

## The Relation between Communication Skills and Self Efficacy among Nurse Interns

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### Abstract

**Background** Communication skills are the most demanded soft skills which facilitate career development of nurse interns and improve their self-efficacy which is vital for achieving effective nursing care. **Aim:** This study aimed to assess communication skills and its relation to self-efficacy among nurse interns. **Design:** A descriptive correlational research design was utilized in this study. **Setting:** This study was carried out in Al-Azher University Hospitals (Al-Hussien University Hospital and Sayed Galal University Hospital). **Subjects:** this study was conducted on a convenient sample of 81 nurse interns. **Tools:** Communication skills observation checklist and Nursing self-efficacy scale **Results:** less than one third of the studied nurse interns had competent in communication skills with the patients and health care team, while that more than one half of nurse interns had low level of self-efficacy. **Conclusion:** There was highly statistically significant positive correlation between nurse interns' communication skills with patient and nursing self-efficacy. **Recommendations:** Using different training strategies which foster nurse interns' communication skills and enhance their self-efficacy through frequent session on job training.

**Key words:** Nurse interns, Communication skills, Self-efficacy

### Introduction

Communication skills in nursing are nurse interns' ability to write and speak clearly and confidently when interacting with patients, families, doctors and clinical staff. Nurse interns communicate important and potentially life-saving information to doctors. And also tell patients about diagnostics, treatments, prevention, prognosis and rehabilitation. Nurse interns also write accurate health records and descriptions of patients' conditions. Some nursing programs require aspiring nurse interns to take communication and interpersonal skill courses as part of their training and education. (Kourkouta, 2020)

Communication skills may take a lifetime to master, if indeed anyone can ever claim to have mastered them. There are, however, many things that you can do fairly easily to improve your communication skills and ensure that nurse interns are able to transmit and receive information effectively. Communication skills are the most demanded soft skills which facilitate career development of nurse interns. (Kaur & Kaur, 2022).

Nurse interns spend much of their workdays communicating with patients, doctors

and other healthcare professionals. Strong communication skills are essential for delivering accurate and compassionate patient care. If nurse interns want to have a successful nursing career, understand and develop written and verbal communication skills. (Joolae, et al., 2019).

Nurse interns are defined as inexperienced nurses who may have or have not passed their licensure exam for nurses. Nurse interns who are in the last year of the 4-year integrated education system and spend this year in the clinical practice. Nurse interns are health care providers undertaking a learning experience supervised by a more experienced clinician. (Daghan, 2019).

Self-efficacy is the belief that one has the power to produce that effect by completing a given task or activity related to that competency. Also, self-efficacy relates to a person's perception of their ability to reach a goal. It is the belief that one is capable of performing in a certain manner to attain certain goals. Furthermore, the expectation that one can master a situation, and produce a positive outcome. Self-efficacy is an important concept for positive psychology of nurse interns.

(Key,2019).

### **Significance of the study**

Having good communication skills is essential to collaborating on health care teams with other disciplines. It's also important to patient-centered care. To be a successful healthcare provider, nurse interns need exceptional communication skills and need to be able to use them during high-stress situations.

Nurse interns who take the time to listen and understand the concerns of each of the patients are better prepared to address issues as they arise, resulting in better patient outcomes.(Chen.et al,2019)

On the other hand, poor communication, or lack of communication in healthcare, can lead to patients misunderstanding directions and failing to follow treatment protocols. It can also lead to workflow breakdowns on the team, resulting in a medical error. A report by the Joint Commission found that poor communication in healthcare during patient transfers contributed to 80% of serious medical errors. (The International Joint Commission,2020)

### **Aim of study is to**

Aim of study is to assess communication skills and its relation to self-efficacy among nurse interns.

**Research Questions:** What is communication skills level among nurse interns?

What is self-efficacy level among nurse interns?

Is there a relation between communication skills and self-efficacy among nurse interns?

### **Subject and Methods**

**Research Design:** A descriptive correlational research design was used to carry out the study and answer the research

questions.

**Setting of the Study:** The study was conducted at Al-Azher University Hospitals, where the nurse interns are having their training, which include two hospitals, these are Al-Hussien University Hospital and El Sayed Galal University Hospital.

