

The Effect of Assertiveness-Based Programme on Psychological Wellbeing and Work Engagement among Novice Nurses in Psychiatric Department

Effect of
Assertiveness-
Based
Programme on
Psychological
Wellbeing among
Novice Nurses

Samina Khanam, Kabir Ozigi Abdullahi, Hajra Sarwar and Maryum Altaf

ABSTRACT

Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness of an assertiveness training program on psychological well-being and work engagement among novice psychiatric nurses

Study Design: quasi-experimental study

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted at the Jinnah and General Hospital Lahore from January, 2022 to July, 2022.

Materials and Methods: Overall, 36 novice nurses working in the psychiatric units were employed in the study. Pre-interventional data regarding Assertiveness, Psychological well-being, and Work-engagement was collected using three adopted questionnaires. The assertiveness training program of four months was designed. Post-interventional data after two months of the interventions were collected. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 24

Results: More than half (52.8%) of the participants were from 20 to 25 years old, and 61.1% held a diploma in nursing. All the participants were female. 55.6% of the nurses were working as a registered nurses, and 72.2% of nurses were Muslim. Assertiveness training program have a significant effect on the novice nurses psychological well-being (132.14 - 188.06, $t=-11.562$, $P=0.000$), assertiveness level (8.94 - 34.56, $t=-16.53$, $P=0.000$) and work engagement (65.17 - 78.39, $t=-3.172$, $P=0.003$).

Conclusion: The study's findings concluded that an assertiveness training program for novice nurses is very effective. Assertiveness training programs develop the assertiveness skills of novice nurses. Also, it improves psychological well-being and works engagement

Key Words: Assertiveness, Psychological Well-Being, Work Engagement, Novice Nurses, Educational Training

Citation of article: Khanam SS, Abdullahi KO, Sarwar H, Altaf M. The Effect of Assertiveness-Based Programme on Psychological Wellbeing and Work Engagement among Novice Nurses in Psychiatric Department. Med Forum 2023;34(1):78-82.

INTRODUCTION

Assertiveness is a style of communication in which ordinary nursing care is reflected to develop solid and successful bonding with families, patients, and colleagues¹. The workplace, especially in the healthcare system, is an important and challenging place for employees, especially novice healthcare professionals². Novice nurses are newly graduated nurses who have primarily new to the health care clinical setup. In short, novice nurses are those nurses who have recently graduated and who have no clinical working experience³.

Department of Nursing, Lahore School of Nursing, University of Lahore.

Correspondence: Samina Khanam, Master of Science in Nursing, Lahore School of Nursing, University of Lahore.
Contact No: 03244200754
Email: saminakhanam786786@gamil.com

Received: September, 2022

Accepted: November, 2022

Printed: January, 2023

Novice nurses usually lack essential nursing skills and face difficulties in providing quality nursing care to the patients⁴.

Eventually, the first six months to one year is a significant and critical period for the nurses where they experience the transition phase. During this period, they begin to develop their professional skills, deal with the patients, attendants, and other health care providers in the organization, and follow the rules and regulations of the hospitals⁵. In this transition phase, the novice nurses switch from a dependent degree to an independent one where they work to deal with every critical situation⁶.

The assertiveness training program is a designed behavior training program in which the people are enabled to stand for themselves, talk for their rights, empower themselves, and understand their rights and lacks. Besides, the assertiveness program is a training program that enables the nursing staff to balance aggression and passivity appropriately⁷.

The positive effect of the assertiveness program had been frequently highlighted, which may help enhance effective communication. The assertive behavior of novice nurses is essential to dealing with many challenges in the new environment such as effectively

dealing with critically ill patients, full-stress situations, adequate time and workload management, lack of flexible duties, and shortage of nurses⁸.

Moreover, the change in environment, shifting duties, dealing with the sick patients and their families, unusual, undesirable symptoms, and unexpected behavior of the patients imitate aggressions among the novice nurses⁹. Assertiveness is a lawful, honest, and caring expression of the nurses. Assertiveness skills reduce interpersonal stress and tension among novice nurses and may help build care and a supportive attitude¹⁰.

The psychological well-being of novice nurses is essential in developing and maintaining a positive relationship with other staff and self-acceptance¹¹. To manage this situation, well-trained and experienced nurses are needed. For a novice nurse working in a psychiatry unit is full of challenges. Usually, novice nurses switch their jobs and working areas due to these challenges, negative professional attitudes, prolonged duties, and lack of support. These factors affect physical and psychological health and lead to fear, job dissatisfaction, less interest in the job, stress, depression, and turnover among novice nurses, which may affect the carrier of the novice nurses¹².

