SELF-MARKETING SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECT ON NURSE INTERNS' SELF-ESTEEM

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Abstract

Background: Self-marketing in the workplace plays a crucial role in all fields, especially in the nursing sector. Therefore, self-marketing programs have a significant effect on the ability of nurse interns to improve their public image, self-esteem, and promotion at work. **Aim:** This study aimed to identify the effects of a self-marketing skills training program on nurse interns' self-esteem. **Methods:** A quasi-experimental research design with a one-group pretest-posttest was used in this study at Ain Shams University Hospitals in Cairo Governorate, Egypt. The participants in the study included 160 nurse interns for participated in a self-marketing training program. Data collection involved instruments such as the Knowledge Questionnaire, the Intern Nurse Students Self-Marketing Skills Questionnaire, and the Self-Esteem Assessment Scale. Data entry and statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS version 26.0. **Results:** There were highly significant statistical positive correlations between nurse interns' total self-marketing and total self-esteem with (R=0.794, P=0.00). Also, there was a highly significant positive correlation between nurse interns' knowledge and self-marketing. Additionally, there were highly significant positive correlations between nurse interns' knowledge, total self-marketing, and self-esteem at preintervention. **Conclusion:** The self-marketing training program significantly improved the knowledge and perceptions of nurse interns' self-marketing and improved their self-esteem. Based on these findings recommended that innovative teaching methods aimed at enhancing students' self-marketing abilities should be created. Collaborative committees that include student members to generate ideas and formulate strategies for improving self-marketing skills should be established.

Keywords: Self-Marketing Skills, Self-Esteem, Nurse Interns, Internship, Personal Branding.

INTRODUCTION

A student nurse intern plays a key role in identifying patient demands, developing appropriate care plans, executing those plans, and assessing outcomes, all while adhering to hospital policies and nursing standards under the supervision of the head nurse [1]. The intern also receives shift handovers from the outgoing nurse regarding assigned patients and actively participates in daily unit and patient care tasks such as bed preparation, personal hygiene assistance, and medication rounds [2]. Additionally, the intern may prepare and administer medications, including controlled substances, under the guidance of a licensed nurse and in line with hospital regulations [3].

Given the breadth of their responsibilities and the direct engagement with patient care, nurse interns consistently exhibit essential professional competencies such as communication, teamwork, and clinical judgment [4]. These experiences provide a platform for interns to demonstrate their capabilities and establish a foundation for their professional identity [5]. Consequently, cultivating self-marketing skills becomes imperative, as it enables nursing interns to effectively present their competencies, gain recognition, and enhance their career development prospects [6].

Self-marketing is the process of promoting oneself, skills, experiences, and achievements to create a personal brand that enhances career opportunities and professional growth. It involves strategically positioning oneself in the job market or industry by showcasing unique strengths and competencies [7]. Self-marketing is essential for professionals seeking career advancement, entrepreneurs looking to attract clients, and individuals aiming to differentiate themselves in competitive environments. Unlike traditional marketing, which focuses on products or services, self-marketing revolves around an individual's abilities, personality, and value proposition [8].

Developing self-marketing competencies not only enhances professional visibility but also strengthens psychological constructs such as confidence and self-worth. When individuals effectively identify and communicate their skills, achievements, and professional value, they reinforce a positive self-concept and a sense of accomplishment. Consequently, self-marketing and self-esteem are interrelated, as the ability to present oneself confidently in professional contexts fosters higher self-evaluation and supports both personal and career development [9].

Self-marketing also involves the ability to articulate one's skills and accomplishments in various contexts, such as interviews, networking events, or interactions on social media. Crafting a compelling elevator pitch, developing a strong résumé, and confidently presenting oneself in professional settings are critical aspects of this process [10]. Self-marketing, often referred to as personal branding, involves applying branding strategies to promote an individual instead of a product [11]. There are self-marketing dimensions that are categorized into three main areas, namely personal attributes, job searching skills, and interviewing skills.

