



## Original Article



## Communication Skills and Emotional Intelligence Among Nursing Students on Patient's Outcome

Maryam Riaz<sup>1</sup>, Robinson Roger<sup>2\*</sup>, Sehrish Bashir<sup>1</sup>, Komal Javed<sup>1</sup>, Romela Charles<sup>1</sup> and Urfa Khursheed<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Saida Waheed Fatima Memorial Hospital College of Nursing, Lahore, Pakistan<sup>2</sup>Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Center, Lahore, Pakistan

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Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Center, Lahore, Pakistan  
[robinsonroger69@gmail.com](mailto:robinsonroger69@gmail.com)Received date: 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2025Acceptance date: 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2025Published date: 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2025

## ABSTRACT

Effective communication in nursing involves verbal, nonverbal, and written exchanges, fostering trust, reducing anxiety, and improving outcomes. Emotional intelligence (EI) enhances nurses' ability to interpret cues, manage stress, and build therapeutic relationships. **Objective:** To see the effect of communication skills and EI among nursing students on patient outcomes. **Methods:** This correlational quantitative study was conducted at Saida Waheed FMH College of Nursing. A total of 102 participants were included by using a convenient sampling technique. The study included 3rd and 4th-year Generic Nursing students and 4th-year General Nursing students, while 1st and 2nd-year Generic and General Nursing students and 3rd-year General Nursing students were excluded. Data were collected using the EI and Communication Skills Questionnaire to assess the relationship between EI and communication skills. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26.0. The correlation of EI with communication skills was determined by the Pearson correlation coefficient. comparison, considering a p-value of  $\leq 0.05$  as statistically significant. **Results:** Among 102 participants, most (96.1%) were aged 20-25, with 62.7% female and 66.9% unmarried. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that patients initiate conversations (67.6%, 24.5%) and that they understand and discuss disease severity effectively (58.8%, 20.6%). Additionally, 59.8% noted patient reluctance in answering queries. Higher EI is linked to improved communication skills. A strong positive correlation ( $r^2=0.961$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) was found between EI and communication skills. **Conclusions:** Effective communication and EI enhance patient outcomes by fostering trust and understanding. A strong positive correlation was found between EI and communication skills, emphasizing the need for nursing students to develop these competencies.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is the exchange of information through verbal, nonverbal, or written means, enabling individuals to share ideas and emotions effectively [1]. Strong communication skills are crucial in nursing, as they involve speaking, listening, analyzing, and demonstrating empathy [2]. Effective communication fosters trust among patients, families, and healthcare staff while reducing anxiety and improving health outcomes [3]. Conversely, communication breakdowns can lead to misdiagnoses, reduced patient participation, and poorer outcomes, including fatal consequences [4]. Nurses with high EI can interpret patients' body language, respond appropriately to emotional cues, and build stronger therapeutic

relationships. It enhances nurses' ability to handle stress in clinical settings, improving their decision-making and problem-solving skills. Moreover, EI contributes to job satisfaction among nurses and improves patient satisfaction by fostering effective communication [5]. Nurses frequently encounter emotionally charged situations where effective communication and EI are essential for maintaining professionalism and patient trust. By developing these skills, nurses can minimize medical errors and improve patient outcomes. Respect, empathy, and clear information exchange enable patients to feel safe, share concerns, and actively participate in their care. In addition, nurses' ability to remain composed in



challenging situations strengthens their capacity to manage patient interactions effectively [6]. Nursing students must develop strong communication and interpersonal skills to excel in their profession. As nurses transition from academia to clinical practice, EI enhances their ability to navigate complex patient interactions [7]. Effective nurse-patient communication improves health outcomes, reduces medical errors, and fosters better therapeutic relationships. Ultimately, communication and EI are fundamental in delivering high-quality, patient-centred care, reinforcing their critical role in nursing practice [8]. Effective communication and emotional intelligence (EI) are essential for nursing students as they directly impact patient outcomes. Engaging with patients enhances learning, while collaboration with colleagues improves care quality and reduces medical errors. Strong communication skills enable nurses to recognize and respond to patients' emotions, fostering trust and reducing stress in clinical settings. Conversely, communication failures can lead to adverse outcomes, including misdiagnoses and fatal errors. Therefore, developing communication and EI skills is crucial for delivering safe, patient-centred care and improving overall healthcare effectiveness. This study was conducted to see the effects of communication skills and emotional intelligence of nursing students on patient outcomes.

