

Determination of Learning Styles among Nursing Students

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Abstract

Nursing education furnishes students with the learning qualities required for their profession and also makes students lifelong learners. Aim of the study was to evaluate the learning styles among nursing students. A quantitative approach with descriptive design was applied. A total of 122 students were recruited by purposive sampling from two nursing colleges, selected by convenient sampling. In addition, tools used for the study were structured questionnaire for sample characteristics and Kolb's Learning Style Inventory. Learning styles were assessed after collecting baseline data. Results indicated that the most preferred learning style was turned out to be Accommodator (35%). Findings concluded that there is a diversity of learning styles among nursing students as the students were having all the types of learning styles.

Keywords: Learning styles, Nursing students, Baccalaureate.

Introduction

The nature of education is in the midst of a transformation. Education has traditionally been viewed as the means to convey information and students as identical empty vessels to fill with information. Nursing education furnishes students with the learning qualities required for their profession. Knowledge and practice are not static always; they are going to change at every step in education.¹

Learning style is defined as "The way each learner begins to concentrate on, process and retain new and difficult information". Learning style theories assume that all may learn in different ways and at different levels. There are theories and models which focus on aspects such as talents, sensory modalities, cognitive and/or learning and thinking processes.²

Learning styles are not "fixed" and can be modified depending on the teaching styles and teaching methods. Teachers have several options for managing their diversity of learners about learning styles accommodate particular styles provide creative mismatches or provide a variety of instructional approaches so that learners are both accommodated and mismatched at the same time.³

Within the nursing career, realistic and theoretical knowledge need to be distinctly consolidated. Practicing in clinical field may be very critical for undergraduate nursing college students to increase themselves professionally. This is the core responsibility of the teacher to provide an individualized learning environment, so that the students can link up the theoretical knowledge to practical skills. The teacher also acts as a role model for students and is seen as pivotal to student learning in clinical setting.⁴

Knowing students' learning style preferences enables teachers to use more effective and a wide range of teaching methods and to choose better educational tools for a particular student.⁶

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Materials And Methods

The study used quantitative approach with descriptive design. The study was conducted in two nursing colleges. A total of 122 students were selected as study participants by purposive sampling. The tools used for the study consisted of selected variables regarding study participants characteristics, Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory to assess the preferred learning styles. Reliability of the tools was established by split-half method for Kolb’s Learning Style Inventory (0.71-0.89). The data collection was done during the period of November to December 2019. Pilot study was conducted before final study. Data collection was started by collecting the baseline data and then assessment of learning styles. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data by SPSS 20 version.

Results

The Kolomogorov- Smirnov test was applied to check the normality of data distribution and it was concluded that the data was normally distributed with the value ($p=0.36$). Hence parametric tests were applied for the study.

Sample characteristics

The baseline data was collected from participants through sample characteristics which conclude that variables were homogenous. Nearly half (46.90%) of students were from the age group of 19-21 years. Majority of (73.30%) the students were enrolled in B.Sc. nursing course. More than half (68.80%) of the students were females. Seventy three (73.3%) of the nursing students were belonged to Hindu religion. All (100%) the nursing students were unmarried. More than half (66.7%) of the nursing students had 61-75% marks in previous university examination. Nearly all the nursing students (96.6%) were not having any additional qualification. Majority of the (73.3%) nursing students involved in extracurricular activities. All the nursing students (100%) had previous experience in psychiatric ward. Majority (87.5%) of the nursing students were not having any history of mental illness in their family.

Learning style preferences

The most preferred learning style was found to be Accommodator (34.78%) followed by Diverger learning style (32.60%) and assimilator learning style (32.60%). Astonishingly no students were having converger learning style preference.

