

Intervention to Enhance General Self Concept and Professional Behaviour of Staff Nurse

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Abstract

This study offers a controlled approach to creating awareness of self and improving professional behaviour within the framework of a workshop, using a structured intervention strategy. It aimed to observe the effects of intervention strategy on general self- concept of staff nurses both during and following the delivery of the intervention. The study group included 500 staff nurses working in two selected general hospitals in north Bangaluru. A three-day workshop was conducted on topics such as self-concept & personal identity, emotional & spiritual intelligence, communication & assertiveness, attitude & professional behaviour. The findings showed significantly high scores in the overall mean in the post-intervention analysis of the experimental group at 0.05 level of significance compared to the pre- intervention score and also that in the control group, indicating effectiveness of the intervention strategy.

Nursing is a discipline that values knowledge and understanding. Knowledge is derived from understanding self, theory, practice and research. In an article entitled "Nursing the sick" (1882) Florence Nightingale wrote, "Nursing is above all a progressive calling. Year by year nurses are called upon to learn new and improved methods to do more and better than earlier". In the words of Paton (2005), sustaining self should be the main focus of nurses in the domains of practice in order to respond in a manner consistent with their own professional beliefs and values especially in situations that interrupt smooth activity. This view is shared by Jack et al (2007), who observed a relationship between self- awareness and nursing practice of the nurses. Nursing is the act of conveying individualised or person-to-person concern or regard through a specific set of behaviours. How a nurse perceives him/herself affects his/her behaviour as a professional nurse.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of self-concept and professional behaviour among the staff nurses.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of a structured intervention strategy on self-concept and professional behaviour.
3. To find out the (a) correlation between self -concept and professional behaviour, and (b) the association of self- concept and professional behaviour with selected demographic variables.

Review of Literature

Walter et al (1999) in a study conducted in Sydney, "Discovery of Self" observed that the self- concept

of individual nurses is still largely unexplored in nursing. The author chose this unique intervention strategy to introduce it to the staff nurses who were willing to participate and experiment on its effects. Assessing the general self-concept and correlating these with selected demographic variables may contribute towards the enhancement of a positive self-concept in the staff nurses and also fine tune their leadership, team building and managerial skills.

Bergers (2011) conducted a study to assess the efficacy of an intervention aimed at providing the nurses in the well-baby clinic with psycho educational knowledge pertaining to stress and trauma in infants, young children and parents. The results showed that compared to the waiting list group the intervention group improved significantly on the professional self-efficacy. The improvement was observed to be clinically significant.

Deshpande (2009) examined factors impacting ethical behaviour of 103 hospital nurses and learned that the level of emotional intelligence, self-concept and ethical behaviour of peers had a significant impact on ethical behaviour of nurses. Emotional intelligence, ethical behaviour of co-workers, and caring climate were significantly correlated with ethical behaviour of self.

Jack (2012) conducted a study to find the relationship between professional self-concept, coping style and health status and factors likely to influence them, and provide the basis for those who are to further enhance nurses professional thinking, coping ability and mental health. The nurse's professional self-concept and health level was found low. It made no difference on demographic information in the total score of professional self-concept ($p > 0.05$).

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The study highlighted problem solving and nurse to nurse relationship as major factors that affect the social, mental and general health status.

Oman (2008) evaluated the effects on health professional, the relational care giving self-efficacy from an eight-week and 16-hour training in self-management tools. Positive effects were observed at post-test, eight- and 19-week follow-up and were mediated by adherence to practices and stress reductions ($p < 0.05$). Evidence from the study suggested that the programme enhances the care giving self-efficacy of the health professional and may merit inclusion in training curricula.

Materials and Methods

A quantitative research approach was used. To collect the data.

Research design: True experimental two group pre-test post-test design was used. The study was carried out using questionnaire method and simple random sampling with lottery method was carried out. A semi-structured self-rating scale on general self-concept and a checklist for professional behaviour was designed.

Ethical considerations: A letter of consent was obtained from the hospital ethical committee to conduct the study. All the participants were assured of confidentiality of information shared, and autonomy for the voluntary nature of their participation before obtaining consent for participation in the study.

Data Collection

The study group included 500 staff nurses randomly assigned to experimental and control group consisting 250 in each group. During the course of the study, perception of self and satisfaction of self was assessed using a semi-structured self-rating scale both before and after the intervention to evaluate the changes in their general self-concept. Professional behaviour was observed using a check list.

