

Knowledge of Pakistani Nurses about Theory-Practice Gap in Nursing

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Abstract

Introduction: Nursing consists of two main basic components: theory and practice. The main goal of nursing education is to generate competent, skilled, and knowledgeable nurses. Most importantly, nursing is a profession where the practical experience of nurses plays a pivotal role; the clinical education

of nurses holds significant importance in nursing training. **Research Objective:** To assess to knowledge of Pakistani Nurses about Theory Practice Gap in Nursing at public and private Institutions. **Methods and Material:** A cross-sectional study was conducted was conducted at different public and private nursing institutions of Sindh. **Target Population:** All nursing instructor and clinical instructor were part of this study. **Sampling Technique:** A convenient sampling technique was used for this study during the data collection. **Sample Size:** Sample size was calculated through Rao-soft sample size calculator, after putting the values, by keeping 95% confidence interval, 5% margin error, the obtained sample size was n=188. **Data Collection Procedure:** Data was collected after the distribution of consent form among the participants. A self-developed questionnaire was distribute among the participants to assess the knowledge regarding the theory practice. **Data Analysis:** The mean and standard deviation were used for quantitative variables, while frequency and percentage were used for categorical variables. **Results:** A total of n=188 sample size were considered in this study, in which almost 66% of the study participants were having age from 21-30. 25% participants were having age from 31-40 years. Moreover, according to demographic variables, this study was consisted of 47% male, and 53% female. In addition to it, according to designation of participants 46.8% were clinical instructor and only 30.2% participants

were nursing instructor, and 22.8% were staff nurses. Furthermore, according to awareness of theory and practice gap, n=98(52%) were well aware from the theory-practice gap, only 18.6% were having low Awareness regarding theory-practice gap. In addition to it, according to potential causes of theory-practice gap most of participants n=112 (59.5%) thought that the rapidly changing tech including nursing technology and procedures evolve faster than curricula can be updated) were the potential cause of theory-practice gap (Mean 0.39, SD±0.48). **Conclusion:** Awareness of the theory-practice gap is sufficient among participants; active efforts are needed to address it. Effective collaboration, enhanced knowledge acquisition, ongoing education, regular curriculum updates, and integrating evidence-based practices into learning are essential to minimize current gaps.

Keywords: Theory-Practice Gap, Knowledge, Nurse, Educators, Private and Government Institute

Introduction

Nursing consists of two main basic components: theory and practice. The main goal of nursing education is to generate competent, skilled, and knowledgeable nurses¹. Most importantly, nursing is a profession where the practical experience of nurses plays a pivotal role; the clinical education of nurses holds significant importance in nursing training. The clinical education of nurses involves the approaches implemented by the council to ensure that nursing students acquire the necessary clinical skills and proficiency². Most studies in Pakistan have found that nurses hold a degree, but they often fail to apply their knowledge in practice³. In addition to it, according to the findings of a study, that the 83.80% participants had good knowledge, while 89.10% had good perspective⁴. This study also revealed that knowledge were substantially different in relation to their educational level. The theoretical knowledge of nurses can deliver the best possible nursing care in a clinical setting, but in the area of nursing, the knowledge-practice gap is significant⁵. In addition to this, a study noted that the theory-practice gap in nursing, where the clinical performance of nurses is inconsistent, has consequences for patient care, workforce satisfaction, and transition to practice outcomes⁶. Moreover, a nurse's performance is significantly impacted by their clinical expertise and acquisition of knowledge; the theory-practice gap has long been a subject

of concern in nursing education and in the nursing profession globally⁷. This disparity between the theoretical knowledge acquired in nursing programs and its application in real-world clinical settings poses challenges for nursing professionals¹. Thus, the researcher decide the find out the gap of knowledge of Pakistani nurses about practice gap in nursing.

Methods and Material

A cross-sectional study was conducted was conducted at public and private nursing institution of Sindh.

Target Population

All nursing instructor and clinical instructor were part of this study.

Sampling Technique

A convenient sampling technique was used for this study during the data collection.

Sample Size

Sample size was calculated through Rao-soft sample size calculator, after putting the values, by keeping 95% confidence interval, 5% margin error, the obtained sample size was n=188.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

All those Nursing and Clinical Instructor was part of study who are responsible nursing and clinical education, both male and female faculties were part of study. All those participants were in exclusion criteria who refused to take part in study.

Validity of Questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was measured through the pilot study, 10% of total sample size. The self-developed questionnaire was divided into two section, the first section of the questionnaire was consists of demographic questionnaire, the second section was consist of awareness knowledge questions related to practice-theory and the third section was consist of potential gaps. The questions was consists of Likert scale, 01 denoted strongly disagree, 02 denoted disagree, 03 denoted agree, and 04 denoted strongly agree. After the pilot study was content validity Index (CVI) was measured through the SPSS, the (1-4) scale was used, by using the expert's rate items on relevance. The knowledge questionnaire and potential gaps achieved a (CVI) of 0.88 and 0.86 respectively.

