RESEARCH ARTICLE

LIFE SKILLS, ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS AND QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG FRESHMEN NURSING STUDENTS: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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Abstract: Freshmen nursing students often face challenges in balancing academics, clinical practice, and personal adjustments. The overall aim of the study was to assess life skills, adjustment problems, and quality of life (QoL) among freshmen nursing students in Vadodara, Gujarat. *Methods:* A descriptive cross-sectional design was employed with 150 first-year nursing students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a socio-demographic questionnaire, Life Skill Likert Scale, Student Adjustment Scale, and WHOQOL-BREF tool. *Results:* Students reported moderate life skills (mean = 151.63, 59.46%) and average adjustment problems (78.67%), while 71.33% reported excellent QoL. Empathy and interpersonal relationships were strengths, whereas problem-solving, coping with emotions, and communication were weaker. Age showed a significant association with life skills (p < 0.05). *Conclusion:* Freshmen nursing students demonstrate moderate adaptability but enjoy relatively high QoL. Interventions focusing on communication, stress management, and problem-solving could strengthen life skills and enhance student well-being.

Keywords: Nursing students, Life skills, Adjustment problems, Quality of life, Freshmen transition

INTRODUCTION

The first year of professional education is often characterized by profound transitions. For nursing students, this involves balancing theoretical learning with clinical training, managing academic workload, and adapting to new social environments. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life skills are adaptive abilities that enable individuals to handle everyday demands and challenges effectively (WHO)[1]. For nursing students, these skills are not only critical for personal resilience but also for professional competence in healthcare. Studies suggest that deficits in life skills may hinder adaptation, contribute to stress, and negatively affect academic success (Gupta and Verma)[2]. Adjustment problems, such as stress, social isolation, and homesickness, are prevalent among first-year nursing students and can directly influence quality of life (Sharma)[3].

Quality of life (QoL) reflects an individual's well-being across physical, psychological, social, and environmental domains. Research indicates that nursing students often report moderate QoL, affected by academic stress, workload, and limited personal time (Singh and Patel)[4]. Understanding the interplay between life skills, adjustment, and QoL is essential for developing student-centered interventions. This study was designed to examine these variables among freshmen nursing students in Vadodara, Gujarat, and to identify their associations with socio-demographic factors.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To Assess the Life Skill of Freshmen Nursing Students.
2. To Identify Adjustment problems of Freshmen Nursing Students.
3. To Determine the Quality of life of Freshmen Nursing students.
4. To Find out the Association between Life Skill, Adjustment Problems and Quality of Life with Socio-demographic Variables.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted for this study. The target population consisted of freshmen nursing students from two selected institutes in Vadodara. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 150 participants who met the inclusion criteria, including age between 17 and 25 years, enrollment in the first year, and willingness to participate.

Data were collected using four instruments: (1) Socio-demographic questionnaire, (2) The Life Skill Likert Scale, (3) The Student Adjustment Scale, and (4) The WHOQOL-BREF Questionnaire. The tools assessed domains such as self-awareness, empathy, communication, stress management, academic adaptation, and QoL across four domains. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional ethics committee, and informed consent was secured from all participants.

Data analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies, percentages, means,

and standard deviations were used for descriptive analysis. Chi-square tests and Pearson's correlation were applied to explore associations between life skills, adjustment, QoL, and socio-demographic variables.

RESULTS

The study included 150 freshmen nursing students. The majority (59.33%) were aged 17–18 years, and females constituted 61.33% of the sample. Most students (58.67%) belonged to joint families, and 48.67% came from rural areas. Nearly three-fourths of respondents (74%) rated their health status as good, while 54.67% reported experiencing study-related stress.

