

Multiphase Investigation Into Nursing Soft Skills Enrichment

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ABSTRACT

Background: There exists a widely recognized shortage in the soft skills at the health sector, especially in the areas of communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and professionalism. The current study seeks to mitigate this kind of shortage by reviewing the literature that relates to the soft skills development, establishing an expert consensus, and developing an outcome-based education (OBE) enrichment framework for institutional nurses. The research adopts a systematic multiphase research design comprising three phases of primary interest. Phase 1 is an integrative literature review to determine and examine different approaches to developing soft skills in various disciplines. Phase 2 employs the Modified Delphi Method, wherein nursing specialists engage in two rounds of questionnaires to narrow down and confirm the most critical soft skills for nursing practice. Phase 3 involves the establishment of an OBE framework that organizes core approaches and learning outcomes to provide practical application within nursing education and clinical practice. The integrative review in Phase 1 highlighted 64 distinct soft skills development approaches that falls under 4 themes namely collaborative learning, experiential learning, reflective practices and technology-enhanced methods, all of which showed positive effects on soft skills development. In Phase 2, nurse experts sharpened and prioritized these methods, choosing 12 key strategies that are most flexible to apply in actual nursing practice. They are mentoring, reflective writing, debriefing, role-playing, case scenarios, problem-based learning (PBL), project-based learning (PjBL), role modelling, verbal feedback, preceptorship, group discussion, and team-based learning (TBL). Phase 3 built upon these results to create an OBE framework that includes the 12 validated strategies for developing nursing soft skills. Implementation of these strategies in a structured manner in nursing education and in practice is likely to significantly enhance healthcare delivery and patient care quality through better interpersonal, cognitive, and professional competencies.

Result: The study employed a three-phase research design to create an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model for the improvement of the soft skills in institutional nursing. Phase 1 is involved an integrative review of 82 studies that yielded 64 distinct methods of soft skills development, which were grouped into a Experiential Learning, Collaborative Learning, Technology-Enhanced Learning, and Reflective Practices. Phase 2 used a Modified Delphi Method to these approaches through agreement among the nurse experts, initially shortlisting them to 23, and then subsequently to 12 key approaches most of the appropriate for the institutional nursing. These approaches prioritized the communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and professionalism. In Phase 3, the final OBE framework was constructed to apply these 12 approaches in a systematic manner in the nursing education and practice, providing an evidence-based and structured approach to enrich the soft skills of the nurses. This model offers a useful roadmap for enhancing the nurses' competencies, that eventually leads to an improved patient care quality and interprofessional collaboration.

Conclusion: In this study, an evidence-based Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model was formulated to advance soft skills in educational nursing at the institutional level. Employing a multiphase research design, it identified and tested 12 strategies with an emphasis on communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and professionalism that play a crucial role in effective nursing practice. An integrative a synthesis of 82 studies to guaranteed these strategies and filled the gaps in soft skills development, and a two-round Delphi method to ensured expert agreement regarding to their relevance and applicability. Through the incorporation of the nursing educator and trainer input, the research offers curriculum guidelines aligned with a actual healthcare needs.

Keywords: Multiphase, Nursing Soft Skills, Communication, Teamwork, Critical Thinking, Professionalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The future of healthcare will require nursing professionals to have a mix of technical and interpersonal skills in order to provide outstanding patient care. Healthcare organizations highly value institutional nurses who show competence and expertise in their respective areas. They are good at handling clinical challenges and contribute a lot to the success of an

institution. Besides, there is a growing focus on training programs that seek to equip nurses with what they need to know, how they should approach issues, and what attitudes should be embraced at every instance in their professional practice. While technical proficiency is crucial for executing clinical procedures, soft skills are extremely important for promoting high-quality patient care.

Currently, there is a generally recognized skills deficit across the healthcare industry which mostly reflects itself within the realm of soft skills. A recent study by Bernardo et al., (2023) titled 'Towards Measuring Soft Skills for Youth Development: A Scoping Study' by Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS); as well as a Commission on Human Rights (CHR) report indicating that many graduates lack soft skills and job readiness (Noriega, 2023). This critical issue points out essential attributes such as collaboration, communication, empathy, resilience, adaptability missing from the young graduates who are expected to become today's dynamic workforce.