Although emotional intelligence and communication skills are widely recognized as essential competencies in nursing practice, limited empirical evidence exists regarding their combined influence on patient outcomes among undergraduate nursing students in Pakistan. Most previous studies have focused on practicing nurses or examined these variables independently rather than exploring their interrelationship in academic settings. Furthermore, local institutional data assessing how these competencies translate into perceived patient care effectiveness remain scarce. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the association between emotional intelligence and communication skills among nursing students to better understand their impact on patient outcomes. This study aims to highlight how students' focus on EI, alongside physical, mental, and social aspects, can enhance the quality of future nursing care and improve communication within the community.

## METHODS

This correlational quantitative study was conducted at Saida Waheed Fatima Memorial Hospital (FMH) College of Nursing over four months from Oct 2023 to Feb 2024. The sample size was calculated by the Sullivan formula. There are only 137 students in 3rd year- and 4th year BS Nursing at the study setting by taking the margin of error (e) 0.05, an estimated proportion of the population (p) 0.5, population

of 137, and  $Z(a/2)$  score from the Z table at 95% confidence interval which was 1.96. The final sample size, based on limited population was calculated to be 102 participants.  $n = \frac{no}{1 + (no - 1)/N}$ . The sampling technique employed was convenient. The study included 3rd and 4th-year Generic Nursing students and 4th-year General Nursing students, while 1st and 2nd-year Generic and General Nursing students and 3rd-year General Nursing students were excluded. Data were collected using the Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills Questionnaire to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and communication skills [9, 10]. Questionnaires were administered by online software. Data were entered and analyzed by using SPSS version 26.0. Quantitative variables were presented as mean  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD), while qualitative variables, including gender, marital status, religion, and education level, were expressed as frequencies and percentages. The correlation of EI with communication skills was determined by the Pearson correlation coefficient. comparison, considering a p-value of  $\leq 0.05$  as statistically significant.

## RESULTS

Among the 102 participants, the majority (n=98, 96.1%) were between 20-25 years of age, while a smaller proportion (n=4, 3.9%) were aged 26-30 years. In terms of gender distribution, 37.2% (n=38) were male, and 62.7% (n=64) were female. Regarding marital status, 33.1% (n=34) were married, whereas 66.9% (n=68) were unmarried. In terms of religious affiliation, 64.7% (n=66) identified as Muslim, while 35.2% (n=36) were non-Muslim (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Demographic Analysis of Participants (n=102)

Variables	Frequency (%)
<b>Age</b>	
20-25 Years	98 (96.1%)
26-30 Years	4 (3.9%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	38 (37.2%)
Female	64 (62.7%)
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	34 (33.1%)
Unmarried	68 (66.9%)
<b>Religion</b>	
Muslim	66 (64.7%)
Non-Muslim	36 (35.2%)

Results present an evaluation of communication skills based on participants' responses. A significant proportion of respondents (n=69, 67.6%) agreed (A), and (n=25, 24.5%) strongly agreed (SA) that patients initiate conversations about their illness. Similarly, most participants (n=60, 58.8%) agreed, and (n=21, 20.6%) strongly agreed. Regarding patient responsiveness, (n=35, 34.3%) agreed that patients avoid or are unable to answer queries about

their illness, while (n=26, 25.5%) strongly agreed. Additionally, (n=32, 31.4%) agreed, and (n=17, 16.7%) strongly agreed that patients struggle to cooperate during discussions about their health. In terms of communication clarity, the majority (n=56, 54.9%) agreed, and (n=43, 42.2%) strongly agreed that they could understand the severity of a patient's illness through gestures. Similarly, (n=53, 52%) agreed, and (n=26, 25.5%) strongly agreed that they can assess their communication effectiveness while monitoring pharmacotherapy. Communication regarding patient care aspects was also rated positively. Most respondents (n=48, 47.1%) agreed, and (n=38, 37.3%) strongly agreed that their communication about nutritional status was good. For hygiene practices, (n=58, 56.9%) agreed, and (n=33, 32.4%) strongly agreed that their communication was excellent. Additionally, (n=52, 51%) agreed, and (n=31, 30.4%) strongly agreed that they effectively communicate with patients about their medications. Lastly, regarding discussions on improvements or declines in a patient's health, (n=49, 48%) agreed, and (n=36, 35.3%) strongly agreed that their communication was effective. Overall, the findings suggest that respondents perceive their communication with patients as effective, particularly in understanding patient conditions, monitoring treatments, and addressing health-related aspects. However, some challenges remain in patient responsiveness and cooperation during discussions (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Evaluation of Communication Skill

