Chelonian Conservation And Biology

Vol. 20 No. 2 (2025) | https://www.acgpublishing.com/ | ISSN - 1071-8443

PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY REGARDING SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING- AN EXPLORATORY STUDY.

Aradhana Eli Rao[1]*, Preethi Maria Mathew[2]

[1.] M.Sc. Nursing Student, MGM New Bombay College of Nursing, MGM Institute of Health Sciences, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

[2.] Professor & HOD, MGM New Bombay College of Nursing, MGM Institute of Health Sciences, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

***Corresponding author- Aradhana Eli Rao**

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Self-directed method allows the student to empower themselves and take total control on their personal growth and increase their educational level. Self-directed learning allows the student to self-motivate themselves to not only reply solely on traditional classroom setting but methods like online studying, seminars, conferences and going through various research data bases for indebt study of their topics It extends beyond the classroom and into all aspects of life. Materials and methods: A quantitative research approach and exploratory study design was used. A sample of 200 nursing students and 10 nursing faculty of nursing institute was selected using non probability convenient sampling technique. Data was collected by 22 structured questionnaire which was validated by 5 experts. Data was using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (chi square test). Results Nursing students: 164 (82%) of the 200 students that took part in the study were female, with the remaining 36 (18%) being male. Of the total number of pupils, 85 (42.5%) were under 21 years old, and the remaining 115 (57.5%(were above 21, 96 (48%) were in their first year of B.Sc. Nursing, 52 (26%) were in their second year of B.Sc. Nursing, 38 (19%) were in their third year of B.Sc. Nursing First-year P.B.B.Sc. nursing students made up 10 (5%) of the total students, and second-year students made up 4 (2%). Nursing Faculty: 10 faculties that took part in the study 1 (10%) were Male and 9 (90%) were Female, 10 (100%) faculties were above 21 years of age, all 10 (100%) had completed their Masters in Nursing. The results indicated that most participants held positive views on self-directed learning, with 69% of students and 70% of faculty expressing favorable perceptions. The study also found significant association between demographic variables (Gender and Academic Qualification) and perceptions of SDL.

Conclusion: The findings reveal that majority of the nursing students and faculty have positive perception regarding self-directed learning.

Keywords: Perception, Self-directed learning, Faculty, Students, Academic, Competency Based Education.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving world, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, educational methods have undergone significant transformation. Traditional classroom approaches are increasingly complemented by **self-directed learning (SDL)**- a flexible model where students assume responsibility for setting goals, identifying resources, and evaluating their progress[1]. SDL supports learners in navigating diverse content through online courses, seminars, and research databases, fostering **critical thinking and lifelong learning** in an adaptable learning environment [2].

In the context of nursing, SDL is particularly vital. The healthcare landscape is becoming more complex, and nursing professionals must engage in continuous learning to stay current with clinical practices and evidence-based care. SDL cultivates autonomy, self-motivation, and problem-solving—qualities central to nursing competence [3]. Furthermore, India's adoption of **Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME)** underscores the emphasis on active, self-directed learning strategies in healthcare training [4].

Despite these advantages, SDL also poses challenges. Learner readiness, time management, and resource access can significantly impact its effectiveness.[5] Studies indicate that while SDL enhances competency and autonomy, successful implementation typically requires **faculty guidance**, structured feedback, and an enabling learning environment[6]

Given SDL's increasing importance and integration into nursing curricula, this study aims to explore the **perceptions of students and faculty toward SDL** in a nursing education setting, with the goal of informing strategies to strengthen its application in educational practice.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) in India highlights active learning, with self-directed learning (SDL) as a key strategy. SDL enables students to take responsibility for their own learning, while teachers guide, mentor, and evaluate the process.

Studies show that medical students perform well in SDL but face challenges in time management, communication, and identifying suitable resources. They stress the need for motivation, focus, stress management, and organization. Suggestions include promoting participation through events and incorporating evaluation to enhance seriousness toward SDL.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, national education policy made SDL compulsory, and nursing colleges integrated it as part of the curriculum. This shift emphasized the importance of SDL for lifelong learning and competency development despite challenges.

Understanding student and faculty perceptions is essential to strengthen SDL practices within CBME, ensuring learners are better supported in developing independence, adaptability, and professional competence.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To assess the perceptions of students and faculty regarding self-directed learning (SDL) in the context of Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME). The study aims to identify strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement in SDL practices. Findings will guide strategies to enhance effective implementation of SDL in medical and nursing education.

OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the perception of students towards self-directed learning.
- To determine the perception of faculty towards self-directed learning.
- To find the association between demographic variable and perception of SDL.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A quantitative research approach with an exploratory survey design was used. The study was conducted at MGM New Bombay College of Nursing, Kamothe among 200 undergraduate nursing students and 10 nursing faculty, selected by non-probability convenient sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire (demographic variables and a 3-point Likert scale) validated by five experts and found reliable with a score of 0.97. A pilot study was carried out on 10 samples for feasibility. Data were collected through Google Forms after obtaining ethical approval and informed consent. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (Chi-square test).

RESULTS

For tabulation and statistical analysis, the data was first obtained using a Google form sheet. The data analysis is arranged and displayed under the subsequent parts-

Section A: Distribution of nursing students and faculty based on demographic data

The majority 164 (82%) of the 200 students that took part in the study were female, with the remaining 36 (18%) being male. Of the total number of pupils, 85 (42.5%) were under 21 years old, and the remaining 115 (57.5%(were above 21. Data was gathered from B.Sc. and P.B.B.Sc. undergraduate nursing students. Of them, approximately 96 (48%) were in their first year of B.Sc. Nursing, 52 (26%) were in their second year of B.Sc. Nursing, and 38 (19%) were in their third year of B.Sc. Nursing. First-year P.B.B.Sc. nursing students made up 10 (5%) of the total students, and second-year students made up 4 (2%).

Section B: Analysis of the perception of students regarding self-directed learning

n= 200

Table 1: ***Students perception towards self-directed learning.***

Questions	**Agree**		**Neutral**		**Disagree**	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. I prefer using SDL as a learning method over other traditional learning methods	134	67%	51	25.5%	15	7.5%
2. I feel SDL is important.	132	66%	55	27.5%	13	6.5%
3. I can pay sufficient attention while doing SDL.	115	57.5%	66	33%	19	9.5%
4. I can concentrate enough during a SDL session.	109	54.5%	72	36%	19	9.5%
5. I have a good understanding during a SDL session.	116	58%	72	36%	12	6%

6. SDL is as influential as lecture method to me.	112	56%	65	32.5%	23	11.5%
7. SDL provides me sufficient time to cover a topic.	126	63%	53	26.5%	21	10.5%
8. My skill and creativity have increased after SDL.	117	58.5%	60	30%	23	11.5%
9. There has been an increase in my learning capacity after SDL.	118	59%	69	34.5%	13	6.5%
10. My interest has wavered from lecture method to SDL.	110	55%	70	35%	20	10%
11. I find SDL beneficial.	133	66.5%	53	26.5%	14	7%
12. I find SDL flexible.	114	57%	63	31.5%	23	11.5%
13. I can rely on SDL for passing.	108	54%	64	32%	28	14%
14. I can dependent on SDL for completing a topic.	103	51.5%	67	33.5%	30	15%
15. I would choose SDL over any other teaching method.	105	52.5%	65	32.5%	30	15%
16. My studies have improved after doing SDL.	114	57%	68	34%	18	9%
17. I find SDL difficult at times.	80	40%	85	42.5%	35	17.5%
18. My knowledge has increased after doing SDL.	116	58%	67	33.5%	17	8.5%
19. I perceive SDL as an additional burden.	71	35.5%	73	36.5%	56	28%
20. I can provide sufficient feedback after an SDL session.	102	51%	82	41%	16	8%
21. I feel SDL has its own drawbacks.	84	42%	84	42%	32	16%
22. I would choose SDL rather than attending regular college.	87	43.5%	69	34.5%	44	22%

Table 1 illustrating overall, 67% of students favoured SDL over traditional methods, with 66% considering it important. More than half (54.5%) reported being able to concentrate during SDL, 58% felt they understood well, and 56% believed SDL had the same influence as lectures. About 63% agreed SDL gave enough time to complete topics, and 58.5% felt it improved their creativity and skills. Similarly, 59% reported an increase in their learning ability, while 55% showed greater interest in SDL compared to lectures.

SDL was viewed as helpful by 66.5% of students, adaptable by 57%, and reliable for passing by 54%. In terms of outcomes, 57% felt SDL improved their academic performance, and 58% stated they learned more through SDL. However, 40% reported difficulties, 28% felt it was an added burden, and 42% acknowledged that SDL has its own challenges. Finally, 43.5% preferred SDL over traditional classes, and 51% felt confident providing feedback after sessions.

