



**Intern Nurse Students` Perception of Self Marketing Skills and its relation
to their self-esteem.**

Mohamed Gamal Mostafa¹, Shymaa Aly Hamed², Heba Kamal Obied³

- 1) Lecturer of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing - Cairo University, Egypt
- 2) Lecturer of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing, Faculty of Nursing - Cairo University, Egypt
- 3) Assistant professor of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing-Tanta University, Egypt

Email address: Dr.mgm2000@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Earlier this decade, the nursing graduates labor market became very competitive with an increasing supply of nursing graduates which put great pressure on nursing graduates to enhance their self-marketing skills and boost their self-esteem. **The study aimed to** assess intern nurse students' perception of self-marketing skills and its relation to their self-esteem. **Design:** This study used a descriptive correlational design. **Setting:** the study was carried out at Cairo University hospitals in different clinical training areas where nursing interns registered for their internship year. **Subjects:** A convenience sample of 405 intern nurse students who volunteered to participate in this study and registered for the internship year at the Faculty of Nursing - Cairo University were included. **Tools:** three tools were used for data collection as follows: (a) Personal Data Questionnaire (b) Self-Marketing Skills Questionnaire, and (c) Self-Esteem Questionnaire. **Results:** the study results demonstrated that the highest percentage (75.10%) of the intern students had a high perception level regarding self-marketing skills. Additionally, about -three-quarters (75.5%) of intern students had a high level of self-esteem. **Conclusions:** there was a highly significant statistically positive correlation between intern students' total perception of self-marketing skills and their self-esteem. **Recommendations:** Self-marketing skills should be emphasized in nursing educational programs to enhance graduates' employability.

Keywords: *Self-marketing skills, Self-esteem, and Nursing interns*

Introduction:

Human resources are a major asset and critical component of organizational success and are thus essential for organizational development. Due to a

shortage of qualified human resources, healthcare institutions are currently investing in attracting and recruiting skilled nurses. Subsequently, self-marketing skills have become the most durable

source of competitive advantage for nurses in the healthcare labor market. As the competition for talent continues, presenting and optimizing the necessary skills at various levels has become mandatory for nurses to gain better job opportunities (Sisodia & Agarwal, 2017).

The internship year is a mandatory training year for all bachelor nursing interns. Its goal is to provide nursing students with the opportunity to develop their nursing skills, apply their knowledge in varied clinical settings, and demonstrate competency in practical skills and procedures. The internship allows nursing interns to reinforce and integrate clinical skills and knowledge acquired during their study. Moreover, the internship enables students to develop career contacts that may lead to job placement opportunities, enhancing self-esteem, leadership abilities, self-marketing skills, and communication skills while collaborating with others (O'Reilly, Ramjan, Fatayer, Stunden & Gregory, 2020).

Self-marketing is simply the art of presenting oneself to others in a simple, direct, and tactful way to show abilities, skills, creativity, talents, and services that nursing staff excel in and provide. This, in turn, helps in achieving the desired goals. (Amoako & Okpattah, 2018). The concept of self-marketing revolves around transforming all the work, skills, and experiences that nurses gain throughout work life into a brand that distinguishes them from others, which the nurses present to healthcare institutions to find suitable work. Healthcare institutions in turn search for what

nurses have offered as self-marketing, then evaluate them and determine whether they are qualified to work for them or not (Brooks & Anumudu, 2016).

The concept of self-marketing is not limited to a biography that is filled with phrases that reflect what a nurse has done throughout life's path. It encompasses actions and methods that distinguish a nurse from others, highlighting their abilities and communication skills in handling various situations and interacting with colleagues. Self-marketing focuses on how nurses' skills, abilities, and interests are organized, and branded in order to provide a programmatic set of strategies for individuals to boost their opportunities in the labor market (American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), 2018).

