

## DESCRIPTIVE CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY: “ASSESSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL IDENTITY AMONG NURSING STUDENTS”

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the development of personal identity among nursing students and evaluate the association between personal identity and demographic variables. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at a Ganga Nursing College in Coimbatore, involving 100 nursing students chosen through purposive sampling. The research employed a structured questionnaire to assess personal identity development, with data analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results: The study findings revealed significant patterns in personal identity development based on age, family income, and hometown location. Students aged 21-22 and 23 and above exhibited stronger identity levels, suggesting that identity development strengthens with age. Gender was not significantly associated with personal identity development, though males predominantly showed strong identity levels. Higher family income brackets were correlated with stronger personal identity, with those from ₹40,000-60,000 and above ₹60,000 brackets showing more pronounced identity development. Urban residents demonstrated stronger identity levels compared to their tribal counterparts, who predominantly fell into the uncertain category. Statistical analysis confirmed that age, family income, and hometown location significantly impact personal identity development, while gender did not. These results suggest the importance of targeted interventions, especially for students from lower-income and tribal backgrounds, to support personal identity formation.

**Key words:** Personal identity, nursing students, demographic variables, age, family income, hometown location, descriptive cross-sectional study.

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### INTRODUCTION

Personal identity refers to the concept of an individual's self-perception, values, beliefs, and the continuous process of self-discovery. For nursing students, personal identity development is essential as it influences their professional conduct, patient care, and career growth. Understanding how nursing students perceive themselves within their professional roles can enhance their academic performance, interpersonal skills, and commitment to ethical practices.

### Background of the Study

The transition from a nursing student to a professional nurse involves not only acquiring technical knowledge but also developing a robust sense of personal and professional identity. Nursing education emphasizes clinical competence, ethical decision-making, and compassionate care. However, personal identity development can be influenced by academic pressures, clinical experiences, and social interactions. Identifying how nursing students form their personal identities can inform educational strategies and foster holistic professional growth.



## Need for the Study

Personal identity development impacts the quality of patient care and professional integrity. Understanding identity formation can help address challenges like burnout, moral distress, and professional dissatisfaction. Limited studies explore the intersection of personal identity and professional growth among nursing students in the Indian context. This study aims to bridge the knowledge gap and provide insights to improve nursing education programs.

## Review of Literature

Recent studies emphasize the multifaceted process of personal and professional identity development among nursing students. An integrative review (2022) identifies key factors influencing identity formation, including the collaboration between clinical practice and academic learning, and the importance of a supportive educational environment. It highlights that clinical supervisors play a crucial role as role models, fostering ethical competence and reflective practices.

Another systematic review (2023) categorizes the challenges faced by nursing students into four areas: student-related, educational system, nurse-related, and environmental challenges. It stresses the need for effective mentorship, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and promoting positive portrayals of nursing in the media. Both reviews underscore the significance of a nurturing learning environment and the pivotal role of clinical mentors in shaping nursing students' professional identities.

## Statement of the Problem

"A study to assess the development of personal identity among nursing students in selected nursing colleges in Coimbatore."

## Objectives of the Study

- ✓ To assess the level of personal identity development among nursing students.
- ✓ To evaluate the association between personal identity and demographic variables.

## Hypothesis

### Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>)

There is no significant association between personal identity development and demographic variables among nursing students in selected nursing colleges in Coimbatore.

### Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>)

There is a significant association between personal identity development and demographic variables among nursing students in selected nursing colleges in Coimbatore.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** Descriptive cross-sectional study.
- **Setting:** Selected nursing college in Coimbatore.
- **Sample Size:** 100 nursing students.
- **Sampling Technique:** Purposive sampling.
- **Inclusion Criteria:** I year Nursing students studying B.Sc. Nursing programs in Ganga College of Nursing.
- **Exclusion Criteria:** Students unwilling to participate or absent during data collection.
- **Data Collection Tool:** Structured questionnaire on personal identity development.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Informed consent obtained, and confidentiality maintained throughout the study.

## Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure for this study followed a systematic approach. Ethical clearance was obtained from the institutional review board, and permission was granted by the nursing college administration. A structured questionnaire was developed to assess personal identity development among nursing students, and purposive sampling was used to select participants from the B.Sc. Nursing program, excluding those unwilling to participate or absent during data collection.

Before data collection, the study's purpose and significance were explained to participants, and written informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout. The questionnaire was distributed with clear instructions, and participants were allowed sufficient time in a quiet environment to provide unbiased responses.

The collected data were reviewed for completeness, organized, and coded for analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) were used to assess personal identity development, while the Chi-square test was applied to examine associations with demographic variables. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, with voluntary participation and confidentiality maintained.

## Data Collection Tool

The tool used for data collection consisted of two parts:

### Part A: Demographic Data

This section collected demographic information about the subjects, including age, gender, family income and location of home town

### Part B: 15 Structured questionnaires Scoring Key

Assigned points to each option:

**A = 4 points** (Strong identity development)

**B = 3 points** (Moderate identity development)

**C = 2 points** (Emerging identity development)

**D = 1 point** (Uncertain identity development)



**Total Score Interpretation**

51-60: Strong personal identity development  
 36-50: Moderate personal identity development  
 21-35: Emerging personal identity development  
 15-20: Uncertain personal identity development

Emerging personal identity development 15-20: Uncertain personal identity development

**Data Analysis and interpretation**

**Section A: Frequency Distribution of Demographic variables:**

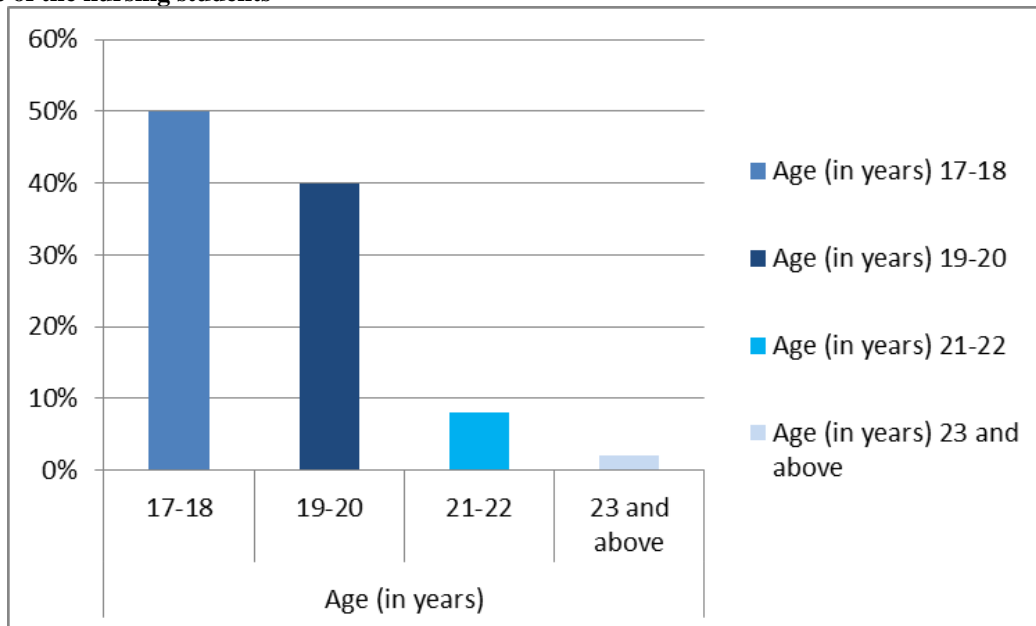
**Table 1: To assess the frequency distribution of Demographic variables**

