

ASSESSMENT OF SELF-LEADERSHIP TRAITS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Background: Self-leadership is a process that enables someone to deliberately influence, lead, and self-regulate themselves in such a way that they develop such manners to regulate their actions, ideas, and behaviors. **Objective:** To evaluate nursing students' self-leadership traits. **Methodology:** This study employed a quantitative research design. Online surveys/questionnaires were used to collect data from nursing students. The target population was all nursing students at the private institute. We used convenience sampling to select 80 students who voluntarily participated in the survey. **Result:** The results indicate that most respondents rely on positive mental imagery, with 52.2% imagining themselves performing well on essential tasks and 50.0% visualizing successful task completion before starting. Goal setting is prevalent, with 35.0% setting specific performance goals and 37.5% actively working toward these goals. Self-talk is standard, as 46.3% engage in self-talk during challenging situations, while 45.5% contemplate future goals. Reward-based motivation is adopted by 41.3%, and 36.3% tend to be self-critical when they underperform. Self-reflection is evident in 37.5% who assess their beliefs, and 43.8% focus on the positive aspects of their work or academic activities. Practical task management is emphasized, with 60.0% relying on written notes for reminders. **Conclusion:** Recommendations based on the results include promoting positive mental imagery, goal-setting, and self-talk as motivational strategies. Encourage self-awareness through reflection and offer practical tools like written notes for effective task management.

Keywords: Evaluating, Nursing Students', Self-Leadership, Traits

INTRODUCTION

Self-leadership is a process that enables someone to deliberately influence, lead, and self-regulate themselves in such a way that they develop such manners to regulate their actions, ideas, and behaviors. (1) To confront various challenges and responsibilities, nursing students must develop clinical competencies and a unique set of personal attributes (2). As a personal attribute, self-leadership has come to be recognized as a crucial element in determining the success of nursing students as they advance in their education and into the dynamic field of healthcare practice(3). Self-leadership, defined by self-awareness, self-motivation, and self-regulation, allows people to take responsibility for their growth and development and nurtures the qualities required for successful leadership in healthcare environments(4).

Nursing students who exhibit self-leadership can assess their strengths and shortcomings, stay motivated in the face of difficulty, and uphold the highest standards of professionalism (5). Applying self-leadership in nursing education is still being researched and developed even though it has become more prevalent in various fields, including business and education. It is crucial to comprehend how nursing students display self-leadership traits and how they affect their academic achievement, clinical experience, and, ultimately, the standard of patient care (6).

Self-awareness, self-motivation, self-regulation, taking the initiative, and problem-solving are some attributes that cultivate self-leadership in nursing students. It is essential to prepare them for the multifaceted challenges of the healthcare profession and, ultimately, safe patient health care(7). Self-leadership has a very significant effect on students and the way they perceive their learning. Their ability to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and remain motivated in adverse situations is directed by their self-leadership ability(8). A significant positive relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and innovative work behavior leads to self-leadership among nursing students (9). Self-leadership traits, such as self-motivation, self-discipline, and self-awareness, can significantly impact the quality of patient care. Nurses who possess these traits are more likely to provide patient-centered care, maintain high standards of practice, and continuously improve their skills (10). Individuals with a positive relationship between learned resourcefulness, like a classroom setting, and stress show high self-leadership and can motivate themselves if they face unfavorable situations. Nursing is a continuously changing field that calls for excellent clinical aptitude and leadership abilities (11). Teachers can determine areas where students might want more assistance and instruction by assessing the self-leadership characteristics of nursing students (12). As a result, nurses may be better equipped to adapt to shifting healthcare environments and step into leadership positions as needed.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design. Online surveys/questionnaires were used to collect data from nursing students. The target population was all nursing students at the private institute. We used convenience sampling to select 80 students who voluntarily participated in the survey. Data was collected from Khyber Institute of Nursing and Health Sciences Peshawar. Participants were selected through a convenient sampling. All BS nursing students were included. The revised self-leadership questionnaire evaluated the nursing students' self-leadership traits (Houghton and Neck, 2002) (13). It included questions covering self-leadership aspects such as self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, and self-efficacy.