n=200

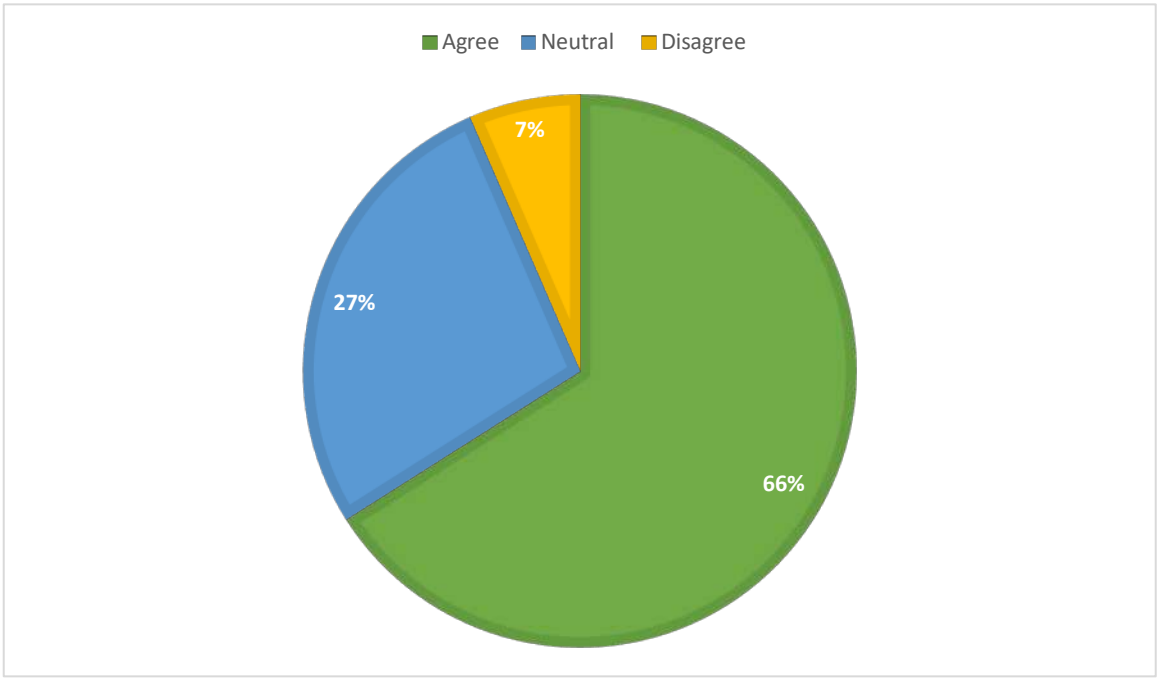

Figure 1: Perception of students about finding SDL important.

