

Investigating the educational competency of student nurses in holistic nursing: Recalibrating holistic education



Hamdan Albaqawi *, Vincent Edward Butcon, Bander Saad Albagawi, Mohammed Hamdan Alshammari, Petelyne Pangket, Richard Dennis Dayrit

College of Nursing, University of Hail, Hail, Saudi Arabia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 15 September 2022

Received in revised form

6 December 2022

Accepted 7 December 2022

Keywords:

Competency

Holistic nursing

Education

ABSTRACT

Teaching nursing students a holistic approach to patient care and integrating treatment modalities is a crucial component of traditional holistic nursing education. This study aims to investigate the educational competency of student nurses in holistic nursing by employing a descriptive comparative design among the 209 student nurses from the University of Hail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Results showed that the student nurses perceived that they have been skillful in the following; professional, legal, and ethical nursing (3.22±.455), management (3.27±.492), leadership (3.29±.493), and professionalism (3.32±.505). On gender and professional, legal, and ethical nursing, there found significant gender differences (t=.822; p=.012). Also, management was found to have significant differences with gender (t=.281; p=.009). Leadership (t=-.694; p>.488) and professionalism (t=.885; p>.377) were found to have no significant difference with gender. Moreover, the professional, legal, and ethical nursing (t=.822; p<.001) and management (t=.910; p<.001) were found to have significant differences with the age of the student nurses, while leadership (t=.231; p>.794), and professionalism (t=.270; p>.764) were found no significant difference with age. On civil status, there found a significant difference in professional, legal, and ethical nursing (t=1.337; p<.001). Meanwhile, management (t=.992; p>.397), leadership (t=.142; p>.935), and professionalism (t=1.122; p>.341) were found to have no significant difference with civil status. Incorporating holistic nursing into nursing courses and research programs would help educate student nurses for multicultural practice contexts as healthcare settings become more diverse.

© 2022 The Authors. Published by IASE. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Despite being a part of the entire nursing curriculum, the nurses' understanding of holistic nursing care was lacking. This demonstrates how the emergence of contemporary technology has led to a more fragmented rather than holistic approach to nursing care (Thomas et al., 2016). In context, it is essential to note that clinical performance evaluation is a key component of nursing education. Because nursing practice is so diverse, this evaluation process is complicated. The capability assessment should take a comprehensive approach (Wu et al., 2016). As a result, nursing education emphasizes

clinical performance evaluation, which is challenging given the variety of nursing practices (Dolan, 2003).

The psychological, social, and spiritual needs are frequently unmet, resulting in the care being provided lacking a holistic viewpoint (Albaqawi et al., 2021). To turn the treatment given into one that is holistic, it is crucial to address these requirements and treat the patient as a person. According to Koslander et al. (2009), holistic nursing care appears to be more significant in this situation. Although holistic nursing principles are included in the curriculum, they still seem to be an ill-defined notion, making it challenging for nurses to put them into practice (Filej and Kaucic, 2013). Nevertheless, nurses knowledgeable about holistic nursing care can provide their patients with high-quality treatment and boost patient satisfaction. To this end, holistic nursing competence is the capacity to approach patient care holistically while maintaining a professional attitude, values, knowledge, skills, and

* Corresponding Author.

Email Address: albaqawihamdan@gmail.com (H. Albaqawi)

<https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2023.03.011>

Corresponding author's ORCID profile:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9749-9669>

2313-626X/© 2022 The Authors. Published by IASE.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

accountability for nursing performance (Takase and Teraoka, 2011).

Teaching nursing students a holistic approach to patient care and integrating treatment modalities is a crucial component of traditional holistic nursing education. The literature suggests incorporating these ideas into other programs (Delaney, 2009) in the nursing profession. In the literature, holistic pedagogy is considered a method applied to a traditional course rather than the guiding concept of all classes in a program, even though it has been regarded as supportive to students in general (Leathard and Cook, 2009). The traditional approach to holism in nursing education emphasizes developing a supportive learning environment, encouraging instructors and students to be critical thinkers, or serving as an example of holism through holistic pedagogy (Love, 2014).