The data was collected from August 2011 to January 2012. Consent was obtained from each subject after giving assurance of confidentiality. The study was carried out in three phases: the pre-intervention assessment phase, intervention phase and post intervention assessment phase.

In pre-intervention phase, the investigator visited the hospitals on a daily basis simultaneously to both hospitals prior to the introduction of the intervention to observe the professional behaviour of the staff nurses based on the self-prepared behaviour observation checklist. Participants were blinded with respect to the observation of professional behaviour (non-participant observation). The focus was on the nurse interactions and dealings with their patients and their family or significant others, colleagues,

supervisors, nursing students, other members of the health team, and non-nursing staff. Particular emphasis was put on observing while dealing with conflict provoking or problem-solving situations as these may trigger emotions and thereby influence their behaviour in a negative way. The investigator took notes during observation and entered the findings in the observation checklist later on the same day.

During intervention phase the researcher focused on the experimental group. During the visit to the wards the investigator discussed with the staff nurses regarding a three days workshop on the topics which were already prepared (intervention strategy) such as self-concept & personal identity, emotional & spiritual intelligence, communication & assertiveness, attitude & professional behaviour.

Voluntary participation to the workshop was encouraged; 25-30 participants in each 3 days session of workshop were permitted. The intervention was introduced by the use of LCD, posters, role play, and demonstration of yoga through video presentations. Group work, individual presentations, homework etc. were given to the participants.

On the third, concluding day of workshop the post-assessment of self-concept was done by administering the Tennessee self-concept self-rating tool to the participants. A certificate of participation was provided to the staff nurses in the experimental group as an incentive to encourage voluntary participation.

During the first part of post-intervention phase, the pre-assessment of self-concept of staff nurses who did not attend the intervention strategy but voluntarily participated in the study as control group was done. Professional behaviours of the available staff both in the experimental and control groups were assessed simultaneously.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage was done for the analysis of demographic variables, and mean and standard deviation for the measurements obtained on self-concept and professional behaviour. Paired t-test was used to compare the pre- and post-intervention outcomes of both the experimental and control group. The independent 't' test (students) was used to compare the outcome of both groups and association was measured using chi-square test. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation was used to find out the relationship between self-concept and professional behaviour.

Limitations

1. Generalisation is limited to staff nurses from two hospitals in the north zone of Bengaluru.

- The study being cross sectional in nature, it only shows a transitory picture, and does not reveal the development of self-concept.
- Variables like attitude, personality, and intelligence were not taken into account.

Results

The calculated 't' value in the perceived and satisfied self-care were greater than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance, indicating significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the pre- and post-intervention scores in the experimental group (Table 1).

Table 2 indicates that the mean post-intervention score of professional behaviour among the staff nurses in the experimental group is found to be higher ($84.3\% \pm 6.6\%$) as compared to the staff nurses in the control group ($58.5\% \pm 8.9\%$) under study. The finding shows a statistically significant high score in the experimental group at 0.05 significance level.

Table 3 revealed a significant positive correlation between the pre- and post-intervention mean scores of self-concept and professional behaviour, (pre-test $r = +0.781$, post-test $r = +0.894$) among the staff nurses in the control group at 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion

This study was aimed to investigate the effects of an intervention on self-concept and professional behaviour of staff nurses in selected hospitals in the north Bengaluru.

The pre-intervention mean score in the perceived self was found to be $61.6 \pm 9.9\%$ and the post-intervention mean score was $80 \pm 9.4\%$, $t(0.05, 249df) = 28.96$. The pre intervention mean score in the satisfied self was found to be $62.5 \pm 10.8\%$ and the post-intervention mean score was $82.7 \pm 9.6\%$, $t(0.05, 249df) = 33.98$.

The post-intervention, mean scores ($M = 84.3 \pm 6.6\%$) of professional behaviour of staff nurses in the experimental group was significantly higher as compared to the pre-intervention score ($57.1 \pm 9.0\%$). The paired t-test revealed a statistically reliable difference between the mean scores of the pre- and post-intervention scores of professional behaviour of staff nurses in the experimental group where t-value ($249df$) was 46.24 at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings of this study were consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Hanem et al (2011) on the effect of self-awareness education programme on the self-efficacy, sociotropy and autonomy characteristics of nurses in a psychiatric clinic. The findings showed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores for the total nurses' autonomy and sociotropy ($p < 0.05$). A highly significant correlation was found between pre- and post-test scores of self-efficacy ($p < 0.05$).