Questions	SD	D	N	A	SA
The patient agreed to initiate a conversation with me about her/his illness	0	5	3	69	25
I completely understand the severity of the patient's disease and can discuss it with him/her	1	17	3	60	21
The patient ignores or cannot respond to me questions on their condition.	6	17	18	35	26
The patient avoids or is unable to effectively cooperate with me when I am speaking regarding his/her health	14	28	11	32	17
By studying the patient's motions, I can properly comprehend the seriousness of their condition.	0	1	2	56	43
I can gauge how well I am communicating with the patient when I provide or oversee their medication.	0	8	15	53	26
I communicate with the patient about their nutritional state at a decent level.	2	9	5	48	38
I communicate with the patient on hygienic measures at a high level.	0	2	9	58	33
The extent to which I discussed the patient's medicine with them	0	13	6	52	31

The extent to which I informed the patient of any advancements or deteriorations in their health	2	12	3	49	36
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\*SD: Strongly disagree, D: Disagree, N: Neutral, A: agree, SA: Strongly agree

Findings evaluate communication skills based on participant responses. A majority (n=69, 67.6%) agreed, and (n=25, 24.5%) strongly agreed that patients willingly initiate conversations about their illness. Similarly, most respondents (n=60, 58.8%) agreed, and (n=21, 20.6%) strongly agreed that they fully understand the severity of the patient's disease and can effectively discuss it with them. Regarding patient responsiveness, (n=35, 34.3%) agreed, and (n=26, 25.5%) strongly agreed that patients avoid or struggle to answer queries about their illness, indicating potential communication barriers. Additionally, (n=32, 31.4%) agreed, and (n=17, 16.7%) strongly agreed that patients do not effectively cooperate during discussions about their health, further emphasizing challenges in patient engagement. In terms of communication clarity, the majority (n=56, 54.9%) agreed, and (n=43, 42.2%) strongly agreed that they can assess a patient's illness severity through gestures. Likewise, (n=53, 52%) agreed, and (n=26, 25.5%) strongly agreed that they can effectively evaluate their communication while monitoring pharmacotherapy. Communication regarding patient care was rated positively. Most respondents (n=48, 47.1%) agreed, and (n=38, 37.3%) strongly agreed that their communication about nutritional status was good. For hygiene practices, (n=58, 56.9%) agreed, and (n=33, 32.4%) strongly agreed that their communication was excellent. Furthermore, (n=52, 51%) agreed, and (n=31, 30.4%) strongly agreed that they effectively communicate with patients about their medications. Finally, in discussions about health improvements or declines, (n=49, 48%) agreed, and (n=36, 35.3%) strongly agreed that their communication is effective. Overall, the findings indicate that while healthcare providers perceive their communication as effective in most areas, patient responsiveness and cooperation remain challenges that may require further attention (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Evaluation of Emotional Intelligence

Questions	Strongly Disagree	DA	N	A	SA
Inquiring about the patient's priorities is something I enjoy doing.	0	5	6	6	31
I never interrupt other patient's conversation	0	1	10	10	52
I can rapidly let my anger "go" so that it doesn't impact me anymore.	5	8	15	15	20
For me, the reasons for differences are usually obvious.	1	11	15	15	15

Whenever necessary, I can control my emotions.	1	3	7	7	43
Even in my worst moments, I can always find motivation for myself.	0	7	5	5	41
My achievement has been largely attributed to my motivation.	0	1	2	2	64
I observe why my behaviour occasionally irritates people.	0	6	4	4	28
I can intentionally change how I feel or how I think.	2	5	5	5	32
I always place a high value on being awake of my feelings.	0	3	2	2	41

The correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and communication skills was presented. The results indicate a strong positive correlation, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r^2=0.961$  ( $p<0.01$ ). This significant correlation suggests that higher emotional intelligence is strongly associated with better communication skills (Table 4).

**Table 4:** Correlation of EI with Communication Skill

Communication Skill	Emotional Intelligence
Pearson correlation $r^2$	0.961**
p-value	<0.001
N	102