The personal attributes dimension reflects the intern's individual qualities, such as communication, confidence, adaptability, and professional behavior, which are essential for building a positive professional image and fostering trust within the healthcare team [12]. The job searching skills dimension focuses on the strategies and proactive behaviors that support career development, including attending conferences, participating in continuing education, and utilizing professional networks—activities that demonstrate initiative and commitment to lifelong learning [13]. The interviewing skills dimension encompasses the intern's ability to prepare for, engage in, and respond effectively during job interviews, highlighting readiness for employment and professional self-presentation [14].

Together, these three dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of the intern nurse's self-marketing capacity and its role in supporting successful transition from education to professional practice [15]. This approach allows job seekers to clearly present their values, abilities, experience, and career goals to prospective employers in a more impactful way for enhancing the nurse intern's self-esteem [16]. Self-esteem plays a vital role in mental health and is considered a key predictor of adolescents' psychological well-being during their critical stage of identity formation [17].

Self-esteem refers to the general assessment of an individual's worth or value. The way individuals assess themselves significantly influences their emotions, thoughts, and actions [18]. Self-esteem stability refers to how consistent a person's self-esteem remains despite alterations in their external relationships or environment, as well as variations in their internal emotional states [19]. Self-esteem emerges as a result of identity formation and is shaped by how well individuals navigate the challenges tied to each stage of life development. It reflects a person's evolving sense of growth and ability to handle life demands, ultimately influencing their sense of self-worth [20]. This trait is relatively stable over time and reflects a generally positive or negative view of oneself [21]. The three dimensions of self-esteem are positive personality, which measures positive self-perception; negative personality, which assesses fear and avoidance of challenges; and social personality, which focuses on how an individual handles social situations, like conflicts [22&23].

Positive/negative self-esteem and self-worth/self-competence models provide mutually exclusive explanations of the dimensionality of global esteem [24]. Decreased self-esteem can cause an increased hazard of mental health issues, whereas elevated self-esteem is seen as a protective factor for mental well-being [25]. Self-esteem changes during human life, increases between late childhood and adolescence, and then increases during late adolescence and early adulthood [26]. This is a period related to a young person's education and the formation of new competencies related to their personal vision of life [27].

Nurse interns were selected to participate in self-marketing programs because they are at a critical transitional stage between academic education and professional practice. At this stage, developing self-marketing skills helps them build confidence, improve self-esteem, enhance employability, and facilitate successful integration into the nursing workforce. Moreover, self-marketing skills enable them to present their competencies effectively, increasing their chances of career advancement and professional recognition.

During the tenure of nurse interns, a distinction was noted in their abilities, including the ability to present themselves, which is an important time to grow and develop their self-marketing skills. Securing employment in today's job market has become increasingly challenging, particularly for recent graduates, who often lack substantial work experience. Each year, many students enter the workforce, leading to intense competition for available positions. In this environment, having strong self-promotion skills is essential. To enhance their visibility to potential employers, individuals can adopt various self-marketing techniques. Similar to branding—but focused on the individual rather than a

product—self-marketing can significantly influence career advancement, including job promotions. Therefore, implementing well-developed strategies and personal marketing plans is crucial when preparing for employment opportunities [28].

The healthcare job market has become more competitive over time. Every year, thousands of nursing students from all backgrounds enter the workforce to compete with more experienced employees for a limited number of unique nursing jobs [29]. 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 offers greater opportunities for individuals to clearly express their values, skills, background, and future goals to prospective employers. Therefore, it's imperative to identify the effects of a self-marketing skills training program on nurse interns' self-esteem.

Aim of the Study

This study aimed to identify the effects of a self-marketing skills training program on nurse interns' self-esteem. The study hypothesized that the implementation of a self-marketing skills training program would improve nurse interns' self-esteem.

METHODS

Design

In this study, a quasi-experimental research design that included one group pretest and posttest was utilized. It is a type of quasi-experimental research design where a single group of participants is measured on a dependent variable (self-marketing) before (pretest) and after (posttest) the implementation of an intervention, allowing researchers to assess the change in the variable over time. In this study, the STORBE checklist was used.

