

Aptitude about Nursing among Nursing Professionals

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Aptitude is zeal towards any activity. It is a natural ability or fitness or readiness to learn and practice some activities-may be related to a profession. Aptitude tests are designed to predict future performance in some activity. Nursing is a profession. Nurses need to have aptitude in nursing since good nursing service for the public will continue to depend on nurses.

The present study gives a baseline data to understand the level of aptitude of nursing professionals (Staff Nurses and Senior Nurses) and the factors which influence them to take up nursing as their profession.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the study was to study the aptitude in nursing among nursing professionals. The objectives of the study were:

- ◆ To devise a tool for the study.
- ◆ To assess the aptitude of Nursing Professionals by using the following areas:

Memory

- (i) Visual Memory
- (ii) Memory for content

- Knowledge

- (i) Basic Sciences
- (ii) Applied Science

- Vocabulary

- (i) General Terms
- (ii) Professional Terms

- Judgement in Nursing Situations.
- Ability to comprehend instructions and follow.

◆ To compare the aptitude of nursing professionals with socio-demographic characteristics like : Age, Sex, Religion, Position, Qualifications (General and Professional), Experience, and type of Hospitals.

◆ To verify the factors influencing nurses to take up nursing profession.

Important terms like aptitude, nursing professionals, profession, professional nursing, achievement, skill and judgement were operationally defined for the purpose of the study.

The conceptual framework selected for the study was adopted and modified from Smeltzer C.H; "Psychological Evaluation in Nursing Education" 1965.

Extensive search was made to review the available and related literature. The available literature was organized under the following areas, year-wise;

- a) Aptitude and achievement
- b) Performance and skills, and
- c) Judgement, decision-making and critical thinking.

The research approach used in the study was Descriptive Survey approach. Questionnaire and Opinionnaire were developed for data collection.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts:

Part I consisted of items on Personal data-age, sex, religion, qualification, position, experi-

ence and the type of hospitals. The respondents were requested to place a check mark in the appropriate space provided for each item.

Part II consisted of Five Tests:

Test I had A and B divisions. A division consisted of 15 items related to Visual Memory, division B consisted of 25 items related to Memory for content, where the subjects were requested to go through a labelled diagram and study material for 10 minutes. After which the subjects were instructed to identify the numbered parts and write the number in the blank space provided before each name of the part, the number which designates the particular part and complete A division. In division B the study subjects were requested to read the statements carefully. If the statement was true, encircle T; if the statement was false, encircle F.

Test 2 had items related to knowledge under which there were two divisions. Items under A division were related to Basic Sciences and items under B division were related to Applied Sciences. The study subjects were requested to read the statements carefully. If the statement was true, encircle T; if the statement was false, encircle F.

Test 3 - items related to Vocabulary, under which there were two divisions. Division A consisted of General terms, under which there were three lists of 15 items each. Division B consisted of professional terms under which there were three lists of 15 items of each. Each of the items

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in the left hand column of the lists defined/described one of the numbered words in the right hand column. The study subjects were requested to place the number on the line before each item to show which word was defined / described by that item and to do each list separately.

Test 4 had items related to Judgement in Nursing Situations. There were 10 statements each of which had four suggested answers. The subjects were requested to 'check' in the space provided in the beginning of the answer, which they consider most correct answer.

Test 5 had items related to the Ability of the study subjects to Comprehend Instructions and follow. In this test a passage was given and the study subjects were requested to read the passage and fill out the 'Nurses Report' on the next page.

Part III consisted of 50 items concerning the study subjects opinion on the reasons for the selection of nursing as their profession. Two alternatives 'Yes' and 'No' were given for each item. Subjects were requested to put a "check-mark" on the line in the space provided against the alternative with which they had agreed.

The developed tool was sent to 10 experts, who were selected on the basis of their qualifications, experience and expertise and their suggestions were incorporated.

A pilot study was conducted on 51 subjects in the same setting and the tool was found to be appropriate, complete, clear, feasible and understandable.

Reliability was established by 'test-retest' method. The percentage of response was calcu-

lated on each item and an average of 95% was found to be high.

Setting, sample and sampling:

The study was carried out in three govt. hospitals, two govt. undertakings (autonomous) institutions and two private hospitals in Bangalore city who accorded permission for data collection. The decision was made to include all the staff Nurses and the Senior Nurses. The tool was personally administered to 520 nursing professionals; 487 Staff Nurses and 33 senior Nurses. The required data was collected after obtaining permission from the concerned authorities.

Data Analysis

For data analysis descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Personal data was analysed in terms of frequencies and percentages and presented in the form of tables and piegraphs. The data related to the performance of subjects in each test was analysed by assigning numerical value to each correct response and total weightage scores for each respondent were calculated. Mean and standard deviation were computed for each variable and for each test and presented in the form of tables.

Mean was selected to determine the performance of the subjects in each test. The respondents were categorized as "unsatisfactory", "satisfactory" and "good" depending on their performance in each test. Wherever necessary statistical tests were applied and significance was calculated and presented in the form of tables.