The goal of holistic nursing is to provide patient-centered care in which the nurse treats the patient as a whole. Significantly, this study is of paramount importance. Holistic care calls for specific expertise, abilities, and dispositions that promote the future nurses' need to consider the patient's physical and psychological issues as an individual rather than as a person in a healing process. Developing such knowledge, abilities, and attitudes calls for specific preparation methods. To deliver all-encompassing care further, the holistic concepts are included in a distinct approach to holistic nursing in education, not simply as material but as a method of teaching content and growing a comprehensive learning setting. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the educational competency of student nurses in holistic nursing.

2. Methods

This study employed a descriptive comparative design to investigate the educational competency of student nurses in holistic nursing. The study's respondents were 209 student nurses from the University of Hail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who were enrolled in the academic school year 2021-2022. Convenience sampling was employed in this investigation. The researchers' exclusion criteria eliminated student nurses who had no clinical practice. Students from another department who were taking minor courses (subjects) were also excluded from this study. Nurses who were on leave during the study period were also excluded.

The holistic clinical assessment test measured the competency of student nurses in holistic nursing (HCAT) adapted from Wu et al. (2016). The scale's average content validity, test-retest reliability, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients are each 0.965, 0.928, and 0.972, respectively (Wu et al., 2016). Accordingly, it has been demonstrated that the HCAT is a valid and reliable clinical evaluation instrument for assessing the overall clinical competence of nursing students. The score on the scale ranges from 36 to 144 points. It has 36 components and four dimensions: Specialization, legal and ethical practice,

clinical care, leadership and nursing management, and professional growth. In addition, the four Likert scales of scoring were used, such as unqualified, qualified, skilled, and excellent, denoted by 1, 2, 3, and 4 points, respectively.

2.1. Data gathering procedure

The data-gathering procedure commenced with the approval of the university authorities as well as the clearance and approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Hail. An orientation was conducted with the students to explain the aim of the study, the procedure, and to which extent their participation would be and explaining them the informed consent. Those who signed the informed consent were given at least 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire. The data gathering was conducted between March and April 2022.

2.2. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to treat the data. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, frequency, and percentage) were used. Moreover, t-tests and one-way ANOVA were used to determine the significant difference between the variables. All statistical analyses were performed at a 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants. Of the 209 participants, almost half of them (49.3%) belonged to 20-25 years old, dominated by females (69.9%), and equally distributed with single status (45.9%) and married status (45.5%).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants (N=209)

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Age		
20-25 years old	103	49.3
26-30 years old	61	29.2
31 years old and above	45	21.5
Gender		
Male	63	30.1
Female	146	69.9
Marital Status		
Single	96	45.9
Married	95	45.5
Widowed/Divorced	18	8.6

Table 2 presents the level of competency in holistic nursing as perceived by the student nurses. In general, the student nurses perceived that they have been skillful in the following; professional, legal, and ethical nursing (3.22±.455), management (3.27±.492), leadership (3.29±.493), and professionalism (3.32±.505). Table 3 presents the differences between demographic characteristics and clinical competence of nursing students in

holistic nursing. On gender and professional, legal, and ethical nursing, there found significant gender differences ($t=.822$; $p=.012$), showing males with the higher mean ($3.26\pm.477$). Also, management was found to have a significant difference with gender ($t=.281$; $p=.009$). Leadership ($t=-.694$; $p>.488$) and professionalism ($t=.885$; $p>.377$) were found to have no significant difference with gender.