In light of this fact, it is critical that nursing intensifies its emphasis on improving certain soft skill areas like professionalism, communication as well as teamwork and critical thinking (US Department of Labor, 2023). These skills, often referred to as 21st-century skills, are important for nurses seeking employment (Yong, 2023). The PIDS study acknowledges the significance of formal education and training but also highlights the need for better preparedness in the workforce. By virtue of embracing soft skills through holistic training and development programs, medical facilities can empower nurses that provide patient-centered compassionate care leading to positive outcomes for patients and healthcare teams at large.

Institutional nurses faced an increasingly difficult task of keeping up with best practices in soft skills. In this health care environment where things are moving very fast, it is difficult for a nurse to find time to improve basic soft skills. There are frequent changes in patient care protocols and technologies that further complicate this matter. Conversely, the nurse's workload is usually demanding while there are few avenues for continuous professional improvement making these areas hardly practicable which could have an impact on quality patient services.

Hence filling this gap is extremely vital hence there must be prioritization on enhancing the development of softer sides of nurses. Bridging this gap will ensure that those who practice nursing are fully prepared and competent enough towards provision of quality care over wide range healthcare settings. It will help breed a new generation of nurses perfectly aligned with the demands of modern health care delivery systems. The researcher emphasizes the importance of grounding a nursing soft skills enrichment program on empirical study and evidence. It will be a structured approach of development that focuses on purpose, activities, learning, and measurement, that aims to enrich essential soft skills that are critical for effective nursing practice in medical institutions.

2. METHODS

Research Design

Utilized a three-phase research design that involved an integrative review, modified Delphi process, and outcome-based education approach to program development. Each of the phases had outlined objectives but was structured to complement and support each other in a way that facilitated procedural improvement, added insights, and methodological enhancement within the study. This structured research design allows comprehensive scrutiny of research phenomena. (Aliswag et al., 2023). To address different facets of the research process, the study breaks into three sequential parts so that each can build upon what was found in the earlier one

Respondents of the Study

The 20 participants who met all the criteria proceeded with the modified Delphi method, contributing their insights essential to the study. Each of them actively participated and successfully completed the entire process.

Instruments of the Study

The results from integrative review formed the basis for building a binary-method questionnaire. This questionnaire was then used in a two-round Modified Delphi Method to achieve consensus among nursing experts. The Delphi method has been effective in establishing best practice guidelines, especially in topics where evidence is limited, ethically or logistically difficult to obtain, or where the existing evidence is unclear (Nasa et al., 2021). The Delphi method was originally created to predict future trends, but through anonymity, the Delphi approach minimizes such biases as conformity and dominance found in group meetings (Jünger et al., 2020). The Delphi technique ensures that all professional opinions are weighed equally, hence a more valid consensus. This process guarantees that all expert opinions are equally considered, leading to a more reliable consensus. The primary goal of the Delphi technique is to facilitate agreement among experts through iterative rounds of questionnaires. Although initially met with slow acceptance in healthcare, it is now widely recognized as an effective tool for achieving expert consensus (Nasa et al., 2021).

3. RESULT

Integrative Review

The PRISMA flow diagram illustrates the study selection process systematically and transparently for the integrative review. In this regard, the purpose of this review was to identify the relevant research on soft skills development in order to provide a basis for designing an enrichment program that is targeted. A total of 1,889 records were retrieved from the sites such as PubMed, ScienceDirect, and SAGE Journals. Through the Rayyan web-based screening tool, 80 duplicate records and 1,388 ineligible studies were removed, primarily due to the language barriers or lack of focus on the key of soft skills such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and professionalism. After the additional manual screening, 421 records were reviewed, in leading to the selection of 82 studies that met all the inclusion criteria.

In order to verify the methodological triangulation of the included studies, the review utilized a triangulated assessment via three appraisal tools: the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP), Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses PRISMA 2020, and Tabulated Expedited Evidence Evaluation Tool (TEEET). Each of the instrument were contributed towards evaluating the various dimensions in the context of research quality CASP focused on the methodological soundness, PRISMA ensured a systematic reporting, and TEEET evaluated to the practical applicability of findings. High-scoring of the studies across at least two of these frameworks allowed entry into the final analysis, thereby strengthening the credibility and reliability of the review.

