"Nurturing Compassion: Evaluating The Compassion Levels Among B.Sc. Nursing Students"

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ABSTRACT:
This study examines the self-compassion levels among BSc nursing students and explores potential correlation with sub scales and demographic associations. A total of 284 BSc nursing students participated in the research, collected by using google form and link sent through college WhatsApp, data on their class of study, gender, residential type, and self-compassion scores. The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) The data analysis was done by using SPSS 28.0 revealed moderate levels of self-compassion among the participants, with mean scores ranging from 2.4 to 3.8, indicate a moderate level of self-compassion. Notably, a significant positive correlation was found between specific pairs of components, such as SK and SJ, CH and I, and M and OI (p<0.001). Chi-Square Tests indicated a significant association between the Self-Compassion Scale scores and gender, highlighting the gender-based differences in self-compassion levels. These findings contribute to our understanding of self-compassion dynamics among BSc nursing students and emphasize the need for tailored interventions to promote self-compassion and well-being in the academic and professional context.

I.   INTRODUCTION:

Compassion is acknowledged as a fundamental professional value that has a significant impact on the decision-making and actions of nurses, and ultimately contributes to the achievement of excellence in the nursing profession while facilitating the provision of quality care. Jean Watson, the founder of the Human Caring Model, defines compassion as the 'ability to observe, empathize with, and cherish in our hearts the sorrows and beauties of the world. Moreover, the American Nurses Association (ANA) explicitly asserts that compassion is one of the ethical principles of nursing: 'The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.[1]

Compassion is an essential value in nursing, and its development among nursing students is crucial. Several studies have explored the level of compassion among nursing students and its impact on their ethical sensitivity and patient care. These studies highlight the need for nursing education to foster compassion among students and provide guidance for teaching compassionate care.[2]

The importance of self-compassion among nursing students is emphasized in the caring theories. Developing self-compassion among nursing students is critical as it empowers them to demonstrate the same towards their patients. It is essential to note that self-compassion is not an action that nursing students take towards patients; instead, it is an internal process that substantially impacts the feedback and clinical performance of nurses towards patients.[3]

Self-compassion is a complex construct that encompasses a profound recognition of not only one's own pain but also the pain experienced by others. It is composed of interlinked elements, notably self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Compassion, as a construct, consisting of three distinct components, each characterized by a positive and negative pole: self-kindness versus self-judgment, common humanity versus isolation, and mindfulness versus over-identification.[4]

Self-compassion can be distinguished from compassion, which involves recognizing and responding to the suffering of others with a strong desire to alleviate it.[5,6] However, the cultivation of self-compassion is of utmost importance in the development of compassion for others. Through the recognition of failure and suffering as inherent and inevitable components of human life, individuals are able to identify with the struggles of others and acknowledge them as manifestations of shared human fallibility.[7,8]

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE IN NURSING:

Self-compassion comprises three primary constituents, namely self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Self-kindness refers to exhibiting kindness and empathy towards oneself during difficult times instead of being severely self-critical. Common humanity involves recognizing one's experiences as part of the

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larger human experience, rather than perceiving them as divisive and isolating. Mindfulness involves maintaining a balanced awareness of painful thoughts and feelings, rather than identifying excessively with them.[9]

Nursing students displayed greater anxiety levels than occupational therapy and social work students. Occupational therapy students demonstrated more positive attitudes towards mental health compared to their counterparts; and nursing students expressed more concern about their reputation in connection to their family than counselling students. In all groups, self-compassion was the most powerful predictor of mental health. These findings can help develop effective interventions tailored to the specific needs of students in each healthcare discipline.[10]

Nursing education and practice are characterized by demanding and stressful environments. Nursing students undergo rigorous training and face various challenges that can impact their well-being, mental health, and ultimately their ability to provide compassionate care. Despite the growing recognition of self-compassion as a crucial factor in promoting well-being and coping, there is a lack of comprehensive research specifically focusing on self-compassion levels among B.Sc. nursing students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:
"A Study to Assess the Compassion levels among B.Sc. Nursing students at selected college of Nursing, Guntur dist., Andhra Pradesh."

OBJECTIVES:
1. To Explore the Self Compassion Levels among B.Sc. Nursing Students
2. To Correlate the Self Compassion between subscales among B.Sc. Nursing Students.
3. To Find Out Association Between Self Compassion Levels among B.Sc. Nursing Students with Their Selected Demographic Variables.