n=200

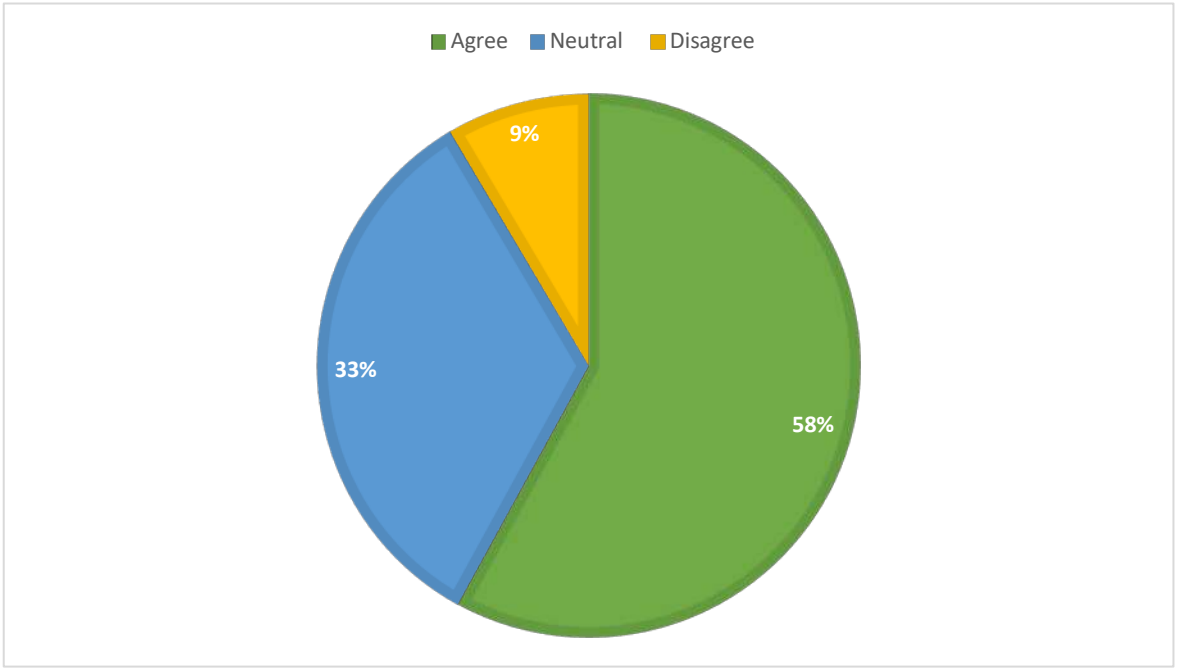

Figure 2: Percentage of students who have shown improvement in their studies

n=200

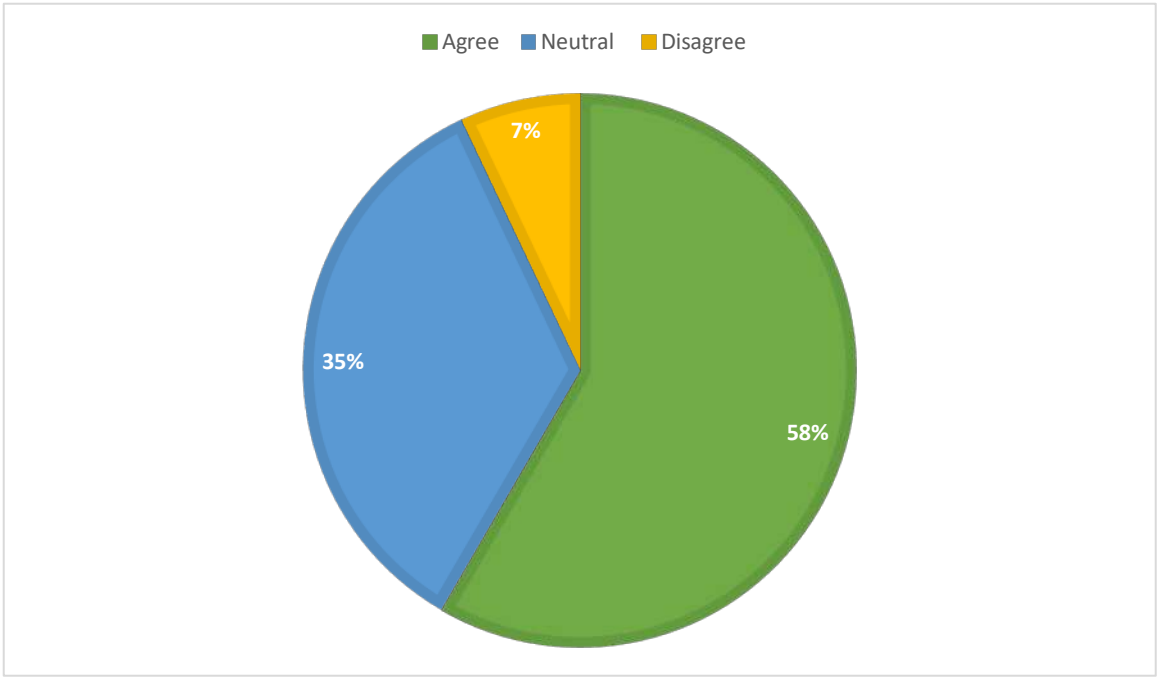

Figure3: Students perception regarding SDL's reliability
n=200

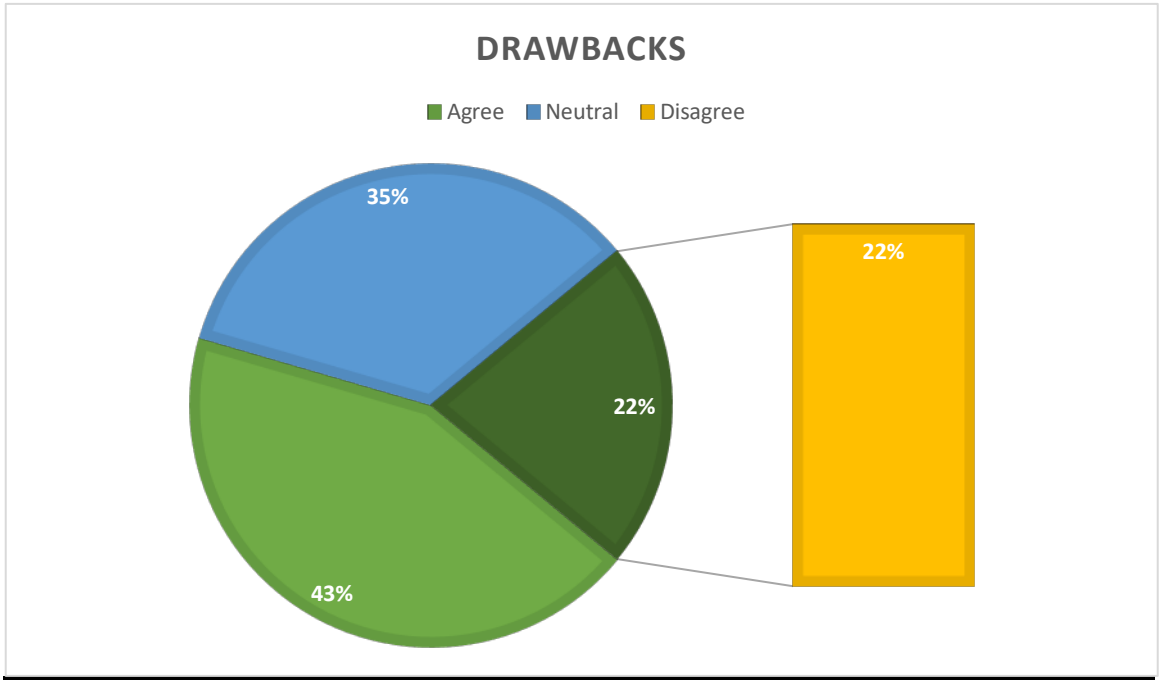

Figure 4: Students perception about SDL having its own drawback.

Section C: Distribution of faculty based on demographic data

All 1 (10%) of the 10 faculties that took part in the study were Male and rest 9 (90%) were Female. All 10 (100%) faculties were above 21 years of age. And All 10 (100%) had completed their Masters in Nursing.

Section C: Analysis of the perception of faculty regarding self-directed learning

Table 2- **Perception of faculty regarding self-directed learning**

n=10

Questions	**Agree**		**Neutral**		**Disagree**	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. I prefer using SDL as a teaching method over other traditional teaching methods.	3	30%	4	40%	3	30%
2. I feel SDL is as important as traditional teaching method.	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%
3. SDL satisfies me as a teacher.	3	30%	5	50%	2	20%
4. My students concentrate enough after the previous chapter is completed through SDL.	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%
5. I can easily assign SDL.	8	80%	2	20%	0	0%
6. SDL is as an influential teaching method to me.	4	40%	3	30%	3	30%
7. SDL provides me with sufficient time to cover a topic.	6	60%	2	20%	2	20%
8. My teaching skills have increased through SDL.	1	10%	5	50%	4	40%
9. There has been an increase in my teaching capacity after assigning SDL.	0	0%	8	80%	2	20%
10. My interest has wavered from teaching due to SDL.	1	10%	7	70%	2	20%
11. I find SDL beneficial.	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%
12. I find SDL flexible.	6	60%	3	30%	1	10%
13. As a teacher I can rely on SDL for students to score well.	3	30%	4	40%	3	30%
14. I can dependent on SDL for completing a topic.	2	20%	2	20%	6	60%