**Subjects:** a convenient sample of 81 nurse interns who were enrolled in the internship year (2022-2023) which includes the following areas as, Intensive Care Units, Neonatal Intensive Units , Pediatric Intensive Units , Hemodialysis Departments , Obstetric Departments ,

Emergency Departments and Operation Room Units . The nurse interns who attend six months at Al-Hussien University Hospital and another six months at El Sayed University Hospital of their internship period.

### **Data Collection tools**

Data were collected using the following tools:

**1- Communication skills observation checklist:** This aims to assess nurse interns' practices of communication skills. It was developed by the investigator guided by review of relevant related literatures (*Abd Elfatah, 2020*). The tool consists of three different parts as follow:

**Part 1: Nurse interns' personal characteristics** this part was intended to collect data related to socio- demographic characteristics of the nurse interns related to age, gender, marital status ,residence, pre university education

, grade degree average, internship training setting, pervious employed in health care.

**Part 2: communication skills with health team members:** this part was intended for assessing nurse interns' communication with health team members. It consists of (31 items) statements under five domains as described in:

general communication skills (7 items),  
personal communication skills (24 items).

**Part 3: communication skills with patients:** This part aims to assess staff nurses' communication skills with patients. It consists of (34 items) divided into two dimensions; general communication skills (10 items), personal communication skills (24 items).

#### **Scoring system:**

Each item or step of the observation checklists will be checked as "Done", "not done" or "Not Applicable." Each item will be observed to be "Done" was scored 1 and zero if "not done." The total score of each area and for the whole scale will be calculated by summing-up the scores of the questions and dividing the sum by the number of items. Then they will be converted into percent scores. The staff nurse's practice will be considered competent if the percent score was 60% or higher and incompetent if less than 60%.

#### **2- Nursing self-efficacy scale:**

This tool assess self-efficacy level of nurse interns throughout implementation of the training program, it was developed by (*Cheraghi et al.,2009*) and was modified by the researcher. It will consist of 37 questions that closely examine five domains were identified: 'attaining clinical skill', 'assessment of patients', 'planning care plan', 'implementation of care plan' and 'evaluation of care plan'

#### **Scoring system:**

The scale is composed of 37 questions that closely on a five-point Likert scale (agree, not sure, and disagree). The scoring system is designed as follows from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" were scored 5 to 1, respectively. The totals of each of the five dimensions were calculated and the sums of scores were converted into percent scores. The subjects were considered had high level of self-efficacy if the total percent score was above 75% and moderate level if the study subject total score ranged from 60 to 75% and low level if the score less than 60% (*Cheraghi et al.,2009*)

#### **Operational Design:**

This design includes an elaboration of the preparatory phase, pilot study and fieldwork.

#### **Preparatory phase:**

During this time, the researcher reviewed the national and international related literature concerning the topic of the study. This was through the use of textbooks, scientific journals and internet search. This helped in the preparation of data collection tool and in the write-up of the literature review.

#### **Tools validity and reliability**

To achieve the criteria of trustworthiness of the tools of data collection in this study, the tools were tested and evaluated for their face and content validity, and reliability which was examined Cronbachs' Alpha Coefficient test (0.902). Face and content validity are tested by five experts from faculty members in the nursing field from Ain Shams, Cairo and Asuite University.

#### **Pilot study**

The Pilot study was carried out for 10% of the sample (9 nurse interns from faculty of nursing Alazher university) to test the reliability, clarity of questions and applicability of the tools, and the time needed to complete them then the tools were modified according to the findings of the pilot study. Subjects who participated in the pilot study were included in the main study sample. The time needed to fill out the tools was took about 30 to 35 minutes.

#### **Field work**

Once permission were obtained and the questionnaire were finalized, the researcher met 8-10 nurse interns per day at their internship setting , the researcher introduced herself and explained to them the study aim and invited them to participate in the study, the researcher was present during the process of filling the questionnaire (nursing self-efficacy scale) to clarify any ambiguities and after completion of the form the researcher checked it for

completeness of all information, the filling of the questionnaire took about 30-35 minutes. The researcher observed 8-10 nurse interns per day at their internship setting, the observation checklist was done during nurse interns' deal with patients and the healthcare team. Additionally there is no any limitation or obstacles were faced by the researcher during the study, this is due to the time of the study while performing her job through the daily round for observing, supporting and solving the nurse interns' problems. The field work extended for one month from the beginning till the ending of May 2023.