Self-marketing has a great and strong impact on nurses' social and economic life. Better self-marketing skills will lead to better personal relationships, resources, and social conditions. Self-marketing necessitates investing a considerable amount of time in acquiring diverse skills and experiences, which will serve as the main qualifications for building a nurse's career and establishing a personal brand. A distinctive self-marketing is an individual effort and desire for each nurse who seeks to succeed, develop and keep pace with rapid scientific progress. Self-marketing entails various conditions, skills, requirements, and a great cost (Hopkins, Raymond, & Carlson, 2011; Walker, 2013).

Self-marketing requires a lot of skills, experience, and extensive knowledge, whether for finding a job or building a strong personality. These skills encompass various personal attributes such as establishing strong relationships with career key employers, having good communication skills, concentration, and creativity at work, effective use of time and resources, developing the professional capabilities and skills, showing enthusiasm for hard work, and maintaining high moral standards, creating a resume, mastering interview skills and job searching skills (Manai & Holmlund, 2015). However, all these skills may not be effective without cultivating positive feelings toward oneself or fostering positive self-esteem. (Gad, Bakr & Sherief, 2021).

Self-esteem is one of the most crucial variables for growth, talent, and innovation. It pervades all a nurse's ideas, views, excitements, dreams, ideals, and desires. It can be defined as how people think and feel about themselves in their social and professional lives, as well as how similar and aligned their ideal self and actual self (Alavijeh, et al., 2018). Self-esteem is defined as the subjective perception of one's own value as a person, the development of self-esteem is characterized by a progressive increase from youth to maturity and peak around 50 to 60 years of age, and then it decreases at old age (Hank, & Baltes-Götz, 2019).

High levels of self-esteem indicate positive outcomes regarding career life, academic accomplishment, social life, physical and mental

health, and job satisfaction. However, poor self-esteem indicates self-rejection, discontent, and disdain (Silvestri, et al., 2018; Bhagora, Kumar & Hawaibam, 2019). Self-esteem can be enhanced and maintained by attaining tremendous achievement and avoiding disappointments. High self-esteem is strongly associated with self-reported happiness, which can stem from feelings of competence, confidence, goal-directedness, and self-efficacy. (DeMello, et al., 2018).

Significance of the Study

The healthcare job market has become more competitive over time. Every year, thousands of undergraduate and graduate nursing students enter the labor market to compete against more experienced employees for a limited chance of distinctive jobs. (Pinto, & Marin, 2021). With such fierce competition for these jobs, intern nurse students must be armed with basic self-marketing skills to be able to compete for better job chances. Self-marketing skills can assist intern nursing students in improving their public image and credibility to further their careers. It provides them with more chances to effectively communicate their beliefs, talents, experiences, and vision to potential employers. However, there is a dearth of studies in the healthcare sector on self-marketing skills in Egypt.

In nursing, self-esteem is an essential component of both personal and professional identity. Intern nurse students are the foundation of tomorrow's professional nurses; hence they must be self-confident individuals to ensure competent

and safe practice. (Velmurugan, et al., 2018). Subsequently knowing intern nurse students' levels of understanding about their self-marketing skills and their self-esteem would enable academics to plan and implement practical steps to help them to enhance their self-marketing skills and self-esteem. For this, it is necessary to explore the concept of self-marketing skills and self-esteem which may limit or enable intern nurse students to get a great job.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the present study was to assess intern nurse students' perception of self-marketing skills and its' relation to their self-esteem.

Research Questions:

To fulfill the aim of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1- What is the intern nurse students' perception of self-marketing skills?
- 2- What is the level of the intern nurse students' self-esteem?
- 3- What is the relationship between intern nurse students' perception of self-marketing skills and their self-esteem?

Subject and Methods

Research Design:

The current study used a descriptive correlational research design to accomplish its aim. A descriptive research design is a theory-based research design that is used to collect, analyze, and present data. A correlation study design is a nonexperimental research method that aids

researchers in establishing a relationship between two closely related variables (Bloomfield, & Fisher, 2019).

