

Emotional Intelligence in Nursing Students

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Abstract: Introduction: Emotion is fundamental to nursing practice and Emotional intelligence is considered as an important characteristic for nurses that impact the quality of student learning, clinical decision-making, critical thinking, evidence and knowledge use in practice. The aim of this research was to assess and Comparison of emotional intelligence between Freshman and Senior baccalaureate nursing students of Islamic Azad University of Yazd. **Materials and Methods:** This descriptive cross-sectional study was performed on a sample of 87 freshmen and senior of baccalaureate nursing students of Islamic Azad University of Yazd. Data was collected with questionnaire, the questionnaire consisted of two parts: demographic characteristics and the BarOn emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). Data was analyzed by SPSS software using descriptive statistics and inferential (T-test) and ANOVA). **Results:** The mean and standard deviation of emotional intelligence total score the mean and standard deviation in freshmen, was 282.37 ± 27.93 and in senior students was 289.64 ± 21.13 . There was no significant difference between the freshmen and senior students' score patterns. **Conclusion:** The findings showed that There was no significant difference between the freshmen and senior students' score. However, EI needs to be explicit within nursing education and nursing education must provide a learning environment that emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence by nurturing and facilitating the development of this qualities.

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1. Introduction

Excitement is a short, severe, and general reaction of an organism to an unexpected situation accompanying with a pleasant or unpleasant emotional state (Heidary & Janati, 2003). Excitement are an important part of a person's life and play the main role in our behaviors and understanding others behaviors (Ahangarzadeh & Sheikloo, according to Anticode, 2008). Humans need to coordinate their thoughts, feelings, and emotions in order to reach a better and healthier life and use them in different situations. Paying attention to excitement, using them in human relations, understanding our and other's excitement, self-control, controlling the momentary desires, sympathizing with others, and using excitement in thinking and understanding are some of the subjects which are discussed in the area of emotional intelligence (Jalali, 2002). Emotional intelligence is an issue that can direct a people's life and make a better adaptation to the surroundings for them (Baraven & Parker, 2000). Features of emotional intelligence concept are completely consistent with the nursing profession. This job requires a nurse to gain the knowledge of self which is consisted of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, excitement management, and the extension of sympathy and patient-nurse therapeutic relationships. Nurses use the features of emotional intelligence in their interactions with colleagues and patients (Queen, 2004). A nurse, as the

center of sanitary care, can preserve the balance and be productive if controls his/her excitement and shows highly developed behaviors. The excitement of patients should be controlled. They may show tension, irritability, and imbalance, so a nurse should treat patients with patience, balance, and in a masterful manner. She/he should try to the negative excitement by positive thoughts. This needs to a healthy interpersonal relationship. Sympathizing with patients and an appropriate understanding of them helps a nurse to accept them as a human (Ahangarzadeh & Sheikloo, according to Anticode, 2008). Emotional intelligence plays an important role in education of supervisors to choose the best choice in a changing sanitary system and resolve the problem of exhaustion among the nurses (Cummings G, Hayduk L, Estabrooks C, 2005). Emotional intelligence has a great effect on the quality of learning in students, clinical decision making, critical thinking, and using the learned knowledge in practice. Excitement is a strong motivation for a quality decision making as it leads the decision maker to development and revision by reasoning and deduction and also critical thinking (Smith K.B, Profetto-McGrath J, Cummings G.G, 2009). Critical thinking is an inevitable part of nursing and should be emphasized in nursing learning (Barkhordari, Jalalmanesh, Mahmoodi, 2009).

The subject of emotional intelligence has been rarely studied on nurses especially nursing students.

The results of many groups of researchers show that there has been a direct relationship emotional intelligence and positive organizational resultants including better performance, more appropriate teamwork, more effective interactions, more solutions for conflicts, and lower levels of tension in recent years (Guleryuz G, Guney S, Aydin EM, Asan O, 2008). Kavidar et al., (2008) studied the emotional intelligence among the supervisors and found a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence and the level of performance and also a higher organizational commitment. Authors suggest that the growth of emotional intelligence in nursing learning leads to an increased nursing performance in the possible future profession (Codier E, Kooker B.M, and Shoultz J, 2008). Evans and Allen (2002) stated that although we need nurses who can control their excitement and understand the patients, emotional intelligence is not taken into account in nursing learning. Freshwater and Stickley (2004) emphasize that emotional intelligence should be the center of educational programs and nursing instructors should try to increase the level of emotional intelligence in nursing students. Although the importance emotional intelligence as a prerequisite for an effective supervision, appropriate performance in nursing, quality results in clinical nursing, and the growth of these skills in future labor force, there is a few studies about the emotional intelligence of nursing student. This paper aims to compare the level of emotional intelligence in first year students and last year students of nursing.