Demographic questions were included to gather information about participants' age, Gender, and educational level. Ethical approval was obtained from the institute's ethics committee, ensuring the

study adhered to ethical guidelines, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw without consequences. Informed consent forms were provided to participants before they started the survey, explaining the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. The online survey link was distributed to the selected nursing students via email or a secure online platform. A clear timeframe for data collection (from June to August) was specified.

Reminders were sent to non-respondents to maximize response rates. Once data collection was complete, the data were organized and cleaned.

Appropriate statistical tools, SPSS, were used to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were performed to summarize the demographic information and self-leadership trait scores. Reliability and validity tests were conducted on the questionnaire to ensure accuracy and consistency.

RESULT

Table 1 shows the overview of three demographic variables: Gender, Age, and Cast. For Gender, there are 48 male students (60%) and 32 females (40%). In terms of age, 26 participants (32.5%) are between 18-20, 49 (61.3%) fall in the 21-23 range, 4 (5%) are 24-26, and only 1 (1.3%) are older than 27. Regarding academic year 40 (50%) from year 1 and 40 (50%) from year 2. Concerning their clinical placement, there are 50 placements in the medical department, 1 in surgical, 13 in ICU, 9 in the emergency room, and 7 in various other departments.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants n=80

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	48	60.0
Female	32	40.0
Age		
18-20	26	32.5
21-23	49	61.3
24-26	4	5.0
Above 27	1	1.3
Academic Year		
Year 1	40	50
Year 2	40	50
Clinical placement		
Medical	50	62.5
Surgical	1	1.3
ICU	13	16.3
ER	9	11.3
Other	7	8.8

Table 2 provides valuable insights into individuals' cognitive and behavioral strategies regarding tasks, challenges, and self-motivation. It contains 35 statements, and respondents have rated their agreement with each statement on a scale ranging from "Not at all accurate" to "Completely accurate."

First, a significant majority (52.2%) of respondents find it mostly accurate to use their imagination to picture themselves performing well on essential tasks. Additionally, 50.0% visualize themselves successfully performing tasks before actually doing them, demonstrating a strong reliance on positive mental imagery.

Regarding goal setting, a substantial number of respondents (35.0%) establish specific goals for their performance, while a similar percentage (37.5%) work actively toward these goals. Moreover, 45.5% think about the goals they intend to achieve in the future.

Self-talk and self-reflection play a prominent role in respondents' strategies. Notably, 46.3% talk to themselves aloud or in their heads when facing difficult situations, indicating a common coping mechanism.

Reward-based motivation is also prevalent, with 41.3% of respondents indicating that they reward themselves with special events or activities when they do something well.

Regarding self-evaluation and reflection, a significant proportion of respondents (37.5%) think about and evaluate their beliefs and assumptions, highlighting a strong inclination toward self-awareness and critical thinking.

However, it's interesting that 36.3% tend to be tough on themselves when they haven't performed well, suggesting a self-critical aspect to their mindset.

Additionally, using written notes and concrete reminders for task management stands out, with 60.0% relying on written notes to remind themselves of what they need to accomplish. Visualization and mental preparation emerge as prominent themes, with over half of respondents (52.2%) finding it mostly accurate to use their imagination to envision success in significant tasks. Additionally, half of the respondents (50.0%) visualize successful task completion before even embarking on them, reflecting a strong reliance on positive mental imagery.

Goal setting and achievement are also prevalent strategies, with a significant portion (37.5%) actively working towards specific self-set goals and 45.5% thinking about the goals they aim to achieve.