Setting:

This study was carried out at Cairo University hospitals in different clinical training areas where the intern nurse students were allocated according to their training schedule rotation as follows; 1) Critical care area; 2) Nursing administration area; 3) Obstetrics and gynecology area; 4) Surgery and emergency area; 5) Pediatric area; 6) Dialysis area; and 7) Cardiothoracic area.

Sample:

A convenience sample (405) of all available intern nurse students who accepted to take part in the study were included in the data collection. The total number of intern nurse students was 465, who registered for the internship year at the Faculty of Nursing - Cairo University. However, out of 465 intern students, only 405 participated in the current study while the rest of the sample (60 intern students) could not be reached. As they transferred their internship training period to other universities that are close to their place of residence.

Tools of Data Collection:

Three tools were used for data collection to achieve the aim of the present study.

Tool I: Personal Data Questionnaire: It includes personal data about the intern nurse students as (age, gender, marital status, place of residence during the internship, if students were

working at a private hospital during the internship year).

Tool II: Intern Nurse Students Self-Marketing Skills Questionnaire: It was used to assess intern nurse students' perception of their self-marketing skills. This questionnaire was developed by researchers based on relevant literature (Whitmer, 2019; Godsey, Houghton, & Hayes, 2020). It included (31) items divided under three dimensions which are personal attributes (10) items, job searching skills (11) items, and interviewing skills (10) items. Students' responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale as follows, 5 (very good), 4(good), 3 (fair), 2 (poor), and 1 (very poor). The maximum score of this tool is (155), and the higher scores indicate a high level of self-marketing skills. According to the total mean percentage scores, the nurses' perception of self-marketing skills was classified based on the following cutoff point:

- High perception of self-marketing skills: mean percentage $\geq 65\%$
- poor perception of self-marketing skills: mean percentage $< 65\%$

Tool III: Intern Nurse Students Self-Esteem Questionnaire: It was used to assess intern nurse students' self-esteem. This valid and reliable questionnaire was developed by Rosenberg, (1965) (Gnambs, Scharl, & Schroeders, 2018). It included 10 items that measure global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The questionnaire is believed to be unidimensional. Students' responses were scored on a four-point

Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), to strongly disagree (1) (Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored). The maximum score of this tool is 40, and higher scores indicated higher self-esteem. According to the total mean percentage scores, the level of self-esteem was classified as follows:

- Low self-esteem: 25%–62%
- Medium self-esteem: 63%–72%
- High self-esteem: 73%–100% (Chao, Vidacovich, & Green, 2017)

Tool validity:

The content validity of the self-marketing skills questionnaire was assured by the revision of three academic experts (one professor and two assistant professors) in nursing administration from the faculty of nursing- at Cairo University and two talent acquisition specialists at private hospitals. The questionnaire was examined for its content coverage, clarity, wording, length, format, and overall appearance. Based on experts' comments and recommendations, a few modifications were made.

Reliability:

Internal consistency reliability of the self-marketing skills questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the independent variable, the calculated reliability score was 0.91. Regarding the self-esteem questionnaire, it was adopted from Rosenberg (1965), and its reliability score was 0.88.

Ethical Consideration

Official approval to conduct the planned study was obtained from the Scientific Ethical Committee Faculty of Nursing – Cairo University (Code:76-2022) with the approval number RHDIRB2019041701. The participants were assured by the researchers that their participation in the study would be voluntary and contingent on their agreement to give informed consent, where informed consent will be signed by the participants after reading all its details. The ethical considerations included explaining the purpose and nature of the study, stating the possibility to withdraw at any time, and ensuring the confidentiality of the information, with no access granted to any other party without the participants' permission. Furthermore, it was emphasized that participation carried no risk.

Procedure

Formal approval from the ethical committee was received. Additionally, official approval from the Vice Dean for community service and environmental development at the Faculty of Nursing- Cairo University was obtained to carry out the study. The researchers started data collection after receiving a list of intern nurse students' names in different clinical training areas at Cairo University Hospitals who registered for the internship year. Then the researchers contacted the intern nurse students at the beginning of the orientation period of each clinical training area at faculty classrooms to explain the aim and scope of the study and obtain signed consent. After that, the

study questionnaires were distributed and collected at the same time. The estimated time to fill in the questionnaires ranged between 25 - 30 minutes. Data was collected over 3 months (November 2022- January 2023).

