

# Knowledge and Attitude of Nursing Students Towards Mentoring Program in Kulliyah of Nursing, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

Salizar Mohamed Ludin<sup>1\*</sup> & Fatin Eliya Roshaimi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Critical Care Nursing, Kulliyah of Nursing, International Islamic University Malaysia, Pahang, Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup>Hospital Pakar Annur, Selangor, Malaysia.

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Mentoring is one of the important elements in education as it includes orientation to enhance the tutors' role, integrating into the education community, teaching and leadership development, scholarship, and service skills. Despite the positive feedbacks and comments on mentoring program, the knowledge and attitude of students towards any problems faced are still unknown or unclear. Thus, this study aims to investigate the knowledge and attitude among nursing students on mentoring program in Kulliyah of Nursing in IIUM Kuantan.

**Methods:** A quantitative cross-sectional study with convenience sampling was conducted on 188 undergraduate nursing students between October to December 2020. Data were collected via online platform (google form) invited through WhatsApp or email. The questionnaires consist of sociodemographic profile, knowledge, and attitude towards mentoring program.

**Results:** Most students age between 22 to 23 years old (59.5%). Students mainly perceived good knowledge and positive attitude towards mentoring program. There were no association seen between sociodemographic profile and knowledge towards mentoring program (gender  $p=0.120$ ; age  $p=0.165$ ; year of study  $p=0.188$ ) and attitude to mentoring program (gender  $p=0.241$ ; age  $p=0.442$ ; year of study  $p=0.720$ ). However, there was a correlation between knowledge and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program in Kulliyah of Nursing ( $p<0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The study revealed there were no effect of sociodemographic profile on knowledge and attitude, however demonstrated of association between their knowledge and attitudes to mentoring program. Thus, the study basically showed that by having a good knowledge on the program, they will tend to have good attitudes and involved in the program accordingly. This finding further implied that more awareness on mentoring program should be executed to boost the student knowledge and attitude. Further research should be explored to look onto students' needs and how to assist the student through mentoring.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Knowledge, Attitude, Students

## \*Corresponding author

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Salizar binti Mohamed Ludin,  
Department of Critical Care Nursing,  
Kulliyah of Nursing,  
International Islamic University Malaysia,  
Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, Bandar Indera Mahkota,  
25200 Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia.  
E-mail: msalizar@iium.edu.my

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## INTRODUCTION

Mentoring gives an excellent opportunity for individual's professional improvements. In educational advancement especially, positive effects had been discovered for mentees, as well as for mentors and universities in the context of higher education. Mentees acquire a good education performance and social integration. Mentors gain advantages through the growth of personal relationships with mentees and the associated satisfaction as a successful mentor. Mentoring also benefits universities from the decreasing trends in dropout rate. Mentor in a university is an individual who is responsible in guiding a mentee along the journey through the stages of life (1) They must support, challenge, and give vision to the mentee. By giving support, mentors build the mentees' trust towards them and the mentoring process. In order to support the mentee, the mentor must listen, assist the mentee, express positive expectations for the mentee, serve as an advisor, share oneself as a person, and make the relationship meaningful (2).

Mentoring process is a lot more than providing technical guidance and teaching; "the term implies a broader and longer interest in the lives of mentee" (3) Mentoring is seen as one of several growth relationships, those relationships of which the purpose and the outcomes was to help one or both parties develop (3).

In a previous study, the hypothesis testing outcomes stated that mentees' knowledge on mentoring relationship does not affect their behavior towards mentors. This is an opposite to the findings from another study (4) which stated that the quality of mentors and their roles influence the way the mentees perceived their exposure to mentors in the mentoring program. The poor attitude of the student studied could be associated to their lack of knowledge about mentoring relationship (5). Another study finding indicated that students seemed to have less knowledge on mentoring because of several reasons such as they do not undergo any specific awareness session on mentoring, that mentoring is seldom used or referred to, and that students might not know what mentoring could benefit them (6).

It was reported that respondents involved in mentoring programs seemed to appreciate more when the guidance was from a mentor who is intelligent, dedicated, encouraging and honest. It helps in developing a satisfaction feeling due to personal improvement and empowerment (7).

In another study, the outcomes also showed the attitude of student toward mentor-mentee relationship with almost all respondents agreed that some students did not show enough interest and came unprepared which was aligned with the previous studies. The respondents also agreed that some mentors do not want to work or regularly spend their time with mentee. They also agreed that some mentors do not want mentee to ask them question. These were accepted by mentors that they should be accessible and available for questions" and there should be "frequent interactions" (8).