Nearly half (46.3%) occasionally engage in self-talk, whether aloud or internally, during challenging situations. Moreover, a substantial percentage (37.5%) ponder and assess their beliefs and assumptions, indicating a proactive stance towards self-awareness.

Reward-based motivation is a common practice, with 41.3% acknowledging that they reward themselves with special events or activities when they perform well. Conversely, self-critique is also prevalent, as 36.3% tend to be tough on themselves mentally when they fall short.

Positivity plays a significant role, with a majority (43.8%) favoring pleasant aspects of their work or academic activities in their thinking. Many (46.3%) actively seek enjoyable tasks to boost their motivation.

Practical task management techniques are not overlooked, as 60.0% of respondents rely on written notes as reminders for their tasks, underscoring a preference for tangible reminders.

Table 2: Assessment of self-leadership traits

Statements	Not at all accurate	Somewhat accurate	A little accurate	Mostly accurate	Completely accurate
I use my imagination to see myself completing important things successfully.	1.3%	11.3%	15.0%	52.2%	20.0%
Before performing a task, I visualise myself doing it successfully.	1.3%	8.8%	11.3%	50.0%	28.8%
Sometimes, I picture in my mind a successful performance before I do a task	2.5%	13.8%	15.0%	41.3%	27.5%
I consciously picture myself conquering the obstacles I encounter.	0%	17.5%	27.5%	41.3%	13.8%
Before I encounter a situation, I frequently mentally practise how I want to handle it.	2.5%	10.0%	22.5%	48.8%	16.3%
I established clear objectives for my performance.	0%	10.0%	12.5%	42.2%	35.0%
I deliberately have objectives in mind for my work.	3.8%	12.5%	11.3%	42.2%	30.0%
I work to achieve the objectives I have set for myself.	0%	17.5%	12.5%	32.5%	37.5%
I think the objectives that I want to accomplish in the future.	2.5%	12.5%	10.0%	30.0%	45.5%
I put specific goals on paper for my work.	2.5%	8.8%	21.3%	48.8%	18.8%
Sometimes, I find I'm talking to myself (out loud or in my head) to help me deal with complex problems I face	6.3%	16.3%	12.5%	40.0%	25.0%
Sometimes, I talk to myself (out loud or in my head) to work through difficult situations	2.5%	15.0%	13.8%	35.0%	33.8%
I occasionally chat to myself—either aloud or in my head—to help me get through trying circumstances.	10.0%	10.0%	13.8%	46.3%	20.0%
When I complete a task really successfully, I want to reward myself with a treat or a particularly enjoyable pastime.	5.0%	8.8%	16.3%	40.0%	30.0%
When I do something well, I reward myself with a special event such as a good dinner, movie, shopping trip, etc.	6.3%	18.8%	11.3%	22.5%	41.3%
Upon finishing a task, I frequently treat myself to something I like.	5.0%	23.8%	10.0%	30.0%	31.3%
I consider my own presumptions and beliefs anytime I come across a challenging circumstance.	6.3%	13.8%	23.8%	28.8%	27.5%
I try to assess in my mind the reality of my own beliefs regarding the circumstances I find problematic.	6.3%	10.0%	22.5%	35.0%	26.3%