2. Material and Methods

The first year and the last year students of nursing at the Islamic Azad University of Yazd in 1388-89 were studied. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of 2 parts. The first part deals with demographic traits and second part is related to emotional intelligence scale. This test examines the 5 components of emotional intelligence (adaptation, interpersonal, intrapersonal, stress management, general creation), besides an overall score. Choices were adjusted on a five-degree Linkret range and scoring was done from 5 to 1 (5 means completely agree and 1 means completely disagree) and in negative questions from 1 to 5 (1 means completely agree and 5 means completely disagree). The overall score of each scale was equal to the sum of scores for each question the overall score of the test to the sum of scores of 5 scales. This questionnaire was used by

Bar- Owen in 1980. The perpetuity of this test at even-odd method and Chronbach's alpha has been calculated 0.88% and 0.93% respectively (Samari AA, Tahmasbi F, 2007). After giving explanation about questionnaires, they were filled out by the respondents during 20 minutes. Mean and standard deviation were calculated by SPSS 16 software and T-test was used to compare the means in different groups. The relationship between emotional intelligence and some personal traits was studied by ANOVA, t-test, and Person correlation coefficient.

Degree	Father (%)	Mother (%)
Illiterate	0	27.6
Elementary	16.1	27.6
Guidance School	16.1	24.1
High school diploma	14.9	32.2
Associate's degree	40.2	5.7
Bachelor's degree or more	13.8	5.7

3. Results:

87 nursing students of the Islamic Azad University of Yazd participated in this survey. 47 of them were first year students and rest of them was last year students. Mean and standard deviation of their age was 21.59 ± 2.48 with a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 34. 75.9% of the respondents were married and 24.1% of them were single. Most of them (85.1%) had no work experience and 59.8% showed a high interest to their major. Mean and standard deviation of their average was 16.48 ± 1.66 . The level of education of their parents is shown in the following table. Kolmogorov-smirnov test was used to verify the homogeneity of experimental data.

Mean, standard deviation, and the rang of acquisitive scores of emotional intelligence and their components in 2 studied groups are shown in Table 1.

The mean of scores in 2 groups was compared by t-test and no significant statistical difference was observed.

There was a significant statistical difference ($p=0.006$) between the mean of emotional intelligence scores of the respondents and the level of education of their fathers, as those whose father had a higher education level gained higher scores of emotional intelligence compared with other groups. No significant statistical difference was observed in other personal traits (Table 2).

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, and the rang of acquisitive scores of emotional intelligence and their components in 2 studied groups

Index	Mean and standard deviation	The range of acquisitive scores	T	P
General creation component				
First year	35/5 ±61/46	60-12	75/0	45/0
Last year	94/5±70/45			
Stress management component				
First year	57/7±93/37	60-12	53/0-	59/0
Last year	52/8±85/38			
Interpersonal component				
First year	05/11±44/78	90-18	85/0	39/0
Last year	49/7±67/76			
Intrapersonal component				
First year	11/12±11/109	150-30	68/0-	49/0
Last year	07/14±02/111			
Adaptation component				
First year	21/6±55/60	90-18	11/1-	26/0
Last year	71/7±22/62			
Overall score of emotional intelligence				
First year	68/30±66/332	450-90	25/0-	80/0
Last year	11/36±48/334			

Table 2: The comparison of emotional intelligence scores at some personal traits.

p.value	Mean and standard deviation	Variable	
79/0	04/34±41/321 04/33±33/335	Have Don't have	Work experience
77/0	73/35±25/323 85/32±61/335 65/33±01/333	Little Intermediate A lot	Interest to nursing profession
006/0	62/36±57/307 04/24±23/346 11/34±25/340 46/19±66/332	Elementary and Guidance school High school and High school diploma Associate's degree Bachelor's degree or more	Father's education
12/0	07/33±25/323 00/33±61/346 13/30±75/334 74/28±00/331	Illiterate or elementary Guidance school High school diploma Associate's degree or more	Mother's education
6/0	77/29±37/334 84/42±71/330	Single Maried	Marital status

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, and the results of Peerson test on emotional intelligence, average, and age.