In influencing mentees' learning, a mentor should regard mentoring skills as important competencies. Mentees who admire their mentors and see them as role models may be more attentive to their mentors' behaviors and is more likely try to emulate their mentors. Through observation and imitation, mentees may build up their own skills (9). It is presumed that mentees will develop positive attitudes toward the activity that they engage in with their mentors. This might include activities associated with school, graduate training, or job assignments (10).

Mentoring relationship is significantly impacted by the attributes portrayed by the mentor and mentee, in which affected the effectiveness of the mentors' feedback and the mentees' capability to critically reflect on their practices (11).

Regardless of the positive effect and advantages, previous studies findings did show that only one third of the respondents said that they have a bit knowledge about mentoring (12)(Abid et al., 2018). While in another study reported that students did not have past mentoring experiences (13). Additionally, studies also shown that even with mentors, it will not usually lead to positive outcomes unless the mentee is satisfied with the mentoring relationship (14). The lacked of

research on the students' attitude for a formal mentoring program in higher education also reported (15). Despite the positive feedbacks and comments on mentoring program, the knowledge and attitude of students towards the problem is unknown or unclear. Thus, this study aims to investigate the knowledge and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program in Kulliyah of Nursing, International Islamic University Malaysia. This study hypothesized that there should not be any association between students' demographic characteristics to their knowledge and attitudes to mentoring program.

## METHODS

This study was conducted using a quantitative cross-sectional study carried out from October to December 2020 on 188 students (100% response rate) from Kulliyah of Nursing, IIUM Kuantan. Convenient sampling method was used in this study to allow the immediate person who experienced in the mentoring program to be included in the study. The inclusion criteria for the participants were undergraduate nursing students from year 2 to year 4, having joined the nursing program for at least one year, and are conversant in English. The exclusion criteria were first year's new students who have no experience in mentoring program, students on leave due to unavoidable circumstances (e.g.: accident), students on semester.

Data were collected through an online survey and disseminated using emails and WhatsApp medium platform. These platforms measured the following questionnaire that was adapted and modified from a validated questionnaire used in the study '*Knowledge and Attitude of Students Regarding the Formal Mentorship Programme for Medical Education*' (12). This questionnaire consists of three parts; Part A: sociodemographic of the participants which include age, gender, year of study and the interaction of the participants with their mentor. Part B involves 16 questions on knowledge of the students towards mentoring program and measured using Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The total score for this part is 80. Respondents who score below the average score for all items are considered having poor knowledge on mentoring program. Respondents who score

above average score are considered having a good knowledge on mentoring program.

Whereas Part C consists of 12 questions on attitude of the participants towards mentoring program and measure using the same Likert scale. in Kulliyah of Nursing. In this part, the total score for all item is 60. Respondents who score below the average score for all items are considered having negative attitude towards mentoring program. Respondents who score above average for all items in this part are considered having positive attitude towards mentoring program.

Prior to the distribution of actual questionnaire, a pilot study has been conducted involving 10% of the total population which is 33 nursing students that showed high internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.871 (Part B) and 0.870(Part C) respectively. Following approval from Kulliyah of Nursing Postgraduates & Research Committee (KNPGRC) and IIUM Research Committee (IREC) data collection were done. Each participant was contacted through email or WhatsApp message and given information sheet, google form link and confidentiality assurance of this study. Participants act of filling and submitting the google form (questionnaire) through the link given was treated as consent to participate. They were also asked to answer the question, not asking others to answer on their behalf. All participants also have the assurance that their information will be kept confidential and solely used for academic purposes. Participants also have the right to refuse participation and withdraw from the study at any time.

## Statistical analysis

Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive statistical test was used to measure frequency and percentage of variables. Normality test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov was conducted, and it showed that the data were not normally distributed therefore Kruskal-Wallis test and Mann-Whitney test were used to assess the association between sociodemographic data and knowledge and attitude towards mentoring program. For the association between knowledge and attitude towards mentoring program, Spearman correlation test was used. Any  $p$ -value less than 0.05 was

considered statistically significant with confidence interval of 95%.

**RESULTS**

**Sociodemographic data**

A total of 188 nursing undergraduate students of Kulliyyah of Nursing were involved in this study with response rate of 100%, the participants include female (84.6%) and male (15.4%) students. The respondents' age ranged from 20 - 25 years old. Most respondents were from year 4 (50.5%), followed by year 3 (28.2) and lastly from year 2 (21.3%). Most of the students have interacted with their mentor at least once, but not more than three times (n=99, 52.7%). Meanwhile, 86 students (45.7%) have never interacted with their mentors, 2 students (1.1%) have interacted with their mentor once a month and one person (0.5%) have interacted with their mentor two or three times a month since the enrolment in the university. The results were summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Sociodemographic data