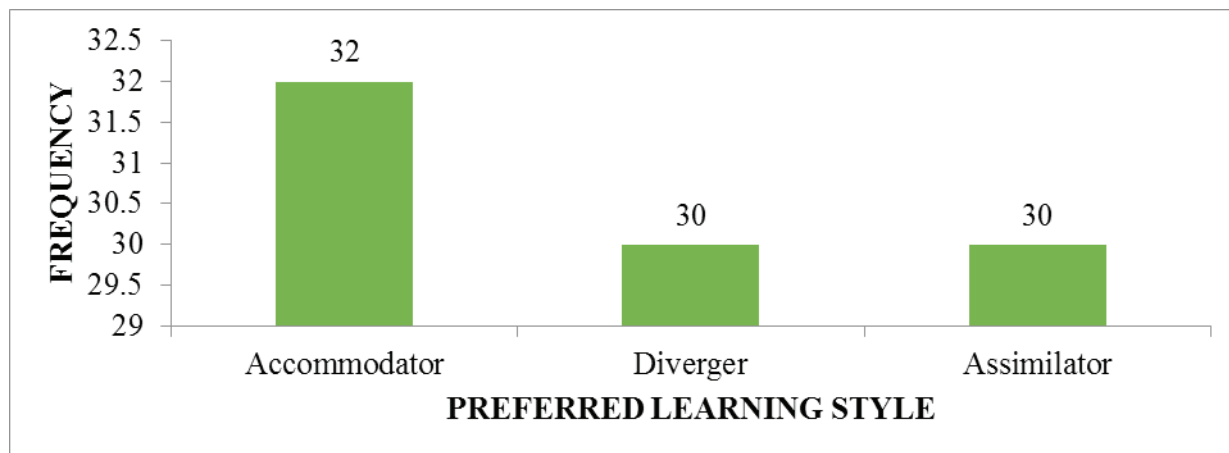


Fig.1.Bar diagram showing Frequency Distribution in Terms of Preferred Learning Styles among nursing students.

Discussion

Mismatching of students' learning style preferences avails better benefit to the students. The study results depicts that there are variety of learning style preferences among nursing students.

In this study, 122 nursing students were enrolled and were homogenous in terms of baseline characteristics. The findings of the study highlighted that there is a wide range of different learning styles among nursing students.

In addition, there has been a predominance among nursing students in gaining knowledge related to learning styles at some point of the years of Bachelor of Science in nursing (Nair MA. 2016). There has been a trend of accommodator and diverging learning style as most preferred learning style in the undergraduate nursing college students.⁸

In addition, understanding learning styles could be considered as a key component of managing classroom teaching strategies (Parul, C. Vikas. 2015). The most preferred learning was reflector followed by theorist; pragmatist and activist preferred learning style. It focussed that nursing students prefer to range between different learning styles.⁹

A research study conducted by (Aina-popoola S, Hendricks CS 2012) also admire that divergers are most preferred learning styles followed by assimilators, accommodators and convergers among first year undergraduate nursing and midwifery university students.¹⁰

Implications

Nursing Education

Nursing educator on the institutional level need to recognize the variations among college teaching techniques. Nursing students getting aware about their own learning style preference would inculcate better thinkers, hassle-solvers, lifelong newbie's and skilful in peer and self-assessment. It also helps them to collect

skills that aid expert improvement. Educators need to design lectures around a trouble-fixing model or discussion method version and lead the class via the invention method after applying appropriate learning styles.

Nursing Administration

Administrators also can form a climate of utilization of most newly research pertaining of learning styles and teaching methods as it helps tutors/educators in understanding the learning styles. Nursing administrators can provide in-service training programme for the nurse educators on assessing desired studying varieties of nursing college students and also inspire them to apply teaching getting to know techniques consistent with their preferred gaining knowledge of styles that suitable to the unique learner.

Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of the study were that it was conducted in two different nursing colleges and the response rate was high. Almost all the students were included besides who were not present at the time of data collection. As with the strengths, the study lacked few points as the sample size was quite small due to time constraints. A similar design can be govern on large sample. It would be a great breakthrough in understanding the learning styles among nursing students.

Conclusion

In the nutshell, the nursing students possessed different preferred learning styles. It depicts the preference of nursing students varied and not all of them pan out in one learning style only. This emerged as an immense need to inculcate teaching learning strategies that are formulated according to preferred learning styles.

Conflict of Interest

Please check the following as appropriate:

- o All authors have participated in (a) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of the data; (b)

drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and (c) approval of the final version.

o This manuscript has not been submitted to, nor is under review at, another journal or other publishing venue.

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