Variables	Mean and standard deviation	Correlation coefficient	p.value
emotional intelligence	15/33±49/333	165/0	21/0
Average	66/1±48/16		
emotional intelligence	15/33±49/333	178/0-	1/0
Age	84/2±59/21		

According to Peerson test, there was no significant statistical difference between age and average with emotional intelligence (Table 3).

4. Discussions

Nurses are in charge of their relationships with the patients and excitement which are coupled with.

Since the ability to understand and realize the excitement is more important than practical skills in nursing, having the emotional intelligence is crucial in this profession (Freshwater D & Stickley T, 2004). The main objective of this study was the comparison of emotional intelligence in first year and last year students of nursing. The finding of this study showed

that the mean of overall scores of emotional intelligence in first year students was 332.66 ± 30.68 and in last year students was 334.48 ± 36.11 . Last year students had a higher score but this difference was not significant. Except general creation and interpersonal components, rest of the components showed higher values in last year students but no significant difference was observed. Similar results were obtained in a study on medical students at King University of London (Todres M. Tsimtsiou Z. Stephenson A. & Jones R, 2010), but the results of another study on nursing students of McMaster University in Canada are completely different (Benson G. Jenny Ploeg J. & Brow B, 2010). The mean of emotional intelligence in nursing students of Tabriz University and students of medical sciences faculty of Esfahan University and Islamic Azad University of Khorasgan was 332.08 ± 39.08 and 313.6 ± 37.1 respectively which are less than the results of the present study.

It has been shown in this survey that the average of emotional intelligence in two groups of students is at a satisfactory level, while putting the concept of emotional intelligence in the nursery education program to reach a better level can help the students better deal with education pressures and communicate with people, a matter which seems to be more important than their physical tasks.

Additionally, nursery instructors should know that students with different levels of emotional maturity choose this profession, and face this major with a load of pressure and stress. They should also take this fact into account that emotions and the way to deal with them is attainable to a noticeable extent through learning. So, in addition to the important role of raising and educating the student along with the professional basics and principles, it has a protecting role especially in the growth of emotional intelligence in the clinical environment. Freshwater and Stickley (2004) state that if the instructors pay less or no attention to the emotional intelligence, they will fail in communicating with the students, a fact which really matters in human relations. The instructor should help grow the students' emotional intelligence with use of methods like reflecting experiences, mentorship, modeling, growing self-consciousness, empathizing, communicating, and role playing, writing daily events and brief reports of tasks, and practicing the speaking skill. Smith (2009) also points out to this fact that emotional intelligence affects the critical thinking and decision making, and given the fact that it has been reported in many surveys that there is an unstable tendency in nursery students to think critically, it can be inferred that one of the guidelines to increase the critical thinking, which is essential in the nursery profession, is to increase the emotional intelligence. In the results of this survey, it has been shown that there

is a meaningful correlation between the emotional intelligence and father's educations ($p=0.006$), which suggests the effect of father's educations on a person's emotional intelligence, but there is no meaningful correlation in other features, results of which are matched with the survey conducted on the students in the university of medical science in Rafsanjan by Arabi and et al (2009). Moreover, it has been shown that there is no connection between the emotional intelligence and gender, age, and interest in the nursery, according to the survey conducted by Namdar and et al on the nursery students in the University of Tabriz (2008). In that survey, there was just a meaningful correlation between the emotional intelligence and economic and social satisfaction. But, in the survey conducted by Samari and Tahmasbi, there was a meaningful correlation between the emotional intelligence and the educational progress, but not with the gender. It seems more surveys with bigger samples are needed in order to traverse the correlation between the emotional intelligence and personal and social traits. Of course it has been clarified in this survey that there is a reverse, meaningful correlation between the component of public mood and age ($p=0.005$). The component of public mood includes happiness and optimism in which and people of younger ages have earned better grades.

Some students have not answered some of the questions in this survey, due to our study limitations. Generally, the lack of incentive or zeal to answer the research questionnaires is one of the common problems in this kind of survey. It should be noted that this survey is a background survey to perform other longitudinal studies to achieve better results. The size of sample society is small and can't be generalized to other faculty. Plus, this survey was designed in a sectional way, and evaluating changes in students' emotional intelligence grades from entering the university to graduation was not possible.

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