Table 2: Level of competency in holistic nursing

Competency in holistic nursing	Mean	Std. deviation
Professional legal, ethical nursing	3.22	.455
Management	3.27	.492
Leadership	3.29	.493
Professional	3.32	.505

1.00-1.75= Unqualified; 1.76-2.5= Qualified; 2.6-3.35= Skillful; 3.36-4.00= Excellent

Moreover, the professional, legal, and ethical nursing ($t=.822$; $p<.001$) and management ($t=.910$; $p<.001$) were found to have significant differences with the age of the student nurses, while leadership ($t=.231$; $p>.794$), and professionalism ($t=.270$; $p>.764$) were found no significant difference with age.

On civil status, there found a significant difference with professional, legal, and ethical nursing ($t=1.337$; $p<0.001$), showing widow/divorced ($3.38\pm.297$) having a higher score. Meanwhile, management ($t=.992$; $p>.397$), leadership ($t=.142$; $p>.935$), and professionalism ($t=1.122$; $p>.341$) were found to have no significant difference with civil status.

Table 3: Differences between demographic characteristics and clinical competence of nursing students in holistic nursing

		Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender						
Professional, legal, ethical, nursing	Male	3.2626	.47774	.822	207	.012
	Female	3.2061	.44629			
Management	Male	3.2857	.49155	.281	207	.009
	Female	3.2648	.49454			
Leadership	Male	3.2599	.51943	-.694	207	.488
	Female	3.3116	.48318			
Professional	Male	3.3677	.55128	.885	207	.377
	Female	3.3002	.48566			
Age						
Professional, legal, ethical, nursing	20-25 years old	3.1536	.45722	2.533	3,206	.001
	26-30 years old	3.3100	.42100			
	31 years old and above	3.2646	.48098			
Management	20-25 years old	3.2298	.49183	.910	3,206	.001
	26-30 years old	3.3370	.45631			
	31 years old and above	3.2765	.54051			
Leadership	20-25 years old	3.2755	.47109	.231	3,206	.794
	26-30 years old	3.3299	.50210			
	31 years old and above	3.2972	.53981			
Professional	20-25 years old	3.3026	.49493	.270	3,206	.764
	26-30 years old	3.3607	.50569			
	31 years old and above	3.3074	.53884			
Civil status						
Professional legal, ethical nursing	Single	3.2936	.42219	1.337	3,206	0.001
	Married	3.1206	.49215			
	Widowed/Divorced	3.3889	.29714			
Management	Single	3.3067	.46718	.992	3,206	.397
	Married	3.2351	.53896			
	Widowed/Divorced	3.2716	.35796			
Leadership	Single	3.3138	.43453	.142	3,206	.935
	Married	3.2592	.55730			
	Widowed/Divorced	3.3958	.43566			
Professional	Single	3.3559	.44434	1.122	3,206	.341
	Married	3.2526	.57110			
	Widowed/Divorced	3.4907	.40209			

4. Discussion

This study aims to investigate the educational competency of student nurses in holistic nursing. In general, the student nurses perceived that they have been skillful in professional, legal, and ethical nursing, management, leadership, and professionalism. These results suggest that student nurses understand that such skills are needed as fundamental competencies necessary for performing one's duties as a nurse in the future. According to Fukada (2018), fundamental competencies are

behavioral qualities built on a person's experiences and interests as influenced by one's attitude and motivation. It is a desirable behavioral characteristic that most likely results in success. Therefore, a prerequisite for establishing competency is the ability and behavioral characteristics. This result contributes to the importance of defining nursing skills precisely to lay the groundwork for nursing practice.

In this present study, it was found that gender and professional, legal, and ethical nursing were found to have significant differences, with males

scoring higher. Also, management was found to have significant differences with gender, which suggests that legally, ethically, and management are equally committed to providing care as women are. According to [Stott \(2007\)](#), this offers males the chance to view themselves favorably and as a motivating challenge toward engaging in the profession due to the need to demonstrate that men, like women, are capable of providing care.