Triangulation played an important role in determining whether the studies were accepted or rejected. For instance, papers such as "Artificial Intelligence Supporting the Training of Communication Skills in the Education of Health Care Professions" had high scores on TEEET and PRISMA but only moderate on CASP, and thus it was accepted with support from other literature. In contrast, the papers like "Development and Implementation of a Novel Peer Mentoring Program for Undergraduate Nursing Students" had a low score on all the three tools and were thus excluded. The rigorous assessment process ensured that only the studies with strong empirical backing contributed to the final synthesis.

The results of the 82 accepted studies were synthesized in a comprehensive report, grouping information like study titles, authors, methods, and major findings. The use of multiple assessment techniques enhanced the validity of the review by providing a balanced view of nursing soft skills development. The synthesis in the final result not only identifies existing trends and challenges but also forms the basis for the development of evidence-based soft skills training programs that are specific to the needs of nursing professionals.

The researcher presents a comprehensive and innovative approach to understanding soft skills development in nursing education. One of the most notable contributions of this study is the extensive categorization of 64 unique soft skills development approaches, identified through an integrative review of 82 studies. Unlike previous research that primarily focuses on conventional methods such as simulation-based learning and role-playing, this study introduces a broader range of strategies, including artificial intelligence-driven learning, online escape rooms, dance movement therapy, and hackathons. This level of categorization and integration of non-traditional techniques has not been systematically explored in nursing education before. Previous literature, such as the work of Preiksaitis and Rose (2023), discusses the potential of artificial intelligence in medical education but does not offer a structured assessment of its application in soft skills training. The researcher, therefore, fills a critical gap in the existing body of knowledge by providing an organized framework for evaluating these diverse methodologies (Preiksaitis & Rose, 2023).

In addition to technology-driven approaches, the researcher's study is unique in its inclusion of non-traditional learning methods that have received little attention in nursing education. While conventional strategies such as problem-based learning and role-playing are well documented, this study introduces alternative approaches, including dance movement therapy, narrative medicine, online and physical escape rooms, and hackathons. These methods, commonly applied in other disciplines, have rarely been systematically analyzed for their impact on soft skills training in nursing. The incorporation of Cognitive-Behavioral Reflective Training (CBRT) as a structured learning intervention is particularly novel, as it merges cognitive-behavioral principles with reflective learning to enhance self-awareness and decision-making abilities. These innovative approaches significantly broaden the existing knowledge base and offer a fresh perspective on how soft skills can be effectively cultivated in nursing education (Widad & Abdellah, 2022).

Beyond the pedagogical aspects, the research contributes to the understanding of institutional and policy implications in nursing education. Unlike many studies that focus solely on individual skill acquisition, the researcher connects soft skills training directly to key institutional outcomes, including improved patient care, increased nurse retention, and enhanced workplace culture. This emphasis on institutional impact aligns with the recommendations of the Future of Nursing 2020-2030 report, which underscores the need for healthcare institutions to prioritize soft skills development as part of their workforce training strategies. The research provides a strong evidence base for nursing institutions to implement tailored training programs that address specific contextual needs, thereby improving overall healthcare delivery and patient outcomes (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2023).

Soft Skills Development Approaches from Integrative Review

Through a rigorous examination of 82 studies, 64 different methods for developing soft skills were identified. Although

some of the studies used similar methodologies, others used a several different strategies, and so a wide variety existed. These were then systematically categorized into an ordered structure so that each method could be clearly distinguished from every other.

To ensure the quality and applicability of such approaches, a multi-tool evaluation process was utilized involving TEEET, CASP, and PRISMA 2020. This stringent testing helped to ensure that only high-quality, evidence-based methods were incorporated into the preliminary framework for a soft skills enrichment program. Additionally, an expert concordance the analysis was done to identify the best methods, whereby only such approaches that are reached a minimum of 60% agreement were adopted.

Agreement of experts on the initial nursing soft skills enrichment program proposed

Round 1 Expert Agreement Result

The results emphasized a high of preference for conventional, interactive, and reflective learning approaches. Methods like mentoring (100% agreement), narrative writing (95%), and debriefing (90%) were greatly preferred, highlighting the significance of the mentorship, reflection, and experiential learning in nursing education. Technology-based methods like artificial intelligence and non-traditional methods like dance movement therapy were less agreed upon, reflecting a perceived lack of alignment with fundamental nursing education requirements. These findings form the basis of an optimally validated soft skills enhancement program for design specifically for nurses.