15. I would prefer using SDL over any other teaching method.	1	10%	4	40%	5	50%
16. My students have shown improvement after doing SDL.	2	20%	6	60%	2	20%

17. I find evaluating SDL assignment difficult at times.	8	80%	1	10%	1	10%
18. SDL has increased my knowledge.	1	10%	8	80%	1	10%
19. I perceive SDL has an additional burden.	5	50%	1	10%	4	40%
20. My students can provide sufficient feedback after a SDL session.	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%
21. I feel SDL has its own drawbacks.	7	70%	1	10%	2	20%
22. I will choose SDL over teaching in college regularly.	3	30%	2	20%	5	50%

Table 2 demonstrates Findings show a divided response: while **30% favor adopting SDL**, 40% remain neutral and 30% disagree. Half of the respondents (50%) recognize SDL's importance, though 30% are neutral and 20% disagree. Regarding satisfaction, only 30% of faculty feel satisfied, whereas 50% remain neutral and 30% disagree. In terms of classroom focus, 57.5% agree that SDL enables sufficient attention, and 50% report that students can concentrate after completing an SDL chapter. Most (80%) believe SDL can be easily assigned, but 80% also report difficulties in awarding SDL at times. Perceptions of SDL's effectiveness remain mixed: only 10% believe it is better than traditional methods, while 50% disagree and 40% remain neutral. Faculty also expressed concerns about workload, with **50% agreeing that SDL increases workload**, and 70% acknowledging that SDL has disadvantages. However, 70% also reported receiving adequate feedback from students after SDL sessions. Interestingly, only 30% of faculty expressed preference for SDL over traditional teaching, while 50% disagreed and 20% were undecided. Overall, the results indicate **faculty are divided**, with many acknowledging the flexibility and importance of SDL, yet expressing reservations about workload, effectiveness, and preference compared to traditional metho