When I don't agree with someone else, I honestly state my disagreement and consider my presumptions.	8.8%	10.0%	21.3%	37.5%	22.5%
I consider and assess the presumptions and beliefs I have.	8.8%	10.0%	21.3%	22.5%	37.5%
When I don't perform well, I usually get down on myself.	8.8%	22.5%	23.8%	32.5%	12.5%
When I don't perform well on a task, I have a tendency to be hard on myself cognitively.	2.5%	3.8%	36.3%	37.5%	20.0%
I feel bad when I don't do a task well.	6.3%	3.8%	18.8%	40.0%	31.3%
Sometimes, when I don't perform well, I openly speaking my displeasure with myself.	1.3%	25.0%	18.8%	35.0%	20.0%
I make it a point to monitor my performance at work (or school).	5.0%	18.8%	12.5%	45.0%	18.8%
Usually, while I'm performing an activity, I'm conscious of how well I'm doing.	2.5%	6.3%	23.8%	51.3%	16.3%
I keep an eye on my performance at work.	8.8%	6.3%	8.8%	41.3%	35.0%
I monitor my advancement on the assignments I'm working on.	C	12.5%	18.8%	37.5%	27.5%
I attempt to think more about the positive parts of my work and school activities than the negative ones.	7.5%	10.0%	17.5%	43.8%	21.3%
I attempt to surround myself with things and people who help me exhibit the behaviours I want to.	2.5%	15.0%	17.5%	43.8%	21.3%
Whenever possible, I try to work on projects that I'm passionate about instead of just rushing through them.	1.3%	12.5%	17.5%	47.5%	21.3%
I look for things to accomplish at work that I enjoy doing.	7.5%	11.3%	3.8%	46.3%	31.3%
I select my preferred method for completing tasks	0%	15.0%	16.3%	42.5%	26.3%
I utilise written notes to help me stay focused on the tasks at hand.	6.3%	6.3%	10.0%	60.0%	17.5%
.I use concrete reminders (e.g., notes and lists) to help me focus on the things I need to accomplish	2.5%	17.5%	15.0%	43.8%	21.3%

DISCUSSION

Self-leadership is an expository attribute for nursing students as it empowers them to take control of their learning, career development, and professional growth (1). Self-leadership is not only essential for nursing students but also for their long-term career development (14). Identifying and nurturing self-leadership traits during the educational phase can set the foundation for a successful nursing career.

This study finding reveals that among the 80 participants, 48 were male and 32 were female. The questionnaire consisted of 35 dimensions: behavior-focused strategies, natural reward strategies, and constructive thought pattern strategies. The results highlight nursing students' significant reliance on

mental imagery and visualization. Over half of the respondents (52.2%) find it mostly accurate to use their imagination to envision success in critical tasks. These findings are similar to the study conducted in Egypt (15).

A considerable proportion (37.5%) of respondents actively engage in goal setting, emphasizing the importance of clear objectives in their academic and professional pursuits. According to maksum *et al.*, 2020 (16), setting specific goals and focusing on vital self-leadership traits help students drive them to their successful endeavors. The prevalence of self-talk and self-reflection among respondents (46.3%) signifies their recognition of the value of inner dialogue in managing difficult situations. These practices can enhance self-awareness and emotional regulation, critical components of self-leadership (17). It is encouraging to observe that many nursing students employ self-talk as a coping mechanism.

The utilization of reward-based motivation strategies is another noteworthy finding. 41.3% of respondents find it a positive reinforcement mechanism to reward themselves for their accomplishments. Similarly, findings were revealed by (Jooste and Mia, 2015), where male learner nurses found self-reward can positively impact their performances and job satisfaction. 37.5% of respondents show an inclination to evaluate one's beliefs and assumptions. It is a proactive approach towards self-reflection (18).

The majority of respondents, 60.0%, rely on written notes and concrete reminders for task management and practical strategies. These results are inclined with the study conducted among nursing and midwifery students in Istanbul, where a significant number of participants rely on this pragmatic approach of concrete reminders that help them stay focused on their responsibilities, aligning well with the demanding academic and clinical requirements of nursing education (19). 43.8% of the respondents focus on the pleasant aspects of work and enjoyable tasks. Many (46.3%) actively seek enjoyable tasks to boost their motivation. Positivity is a key driver of motivation and resilience and is crucial for effective self-leadership (7).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it is recommended to emphasize and support positive mental imagery, goal-setting, and self-talk as effective strategies for enhancing individuals' motivation and task performance. Promoting self-awareness and self-reflection can help individuals better understand and improve their cognitive and behavioral approaches. Finally, providing practical tools like written notes for task management can aid in task completion and organization.

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