Narrative writing and preceptorship comes in second. Narrative writing plays a pivotal role in helping nurses to critically assess their actions, learn from their experiences, and to adapt to complex healthcare environments. Studies highlight that writing about their clinical experiences would fosters deeper learning and critical thinking abilities (Timpani, et. Al., 2021). Reflective practices, like narrative writing, are foundational for an effective nursing leadership that allows professionals to foster continuous improvement in their workplaces (American Nurses Association, 2024). It encourages the development of empathy which is a crucial skill in patient care, and helps nurses understand the emotional aspects of their experiences better. This results in improvement in their approach to care. On the other hand, preceptorship programs provide structured and hands-on learning experiences that reinforce professional behaviors and leadership skills. Literature review confirms that they contribute to nurse retention and competence (Çamveren, et al., 2020).

Debriefing is another favorable approach by the study respondents. It is often used after simulations in clinical events that enhance learning and improve clinical judgment of the nurses. The National League for Nursing (2024) emphasizes the importance of debriefing as a method for active reflection and learner-centered education. Debriefing is an effective reflective learning method that enhances both problem-solving and teamwork. Research supports its role in simulation-based training that would then improve clinical reasoning skills (Sawyer et al., 2021). The emphasis on debriefing reflects a broader trend in nursing education that focuses on reflection as a key component of skill development.

The approach that received the lowest agreement with 35% was Dance Movement Therapy (DMT). Although expressive therapies have benefits, DMT lacks strong evidence and studies in nursing education and soft skills improvement. Studies suggest limited applicability in structured healthcare settings (Dimonte et al., 2023).

Significant agreement among the experts on the initial nursing soft skills enrichment program proposed

Round 1 Case Processing Summary on Expert Responses

The Delphi study was successful in getting the 100% participation from the panel of the experts, with all of the 64 responses being complete and none missing. This 100% response rate reflects a high participation from the experts, which increases the credibility of the preliminary findings. In the survey questionnaire, experts labeled their responses as either agree or disagree to indicate their degree of the acceptance of suggested nursing soft skills enrichment program.

Round 1 Symmetric Measure on Expert Agreement

The kappa value of 0.746, with a significance level of $p = 0.000$, signifies a strong agreement among the experts, affirming that the consensus observed is statistically significant. The high level of the agreement points to the efficacy of the collaborative and decision-making in competency-based nursing education, which guarantees a clarity and consistency in the training.

Moreover, the high kappa value promotes evidence-based practice (EBP) in nursing by ensuring expert consensus is aligned with best practices in patient care. An optimally agreed-upon training method improves the application of EBP, ultimately resulting in better patient outcomes. This consensus confirms the potential of the proposed enrichment program to prepare nursing students with the necessary soft skills for high-quality, patient-focused care.

Furthermore, the substantial agreement among experts may indicate a shared recognition of the value of integrating multiple perspectives and disciplines into nursing practice, as emphasized by AACN. Nursing education increasingly requires incorporating diverse knowledge areas, including humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, to provide a holistic approach to patient care. The strong consensus suggests that experts agree on the need for an enriched curriculum that integrates these interdisciplinary elements to foster critical thinking, empathy, and effective communication among

nursing professionals (AACN, 2021).

Final nursing soft skills enrichment program that can be proposed

Round 1 Soft Skills Development Approaches Result Summary

The first-round Delphi results for the nursing soft skills enrichment program identified 23 different approaches for consideration. These approaches achieved 60% or greater agreement among the experts in the first round delphi. The first-round Delphi results for the nursing soft skills enrichment program identified 23 different approaches for consideration. These approaches achieved 60% or greater agreement among the experts in the first round delphi.

The importance of collaborative learning is further emphasized in the "Crisis in Competency" article by OJIN, which suggests that a shift towards personalized adaptive learning and collaborative strategies is essential for nursing education in the modern age (Parast & Heshka, 2021). Methods such as group discussions, flipped learning, and project-based learning enable students to engage in active, experiential learning environments that prepare them for real-world healthcare settings. These approaches are consistent with the need to foster adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape.

The inclusion of reflective practices, such as reflection or reflective writing, aligns with the recommendations by the AACN for nurses to use evidence-based methodologies to continually assess and improve their practice (AACN, 2021). Reflective practices are instrumental in helping nurses understand their experiences and improve their approach to patient care by providing opportunities for critical assessment and learning from both successes and challenges.