Statistical design:

The data were scored, tabulated, and analyzed using the “statistical package for the social science” (SPSS), version 20 for analysis. The frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were determined. Relative statistical tests of significance, such as (Friedman’s ANOVA, and independent t-test) and Pearson’s correlation coefficient were used to detect the correlation between study variables. The degree of significance and the significance level of all statistical analysis was at ≤ 0.05 (P-value) while the $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ indicates a non-significant result.

Results:

Table (1) shows that the majority (83.7%) of the intern nurse students were in the age group that ranged between ($21 \leq 23$) years old with mean \pm SD. 21.84 ± 1.25 . As for gender, the table reveals that about half (56.8%) of them were female, and the majority (87.2%) of the study sample were single. Regarding the attendance of the internship orientation period, most of the intern students (95.8%) attended the orientation period.

Figure (1) depicts that more than two-thirds (69.9%) of the intern nurse students lived in private houses away from their families.

Additionally, most of them (80%) were working during internship periods in private hospitals.

Figure (2) shows that the highest percentage (26.4%) of the intern nurse students were trained in the critical care training area. While the lowest percentage (8.40%) of them were trained in the administration area.

Figure (3) shows that the highest percentage (75.10%) of the intern students had a high perception level regarding self-marketing skills. While the lowest percentage (24.90%) of them had a poor perception of self-marketing skills.

Table (2) indicates that intern nurse students perceived nearly the same mean percentage regarding all dimensions of self-marketing skills (69.21%, 66.18%, 66.24%) respectively. While the total mean percentage was 67.182%.

Figure (4): Illustrates that the highest percentage (75.5%) of intern nurse students had a high level of self-esteem. However, the lowest

percentage (7.16%) of them had a medium level of self-esteem.

Table (3) It is obvious from the above table that intern nurse students had a high level of self-esteem (76.25%).

Table (4): shows that there was a highly significant statistical strong positive correlation ($r=0.877$, $p=0.000$) between intern nurse students' total perception of self-marketing skills and total perception of their self-esteem.

Table (5): illustrates that there was no statistically significant difference between intern nurse students' age, gender, marital status, and training area and total perception of self-marketing skills and total self-esteem. While there was a highly statistically significant difference between intern nurse students' place of residence, working during the internship and attendance of internship orientation period, and total perception of study variables.

Table (1): Frequency and percentage distribution of intern nurse students' personal data (n= 405)

| Personal data | | NO. | % |
|---|------------|-----|------|
| Age | 21 ≤ 23 | 339 | 83.7 |
| | 24 - 26 | 66 | 16.3 |
| M±SD | 21.84±1.25 | | |
| Gender | Male | 175 | 43.2 |
| | Female | 230 | 56.8 |
| Marital status | Single | 353 | 87.2 |
| | Married | 52 | 12.8 |
| Attendance of internship orientation period | Yes | 388 | 95.8 |
| | No | 17 | 4.2 |