Work engagement is the efficient involvement of a person in their working environment. In the nursing context, work engagement covers a massive responsibility of the nurses, which includes sincerity, honesty, responsibility, skills, and holistic nursing care of nurses¹³. Similarly, these factors also affect the work engagement of the novice nurse, and the nurses usually pay less attention to their job commitment and efficiency. They lose their energy and involvement in the job, dedication, and professional efficacy^{14,15}. Job dissatisfaction compels the nurses to leave their job. Assertiveness reduces nurses' turnover because it is a strong predator of job satisfaction¹⁶.

Psychological well-being and engagement are the main concerns for novice nurses working in the psychiatry units. Stressful duties, dissatisfaction, aggression, and leaving the job are the most prevalent consequences for novice nurses. In Pakistan, this area is the most neglected area where hundreds of nurses face the products, and the transition face fails to provide a better future for the nurses. This study is, therefore, designed to evaluate the effect of an assertiveness training program on assertiveness, psychological well-being, and work engagement of novice nurses. The findings of this study will provide insight to the health care administration to highlight these issues in terms of arranging assertive training programs for novice nurses under the results of the current study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a quasi-experimental study carried out in Jinnah and General hospital Lahore. The study sample consisted of 36 novice nurses working in the psychiatric units of both hospitals. The novice nurses who have just completed their nursing education and started work in psychiatry were included in the study. Data were collected from January to July 2022. Initially, approvals were granted from the ethical review board of the University of Lahore and the hospital directors of the concerned hospitals.

Assertiveness: Assertiveness is defined as the lawful, confident, honest behavior of a novice nurse to understand the rights of others and themselves. Assertiveness is the expression of ones feeling, beliefs, opinions, and needs in a direct, honest, and appropriate manner. Assertiveness among the novice nurses was assessed using 30 items Rathus Assertiveness scale was adopted from a study by Abdelaziz et al¹⁷.

Psychological well-being: Psychological well-being is defined as the functioning of novice nurses in relation of their feelings. Psychological well-being was assessed using 42 items Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB) adopted from a study by Abdelaziz et al¹⁷.

Work Engagement: Work engagement is defined as the commitment and passion of novice nurses toward their work. Work engagement was assessed using 17 items Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). UWES was adopted from a study by Abdelaziz et al¹⁷.

Intervention plan: All the participants were divided into five groups, and a session of two hours per week was designed for each group. Pre-interventional data was collected, interventions for four months were given to the participants, and post-interventional data was collected after two months of interventions.

Statistical Analyses: Data was analyzed using SPSS version 24. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for all socio-demographic variables. Paired t-test was applied to evaluate the effect of an assertiveness training program on novice nurse's assertiveness level, psychological well-being and work engagement.

RESULTS

The participants were asked about their socio-demographic profile. More than half (52.8%) of the participants were from the age group of 20 to 25 years, followed by more than 25 years (27.8%) and less than 25 years (19.4%). The majority (61.1%) of the participants held a diploma in nursing. All the participants were female. 55.6% of the nurses were working as a registered nurse while 44.4% nurses were working on the post of head nurses. 72.2% of nurses were Muslim and 66.7% were unmarried (Table 1).

Pre-data about psychological well-being, work engagement and assertiveness were collected. Four

months assertiveness training based program was designed for the novice nurses and post data was collected after two months. Assertiveness training program have a significant effect on the novice nurses and significant improvement was observed in the mean score of psychological well-being (132.14 - 188.06, $t = -11.562$, $P = 0.000$) (Table 2).

Pre and post-Assertiveness score among the novice nurses were also assessed. A significant (8.94 – 34.56,

$t = -16.53$, $P = 0.000$) effect of the assertiveness training program was observed on the assertiveness level of the novice nurses (Table 3).

Similarly, the effect of assertiveness training program on work engagement was also assessed. After four months assertiveness training program significant (65.17 – 78.39, $t = -3.172$, $P = 0.003$) mean difference of work engagement was reported (Table 4).

Table No.1: Socio-Demographic profile of the novice nurses, n=36

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age of the Participants				
Less than 25 year	7	19.4	19.4	19.4
20-25 years	19	52.8	52.8	72.2
More than 25 years	10	27.8	27.8	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Qualification of the Participants				
Diploma in Nursing	22	61.1	61.1	61.1
Generic BSN	14	38.9	38.9	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Gender of the Participants				
Female	36	100.0	100.0	100.0
Job Position of the Participants				
Nurse	20	55.6	55.6	55.6
Head Nurse	16	44.4	44.4	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Religion of the Participants				
Islam	26	72.2	72.2	72.2
Christian	10	27.8	27.8	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Material status of the participants				
Un-married	24	66.7	66.7	66.7
Married	12	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	

Table No.2: Results from Paired t-Test, effect of assertiveness training program on Psychological well-being