Meanwhile, leadership and professionalism were found to have no significant difference with gender. Nursing educators are crucial in determining how nurses will advance in terms of leadership and professionalism, equipping them to handle unforeseen issues in the future ([Seada and Fathi Sleem, 2012](#)). While men and women nursing students initially learn leadership and professionalism through the socialization process and the instruction of their school teachers, it is crucial also to recognize differences in gender between men and women. To some extent, it affects the gender roles on behavior through internalization. Indeed, according to [Trinidad and Normore \(2005\)](#), due to the dynamics of position incongruity and the influence of their leadership styles, women exhibit greater democratic participation and transformation due to the gender stereotype that women are perceived as being more talkative, diplomatic, and sensitive than men.

The professional, legal, and ethical nursing and management were found to have significant differences with the age of the student nurses. It can be argued that time and experience aid progress along the transformation continuum that is that older student nurses have more experience, enhancing their professional, legal, and ethical nursing and management. This can be seen in an earlier study where age was another determinant in developing nurses' abilities, such as their professionalism and managing their practice ethically. Moreover, it was discovered that senior nurses had more excellent job experience and improved competencies. More experienced and older nurses were judged to be more capable ([Numminen et al., 2015](#); [Bahreini et al., 2011](#)) in dealing professionally, legally, and ethically. As such, it is important that educational institution should be bolder in assessing the needs of the students on what to improve ([Pacheco et al., 2020](#)) specifically on the holistic nursing approach.

On civil status, there was a significant difference in professional, legal, and ethical nursing showing widow/divorced scored higher than their counterparts. It is essential that regardless of their civil status, student nurses must be aware of the myriad ethical, legal, and professional challenges they will encounter if working in the future. Indeed, patients, the general public, employers, and the nursing profession hold nurses in high regard. According to [Haddad and Geiger \(2021\)](#), ethics within the profession are essential because healthcare workers must recognize ethical difficulties and make intelligent judgments and

decisions based on their convictions while following the laws that control them. Like all healthcare workers, nurses need regulation and direction within the field to practice competently and ethically ([Epstein and Turner, 2015](#)). For professional nurses in this context, the evaluation of training requirements can assist in determining current performance or knowledge levels in relation to some crucial nursing tasks ([Pasay-an and Alsrouf, 2022](#)).

The implication of this study is geared toward nursing education and practice. This study suggests the importance of educating student nurses for them to be able to create a compassionate healing space within themselves. As such, as early as their formation stage, teaching them holistic nursing allows them to be an instrument of conveying sincerity of unconditional presence that helps to remove barriers to healing and facilitates a person's development.

5. Study limitations

The current study only uses self-reported, perception-based data acquired from survey respondents. The research can independently validate the results because no triangulation of findings was used. The current conclusions were drawn only from the results of the single survey. In light of the current situation, the researcher recommends conducting a follow-up study on such a topic utilizing a mixed-methods approach.

6. Conclusion

Incorporating holistic nursing into nursing courses and research programs would help educate student nurses for multicultural practice contexts as healthcare settings become more diverse. Therefore, perceptions and viewpoints must be considered before creating any plans for student achievement in terms of holistic nursing, take into account.

Funding

This research has been funded by the Scientific Research Deanship of the University of Ha'il Saudi Arabia with project number RG-191236.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to acknowledge the support of the Scientific Research Deanship of the University of Ha'il Saudi Arabia to this research endeavor through project number RG-191236.