Table No.1 Showing Life Skill Among Freshmen Nursing Students

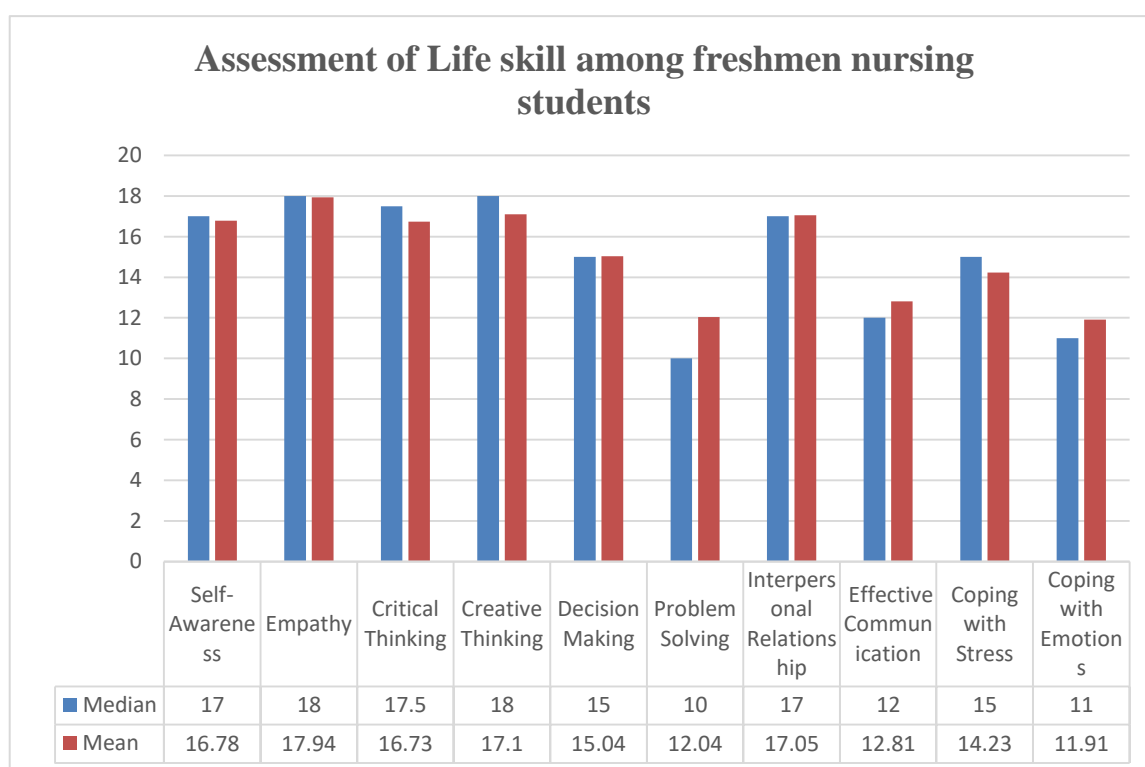| Area of Life skill	Life Skill of Freshmen Nursing Students					
	Max score	**Min-Max**	**Median**	**Mean**	**Mean %**	**SD**
Self-Awareness	25	6-23	17	16.78	67.12	3.34
Empathy	25	9-24	18	17.94	71.76	3.79
Critical Thinking	30	8-23	17.5	16.73	55.77	3.8
Creative Thinking	25	9-23	18	17.1	68.4	4.18
Decision Making	25	8-25	15	15.04	60.16	4.0
Problem Solving	25	5-23	10	12.04	48.16	5.32
Interpersonal Relationship	25	9-23	17	17.05	68.2	2.5
Effective Communication	25	5-25	12	12.81	51.24	4.48
Coping with Stress	25	5-24	15	14.23	56.92	4.9
Coping with Emotions	25	5-24	11	11.91	47.64	4.65
Total	**255**	**115-212**	**146.5**	**151.63**	**59.46**	**23.93**

Fig No. 1 Showing Assessmment Of Life Skill Among Freshmen Nursing Students

Life Skills: As illustrated in Figure No. 1, The mean life skill score was 151.63 (59.46%). Empathy (71.76%) and creative thinking (68.4%) were the strongest domains, while coping with emotions (47.64%), problem-solving (48.16%), and communication (51.24%) were the weakest. About 76.67% of students fell into the average life skill category, 12.67% demonstrated poor life skills, and only 10.67% achieved excellent scores.

Adjustment Problems: The mean adjustment score was 35.47, indicating moderate adjustment. Most students (78.67%) reported average adjustment, 20.67% had good adjustment, and only 0.67% reported excellent adjustment levels.

Quality of Life: The mean QoL score was 90.49 (69.61%). A majority (71.33%) of students reported excellent QoL, 28.67% had moderate QoL, and none fell into the poor QoL category. The environmental and social domains scored higher, while physical health and psychological domains were relatively lower.

Association Analysis: A significant association was found between age and life skills ($\chi^2 = 15.57$, $p < 0.05$). However, no significant associations were identified between gender, religion, or type of family and the three core variables.

DISCUSSION

This study highlights that while freshmen nursing students demonstrated moderate life skills and adjustment challenges, their overall quality of life remained high. Empathy and interpersonal skills emerged as strong points, consistent with prior studies emphasizing the caring nature of nursing students (Rani and Saini)4. However, deficits in communication, emotional regulation, and problem-solving require attention, as these are crucial for clinical practice and academic success (Singh et al.)7.

The prevalence of moderate adjustment difficulties aligns with findings by Waghmare and (Kaur)9, who reported that most first-year nursing students face adjustment challenges. Such problems may stem from academic workload, social isolation, and transitioning into independent living. Interventions such as mentorship programs, stress management workshops, and orientation activities could mitigate these issues.

The majority of students reported excellent QoL, a finding that diverges from some earlier research indicating predominantly moderate QoL (Sharma; Kumar and Sharma)3. This may reflect strong support systems reported by all participants in the present study, underscoring the role of social and familial support in enhancing well-being.

The significant association between age and life skills suggests that maturity plays a role in adaptability and coping. However, gender and religion did not show significant differences, echoing findings from (Patel and Sharma)4. Future studies could explore longitudinal patterns of life skill development and its effect on retention and performance in nursing programs.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
1.	Exclusion of students from other academic years restricted comparative insights.
2.	Cultural and regional uniqueness of the sample may not represent the national nursing student population.
3.	Lack of control for confounding variables such as mental health status, prior academic performance, or family support.

RECOMMENDATIONS
1.	Incorporate structured life skills training and adjustment enhancement modules into the nursing curriculum.
2.	Establish counseling units and peer mentoring programs to address adjustment challenges.
3.	Conduct multi-institutional and longitudinal studies for broader generalization.
4.	Monitor students' quality of life periodically to identify those at risk of academic or psychological distress.
5.	Strengthen collaboration between faculty, hostel wardens, and student leaders for holistic student support.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that freshmen nursing students in Vadodara demonstrate average life skills and moderate adjustment difficulties, yet enjoy a relatively high quality of life. Empathy and social skills were strengths, while problem-solving, communication, and coping with emotions emerged as weaknesses. Institutional support in developing targeted life skill programs can enhance student adaptation and academic success. Further research should investigate the effectiveness of structured interventions on improving student outcomes across multiple domains of life and education.

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