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Study aimed to reveal underlying themes among undergraduate nursing students who self-identified as recipients of empathy within their Baccalaureate nursing education. The research yielded four discernible themes, encompassing: 1) compassion emerging in situations marked by confusion, disorientation, fear, and demoralization; 2) being evident in relationships characterized by acknowledgment, esteem, and understanding; 3) evolving through others assuming leadership roles, attentive listening, patience, and sustained presence; and 4) culminating in feelings of achievement, comfort, and belonging. These findings offer valuable insights into compassion from the students' viewpoint and suggest the potential for a compassion-focused pedagogical approach. In essence, this study provides illumination into the experiences of undergraduate nursing students, underscoring the significance of empathy and compassion in nursing education.[11]

Nursing education and practice are characterized by demanding and stressful environments. Nursing students undergo rigorous training and face various challenges that can impact their well-being, mental health, and ultimately their ability to provide compassionate care. Despite the growing recognition of self-compassion as a crucial factor in promoting well-being and coping, there is a lack of comprehensive research specifically focusing on self-compassion levels among B.Sc. nursing students. Therefore, this study is needed to fill the research gap, existing literature primarily focuses on self-compassion among healthcare professionals or general student populations, leaving a gap in understanding self-compassion among nursing students. This study seeks to address this gap and contribute unique insights specific to nursing education.

III.   METHODOLOGY:

A Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study used to conduct the study. This design involves collecting data from BSc Nursing students at a single point in time to describe and understand the self-compassion levels and related variables among this group. The present study investigator selected the BSc Nursing students at NRI college of nursing, Chinnakakani, Guntur Dt. All BSc Nursing students currently enrolled in Dr.YSR Universities Affiliated colleges within the age range of 18 to 25 years. Accessible Population: BSc Nursing students currently enrolled in NRI college of Nursing. First year to final year of the BSc Nursing programme. Students who are willing and able to participate in the study based on factors such as availability and consent. Sampling: In the research study sample for the present study were BSc Nursing students. Sampling Method: Convenience Sampling used to select participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. This involved selecting BSc Nursing students who are readily available to the researchers. Sample Size: Sample size of 280 participants were selected to achieve statistical power and representativeness.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION: Planned to collect information from the subjects by using a self-report method to collect socio demographic data, to explore the level of self-compassion among 4 year BSc Nursing students.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL: The tool for the study was chosen by the investigator based on the thorough review of literature and consultation with experts. Tool includes 4 sub-sections: SECTION-A: Based on objectives-demographic data included class of study, gender, place of residence. SECTION – B: Self-compassion scale (SCS) This scale with 26 items and with a five-point Likert response option was created by Neff (2003) to assess the self-compassion of an individual along with six dimensions. The three dimensions pertain to positive self-compassion behavior and the three other dimensions focus on negative self -compassion behavior. Higher mean scores signify more positive self-compassion. The scale's validity and reliability were well established by Neff (2003). The Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was 0.92.

COLLECTION OF DATA: Data collection information were collected from 1-8-2023to 7-08-23 at NRI College of Nursing. The formal permission was obtained from the principal of NRI College of Nursing, Chinnakakani, Guntur district. The convenient sampling used for selecting the sample, Provide participants with the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) questionnaire. Explained about the study aims and procedure of filling the google form and sent the link to the participants via WhatsApp class groups included with informed consent and the questionnaire with demographic variables and Self Compassion scale of 26 items.

IV. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION:

Findings related to socio-demographic variables:

Table 1 presents the results concerning the demographic characteristics of 284 BSc nursing students. In terms of their class of study, the participants were distributed as follows: 31% were in the 1st year of BSc. Nursing, 22% in the 2nd year, 28% in the 3rd year, and 18% in the 4th year. With regard to gender, the study included 90% female participants and 9.5% male participants.

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Class of study		
	BSC(N) 1year	88	31.0
	BSC(N) 2year	63	22.2
	BSC(N) 3year	82	28.9
	BSC(N) 4year	51	18.0
2.	Gender		
	Female	257	90.5
	Male	27	9.5

Table-2 Mean and Standard Deviation Of Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) Scores Among Bsc Nursing Students.