	Mean	Paired Mean Differences	N	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre- Psychological well-being	132.14	-55.917	36	28.322	-11.562	35	0.000
Post- Psychological well-being	188.06		36	15.651			

Table No.3: Results from Paired t-Test, effect of assertiveness training program on Assertiveness level

	Mean	Paired Mean Differences	N	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Assertiveness	8.94	-25.611	36	22.711	-16.530	35	0.000
Post-Assertiveness	34.56		36	20.542			

Table No.4: Results from Paired t-Test, effect of assertiveness training program on work engagement

	Mean	Paired Mean Differences	N	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Work Engagement	65.17	-13.222	36	15.749	-3.172	35	0.003
Post-Work Engagement	78.39		36	17.392			

DISCUSSION

This one-group study showed that an assertiveness training program among beginning psychiatric nurses might significantly increase their assertiveness abilities, psychological well-being, and job engagement. One of the therapies that aid a person in self-actualization without violating the rights of others is assertiveness training. In order to develop professional nurses with high self-worth, self-respect, acquiring a high degree of psychological wellness, and achieving an ideal level of organizational citizenship, it is more crucial to help new psychiatric nurses master assertion skills through the assertive training program.

The current study showed that majority (52.8%) of the participants was from the age group 20 -25 years and all the participants were female. This result demonstrates the current state of nursing, which is that nursing is a predominantly female occupation, despite the fact that there are male nursing graduates. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study authored by Abd El Gawad et al., in which the researchers stated that around two thirds of the study participants were females and that their age group ranged from 21 to 30¹⁸.

According to the current survey, the majority of participants (66.7%) were single. This conclusion might be explained by their young ages, the government hospital's low pay, and the poor advancement of nurses in general, and mental nurses in particular, which results in a high turnover rate. The current findings were supported by another study which showed that 72.2% participants were unmarried¹⁷.

The current study's findings on participant qualification and employment status showed that a significant portion (61.1%) of participants held staff nurse positions and had nursing diploma. These findings were consistent with those of another study conducted by Jarden et al¹⁹.

The study found that assertiveness training improves rookie nurses' assertiveness and work engagement. Because the subjects volunteered for the study, they had strong preferences, motivation, and loyalty to the programme. Allowing newly minted nurses to explore their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings in a trustworthy environment may boost their self-awareness and help them communicate assertively. Other research found that assertiveness training improved the work engagement, communication, and self-esteem of novice nurses^{12,17,20}.

Honjo & Komada and Yamamoto et al., on the other hand, provided totally different findings and the finding of the studies claimed that assertiveness training among the novice nurses had "no impact" on the assertiveness and psychological health of the novice nurses^{21,22}. Additionally, research revealed that a variety of issues, such as concern over a job supervisor's poor appraisal, a lack of good decision-making abilities, and an

ineffective support system, might have an impact on nurses' assertiveness levels. These elements cause the nurses to act less firmly in social situations^{23,24}. Similarly, another study also supported the findings of the current study and showed that assertiveness training program have a significant effect on work engagement and clinical performance of novice nurses²⁵.

CONCLUSION

Novice nurses experience a variety of social and psychological challenges working in psychiatry units. The findings of the study concluded that assertiveness training program for novice nurses is very effective. Assertiveness training program develop assertiveness skills of the novice nurses. Moreover, assertiveness training program is very effective in improving assertiveness, psychological well-being and work engagement of novice nurses.

Author's Contribution:

Concept & Design of Study:	Samina Khanam
Drafting:	Kabir Ozigi Abdullahi, Hajra Sarwar
Data Analysis:	Hajra Sarwar, Maryum Altaf
Revisiting Critically:	Samina Khanam, Kabir Ozigi Abdullahi
Final Approval of version:	Samina Khanam

Conflict of Interest: The study has no conflict of interest to declare by any author.

REFERENCES

1. Omura M, Maguire J, Levett-Jones T, Stone TE. Effectiveness of assertive communication training programs for health professionals and students: a systematic review protocol. JBI database Syst Rev Implement Reports 2016 Oct;14(10):64–71.
2. Maddalena V, Kearney AJ, Adams L. Quality of work life of novice nurses: A qualitative exploration. J Nurses Staff Dev 2016;28(2):74–9.
3. Manoochehri H, Imani E, Atashzadeh-Shoorideh F, Alavi-Majd A. Competence of novice nurses: role of clinical work during studying. J Med Life [Internet] 2015;8(Spec Iss 4):32–8. Available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28316703>
4. Oshodi TO, Bruneau B, Crockett R, Kinchington F, Nayar S, West E. The nursing work environment and quality of care: Content analysis of comments made by registered nurses responding to the Essentials of Magnetism II scale. Nurs Open 2019;6(3):878–88.
5. Mushtaq B. Assertiveness in Nursing. CON Nurs Heal Care 2018;272–3.
6. Sumathi C, Devi JVV, Sivakumar VP. Assess the Level of Assertiveness among BSc Nursing Final Year Students in a Selected Nursing College,

- Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. *Pondicherry J Nurs* 2020;13(2):33–6.
7. Amal Mousa SI. The Effect of an Assertiveness Training Program on Assertiveness Skills and Social Interaction Anxiety of Individuals with Schizophrenia. *J Am Sci* 2016;7(12):332–9.
 8. Khankeh H, Khorasani-Zavareh D, Hoseini SA, Khodai-Ardekandi MR, Ekman SL, Bohm K, et al. The journey between ideal and real: Experiences of beginners psychiatric nurses. *Iran J Nurs Midwifery Res* 2019;19(4):396–403.
 9. Greene Shortridge TM, Britt TW, Castro CA. The stigma of mental health problems in the military. *Mil Med* 2019;172(2):157–61.
 10. Nishina Y, Tanigaki S. Trial and evaluation of assertion training involving nursing students. *Yonago Acta Med* 2013/09/11.
 11. Tan Z, Choong Y, Chung SC, Loh YC, Tay W. Relationship between incentives and employee engagement: an empirical study on employees in manufacturing companies. *J Nurses Prof Dev* 2018; 2(1):91–102.
 12. Mohamed NA, EL-Hammad NAA, Thabet RA. The Effect of Assertiveness Training Program on Psychiatric Nurses' Communication Skills and Self-Esteem. *J Compil Adv Nurs* 2018;23(1): 132–9.
 13. Laschinger S. NursingCenter Empowering Nurses for Work Engagement and Health in Hospital Settings. *J Nurs Adm* 2021;35(10):439–49.
 14. Fiabane E, Giorgi I, Sguazzin C, Argentero P. Work engagement and occupational stress in nurses and other healthcare workers: the role of organisational and personal factors. *J Clin Nurs* 2015;22(17–18):2614–24.
 15. Kumar S, Hatcher S, Dutu G, Fischer J, Ma'u E. Stresses experienced by psychiatrists and their role in burnout: a national follow-up study. *Int J Soc Psychiatry*. 2016 Mar;57(2):166–79.
 16. Gómez-Salgado J, Navarro-Abal Y, López-López MJ, Romero-Martín M, Climent-Rodríguez JA. Engagement, Passion and Meaning of Work as Modulating Variables in Nursing: A Theoretical Analysis. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2019; 16(1):145–54.
 17. Abdelaziz EM, Diab IA, Ouda MMA, Elsharkawy NB, Abdelkader FA. The effectiveness of assertiveness training program on psychological wellbeing and work engagement among novice psychiatric nurses. *Nurs Forum* 2020;55(3): 309–19.
 18. Zebeda Abd El Gawad, El Sayed Gad, Elham Abd El Kader OARL. The effect of Assertive Training Techniques on Improving Coping Skills of Nurses in Psychiatric Set Up Introduction: *ASNJ* 2019; 6(2):57–74.
 19. Jarden RJ, Jarden A, Weiland TJ, Taylor G, Brockenshire N, Gerdtz M. Registered Nurses' experiences of psychological well-being and ill-being in their first year of practice: A qualitative meta-synthesis. *J Adv Nurs* 2021;77(3):1172–87.
 20. Nakamura Y, Yoshinaga N, Tanoue H, Kato S, Nakamura S, Aoishi K, et al. Development and evaluation of a modified brief assertiveness training for nurses in the workplace: a single-group feasibility study. *BMC Nurs* 2017;16(1):29.
 21. Matsuda M, Kono A. Development and Evaluation of a Psychoeducation Practitioner Training Program (PPTP). *Arch Psychiatr Nurs* 2019;29(4): 217–22.
 22. Yamamoto K, Ishida S, Shimizu K, Hanada F. The Interventional Effect of the Short form of Assertion training for Preceptor Nurses. *J Japan Heal Med Assoc* 2021;24(1):25–30.
 23. Suzuki E, Takayama Y, Kinouchi C, Asakura C, Tatsuno H, Machida T, et al. A causal model on assertiveness, stress coping, and workplace environment: Factors affecting novice nurses' burnout. *Nurs Open* 2021;8(3):1452–62.
 24. Pai HC, Huang YL, Cheng HH, Yen WJ, Lu YC. Modeling the relationship between nursing competence and professional socialization of novice nursing students using a latent growth curve analysis. *Nurse Educ Pract* 2020;49:102916.
 25. Bakker AB, van Wingerden J. Do personal resources and strengths use increase work engagement? The effects of a training intervention. *J Occup Health Psychol* 2021;26(1):20.