Items related to the expressed opinion of the respondents towards the selection of nursing as their professions were categorized into - items related

to attitude, influence of personal interest, influence of socio-economic factors etc. Related data was analysed in terms of frequencies and percentages and presented in tables.

Findings of the Study

Majority, 313 (60.19%) study subjects were in the age group of 21-30 years; 489 (94.04%) were females; 272 (52.30%) were Hindus; 487 (93.65%) were staff nurses; 443 (85.19%) had general education upto-PUC; 299 (57.50%) had general nursing; 355 (68.27%) had less than 11 years of experience; and 281 (54.04%) were working in government hospitals.

The performance of (68.05% and 16.67% study subjects in the age group of 31-40 years was satisfactory and good (mean - 146.74) respectively compared to other two groups. The chi-square value, 1.99 is statistically not significant at 0.05 level.

The performance of females 65.24% and 17.18% was satisfactory and good (mean - 145.82) respectively compared to their counterpart. The computed chi-square value, 1.34 is statistically not significant at 0.05 levels.

The performance of 68.05% and 20.75% Christians was satisfactory and good (mean - 151.86) respectively compared to Hindus whose performance was 61.40% satisfactory and 14.34% was good (mean - 139.63). The computed chi-square value, 18.51 is statistically significant at 0.05 level.

The study revealed that the performance of staff nurses, 64.48% was satisfactory and 17.45% was good (mean - 145.35) compared to senior nurses, whose performance 69.70% satisfactory and 12.12% good (mean - 145.73). The calculated chi-square value, 0.64 is statistically not significant at 0.05 level.

The performance of subjects with Bachelor degree general qualification, 61.54% was satisfactory and 23.08% was good (mean = 146.55) compared to other two categories. The computed chi-square value, 1.81 is significant at 0.05 level.

The performance of subjects of Basic B.Sc. (N) professional qualification, 70.95% was satisfactory and 26.16% was good (mean = 157.65) compared to other two groups. The calculated chi-square value, 55.60 is statistically significant at 0.05 level.

The study revealed that the performance of subjects with 11-20 years experience, 68.25% was satisfactory and 19.05% was good (mean = 147.62) compared to other two groups. The computed chi-square value, 11.41 is statistically significant at 0.05 level.

The performance of subjects working in govt. undertaking hospitals, 62.64% was satisfactory and 20.88% was good (mean = 150.15) compared to other two groups. The calculated chi-square value, 3.46 is statistically significant at 0.05 level.

In brief the study reveals that the performance of study subjects is dependent on variables like Religion, Professional Qualification, and Experience. However, variables like Age, Sex, Position, General Qualification and Type of Hospitals do not play a significant role in the performance of study subjects.

Items related to the expressed opinion of the respondent towards the selection of nursing as their profession were categorized into-

- 1) Items related to attitude
- 2) Influence of personal interest,
- 3) Influence of socio-economic factors
- 4) Influence of other factors

The related data was analysed in terms of frequencies and percentages and presented in the form of tables, in relation to the respondents' characteristics.

The following were some of the factors, which have mostly influenced the subjects to take up nursing as their profession irrespective of their characteristics.

- ◆ Nursing profession is one through which one can serve humanity and selected nursing to serve humanity.
- ◆ Joined nursing with the idea of becoming good nurses.
- ◆ Got inspiration to get into nursing after seeing nurses serving the patients in the hospitals / clinics.
- ◆ Presence of clinic / hospitals close to their residence.
- ◆ Better scope of nurses both in India and abroad.
- ◆ Their religion was suited for nursing.
- ◆ With the idea of contributing to the welfare of mankind
- ◆ With their own interest.
- ◆ To have better personality development.
- ◆ Their close relatives were admitted to the hospitals.
- ◆ Inspired by nurses uniform.
- ◆ Easy availability of job after studying nursing.
- ◆ To acquire knowledge in nursing and to get diploma/ degree in nursing.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the staff nurses and senior nurses who were working in selected hospitals of Bangalore City, and to those hospitals in Bangalore City who accorded permission to collect data for the study.

Recommendation

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- ◆ It was proposed to conduct aptitude test at entry point for the aspirants of nursing profession.
- ◆ Since graduate and diploma programme vary and the nature of work does not differ, instead of dual entry level system of nursing it can be emphasized the degree as the minimal entry-level for professional nursing practice.
- ◆ It was recommended that the promotions to the higher cadres should be based on seniority cum qualification rather than only seniority.
- ◆ The nursing professionals who opt teaching should be screened for aptitude in teaching before they take up teaching instead of considering only qualifications, keeping in view the preparation of better nurses through quality nursing education.
- ◆ Frequent evaluations be made for nursing professionals so that they are forced to keep abreast with up-to-date knowledge and the license of only those renewed whose performance is satisfactory.
- ◆ It was recommended to conduct frequent in-service education programme under continuing education department in the hospitals set up based on the needs of practicing nursing professionals.
- ◆ It was recommended to provide opportunities for the nursing professionals to pursue higher education to enable them to develop their critical thinking.
- ◆ Setting up library facilities was recommended in the hospitals.
- ◆ It was recommended to place emphasis on collaborative functioning of nursing administrators and nursing educators.