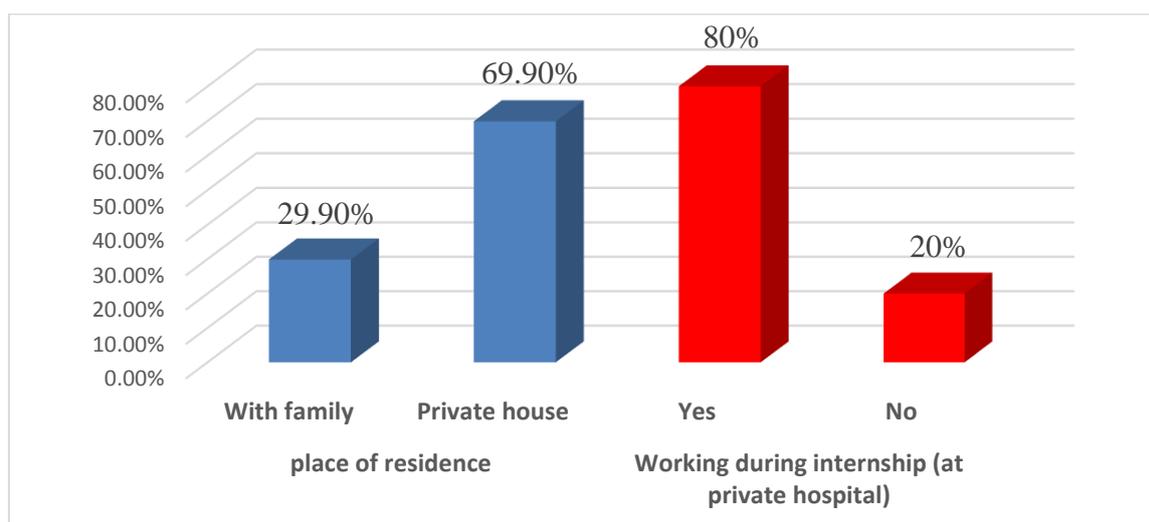


Figure (1): Percentage distribution of intern nurse students according to their place of residence and working status during the internship period (in a private hospital) (n=405).

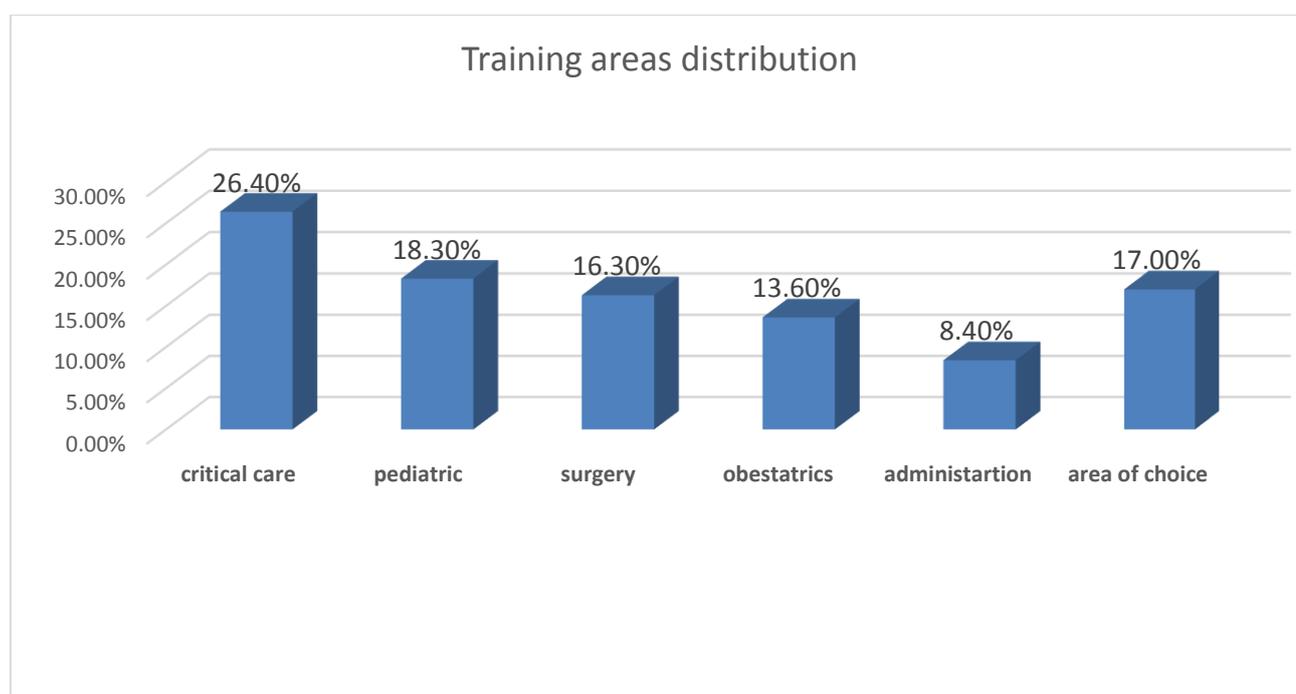


Figure (2): Percentage distribution of intern nurse students according to their training areas (n=405).