### **Ethical considerations:**

The study proposal was approved by scientific research and ethical committee of Faculty of Nursing Ain-Shams University.  
**Ethical code : 25.03.583**

In addition oral approval was obtained from each participant. The researcher clarified the aim of the study and its implications to the nurse interns included in the study. They were assured that anonymity and confidentiality would be guaranteed and were informed about their right to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time, the study procedures do not entail any harmful effects on participants

### **Statistical Design**

Collected data was revised, coded and entered using the Computer software PC. Data entry and statistical analysis were fulfilled using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 25. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables and total score of each domain of questionnaire. Chi square test (X<sup>2</sup>) and

p value were used for the relation among personal and job characteristics data

,communication skill and nursing self-efficacy of each domain and also assess statistical significant difference between study variables. Correlation coefficient test (r) was also used to assess the correlation between

nurse interns 'communication skills and nursing self- efficacy. Degrees of significance of results were considered as follow, P-value > 0.05

Not significant (NS), P-value ≤ 0.05  
Significant (S), P-value ≤ 0.001 Highly Significant(HS)

### **Results**

**Table (1)** show that 100% of the studied nurse interns were females. The great majority of them were single (77.8%) and 65.4% live in rural areas. The majority of the participants haven't previous training on communication skills and self-efficacy (74.1% & 86.4%) respectively.

**Table (2)** reveals that less than one third of the studied nurse interns (22.2%) were competent in communication skills with a patient and more than three quarters of them (77.8%) were incompetent in communication skills with patient.

**Table (3)** represented that less than one third of the studied nurse interns (23.5%) were competent in communication skills with health care team and more than three quarters of them (76.5%) were incompetent in communication skills with health care team.

**Table (4)** reveals that more than one half of nurse interns (64.2 %) had low level of self- efficacy and about one third of them (76.5%) had moderate level of self-efficacy.

**Table (5):** Illustrates that there was a highly statistically significant positive correlation between nurse interns' communication skills with patient, health care team and nursing self-efficacy

**Part I: Personal and job characteristics of Nurse Interns:****Table (1): Number and percentage distribution of the studied nurse interns personal and job characteristics (n=81):**

<b>Personal and job data</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age “years”</b>		
19 < 23 years	13	16.0
23 < 25 years	68	84.0
Mean $\pm$ SD	23.44 $\pm$ 1.24	
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	81	100.0
Male	0	0.0
<b>Residence:</b>		
Urban	28	34.6
Rural	53	65.4
<b>Marital status:</b>		
Single	63	77.8
Married	18	22.2
<b>Pre university education:</b>		
Secondary school	55	67.9
Nursing technical institute	26	32.1
<b>Grade degree average</b>		
Good	3	3.7
Very good	17	21.0
Excellent	61	75.3
<b>Internship training setting:</b>		
Al-Hussein University Hospital	40	49.4
Sayed Galal University Hospital	41	50.6
<b>Pervious Employed in health care</b>		
Yes	25	30.9
No	56	69.1
<b>Participation in the delivery of care at a health care setting</b>		
Yes	19	23.4
No	62	76.6
<b>Attendance of training program about communication</b>		
Yes	21	25.9
No	60	74.1
<b>Attendance of training program about self-efficacy</b>		
Yes	11	13.6
No	70	86.4

**Part II: Level of nurse interns' communication skills and their nursing self- efficacy****Table (2): Total level of nurse interns' communication skills with a patient (n=81).**

	Total level of nurse interns' communication skills with patient			
	No.	%	x2	p-value
Competent >60% [Score 20-34]	18	22.2	39.582	<0.001**
Incompetent <60% [Score 0-20]	63	77.8		

**Table (3): Total level of nurse interns' communication skills with health care team (n=81).**

	Total level of nurse interns' communication skills with health care team			
	No.	%	x2	p-value
Competent >60% [Score 20-34]	19	23.5	37.39	<0.001**
Incompetent <60% [Score 0-20]	62	76.5		

**Table (4): Total level of nurse interns' self-efficacy (n=81).**

	Nursing self-efficacy scale			
	No.	%	x2	p-value
Low Self-efficacy <60% [Score 37-67]	52	64.2	41.44	<0.001**
Moderate Self-efficacy 60-75% [Score 68-83]	29	35.8		
High Self-efficacy >75% [Score 84-111]	0	0.0		