\*\*The correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## DISCUSSION

The study showed a positive relationship between higher levels of emotional intelligence and communication, and the results discussed based on research questions. In current study variables such as age, gender, religion, marital status, and educational status were included. The majority of participants (96.1%) were between the ages of 20 and 25. This aligns with findings from studies by Khademi and colleagues which also report similar age distributions. The high proportion of participants in this age group may be attributed to the increasing trend of pursuing education at this stage of life [11]. Moreover, the majority of participants (62.7%) were female, which was consistent with findings from study by Meng and Qi, reporting a similar gender distribution. The high proportion of female participants may be attributed to the fact that nursing is a profession predominantly pursued by women [12]. The marital status (66.9%) majority of the participants are unmarried whereas the previous study shows the Effect of communication skills and emotional intelligence among nurses on patient outcomes. The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills of Healthcare Workers) means references do not match with the following study. The percentage of unmarried nurses is high because most of the student nurses are unmarried. The majority of participants (51.4%) were BSN students, which aligns with findings from literature reporting a similar educational distribution. The higher proportion of BSN students may be because BSN is a

degree program, whereas general nursing is a diploma, making it a more common choice for those pursuing advanced education in nursing [13, 14]. The findings of this study suggest that contrary to literature indicating that nurses struggle with patient communication; nurses can effectively communicate when adopting a patient-centred approach. However, healthcare organizations often fail to recognize the importance of this approach in ensuring quality patient care. In this study, 47.9% of student nurses agreed that patients initiate conversations about their illness, whereas a previous study reported that the nurses needed to improve communication skills, had destructive communication habits, and demonstrated effective communication skills [15, 16]. Similarly, the study showed that (33.1%) of nurses agree with the level of communication with patients when they assess improvement/decline in health while the previous study stated that 83% of undergraduate nursing students generally show a significantly higher mean score of empathy than the students attending other undergraduate courses [17]. Furthermore, the study showed that (23.2%) of nurses agree that patients were unable to effectively cooperate with them whereas the previous study Iran, Tehran 28 September 2015 described that an appropriate verbal communication, the nurse could thoroughly understand the patient's problems [18]. Additionally, the study shows that (38.0%) of nurses agree with the level of communication with patients when they monitor pharmacotherapy. The practice of highlighting deterioration is a collaborative communication strategy that could be used by other healthcare professionals to meet these recommendations [4]. The study reveals that 38.7% of nurses agree they develop empathy to understand patients' emotions, while 33.1% acknowledge that communication improves when assessing a patient's health status. Overall, the findings suggest that although healthcare providers consider their communication effective, patient responsiveness and cooperation remain challenges that require further attention. The literature indicates that the nurse-patient relationship plays a crucial role in determining the quality of care. Nurses acknowledge that fostering strong relationships improves patient outcomes by integrating technical expertise and clinical knowledge with delegated physician tasks. However, a discrepancy exists between records and patient perceptions while patients view nurses as authoritative decision-makers, the nurse's role should primarily involve guiding and supporting patients through their health journey rather than influencing their values or customs [19]. The current study results reported the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and communication skills. This significant correlation suggests that higher emotional intelligence is strongly associated with better communication skills. These findings were in line with the study conducted by Ghasemi SS, which reported that

emotional intelligence is closely related to communication skills. The findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and communication skills, suggesting that higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with better communication abilities in nursing students [20]. Another study by Oyur, explored the connection between patient satisfaction and the emotional intelligence (EI) skills of nurses in surgical clinics. The study found a significant positive correlation between patient satisfaction and nurses' empathy, emotional awareness, and ability to utilize emotions effectively. These findings suggest that higher EI levels in nurses contribute to greater patient satisfaction, highlighting the importance of enhancing EI skills to improve healthcare quality [21].

This study was limited by its single-institution design and the use of convenience sampling, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, reliance on self-reported questionnaires may introduce response bias and may not fully reflect actual clinical performance. Future research should involve multi-center studies with larger and more diverse samples, incorporating observational or performance-based assessments to evaluate real-time communication competencies. Integrating structured emotional intelligence training programs into nursing curricula may further enhance communication skills and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that effective communication skills and emotional intelligence improve the patient's health. According to this study, most of the nursing students agreed that effective communication and emotional intelligence enhance the positive patient's health. For effective communication nurses' students must be attentive, ask open questions to clear their doubts about the patient's condition and involve friends and family. Use the right tone, be aware of your patient's situation, and get help from colleagues. For building emotional intelligence use self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management. Nursing students must know the importance of having strong interpersonal relationships as well as communication skills. Students in nursing learn more by communicating with their patients and family. It is assessed that the effect of communication and emotional intelligence of nursing students has a great impact on patient outcomes. Emotional Intelligence is important for nurses because it enables them to provide better, more individualized care to patients by fostering effective communication.

## Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization: MR

Methodology: KJ, UK

Formal analysis: RR, SB

Writing and Drafting: MR, RR, RC

Review and Editing: MR, RR, RC, SB, KJ, UK

All authors approved the final manuscript and take responsibility for the integrity of the work.

## Conflicts of Interest

All the authors declare no conflict of interest.

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