Comparison of self-concept and professional behaviour of the experimental group showed a positive significant relationship between self-concept and professional behaviour (pre-test $r = 0.781$ & post-test, 0.894) establishing that higher the self-awareness is better the professional behaviour. This finding is consistent with that of a related study carried out by Karnikola et al (2007), which showed a positive correlation between professional satisfaction and self-esteem indices ($r = 0.249 - 0.313$, $p < r = 0.008$).

Further the findings revealed that the chi-square value had a statistically significant association at 0.05 level of significance between self-awareness and professional behaviour with six demographic variables such as gender, professional qualification, food habit, residential area, religion and type of family. This finding is consistent with those of Perry & Gloria (2005) who studied relationship between nurses' self-concept and their professional behaviour such as attitude towards autonomy, client advocacy, and rejection of

Table 1: Comparison of aspect wise pre-and post-intervention mean percentage scores of general self-concept among the experimental group (n1 = 250)

S. No.	General self-concept	General self-concept (%)						Paired 't' Test
		Pre-test		Post- test				
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Perceived	61.6	9.9	80.0	9.4	18.5	10.1	28.96*
2	Satisfied	62.5	10.8	82.7	9.6	20.2	9.4	33.98*

*Significant at 0.05 level, $t(0.05, 249df) = 1.96$

Table 2: Comparison of post-intervention mean scores of professional behaviour among experimental and control group

Sample size (n)	Max score	Professional behaviour scores				Student 't' test
		Mean	SD	Mean (%)	SD (%)	
Experimental 250	100	84.31	6.6	84.3	6.6	36.82*
Control 250	100	58.5	8.9	58.5	8.9	

*Significant at 0.05 level, $t(0.05, 498df) = 1.96$

Table 3: Correlation between self-concept and professional behaviour among the experimental group (n1=250)

S. No.	Domains	Correlation (r), self-awareness with professional behaviour			
		Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Self-concept	56.6	6.4	80.3	6.9
2	Professional Behaviour	57.1	9.0	84.3	6.6
	Correlation coefficient (r)	+ 0.781**		+ 0.894**	

traditional role limitations associated with nursing. The result revealed that the staff nurses scored high on all selected domains of Tennessee self-concept scale. A significant relationship was revealed between self-concept autonomy, highest degree held, basic nursing education, years active in nursing, position and current employment status.

Nursing Implications

Nursing Education

1. Assessment of self-concept may help the nurse educators to find out the weaker areas of self-understanding and plan appropriate social skill and other guidance and counselling services for the nursing students.
2. In-service education programmes could be planned in order to strengthen the self-confidence of the staff nurses and empower them to advance in their profession.
3. Instructional modules could be prepared to include in the curriculum of the nursing students to inculcate the spirit of compassionate care to their patients.

Nursing Practice

1. An evaluation of this study result could provide direction for strategies and changes that address the nurse's role in providing high quality health care.
2. Self-awareness exercises can help nurses improve their professional behaviour like interpersonal communication skills that enhance delivery of health care.

Nursing Administration

1. The changes found in nurses general self-concept and professional behaviour provides a logical reasoning for the development of appropriate interventions for enhancing self-awareness and improving professional behaviour.
2. Knowledge of self will help the nurse administrators to understand the sub ordinates well and delegate the responsibilities appropriately based on their abilities.
3. Self-understanding will help the administrators to balance between the professional work load and demands of her personal life.

Nursing Research

1. A study on self-assessment can help the researchers to identify the areas of personal and professional self-concept that have been after ignored by the previous researchers.
2. The results of nurses' self-concept changes have provided good evidence for highlighting the importance of self-awareness enhancement programmes.

Recommendations

1. A comparative study can be conducted between

nurses from different states.

2. A longitudinal assessment with longer periods of educational intervention may be more appropriate to bring positive change in their behaviour.

3. A study can be carried out with different styles of teaching strategies to know the effect of each strategy on self-concept of staff nurses.

Conclusion

The nurses need to play an important role of knowing own self well, not only as a nurse but also as a person, since for patients to be cared befittingly, they have to be efficient and effective. An adequate awareness of own strengths and weaknesses will serve as an eye opener for the nurse to realise the limitations of human situations within which we all have to fit in the world around us.

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