Variables		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	20 - 21	70	37.2
	22 - 23	111	59.1
	24 - 25	7	3.7
Gender	Male	29	15.4
	Female	159	84.6
Year of study	Year 2	40	21.3
	Year 3	53	28.2
	Year 4	95	50.5
Interaction with mentor since the enrolment in the university	Never interacted with my mentor	86	45.7
	At least once, but not more than three times	99	52.7
	About once a month	2	1.1
	About two or three times a month	1	0.5

**Level of knowledge and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program**

Questions on knowledge of mentoring program was asked to assess respondents' knowledge. A total score of 80 was used to indicate the overall level of knowledge on mentoring program. From the result, most respondents (76.6%) perceived good knowledge on mentoring program with mean score of  $60.21 \pm 8.91$  where 23.4% students perceived poor knowledge on mentoring program.

**Table 2:** Level of knowledge of nursing students on mentoring program

Variable	n (%)	Median (IQR)	Mean $\pm$ SD
Level of knowledge			
Below average	44 (23.4%)	61.00	$60.21 \pm 8.91$
Above average	144 (76.6%)		

For attitude towards mentoring program, total score for the questions on attitude part was 60. The score was used to indicate the overall level of attitude towards mentoring program. From the results, 75.0% of the respondents have positive attitude towards mentoring program as they scored above the average score (mean score= $43.96 \pm 5.01$ ) while 25.0% of the respondents have negative attitude towards mentoring program.

**Table 3:** Level of attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program

Variable	n (%)	Median (IQR)	Mean $\pm$ SD
Level of attitude			
Below average	47 (25.0%)	44.00	$43.96 \pm 5.01$
Above average	141 (75.0%)		

**Association between sociodemographic data and knowledge on mentoring program**

There were no significant association between sociodemographic data (gender, age and year of study) and knowledge on mentoring program. Based on the data analysis, the result

showed that there was no significant difference between gender and the level of knowledge in mentoring program ( $p$ -value = 0.120). There is also no association between age and knowledge in mentoring program as  $p$ -value= 0.165. Similarly for year of study, the results show that there is no significant difference between year of study and knowledge of nursing students towards mentoring program as the level of knowledge ( $p$ -value= 0.188).

**Table 4:** Association between sociodemographic data (gender, age, year of study) and knowledge towards mentoring program

Variable	n (%)	Z statistics	$p$ -value
Gender			
Male	29 (15.4)	-1.553 <sup>a</sup>	0.120
Female	159 (84.57)		
Variable	n (%)	X <sup>2</sup> statistics (df)	$p$ -value
Age			
20-21	70 (37.2%)	3.607 <sup>b</sup> (2)	0.165
22-23	111 (59.0%)		
24-25	7 (3.7%)		
Year of study	n (%)	X <sup>2</sup> statistics (df)	$p$ -value
Year 2	40 (21.3%)	3.340 <sup>b</sup> (2)	0.188
Year 3	53 (28.2%)		
Year 4	95 (50.5%)		

**Association between sociodemographic data and attitude towards mentoring program**

For attitude, there is no significant relationship between sociodemographic data (gender, age, and year of study) and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program. The results show that there is no significant difference between gender and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program as the level of attitude ( $p$ -value = 0.241). As for age, the  $p$ -value= 0.442 shows that there is no association between age and attitude of students towards mentoring program. There is also no significant difference between year of study and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program as the level of attitude ( $p$ -value = 0.720).

**Table 5:** Association between sociodemographic data (gender, age, year of study) and attitude towards mentoring program

Variable	n (%)	Z statistics	$p$ -value
Gender			
Male	29 (15.4)	-1.172	0.241
Female	159 (84.57)		
Variable	n (%)	X <sup>2</sup> statistics (df)	$p$ -value
Age			
20-21	70 (37.2%)	1.635 (2)	0.442
22-23	111 (59.0%)		
24-25	7 (3.7%)		
Year of study	n (%)	X <sup>2</sup> statistics (df)	$p$ -value
Year 2	40 (21.3%)	0.656 (2)	0.720
Year 3	53 (28.2%)		
Year 4	95 (50.5%)		

**Association between knowledge and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program**

Table 6 shows there is a positive correlation between the knowledge and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program,  $r=0.518$ ;  $p=0.001$ .

**Table 6:** The association between knowledge and attitude towards mentoring program

Variable	Level of knowledge	$r$	$p$ -value
Level of attitude		0.518	0.001*

\*Spearman correlation test,  $p < 0.05$

**DISCUSSION**

The findings shows that majority of nursing students have a good knowledge about mentoring program as the mean score for knowledge lies above the average score which was 61. This result contradicts with previous study (12) that mentioned the knowledge of students on mentoring program for education

is limited where only one third of the respondents claimed that they have a bit of knowledge about mentoring. It was also mentioned that students seemed to have less knowledge regarding mentoring as students were unable to provide precise and exact details to reflect awareness of the program (5).