n=10

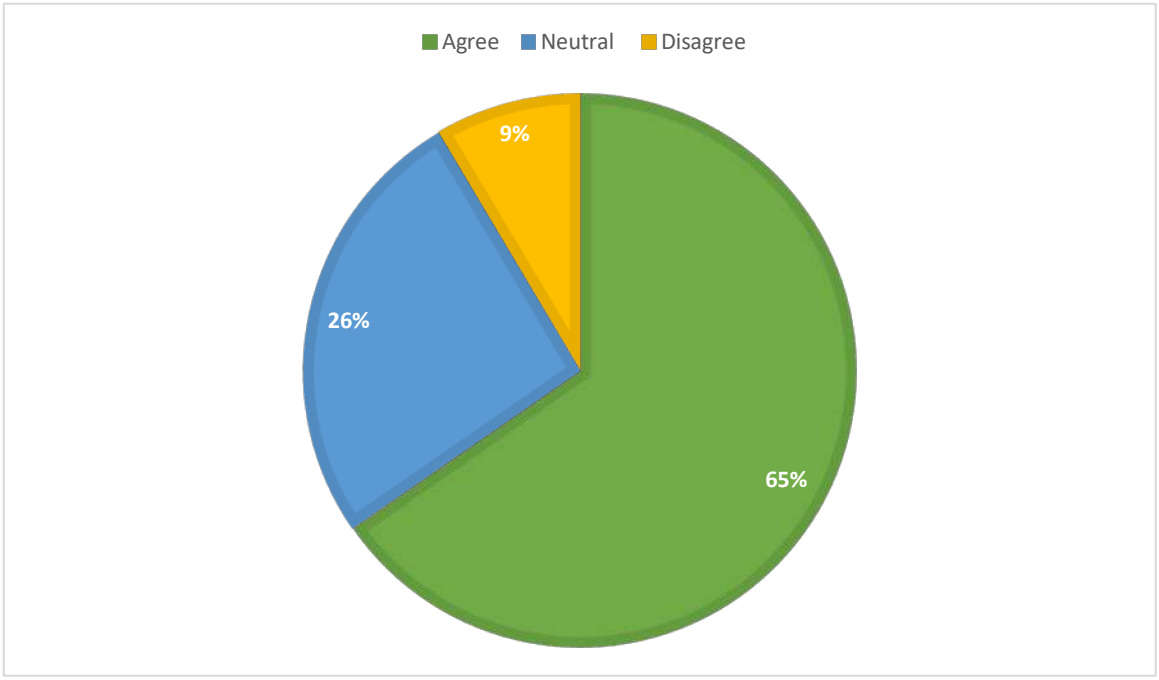

Figure 5: Perception of faculty about finding SDL important.
n=10

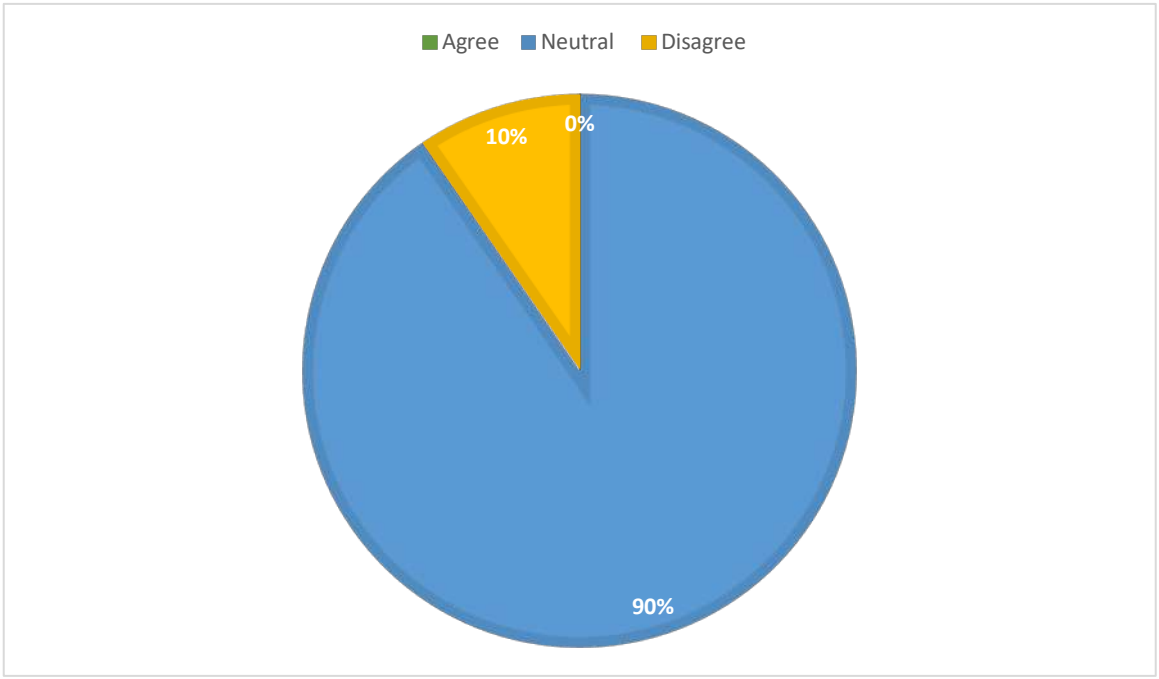

Figure 6: Faculty who found improvement in their teaching ability
n=10

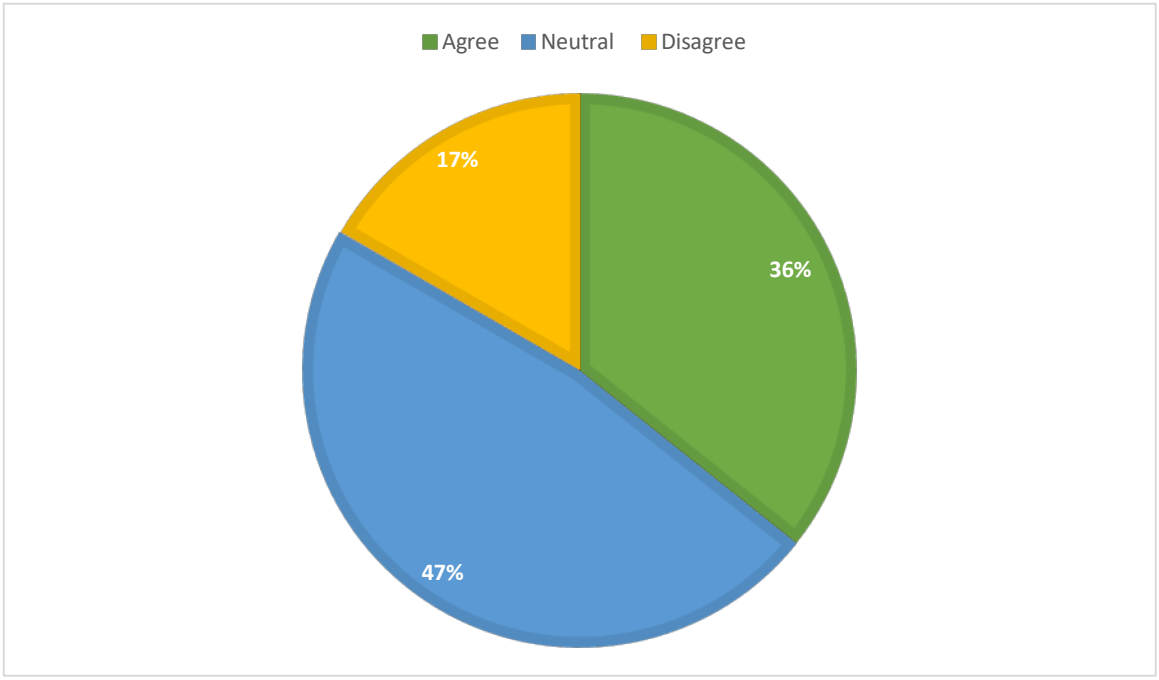

Figure 7: Faculty's perception regarding SDL's reliability

n=10

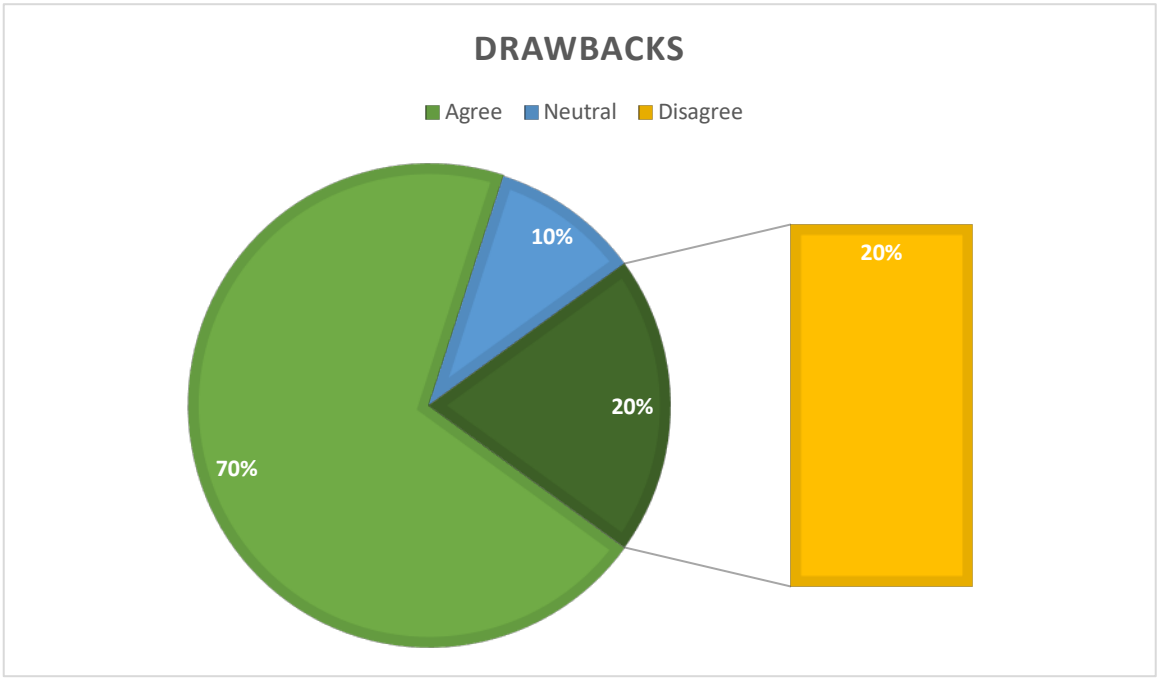

Figure 8: Faculty's perception about SDL having its own drawback.

Section D: Association between demographic variable and perception of self-directed learning.

n=200

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant association between the gender of students and their perception regarding self-directed learning (SDL). Similarly, a significant association was found between the academic qualification of students and their perception of SDL. However, no significant association was observed between the age of students and their perception regarding SDL.

DISCUSSION

The exploratory study conducted at MGM New Bombay College of Nursing assessed the perceptions of students and faculty regarding self-directed learning (SDL). Findings revealed that 69% of students expressed a positive attitude toward SDL, appreciating its flexibility, convenience, and usefulness in promoting autonomy, while 33% remained neutral, often citing difficulties in independent learning. Faculty also acknowledged SDL as a valuable pedagogical strategy that fosters responsibility, critical thinking, and analytical skills, although challenges related to its implementation, including the need for faculty training and structured support, were noted. A significant association was observed between demographic variables such as gender and academic qualification and the perceptions of SDL, suggesting variability in how different groups value this approach.