Mentoring and preceptorship were also included, emphasizing the value of direct support and hands-on experience in developing nursing soft skills. Mentoring has been shown to be highly effective in enhancing empathy, interpersonal skills, and professional competence among nursing students (AACN, 2021). The focus on mentorship is critical in ensuring that nursing students receive personalized guidance, which helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Overall, the selected approaches reflect a comprehensive strategy aimed at developing both the interpersonal and technical skills required in nursing. They address key competencies in communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and reflection, all of which are highlighted as critical in current nursing education literature (AACN, 2021; Parast & Heshka, 2021).

Agreement of experts on the final nursing soft skills enrichment program proposed

Round 2 Expert Agreement

In this Delphi study, experts rated the different approaches to the developing soft skills in nursing education. The results showed a high consensus for some approaches, and they were included, whereas others were excluded because of a lower consensus. Strongly supported techniques were mentoring (100% agreement), debriefing (80%), reflective writing (85%), and problem-based learning (PBL) (75%), all of which focus on the experiential and reflective learning—essential in developing a critical thinking, empathy, and communication in nursing. Conversely, methods such as bite-sized video learning, collaborative learning, and critical thinking cards were excluded in to the lack of expert agreement.

On the first delphi round, the top five approaches with the highest agreement percentages are mentoring (100%), reflective writing (85%), debriefing (80%), role-playing (80%), and case scenarios (75%). These underscore the importance of experiential, guided, and interactive learning in developing nursing soft skills. Mentoring received unanimous agreement, reinforcing its well-documented effectiveness in fostering professional growth, leadership, and communication skills in nursing education (Walsh et al., 2020). Reflective writing, which allows learners to critically analyze their experiences and develop self-awareness, aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory and has been found to enhance critical thinking and empathy in nursing students (Koivisto et al., 2020). Debriefing, which is a structured reflection process after an experience, is widely used in simulation-based education and clinical practice to enhance decision-making and teamwork (Sawyer et al., 2021). Role-playing, which received 80% agreement, facilitates active engagement in realistic scenarios, promoting communication, collaboration, including adaptability (Katiban et al., 2019). Lastly, case scenarios (75%) provide context-based learning opportunities, supporting problem-solving and decision-making by immersing nurses in real-world clinical situations (O'Connor et al., 2022). These approaches share a common emphasis on active engagement, critical reflection, and collaborative learning. These are the key components in soft skills development for healthcare professionals.

In contrast, the bottom five approaches on the first delphi round are narrative writing (20%), critical thinking cards (20%), self-education programs (35%), written case studies (40%), and case video-based debriefing (40%). These approaches that received low agreement suggest that experts perceive them as less effective in fostering nursing soft skills. Narrative writing, while valuable for personal reflection, still lacks the immediate feedback and interactive elements that enhance communication and teamwork skills in clinical settings (Park & Kim, 2022). Critical thinking cards, which provide structured prompts to encourage analysis, may not be as effective as more immersive or discussion-based strategies (Dolmans et al., 2019). Self-education programs (35%) which emphasize independent learning, maybe beneficial for knowledge acquisition, may not sufficiently develop interpersonal and collaborative skills needed in nursing (Struyven et

al., 2019). Written case studies (40%) and case video-based debriefing (40%) were both also excluded. It is more likely due to the approaches passive nature compared to active discussion-based methods such as debriefing and case scenarios. These exclusions highlight a preference for dynamic, face-to-face learning experiences over methods that are more static or rely heavily on self-directed study.

Final Approaches for Enrichment Program

The final approach of the nursing soft skills development strategies, identified using the Delphi method, comprises of 12 strategies with an expert agreement from 65% to 100%. These strategies such as mentoring, reflective writing, debriefing, role-playing, and problem-based learning is focus on experiential, collaborative, and reflective learning to develop nursing competencies. The Delphi process enabled experts to refine their opinions, thus culminating in a narrowed and verified list of effective strategies.

These chosen methods concur with evidence-based instructional design frameworks and theories of experiential learning that further enhance critical thinking, leadership, communication, and teamwork. The mannerisms such as mentoring and preceptorship that emphasize the necessity of tutored, experiential learning, whereas practices like case scenarios, project-based learning, and team-based learning reinforce active problem-solving and intensive retention of knowledge. The addition of the group discussions and feedback through words additionally enhances the interpersonal and collaborative competencies, that guaranteeing a complete approach to nursing education that encompasses technical competence and hard-to-replace soft skills.