Setting

The study was carried out across multiple training sites where nurse interns at Ain-Shams University have practical experience. At Ain-Shams University Hospital, training occurs in five units: the coronary care unit (CCU), neurological ICU, stroke ICU, endemic ICU, and kidney dialysis unit. At El-Demerdash Hospital, interns are assigned to operating rooms and intensive care units.

In the Cardiovascular Hospital, training is provided in three areas: the Adult ICU, Pediatric ICU, and CCU. Moreover, at Pediatric University Hospital, interns rotate through four departments: the neonatal ICU, medical ICU, surgical ICU, and emergency department. These facilities offer a wide range of medical and surgical services, including care for cardiac, vascular, and various other specialties. Ain-Shams University Hospital, 601 beds. Two buildings First building consists of three floors Second building consists of five floors, 37 units, which include 13 intermediate and intensive care units. It provides care for patients in different medical specialties. Cardio-vascular Surgery Hospital, 150 beds: One

building Hospital consists of eight floors, 9 units. It provides care for patients with cardiac and vascular diseases. Ain-Shams Pediatric Hospital has 315 beds. The two buildings old building consists of three floors, and the new building consists of seven floors, 29 units, which include 9 intermediate and intensive care units. It provides care for pediatric patients in different medical and surgical specialties. El Demerdash Surgical Hospital has 370 beds. One building, Hospital, consists of three floors13 units. It provides care for patients in different surgical specialties.

Sample and Sampling

During the data collection period, all nurse interns who were enrolled in their internships from 2024-2025 were involved in the study.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Nurse interns receiving training at Ain Shams University Hospitals during the first six months of their internship year were eligible to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria:

- Nurse interns who postponed and deferred their internship training from the previous year.

- Nurse interns who were unwilling to take part in the study

Sample size calculation: The study participants included nurse interns who were receiving training in the previously mentioned clinical settings at the time of data collection. Out of a total of 272 nurse interns, a sample of 160 was based on this equation [30], according to nurse interns enrolled in the internship year (2024-2025).

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1 - p)}{[N - 1 \times (d^2 \div Z^2] + p(1 - p)}$$

n= sample size

N= total size

Z= 1.96

d= error level 5%

p= 0.5

This sample size was sufficient to estimate a 50% prevalence rate of awareness among nurse interns, with a 5% margin of error at the 95% confidence level. The calculation also accounted for an anticipated nonresponse rate of approximately 10%, and the finite population correction was applied.

Data collection tools

Tool 1: Knowledge Questionnaire:

It was developed by researchers based on the relevant literature [(Godsey, Houghton, & Hayes, 2020; Eniola & Olorunleke, 2020; Wang et al., 2022) 31,32,33] to assess the knowledge of nurse interns' self-marketing skills. It included two sections: Section I: Data concerning the personal characteristics of the nurse interns. The data included age, sex, marital status, hospital name, and attendance at any training workshops. Section II consists of 30 items grouped under seven dimensions.

Dimensions	No. of items
Psychological safety	5
Professionalism	4
Communication	5
Personal Brand	5
Self-Marketing	3
Motivation	3
Resilience	5

For each question, a correct response was scored 1, and an incorrect zero. For each area of knowledge, the scores of the items were summed up and the total divided by the number of items, giving a mean score for the part. These scores were converted into percent scores. Knowledge was considered satisfactory if the percent score was 60% or more and unsatisfactory if less than 60%. The tool's validity was confirmed through face and content validation conducted by five nursing administration experts, who recommended revisions to enhance clarity and relevance. The instrument showed strong reliability, reflected by a Guttman split-half coefficient of 0.729.

Tool 2: Intern Nurse Students' Self-Marketing Skills Questionnaire: This tool aims to measure nurse interns' perceptions of their self-marketing skills. This questionnaire was adopted from [(Mostafa et al., 2023) [34] and is based on [(Whitmer, 2019; Godsey, Houghton, & Hayes, 2020) [35,31]. It includes 31 items divided into three dimensions.