These findings are consistent with several review studies. Murad et al. (2010) conducted a systematic review and found that SDL enhances motivation, accountability, and problem-solving skills among health professions students, though its effectiveness depends heavily on structured guidance and faculty facilitation[7,] Similarly, Cadorin et al. (2017) confirmed that nursing students generally show a positive perception of SDL, particularly in relation to developing lifelong learning skills, but also emphasized the need for tailored support to overcome initial resistance[8]. A more recent scoping review by Shen et al. (2020) further reinforced that while students value the autonomy of SDL, barriers such as lack of readiness, inadequate feedback, and limited faculty preparation often hinder full effectiveness[9.]

Comparable results have also been reported in empirical studies. A qualitative study at McMaster University demonstrated that both students and faculty initially faced confusion and difficulty with SDL, but with proper guidance, students gradually developed confidence and a deeper sense of responsibility for their learning[10]. Abraham et al. (2021) reported similar findings among Indian nursing students, where SDL readiness was high in domains of self-motivation and self-management but lower in areas of resource utilization, indicating the need for structured faculty mentoring[11].

Overall, the current study affirms that SDL holds strong potential in nursing education, provided it is implemented with clear guidance, ongoing feedback mechanisms, and faculty development programs. The consistency of findings with previous reviews and research strengthens the evidence base supporting SDL as an effective strategy for fostering lifelong learning in nursing.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to assess the perceptions of nursing students and faculty regarding self-directed learning (SDL) at MGM New Bombay College of Nursing. Data were collected from 200 nursing students and 10 faculty members through a Google form survey. The results revealed that most

participants held positive views toward SDL, with 69% of students and 70% of faculty reporting favourable perceptions. A significant association was also found between demographic variables (gender and academic qualification) and perceptions of SDL.

Self-directed learning, like other educational methods, presents both advantages and challenges. Its strengths lie in student-centred approaches, authentic skill development, reduced academic stress, and the promotion of critical thinking and independent problem-solving, especially among intrinsically motivated learners. However, its effectiveness depends largely on students' self-motivation, discipline, and readiness to take responsibility for their learning.

Given its potential benefits, SDL is recommended in higher education, particularly during formative assessments and midterm examinations, to enhance the learning experience. It supports the development of practical skills while easing exam-related stress, making it an effective strategy in nursing education.

Limitations:

This study was limited to nursing students and faculty of a single institution.

Implications:

The findings have implications for nursing practice, education, administration, and research.

Recommendations:

- Similar studies can be conducted on different groups who follow SDL.
- Follow-up studies may be carried out to determine the effect of SDL on academic performance of students.

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