| Demographic Variable    | Options        | No. | %   |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----|-----|
| Age (in years)          | 17-18          | 50  | 50% |
|                         | 19-20          | 40  | 40% |
|                         | 21-22          | 8   | 8%  |
|                         | 23 and above   | 2   | 2%  |
| Gender                  | Male           | 50  | 50% |
|                         | Female         | 50  | 50% |
| Family Income (monthly) | Below ₹20,000  | 10  | 10% |
|                         | ₹20,000-40,000 | 30  | 30% |
|                         | ₹40,000-60,000 | 40  | 40% |
|                         | Above ₹60,000  | 20  | 20% |
| Location of Hometown    | Urban          | 55  | 55% |
|                         | Semi-Urban     | 25  | 25% |
|                         | Rural          | 15  | 15% |
|                         | Tribal         | 5   | 5%  |

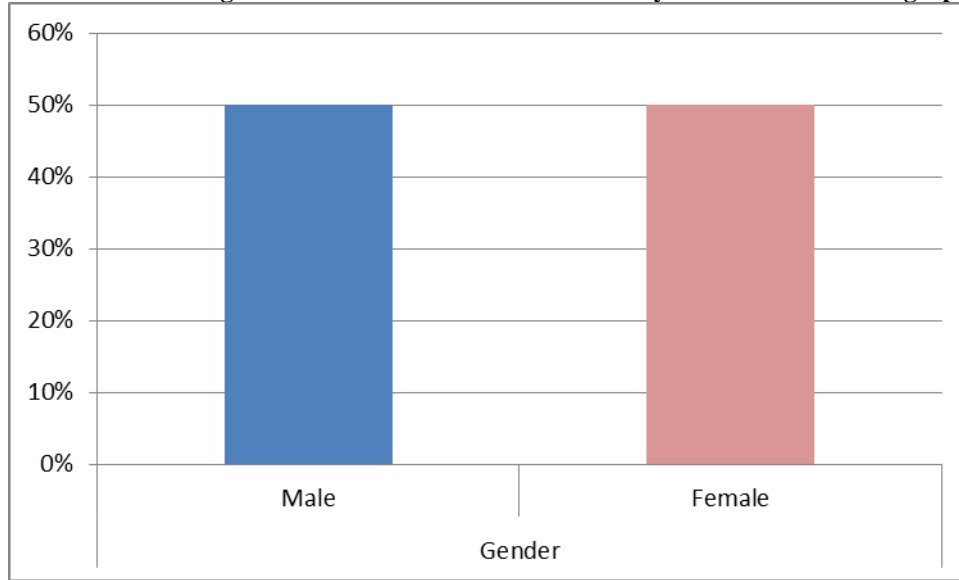
The sample predominantly consists of younger individuals, with 50% aged between 17-18 years, followed by 40% aged 19-20 years, while 8% fall within the 21-22 age group, and only 2% are 23 years or older. Gender representation is relatively balanced, with males comprising 50%, females are equal at 50%. Family

income levels vary, with 10% having a monthly income below ₹20,000, 30% earning between ₹20,000-40,000, 40% falling within ₹40,000- 60,000, and 20% earning above ₹60,000. Geographically, the majority, 55%, hail from urban areas, while 25% come from semi-urban regions, 15% from rural locales, and 5% identify as tribal