Dimensions	No. of items	Examples
Personal attributes	10	Having Good verbal communication skills at work
Job Searching skills	11	Attending conferences and continuing education events in your specialty
Interviewing Skills	10	Expectations for the interviewer's possible questions

For each statement, the responses from "very good" to "very poor" were scored from 5 to 1. The scores of the items were summed up, and the total was divided by the number of items, giving a mean score for the area. These scores were converted into percent scores. A nurse intern's perception was considered high if the percent score was 65% or more, and low if less than 65%.

Tool 3: The self-esteem assessment scale:

It was adopted from (Mostafa et al., 2023) [22] and is based on (Sorensen, 2006) [23]. It is used to assess nurse interns' self-esteem levels, and it consists of 20 items divided into three domains.

Dimensions	No. of items	Examples
Positive personality	7	I am not easily embarrassed
Negative Personality	6	I haven't reached my full potential because of fear and the tendency to avoid challenges.
Social Personality	7	I try to avoid conflicts and confrontations.

Items were scored 5,4,3,2, and 1, where (5) represented agree strongly, (4) represented agree, (3) represented rather agree, (2) represented disagree, and (1) represented strongly disagree, respectively. For each dimension and the total scale, the scores of items were summed up, and the total was divided by the number of items, giving the mean score for the part. These scores were converted into percentage scores. Self-esteem was considered high if the percent score was 60% or more, and low if less than 60%. For the total scale, the scoring was reversed for the negative items.

Validity

The preliminary version of the tools was submitted to a panel of experts for face and content validation. This panel consisted of five professors and assistant professors specializing in nursing administration and mental health nursing from Ain Shams University. Each tool was evaluated on the basis of clarity, comprehensiveness, simplicity, understandability, and applicability. On the basis of the feedback from the expert panel, the researcher made several adjustments, including rephrasing certain statements and adding or removing words.

Ethical considerations:

Prior to conducting the study, the research protocol received approval from the Scientific Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Nursing at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt. The Faculty of Nursing/Ain Shams University adheres to the guidelines set forth by this committee. Additionally, ethical clearance was obtained from the Scientific Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Nursing at Modern Technology Information University under the code number NUR 24.04.275. The researcher met with the nurse interns to explain the study's purpose, objectives, and procedures for completing the various tools. The interns sought consent to participate and cooperate throughout the study. They were assured that all the information collected would remain confidential and be used solely for research purposes. Furthermore, the nurse interns were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to provide a reason.

Pilot Study:

A pilot study was carried out with 16 nurse interns, representing 10% of the total sample size. The purpose of this pilot study was to assess the clarity and suitability of the language used and to evaluate the practicality of the developed tools. Additionally, it helps

determine the average time required for each participant to complete the questionnaires and to identify any potential challenges that might arise during data collection. The time taken to complete the study tools ranged between 30 and 45 minutes. After the pilot study data were analyzed, no changes were deemed necessary, so the participants from the pilot study were included in the final study sample.

Field Work

The field work for this study involved several key phases: assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. As illustrated in Figure 1
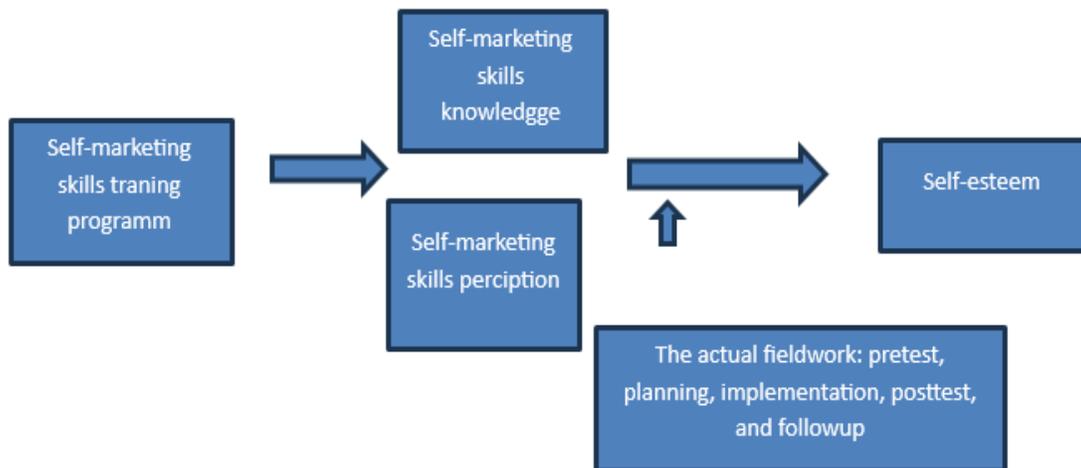