**Part III: Correlation between nurse interns' communication skills and nursing self-efficacy:****Table (5): Correlation matrix between the studied nurse interns' communication skills and nursing self-efficacy scale (n=81):**

		Spearman's rank correlation coefficient		
		Nurse communication skills with patients	nurse communication skills with health care team	Nursing self-efficacy
Nurse interns' communication skills with patients	p-value			
	r-value			
Nurse interns' communication skills with health care team	p-value	0.624		
	r-value	<0.001**		
Nursing self-efficacy	p-value	0.517	0.423	
	r-value	<0.001**	0.028*	

*r*-Pearson Correlation Coefficient; *p*-value >0.05 is insignificant

## Discussion

Communication skills in nursing are nurse interns' ability to write and speak clearly and confidently when interacting with patients, families, doctors and clinical staff. Nurse interns communicate important and potentially life-saving information to doctors. And also tell patients about diagnostics, treatments, prevention, prognosis and rehabilitation.

Nurse interns also write accurate health records and descriptions of patients' conditions. Some nursing programs require aspiring nurse interns to take communication and interpersonal skill courses as part of their training and education.

The present study aimed assessing communication skills and its relation to self-efficacy among nurse interns. Concerning to total level of nurse interns' communication skills with a patient, the current study result showed that, more than two third of the studied nurse interns had incompetent in communication skills with a patient. This result may be due to the nurse interns' ability to solve communication problems in a real life situations without support of clinical instructors.

This result was disagreed with **Seada, & Bayoumy, (2018)** who conducted study entitled "Effectiveness of handoff educational program on nurses interns' knowledge, and communication competence" which showed that more than one third of the studied nurses interns' had high competent in communication skills

According to total level of nurse interns' communication skills with health care team throughout intervention phases, the current study result showed that, less than one quarter of the studied nurse interns had incompetent in communication skills with health care team. This result may be due to there is no effective communication strategies which nurse internes are trained during pervious clinical training to deal with workload and stress among health care team.

This result was contrasted with **El- Kawi**

**et al., (2018)** who conducted study entitled "Assessment of Communication Skills among Nurse Interns' Students of Technical Institute of Nursing during Health Teaching at Suez Canal University Hospitals" and reported that less than two thirds of the studied nurses had unsatisfactory level of communication skills.

Likewise, concerning to total level of nurse interns' self-efficacy throughout intervention phases, the current study result revealed that more than half of nurse interns had low level of self- efficacy. This result may be due to most nurse interns had a lack of practical experience (an insufficient trial-and-error process) because of some defects in clinical training during the academic years, so they didn't possess adequate confidence in their soft skills.

While, this result was disagreed with **Mehralian et al.,(2023)** who applied study entitled "Communication competence, self-efficacy, and spiritual intelligence: evidence from nurses" And reported that self-efficacy among studied nurses were at a moderate level.

As regard to correlations matrix communication skills and nursing self- efficacy, the current study result presented that there were highly statistically significant positive correlation between communication skills with patient and nursing self-efficacy. Meanwhile, statistically significant strong positive correlations between nurse interns' communication skills with health care team and nursing self-efficacy. This result due to when nurse interns practice effective communication strategies for achieving their goals with full desire that make them more competent .

This result was supported with **Leal-Costa, et al., (2020)** who applied study entitled "Communication skills and professional practice: does it increase self- efficacy in nurses?" and reported that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation ( $p < 0.01$ ) between the communication skills and the perceived general and specific self- efficacy was obtained

## Conclusion

**On the light of the current study results, it can be concluded that** the studied nurse interns' communication skills were incompetent and had low level of self-efficacy. On the other hand, there was positive statistically significant correlations were documented between nurse interns' communication skills and their self-efficacy.

## Recommendations

**Based upon the results of the current study, the following recommendations were suggested:**

- a. Faculty staff
  - Create a positive communicating atmosphere at training setting between health care team and nurse interns through empathy, healthy, social dialogue, confidence and recognition
- b. Faculty management
  - Integrate communication skill courses into the nursing curriculum to increase nurse interns' development
- c. Nursing interns
  - expose to meaningful learning experiences in every clinical area
  - Future research
  - Replicate of the study on a larger probability sample is highly recommended achieving generalize able results.
  - Perform training program related to communication skills which enhance concept of self-efficacy.

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