**Figure 1: Age of the nursing students**



**Figure 2: Gender of the nursing students Section B : Personal Identity Levels Across Demographic Variables**



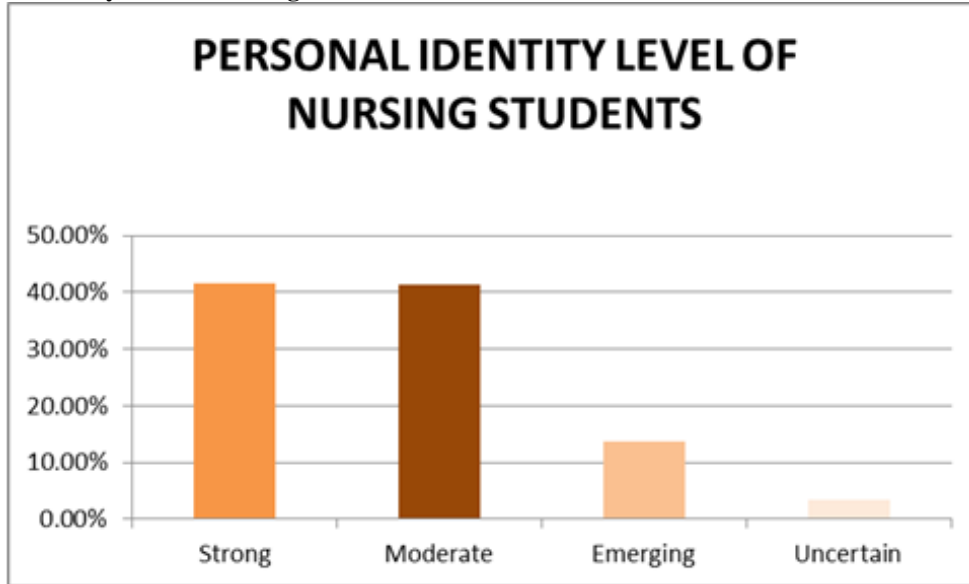
**Table 2: Distribution of Personal Identity Levels across Demographic Variables** N=100

| Demographic Variable           | Category        | Strong (51-60 pts) | Moderate (36-50 pts) | Emerging (21-35 pts) | Uncertain (15-20 pts) | Total (No.) | Total (%) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| <b>Age (in years)</b>          | 17-18           | 25 (50%)           | 20 (40%)             | 5 (10%)              | 0 (0%)                | 50          | 50%       |
|                                | 19-20           | 15 (37.5%)         | 20 (50%)             | 5 (12.5%)            | 0 (0%)                | 40          | 40%       |
|                                | 21-22           | 5 (62.5%)          | 3 (37.5%)            | 0 (0%)               | 0 (0%)                | 8           | 8%        |
|                                | 23 and above    | 1 (50%)            | 1 (50%)              | 0 (0%)               | 0 (0%)                | 2           | 2%        |
| <b>Gender</b>                  | Male            | 30 (66.7%)         | 10 (22.2%)           | 5 (11.1%)            | 5 (11.1%)             | 45          | 50%       |
|                                | Female          | 15 (30%)           | 25 (50%)             | 5 (10%)              | 5 (10%)               | 50          | 50%       |
| <b>Family Income (monthly)</b> | Below ₹20,000   | 5 (50%)            | 4 (40%)              | 1 (10%)              | 0 (0%)                | 10          | 10%       |
|                                | ₹20,000- 40,000 | 10 (33.3%)         | 15 (50%)             | 4 (13.3%)            | 1 (3.3%)              | 30          | 30%       |
|                                | ₹40,000- 60,000 | 15 (37.5%)         | 20 (50%)             | 4 (10%)              | 1 (2.5%)              | 40          | 40%       |
|                                | Above ₹60,000   | 6 (30%)            | 8 (40%)              | 2 (10%)              | 4 (20%)               | 20          | 20%       |
| <b>Location of Hometown</b>    | Urban           | 25 (45.5%)         | 20 (36.4%)           | 8 (14.5%)            | 2 (3.6%)              | 55          | 55%       |
|                                | Semi- Urban     | 10 (40%)           | 10 (40%)             | 4 (16%)              | 1 (4%)                | 25          | 25%       |
|                                | Rural           | 5 (33.3%)          | 8 (53.3%)            | 2 (13.3%)            | 0 (0%)                | 15          | 15%       |
|                                | Tribal          | 0 (0%)             | 1 (20%)              | 0 (0%)               | 4 (80%)               | 5           | 5%        |

- **Age (in years):** The majority of individuals aged 17-18 exhibit strong personal identity levels (50%), with a significant portion (40%) showing moderate levels.
- **Gender:** Males predominantly display strong identity levels (66.7%), while females have a more balanced distribution across all identity levels.
- **Family Income (monthly):** Individuals from higher income brackets (₹40,000- 60,000 and above ₹60,000) tend to have a higher percentage of strong identity levels.
- **Location of Hometown:** Urban residents show a higher proportion of strong identity levels (45.5%), with tribal residents having a unique distribution, including a significant portion (80%) in the uncertain category.