Questionnaire Tool

The questionnaire consisted of 6 parts. The first part consisted of demographic data, and the second part consisted of the Awareness of Theory-Practice Gap. The III-part of the questionnaire consisted of Potential Causes of the Gap. The questionnaire was consisted of (Likert Scale: Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral/Uncertain, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected after the distribution of consent form among the participants. A self-developed questionnaire was distribute among the participants to assess the knowledge regarding the theory practice.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by frequency and percentage, mean, standard deviation, and display in form of tables.

Results

A total sample size of $n=188$ was considered in this study. Among the participants, approximately 66% were aged 21-30 years, while 25% were aged 31-40 years. Additionally, 8% were in the 41-50 year age group, and only 1% were over 50 years old. In this study, the mean age of participants was (1.39 ± 0.59) , indicating that most participants were young adults. Regarding gender, female participants were dominant; out of $n=188$, almost 53% were female, and 47% were male. According to designation, most participants were clinicians (46.8%), while 30.3% were nursing instructors. Regarding education, 23.4%% were Registered Nurses (Diploma holders) and 76.59% held a bachelor's degree in nursing. In terms of experience, most participants (48%) had 1-5 years of experience, and 32% had 5-7 years. Added to this, 12% had 7-9 years but less than 10 years of experience, and only 7.5% had more than 10 years of experience. Additionally, the mean experience was (1.94 ± 0.8) , indicating that most participants belonged to the 1-5 year experience group (*Table 01*). Furthermore, according to clinical experience, 32% of participants had 5-7 years of experience. Regarding awareness of the theory-practice gap, $n=98$ (52%) were well aware of the theory-practice gap, and only 18.6% had low awareness regarding the theory-practice gap (*Table 02*). In addition to it, according to potential causes of theory-practice gap most of participants $n=112$ (59.5%)

thought that the rapidly changing tech including (Nursing technology and procedures evolve faster than curricula can be updated) were the potential cause of theory-practice gap (Mean 0.39, SD±0.48) (Table 03).

Table 01: Frequency and Percentage of Demographic variables.

Variables	Frequency	%age	Mean	S.D
Age				
21-30	124	66%	1.39	0.59
31-40	47	25%		
41-50	15	8%		
>50 years	02	1%		
Gender				
Male	88	47%		
Female	100	53%		
Designation				
Clinical Instructor	88	46.8%		
Nursing Instructor	57	30.3%		
Staff Nurses	43	22.8%		
Professional Qualification				
Registered Nurse(Diploma Holder)	44	23.4%		
Bachelors in Nursing	138	76.59%		
Masters in Nursing	6	3.19%		
Clinical Experience				
1-5years	91	48%	1.94	0.8
5-7years	61	32%		
7-9years	23	12%		
>10years	13	7.5%		

Descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage $x \pm S.D.$

Table 02: Awareness of Theory-Practice Gap

Category	Frequency	%age
High Awareness of Theory- Practice Gap.	n=98	52%
Moderate Awareness of Theory-Practice Gap.	n=55	29.2%
Low Awareness of Theory- Practice Gap.	n=35	18.6%

Table 3: *Potential Cause of Theory-Practice Gap*

Items	Frequency	%age	Mean	Standard deviation.
Clinical Environment.	n=17	9%	0.08	0.22
Educational Limitations.	n=29	15.4%	0.13	0.037
Professional Socialization.	n=30	15.95%	0.131	0.04
Rapidly Changing Tech.	n=112	59.5%	0.38	0.48

Discussion

According to the findings of this study, there is a high level of awareness among participants regarding the existence of a gap between theory and practice. This level of knowledge is seen to be highest among bachelor's holders, followed by diploma nurses. So the result of this study is contrary to the study^{8,9}, where moderate results of knowledge among participants were seen. This result demonstrate that majority of nurses are bachelors in nursing, The clinical and academic task collaboration provides a better understanding of the gap's existence, highlighting the urgent need for professional collaboration to close the gap between theory and practice⁴. The result of this study shows high level of awareness due to the fact that the majority of participants were bachelor's degree holder, and this result is also contrary to the study¹⁰ in which study's result stated poor level of knowledge among participants.

Conclusion

Awareness of the theory-practice gap is sufficient among participants; active efforts are needed to address it. Effective collaboration, enhanced knowledge acquisition, ongoing education, regular curriculum updates, and integrating evidence-based practices into learning are essential to minimize current gaps.

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