Figure (3): Frequency distribution of intern nurse students' perception level of self-marketing skills (n=405).

Table (2): Mean and Mean percentage of intern nurse students' perception toward self-marketing skills dimensions (n=405).

| Self-marketing skills dimensions | Minimum score | Maximum score | Mean | SD | Mean % |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Personal attributes | 12.00 | 43.00 | 34.607 | 7.403 | 69.214 |
| Job searching skills | 14.00 | 48.00 | 36.404 | 7.284 | 66.189 |
| Interviewing skills | 11.00 | 43.00 | 33.121 | 6.764 | 66.242 |
| Total | 37.00 | 128.00 | 104.132 | 19.661 | 67.182 |

(High perception of self-marketing skills: $\geq 65\%$ - poor perception of self-marketing skills: $<65\%$)

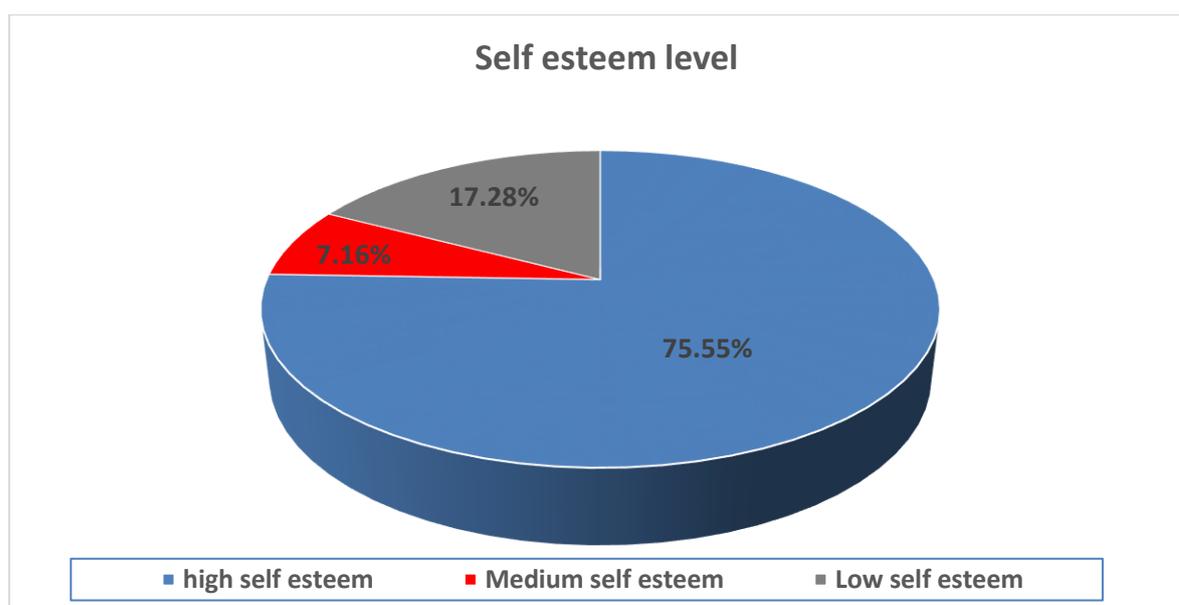


Figure (4): Frequency distribution of Intern nurse students' self-esteem level (n=405)

Table (3): Mean and Mean percentage of intern nurse students' perception toward their self-esteem (n= 405).