The selected approaches align well with current trends in nursing education that emphasize interactive, experiential, and reflective learning methods. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2021), core nursing competencies must include proficiency in communication, teamwork, and clinical decision-making, which are best cultivated through methods like mentoring, role modelling, and PBL (AACN, 2021). These approaches provide nurses with the tools to engage in complex problem-solving and to develop strong interprofessional relationships, which are crucial for effective patient care.

The final list of selected methods represents a balanced approach that integrates the best practices for nursing education. These approaches are in line with the goals of creating competent, adaptable, and reflective nursing professionals who can effectively contribute to patient care and work well in a collaborative healthcare environment.

Significant agreement among the experts on the final nursing soft skills enrichment program proposed

Round 2 Case Processing Summary on Expert Responses

The findings of Round 2 for the Delphi study reveal a 100% response from all 23 experts with all responses being legitimate and none being left blank. The 100% response rate reflects a heavy expert involvement, in increasing the validity of the ultimate findings. In the questionnaire, the experts marked their responses as agree or disagree to indicate their degree of acceptance of the completed nursing soft skills enrichment program. The overall information collected was important in building a general agreement and sharpening the program's strategies.

Round 2 Symmetric Measure on Expert Agreement

The final Delphi results rated by the expert agreement of the suggested nursing soft skills development program. As all of the 23 responses were usable, the analysis had full data, and this guaranteed reliability. The kappa coefficient of 0.566 at a significance level of $p = 0.000$ reflected moderate but statistically significant agreement among experts.

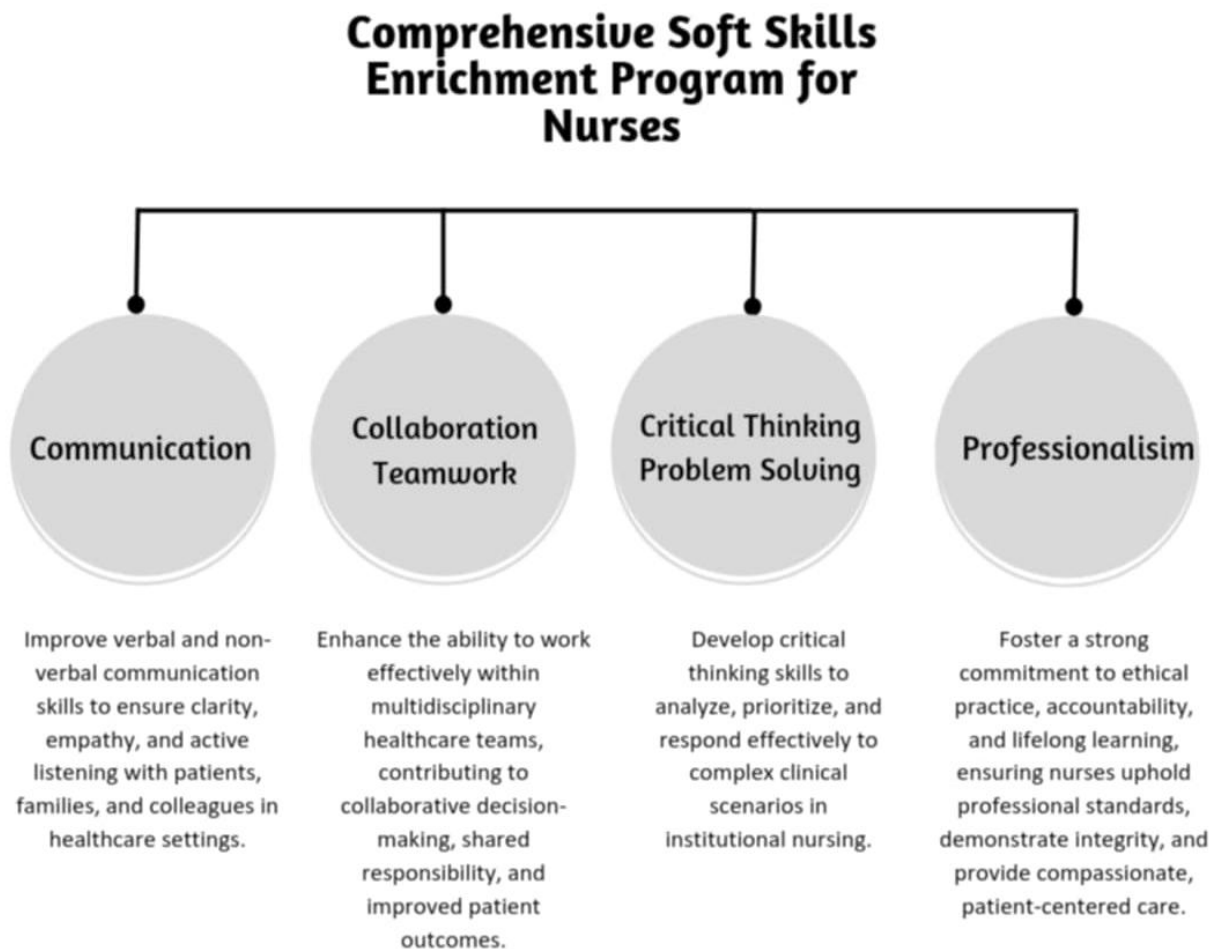
The moderate level of agreement aligns with the expectations for educational interventions, where differences in opinion can be expected due to the diversity of experiences among nursing educators. According to Liu & Aungsuroch (2021), the Delphi technique works well when anonymity is preserved and controlled feedback is provided, as these factors help minimize bias and the effects of dominant personalities in group settings. The iterative rounds of questioning used in the Delphi process contribute to refining expert consensus, which is crucial in the development of standardized educational guidelines.