Figure (1): Field work map

Assessment phase

This phase took place from October to November 2024. The researcher began by explaining the purpose and details of the study to the nurse interns before distributing the data collection tools. Each intern completed the forms and returned them to the researcher, who reviewed them on the spot to ensure that they were fully completed and to address any questions or clarify any uncertainties from the participants.

The researcher then visited the designated study settings three days a week, from 9 AM to 1 PM and again from 5 PM to 7 PM. During these visits, the researcher met with the nurse interns to explain the study's purpose and procedures and invited them to take part. Those who provided written consent were given a questionnaire to evaluate their knowledge of self-marketing skills, their perceptions of these skills, and their self-esteem levels.

This process took place during both the morning and afternoon shifts in the nurse interns' training units. The researcher remained present throughout to address any questions and to ensure that there was no contamination of knowledge. Completing the questionnaires took approximately 30--45 minutes, with 11--14 nurse interns completing them each day.

The completed forms were collected by the researcher, who reviewed them for completeness. Each nurse intern completed three questionnaires at three different times: before the intervention (pre), immediately after (post), and during the follow-up. This entire data collection phase lasted for approximately one month, ending at the end of November 2024.

Implementation of the self-marketing skills program

The researcher chooses the precise moment to speak with participants who require any program-related explanations. To guarantee that the nurse interns understood the developed self-marketing skills, the researcher divided them into groups and began implementing the program.

The main goal of this training program is to equip nurse interns with the skills needed to adapt effectively to self-marketing. The teaching approaches include minilectures, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, real-life scenarios, role-playing, small group activities, and active participation in discussions. The educational materials utilized consisted of handouts, videos, and PowerPoint presentations.

The researcher talked with the nurse interns about their understanding of self-marketing techniques during each training session. Each nurse intern received a self-marketing skills training program booklet at the conclusion of the session. Additionally, the researcher conducted numerous sessions with the nursing interns to address performance-related concerns and address any queries they might have had following the execution of the self-marketing skills training program. Daily group meetings began at 11:00 am and ended at 1:00 pm. This stage lasted until the end of March 2025, which was two months.

Statistical analysis

Data entry and statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS version 26.0. Qualitative variables were summarized using frequencies and percentages. The chi-square test was applied to compare qualitative variables and to explore associations between two qualitative variables. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed, along with an analysis of variance for the overall regression models. Spearman's rank correlation was used to evaluate relationships among quantitative and ranked variables.

To assess the reliability of the developed tool, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to measure internal consistency. Statistical significance was defined as a p-value less than 0.05, whereas a p-value less than 0.001 indicated high statistical significance.

RESULTS

Table (1) indicates that the majority (90.6%) of the nurse interns were aged ≥22 years, more than half (58.1%-51.9%) were female, and the first arrangement was among their brothers. In addition, the majority of them were single (74.4%). Additionally, the majority (88.1%) of them did not attend training workshops.

Table (1): Personal characteristics of the studied nurse interns (n=160)

Personnel data	(N)	(%)
Age (year)		
<22	15	9.4
≥22	145	90.6
Mean±SD	21.9 ± 4.23	
Gender		
Male	67	41.9
Female	93	58.1
Marital Status		
Single	119	74.4
Married	41	25.6
Arrangement between brothers		
First	83	51.9
Average	51	31.9
Last	26	16.3
Place of Residence		
Rural	83	51.9
Urban	77	48.1
Attendance to any training workshops		
Yes	19	11.9
No	141	88.1

Table 2 shows that more than two-fifths (47.5%) of the nurse interns had satisfactory knowledge regarding the resilience dimension at the preintervention phase. The majority (96.9%) of the nurse interns had satisfactory knowledge regarding the resilience dimension in the postintervention phase. Additionally, the majority (91.3%) of the nurse interns had satisfactory knowledge regarding the self-marketing dimension at the follow-up intervention phase. Additionally, there were statistically significant enhancements at the postintervention phase, with some decreases at the follow-up phase. The differences were statistically significant (P<0.00).

