-solving skills, technology use, patient education, and infection control practices, with mean percentages below 40%. Contrarily, they demonstrated relatively better proficiency in knowledge of patient safety, personality and soft skills, and basic clinical nursing skills, although mean percentages

lingered below the 45% mark. The noteworthy exception was communication skills, wherein novice nurses excelled (59.53%). This echoes the findings of studies conducted in Victorian branch, Australia in 2016, and the School of Nursing, University of Namibia, Africa, which also identified shortcomings in critical skills among newly qualified nursing graduates.

A staggering 5487 nursing colleges, both private and government, currently exist in India. However, the absence of parent hospitals has resulted in inadequate clinical training, a sentiment echoed in the findings of a report by FICCI (2020). The gaps identified include understaffing, poor faculty credentials, and a lack of faculty development programs in most nursing educational institutions ⁽³⁾. A review of strategies for bridging the theory practice gaps from the perspective of nursing experts conducted in Iran (2019) revealed that creating an appropriate context for both nurses and trainers to learn from each other using practical language through clinical guidelines can help ⁽⁴⁾.

To address these challenges and enhance the employability skills of novice nurses, several meticulous measures are proposed. First and foremost, permission to impart nursing education should be granted exclusively to institutions with affiliated parent hospitals, ensuring a rich clinical learning environment reported by express healthcare (2018) ⁽⁵⁾. The recruitment of teaching faculty with substantial clinical experience is paramount, as it directly impacts the quality of clinical learning for students. The strategic measures aim to fortify the foundation of nursing education, equipping novice nurses with the requisite skills to navigate the complexities of contemporary healthcare settings ⁽⁶⁾.

Conclusion

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patient education, infection control practices and technology use. Whereas the novice nurses seemed to perform better in basic clinical nursing skills, knowledge of patient safety and personality and soft skills. The novice nurses are good in communication skills.

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