Objective: To test a causal model of social intelligence among undergraduate nursing students. Methods: A predictive correlational study was performed with a stratified random sampling of 450 undergraduate nursing students in Chonburi who met criteria. Data were collected using seven self-administered questionnaires namely Nursing Student Information Form, Social Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Learning Style, Nursing Adaptation, Chat Addiction, and Family Relationship Questionnaires. The second to seventh questionnaires had Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of 0.83, 0.90, 0.89, 0.85, 0.92 and 0.84, respectively. Descriptive statistics and structural equation model were used for data analysis. Results: Structural equation modeling revealed that the modified model fitted with empirical data, explaining 72% of variance in social intelligence among nursing students (χ² = 403.85, P-value < 0.001, df = 101, GFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.08). Emotional intelligence had a positive direct impact on nursing students’ social intelligence (β = 0.42, P-value < 0.001). Moreover, nursing student adaptation, chat addiction, learning style, and family relationship had indirect effects on social intelligence of nursing students via emotional intelligence (β = 0.28, P-value < 0.001; β = 0.08, 0.03, 0.03, respectively, P-value < 0.05 for all). Conclusion: This research finding provides empirical knowledge about the mechanisms of causal model of social intelligence among undergraduate nursing students. This might develop appropriate interventions to improve nursing students’ ability to stay and work with others.

Keywords: social intelligence, emotional intelligence, nursing students

Introduction

Nursing students are responsible for coordinating and manifesting with others to enhance good health for the public. They need to be able to adapt themselves to cooperating with personnel working in outpatient departments and inpatient wards, achieving their supervising instructor’s requirements, and dealing with the needs of both the patients themselves and their relatives. They have to adapt themselves to various situations including performing their tasks confidently, behaving properly in society, and providing service effectively. On the other hand, lack of adaptability negatively affected their mental health. Literature review found that nursing students are a vulnerable group who develops mental health problems such as depression which can affect their learning achievement, and cause a high rate dropout from college.