Figure 3: Personal identity level of nursing students



**Section C; Mean, Median & SD to assess the level of personal identity of nursing students**

The analysis of personal identity development scores among nursing students reveals that the mean score is 59.58, indicating a moderate level of personal identity development. The median score of 58.00 suggests that half of the students scored below this value, while the other half scored above it. The standard deviation of 18.03

shows a moderate variation in scores, suggesting that students' personal identity development levels are not highly clustered around the mean but vary to some extent.

Overall, the findings suggest that while most students exhibit a moderate level of personal identity development, there are variations in individual scores, highlighting the need for further exploration of factors influencing identity formation.

**Section D: Association of variables with the Outcomes:**

**Table 3: Association of demographic variables with personal identity of nursing students.**

N=65

| Demographic Variable | Chi-Square Value | p-value | Degrees of Freedom (df) | Significance    |
|----------------------|------------------|---------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Age                  | 17.99            | 0.006   | 6                       | Significant     |
| Gender               | 12.06            | 0.061   | 6                       | Not Significant |
| Family Income        | 19.56            | 0.003   | 6                       | Significant     |
| Hometown             | 18.47            | 0.005   | 6                       | Significant     |

Age, Family Income, and Hometown have a significant impact on personal identity development ( $p < 0.05$ ). Gender does not have a significant association with personal identity development ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of personal identity development among nursing students reveals notable trends based on age, gender, family income, and hometown location:

- **Age:** Older students (21-22 and 23+) show higher levels of strong personal identity (62.5% and 50%, respectively), indicating stronger identity formation with age.
- **Gender:** Males predominantly exhibit strong identity levels (66.7%), while females are more evenly distributed across strong and moderate identity levels. Gender was not significantly associated with personal identity development ( $p > 0.05$ ).

- **Family Income:** Higher-income groups (₹40,000-60,000 and above ₹60,000) show stronger identity development, with 37.5% and 30% exhibiting strong identity, respectively. Lower-income groups tend to show more variation in identity levels.

- **Hometown Location:** Urban students show a higher percentage of strong identity (45.5%), while tribal students predominantly fall into the uncertain category (80%), suggesting that environmental factors may influence identity development.

Statistical analysis confirms that age, family income, and hometown location significantly impact personal identity development ( $p < 0.05$ ), while gender does not ( $p > 0.05$ ). These findings highlight the necessity of targeted interventions to support identity formation, particularly for students from lower-income and tribal backgrounds.



## Summary

The study assessed the personal identity development of nursing students and its association with demographic variables. The mean identity score was 59.58, with a median of 58.00 and a standard deviation of 18.03, indicating moderate variability among participants. The results suggest that age, family income, and location of hometown significantly influence identity development, whereas gender does not show a statistically significant impact.

The findings reveal that younger students (17-18 years) exhibit strong and moderate levels of personal identity, and individuals from higher income backgrounds have stronger identity formation. Additionally, urban students tend to show more developed personal identities, while tribal students exhibit higher uncertainty in identity formation.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that personal identity development among nursing students is influenced by socio-demographic factors, particularly age, income, and hometown location. Students from higher-income and urban backgrounds tend to exhibit stronger identity development, whereas those from lower-income and tribal backgrounds require additional support. Given the observed differences, educational institutions should implement mentorship programs and socio-emotional learning strategies to enhance identity development, especially for students with uncertain identity levels. Further research could explore the underlying psychosocial and environmental factors affecting identity formation in diverse student populations.

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