| Self-esteem scale | Strongly disagree | | disagree | | Agree | | Strongly agree | |
|---|-------------------|------|----------|------|-------|------|----------------|------|
| | NO. | % | NO. | % | NO. | % | NO. | % |
| 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | 37 | 9.1 | 59 | 14.6 | 76 | 18.8 | 233 | 57.5 |
| 2. At times I think I am no good at all * | 152 | 37.5 | 122 | 30.1 | 68 | 16.8 | 63 | 15.6 |
| 3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | 48 | 11.9 | 66 | 16.3 | 128 | 31.6 | 163 | 40.2 |
| 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people. | 55 | 13.6 | 47 | 11.6 | 178 | 44 | 125 | 30.9 |
| 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of * | 162 | 40 | 151 | 37.3 | 50 | 12.3 | 42 | 10.4 |
| 6. I certainly feel useless at times * | 178 | 44 | 128 | 31.6 | 53 | 13.1 | 46 | 11.4 |
| 7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | 57 | 14.1 | 81 | 20 | 148 | 36.5 | 119 | 29.4 |
| 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself* | 167 | 41.2 | 129 | 31.9 | 73 | 18 | 36 | 8.9 |
| 9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure * | 209 | 51.6 | 119 | 29.4 | 46 | 11.4 | 31 | 7.7 |
| 10. I take a positive attitude toward myself. | 35 | 8.6 | 53 | 13.1 | 135 | 33.3 | 182 | 44.9 |
| Total mean± SD | 30.479±7.238 | | | | | | | |
| Mean % | 76.25 | | | | | | | |

*Reversed scored items (2,5,6,8,9)

Table (4): Correlation between self-marketing skills dimensions and self-esteem (n=405).

| Self-marketing skills dimensions | Total self-esteem | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------|
| | r | p |
| Personal attributes | .762** | .000 |
| Job searching skills | .842** | .000 |
| Interviewing skills | .807** | .000 |
| Total | .877** | .000 |

** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Table (5): Relationship between intern nurse students' personal data and their perception of total self-marketing skills and total self-esteem (n=405).

| Personal data | | Self-marketing skills | Self-esteem |
|---|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| Age | t | .484 | .438 |
| | P | .629 | .661 |
| Gender | t | .962 | 1.543 |
| | P | .336 | .124 |
| Marital status | t | -1.369 | -.555 |
| | P | .172 | .579 |
| Place of residence | t | 10.082 | 9.365 |
| | P | .000** | .000** |
| Training area | f | 1.725 | 1.590 |
| | p | .128 | .162 |
| Working during the internship (at a private hospital) | t | -3.135 | -2.308 |
| | p | .002* | .021* |
| Attendance of internship orientation period | t | -7.755 | -7.957 |
| | p | .000** | .000** |

** . P is significant at ≤ 0.05 level.

F: stands for one-way ANOVA, and t: stands for the independent t-test.

Discussion:

Considering the fierce competition in the labor market, whether at the level of self-employment or the level of institutions and brands, it has become difficult for fresh graduates to get good job opportunities and difficult for small institutions to enter the world of business. Therefore, self-marketing skills have become a necessity for nurses and healthcare institutions to survive in such a competitive market (Manai, & Holmlund, 2015). Moreover, nurses who have high self-esteem are more likely to perform effectively and gain better job opportunities compared to nurses with low self-esteem (Lo Presti, Törnroos, & Pluviano, 2020).

The current study revealed that the highest percentage of intern students highly perceived all self-marketing skills dimensions. This may be owing to the exposure of intern students to different work experiences in private hospitals during their internship period which gave them the chance to contact expert healthcare professionals that enhance their skills at all levels. Additionally, this opinion has been supported by the results of the current study as the highest percentage of the intern students were working in private hospitals during their internship period. This result was in agreement with Perera, Fernandes, & Panikts, (2018) who found that the majority of students at the university level were equipped with self-

marketing skills to gain better job opportunities in such a competitive job market. Moreover, Ward, Leuty, & Corie, (2016); Majid, Eapen, Aung, & Oo, (2019) found that graduate students had a high perception of self-marketing skills specifically job searching, interviewing and soft skills needed in their employability and career development.