Majority of nursing students exhibit a positive attitude towards mentoring program as the mean score for attitude is above the average score, which was 44, however previous study found that the attitude of students towards mentoring relationships was negative as the students show less interest and came to the mentoring meeting unprepared (6).

There is no association between age and total score of knowledge in mentoring program as  $p=0.165$  and this result is not in line with the previous study that mentioned age is a variable that represent level of development in mentoring program (16).

For gender, the result showed that there was no significant difference between gender and the level of knowledge in mentoring program and these results are in line with research by previous researcher, which stated that both males and females have good understanding on mentoring and are satisfied with the academic program. It was also stated that gender does not influence someone's knowledge towards mentoring experience (17).

There is no significant difference between year of study and the knowledge of nursing students about mentoring program. The  $p$ -value was 0.188 which was higher than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that year of study does not influence the students' knowledge on mentoring program. However, this result differs from the previous study (5) that reported, mentoring seems to be underutilised as junior students might not know what mentoring could provide.

Between sociodemographic data and attitude towards mentoring program, there is no significant difference between age and attitude towards mentoring program since there is no association as  $p=0.442$ . It can be simplified that age does not affect the attitude of students towards mentoring program. This result is different to the previous study as it recorded

those students from older age group perceived neutral attitude while younger students have positive attitude towards mentoring program. Past study stated that respondents of older age group require less professional guidance thus, they may seek fewer help from mentors while younger students agreed that 'the mentor should be accessible and available for questions' and 'there should be frequent interaction between mentor and mentee' (6).

Based on the results, there is no significant difference between gender of the nursing students and the level of attitude towards mentoring program as the  $p$ -value was 0.241 which is more than the pre-set value (0.05). In short, gender does not influence the nursing students' attitude towards mentoring program. However, it was mentioned that female students are at ease with having someone to provide guidance and support in psychological and emotional aspects. This is due to the nature of women who treasure the quality of their relationship even with mentors (5).

For year of study, there is no significant difference between year of study and attitude of nursing students towards mentoring program. The  $p$ -value was 0.720 which was higher than 0.05. In previous study, it was mentioned that third- and fourth-year nursing students obtained low score for attitude towards mentoring program as it was reported that their mentor did not adequately fulfil the criteria of role model (18). It was reported that first year nursing students find mentoring program to be helpful in reducing their stress and cope with loneliness with the involvement of mentor in providing guidance (19).

Finally, the results for association between knowledge and attitude towards mentoring program show that there is a positive correlation. It can be simplified that students with better knowledge on mentoring program will show better attitude towards the program itself. This conclusion is in line with a previous study where it recorded that student with poor knowledge on mentoring program have negative attitude towards the program, but the attitude of their mentor was not determined by their level of knowledge (18). Previous study also reported that the students' poor attitude could be associated with their lack of knowledge about mentoring relationship (6).

## CONCLUSION

This study revealed that despite there were no effect of sociodemographic profile to knowledge and attitude, the students have demonstrated there were association between their knowledge and attitudes to mentoring program. Thus, the study basically learned that by having good knowledge on the program, they will tend to have good attitudes and involved in the program accordingly. The implication from it is that more awareness strategies on mentoring program should be executed to boost the student knowledge and attitude. Further research should be employed to look further onto the aspect of students' needs. This is because the impact of being at home during the Standard Movement Order, doing clinical posting during the pandemic and the feeling at risk to get indicted may somehow affect their and mental wellbeing. This will trigger them to need more help from their mentor.

## ETHICAL MATTERS

The study was approved by the Kulliyyah Nursing Committee (KNPGRC) and the University Ethics Committee (IREC). Information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, assurance of confidentiality and statements about their right to withdraw at any time. The return of the completed questionnaire was treated as informed consent to participate.

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## LIMITATION OF STUDY

There are some limitations that may affect the overall findings in this study. First, the data was collected during the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of the participants were at home. This may affect the response rate, as some of the targeted samples were not able to be reached as the questionnaire distributed online. The method used (survey) may have methodological biases. Being on 'air' the questionnaire can literally be answered by their friend, brother or anyone with them. At some point it can be biased when participant may choose to click the most favourable answer to

avoid scoring low for their response. Also, because participants were at home, it is unclear whether they contacted their mentor and use the mentoring services provided by the Kulliyyah. Thus, this may also affect their response to the questions

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We declare no conflict of interest for this study.

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