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical consideration

This research protocol has the approval of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Hail.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Albaqawi HM, Butcon VE, Albagawi BS, Dayrit RD, and Pangket P (2021). Holistic nursing care among operating room nurses: Strengthening the standard of practice in Saudi Arabia. *Belitung Nursing Journal*, 7(1): 8-14.
<https://doi.org/10.33546/bnj.1279>
- Bahreini M, Shahamat S, Hayatdavoudi P, and Mirzaei M (2011). Comparison of the clinical competence of nurses working in two university hospitals in Iran. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 13(3): 282-288.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-2018.2011.00611.x>
PMid:21733050
- Delaney C (2009). Opening new doors: RN to BSN students' experiences in a holistic nursing course. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, 23(1): 39-48.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.HNP.0000343208.79581.4f>
PMid:19104274
- Dolan G (2003). Assessing student nurse clinical competency: Will we ever get it right? *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 12(1): 132-141.
<https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2702.2003.00665.x>
PMid:12519259
- Epstein B and Turner M (2015). The nursing code of ethics: Its value, its history. *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 20(2): 4.
<https://doi.org/10.3912/OJIN.Vol20No02Man04>
PMid:26882423
- Filej B and Kaucic BM (2013). Holistic nursing practice. *South Eastern Europe Health Sciences Journal*, 3(1): 1-7.
- Fukada M (2018). Nursing competency: Definition, structure and development. *Yonago Acta Medica*, 61(1): 1-7.
<https://doi.org/10.33160/yam.2018.03.001>
PMid:29599616 PMCID:PMC5871720
- Haddad LM and Geiger RA (2021). *Nursing ethical considerations*. StatPearls Publishing, Treasure Island, USA.
- Koslander T, da Silva AB, and Roxberg Å (2009). Existential and spiritual needs in mental health care: An ethical and holistic perspective. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 27(1): 34-42.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010108323302>
PMid:19176899
- Leathard HL and Cook MJ (2009). Learning for holistic care: Addressing practical wisdom (phronesis) and the spiritual sphere. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 65(6): 1318-1327.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2008.04949.x>
PMid:19243460
- Love K (2014). A midrange theory of empowered holistic nursing education: A pedagogy for a student-centered classroom. *Creative Nursing*, 20(1): 47-58.
<https://doi.org/10.1891/1078-4535.20.1.47>
PMid:24730192
- Numminen O, Leino-Kilpi H, Isoaho H, and Meretoja R (2015). Newly graduated nurses' competence and individual and organizational factors: A multivariate analysis. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 47(5): 446-457.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jnu.12153> **PMid:26219521**
- Pacheco H, Hernandez JP, Carsula R, Dayrit RD, Albaqawi HM, and Pasay-an E (2020). Systems based assessment of multiple choice questions (MCQs) for quality assurance in testing. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 31(1-3): 1-11.
<https://doi.org/10.31901/24566322.2020/31.1-3.1146>
- Pasay-an E and Alsrouf HH (2022). Prioritizing training needs for nurses in the government hospitals of the Ha'il region, Saudi Arabia: Future directions for educational developers. *Makara Journal of Health Research*, 26(2): 104-110.
<https://doi.org/10.7454/msk.v26i2.1365>
- Seada A and Fathi Sleem W (2012). Professional socialization process and acquisition of professional nursing values among undergraduate nursing students. *Journal of American Science*, 8(4): 678-683.
- Stott A (2007). Exploring factors affecting attrition of male students from an undergraduate nursing course: A qualitative study. *Nurse Education Today*, 27(4): 325-332.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2006.05.013> **PMid:16887238**
- Takase M and Teraoka S (2011). Development of the holistic nursing competence scale. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 13(4): 396-403.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-2018.2011.00631.x>
PMid:21883769
- Thomas RB, Chakrabarty J, and DSouza JP (2016). Staff nurses' knowledge regarding holistic nursing care. *Manipal Journal of Nursing and Health Sciences*, 2(2): 38-40.
- Trinidad C and Normore AH (2005). Leadership and gender: A dangerous liaison? *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 26(7): 574-590.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730510624601>
- Wu XV, Enskär K, Pua LH, Heng DGN, and Wang W (2016). Development and psychometric testing of holistic clinical assessment tool (HCAT) for undergraduate nursing students. *BMC Medical Education*, 16: 248.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-016-0768-0>
PMid:27658587 PMCID:PMC5034523