However, this result contradicts the findings of Manai & Holmlund (2015), who concluded that the study participants exhibited poor self-marketing skills, particularly in job searching and career preparation skills. Additionally, this result is in contrast with Ashipala, & Shatimwene, (2021) who showed a relatively low rating of the study participants regarding skills related to self-marketing.

Regarding the intern students' perception of their self-esteem, the study findings revealed that more than two-thirds of the intern students had a high level of self-esteem. This can be attributed to the educational and informational support provided to nursing interns through a structured and organized internship orientation period, which equips them with the necessary knowledge and skills. Furthermore, regular supervision and periodic evaluations conducted by clinical instructors for the nursing interns at their clinical training areas contribute to enhancing their self-esteem.

This result was supported by Duruk, Kurban, & Kurban, (2017) who revealed that nursing students had high levels of self-esteem. However, this finding was contradicted with Mohamed,

(2019) who found that the majority of nursing students had low self-esteem levels. Additionally, in contrast to the present study finding, a study that was carried out by Gad, Bakr & Sherief, (2021) revealed that more than two-thirds of nursing interns had moderate level of self-esteem.

The results of the present study revealed that there was a highly statistically significant strong positive correlation between nursing interns' total perception of self-marketing skills and total perception of their self-esteem. This implies that nursing interns with higher self-esteem are more likely to make an effort to uphold their integrity in front of others, particularly potential employers. They also tend to possess good communication skills, interviewing skills, job searching skills, and the ability to highlight their strengths, enabling them to navigate the current competitive labor market more effectively (Chinyamurindi, Rukuni, & Marembo, 2017).

This result was in line with the findings of Nabilah, Tentama, & Widiana, (2022) who found that there was a statistically significant correlation between self-marketing skills as a part of employability skills and self-esteem. Additionally, this result was consistent with the result of Ismail, (2017) whose results displayed the presence of significant relations between graduate employability skills and self-esteem.

Regarding the relationship between study variables and the personal data of nursing interns, the study findings showed that there was no statistically significant relation between nursing

interns' age, gender, marital status, training area, and both study variables. These results were consistent with Jackson, & Wilton, (2017); Abd Majid, Hussin, Norman, & Kasavan, (2020) who found that there is no relation between students' gender and marketability and employability skills. As well these results were aligned with Banappagoudar et al., (2022) who pointed out that there is no link between self-esteem and personal characteristics data of nursing students. On the other hand, these results were contradicted with Haq et al., (2016) who indicated that students' age and gender have a significant effect on self-esteem.

However, the study findings revealed that there was a highly statistically significant relation between nursing interns' place of residence, working during the internship period, attendance of the internship orientation period, and total perception of study variables. This could be explained by the fact that the nursing interns who lived in private houses away from their families worked in private hospitals as they had to rely on themselves to pay for their personal expenses and help their families. All of these could contribute to enhancing the students' self-marketing skills through exposure to certain work experiences and enhancing their self-esteem through self-dependence.

The previous study results were supported by Syed Kamarudin, Muhammad, & Hamidun, (2017); Abd Majid, Hussin, Norman, & Kasavan, (2020) who found that there were differences in place of residence and demographic factors,

influencing the graduates' marketability and employability skills. However, this finding was incongruent with Damota, Ibrahim, Woldemariam, & Kifle, (2019) whose study results indicated that students' self-esteem was not significantly different by their place of residence.

Conclusion:

It may be concluded from the results of the current study that nursing interns perceived highly self-marketing skills and had a high level of self-esteem. There was a positive statistically significant strong correlation between total self-marketing skills and total self-esteem among nursing interns.

Recommendations:

- Advanced self-marketing skills should be emphasized in nursing educational programs to enhance graduates' employability.
- Nurse educators should highlight how nurses' self-esteem influences their self-marketing skills and should work to enhance their students' self-esteem.
- Further studies are needed to assess the main nursing employers' perspectives regarding self-marketing skills that should be possessed by nursing fresh graduates.

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