The significance of the kappa value further emphasizes the reliability of the consensus reached, as the probability that this level of agreement occurred by chance is extremely low. This consensus is critical for nursing education, as it helps establish a shared framework for soft skills development, ultimately ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of patient-centered care. The selected approaches, such as mentoring, reflective writing, and team-based learning, are consistent with recommendations by professional nursing bodies, such as the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2021), which emphasize the importance of interpersonal communication, critical thinking, and collaboration in nursing practice.

Proposed Program

The Soft Skills Enrichment Program aims to enhance the non-technical competencies of nurses to foster effective communication, teamwork, critical thinking and professionalism. By focusing on reflective and experiential learning approaches, this program will improve the quality of patient-centered care and collaborative team dynamics. The selected

approaches, including case scenarios, debriefing, mentoring, and problem-based learning, will help nurses develop critical thinking and adapt to complex healthcare environments. This enrichment program utilized a modular approach that organized the program into independent units. Each addresses a specific soft skill namely communication, collaboration, critical thinking and professionalism. Each instructional module allows participants to progress at their own pace, making it adaptable to individual learning needs and schedules. This modality is especially effective for institutional nurses, where flexible learning methods are essential due to varying shifts and time constraints. Studies showed that modular designs enhance learner autonomy and improve knowledge retention, particularly in professional development contexts (Muthuprasad et al., 2023). The researcher chose this modality because it is aligned with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework by ensuring that learners achieve specific, measurable objectives while accommodating diverse learning preferences. Implementing soft skills enrichment through a modular approach in institutional nursing education is a practical and effective strategy that aligns with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles, which focus on achieving defined learning outcomes rather than using a fixed set of approaches. Each module or instructional design addresses each soft skill.



4. CONCLUSION

The study created an evidence-based Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model to develop the soft skills in institutional nursing education. Using the multiphase research design, the research established and confirmed 12 major strategies that centered on communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and professionalism as also the critical competencies for successful nursing practice.

The model is based on a thorough integrative review of 82 studies, ensuring that the chosen strategies are evidence-based and cover gaps in soft skills development. The Delphi method, with two rounds, validated expert agreement on the appropriateness and usability of these strategies in institutional nursing environments. Through the inclusion of the views of nursing educators and trainers, the research provides recommendations for the curriculum development that are consistent with the actual healthcare requirements.

The OBE framework offers a systematic method of the soft skills enrichment through the establishment of the specific learning outcomes that are aligned with the institutional objectives. Through the focus on the evidence-based communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and professionalism training, the framework is a useful as the handbook for the development of nurses' non-technical skills, ultimately enhancing the patient care and workplace relationships in clinical environments.

5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The researcher declares no conflict of interest in conducting this study. All phases of the research, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, were carried out with objectivity and academic integrity.

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