Sub Scales	Mean	Std. Deviation	Score
Self-Kindness (SK)	3	.90	Moderate Self-Compassion
Self-Judgment (SJ)	2	.72	Low Self-Compassion
Common Humanity (CH) Items:	3	.84	Moderate Self-Compassion
Isolation (I) Items:	2	.86	Low Self-Compassion
Mindfulness (M) Items:	3	.90	Moderate Self-Compassion
Over-identification (OI) Items:	2	.77	Low Self-Compassion
Overall self-compassion			
self-compassion score	3.2	.57	Moderate Self-Compassion

The data in Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) scores among 284 BSc Nursing students. The overall self-compassion score was 3.2 with a standard deviation of 0.57, indicating a moderate level of self-compassion among BSc Nursing students.

Table-3: **Correlation coefficient between positive and negative sub scales of Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) Among Bsc Nursing Students.**

		Self-Judgment	Sig. (2-tailed)
Self-Kindness (SK)	**Pearson Correlation**	.348**	<.001
		Isolation (I)	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Common Humanity (CH)	**Pearson Correlation**	.188**	<.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	

		Over-identification (OI)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mindfulness (M)	**Pearson Correlation**	.388**	<.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	

The presented data pertains to the correlation coefficients between the positive and negative components of the scales. It indicated a positive correlation between Self-Kindness (SK) and Self-Judgment of .348, a correlation of .188 between Common Humanity (CH) and Isolation (I), and a correlation of .388 between Mindfulness (M) and Over-identification (OI). These correlations are statistically significant at p<0.001.

Table -5 **Chi-Square to find association between Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) and demographic variables among Bsc Nursing Students**.

Variable	Chi-Square Value	Table Value	Significance (2-Sided)
Class of study	506.96	512.43	0.143
Gender	156.14	116.00	0.527
Residence	161.56	211.62	0.407

The Chi-Square Tests revealed an association between the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) and selected demographic variables among BSc Nursing students. Notably, the analysis identified a significant association only with the students' gender.

V. DISCUSSION:

The data presents an insightful overview of self-compassion levels among 284 BSc nursing students, along with their demographic characteristics. The study examines various components of self-compassion and explores correlations with demographic variables. The data demonstrates that BSc nursing students exhibited moderate levels of self-compassion, with individual item scores falling between 2.4 and 3.8, indicating a range of moderate self-compassion. The mean scores for each component of the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) shed light on the different aspects of self-compassion experienced by the students.

The study also explores the association between self-compassion and demographic variables among BSc nursing students. Notably, a significant association is observed between self-compassion and gender, with 90% of participants being females and 9.5% being males. This gender difference could be attributed to cultural, societal, or psychological factors that influence self-compassion levels.

The data revealed weak positive correlations between various components of the Self-Compassion Scale. These correlations highlight the interplay between different aspects of self-compassion and how they relate to each other within the context of nursing students. For instance, the positive correlation between Self-Kindness and Self-Judgment suggests that individuals who are kinder to themselves tend to exhibit lower self-judgment.

VI. IMPLICATIONS:

The findings of this study hold significance for both academia and clinical practice. Enhancing self-compassion levels among nursing students could potentially contribute to improved mental well-being and coping strategies, which are essential for managing the challenges of a demanding profession. Further research could explore interventions that foster self-compassion and their impact on academic performance, stress management, and overall student satisfaction.

VII. RECOMMENDATION:

Some recommendations for future research that could further enhance our understanding of self-compassion among BSc nursing students:
1. Investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness-based practices, self-compassion training programs, or other interventions in improving self-compassion levels, reducing stress, and enhancing overall well-being.
2. Explore the influence of cultural and gender factors on self-compassion.
3. Examine the relationship between self-compassion and academic performance among nursing students.
4. Explore how self-compassion impacts clinical practice among nursing students.
5. Compare self-compassion levels among nursing students with those in other healthcare professions, such as medical students, psychology students, or social work students.
6. Investigate the role of peer support and social networks in promoting self-compassion among nursing students.
7. Examine the relationship between self-compassion and resilience among nursing students.
8. Study the impact of integrating self-compassion training into the nursing curriculum.

VIII. CONCLUSION :

The data presented in this study sheds light on the self-compassion levels and demographic associations among BSc nursing students. While the findings indicate a moderate level of self-compassion, they also suggest areas where targeted interventions could be beneficial. Understanding the meaning of self-compassion and its correlations with demographic variables can lead to more effective strategies for promoting well-being and resilience among nursing students.

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