Table (2): Nurses' knowledge level regarding their dimension of self-marketing throughout the program phases (n=160)

Self-Marketing Knowledge dimensions	Satisfactory knowledge (60%+)						P1		P2	
	Pre		Post		FU					
	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ2	P value	χ2	P value
Psychological safety	35	21.9	152	95	138	86.3	8.13	0.00**	7.14	0.00**
Professionalism	32	20	149	93.1	141	88.1	16.48	0.00**	12.42	0.00**
Communication	39	24.4	146	91.3	138	86.3	13.25	0.00**	8.22	0.00**
Personal Brand	28	17.5	142	88.8	132	82.5	20.34	0.00**	19.67	0.00**
Motivation	41	25.6	150	93.8	134	83.8	30.9	0.00**	42.8	0.00**
Self-Marketing	18	11.3	153	95.6	146	91.3	57.74	0.00**	55.64	0.00**
Resilience	76	47.5	155	96.9	144	90	7.62	0.00**	17.38	0.00**

(**) Highly statistically significant at P <0.01.

(χ2) Chi-square

Figure 2 illustrates that nurse interns' self-marketing was satisfactory (17.5%%) during the preintervention phase. However, self-marketing was satisfactory (93.8%) at postintervention. Additionally, self-marketing declined to 85.6%, which was satisfactory at the follow-up intervention.
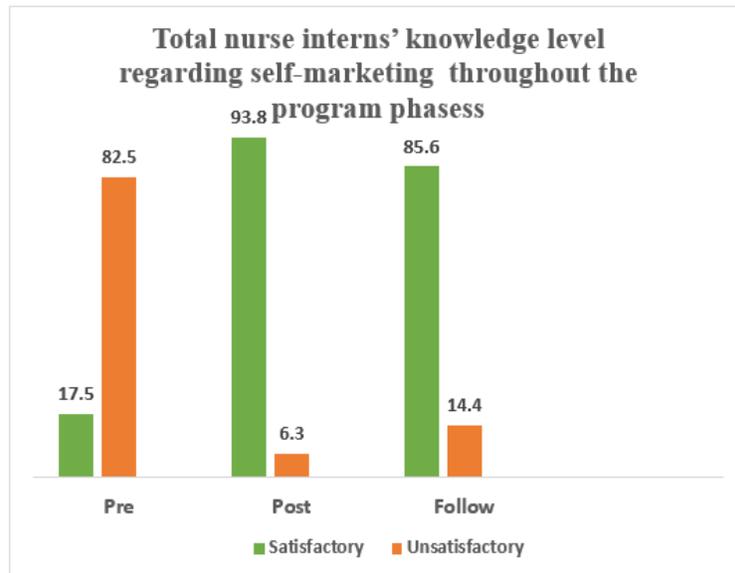

Figure 2: Total knowledge of self-marketing among nurse interns throughout the program phases (n=160)

Table 3 reveals that more than one-fifth (29.4%) of the nurse interns had high perceptions of self-marketing skills regarding the personal attributes dimension during the preintervention phase. The majority (98.1%- 93.1%) of the nurse interns had high perceptions of self-marketing skills in the interviewing skills dimension at the post-follow-up intervention phase.

Table (3): Nurses' interns' self-marketing skills dimensions as perceived throughout the program phases (n=160)

| Self-Marketing Skills Dimensions | High perception of self-marketing skills (65%+) | | | | | | P1 | | P2 | |
| | Pre | | Post | | Fu | | | | | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ2	P value	χ2	P value
Personal attributes	47	29.4	152	95	136	85	20.24	0.00**	11.74	0.00**
Job searching	31	19.4	149	93.1	141	88.1	7.46	0.00**	14.14	0.00**
Interviewing skills	27	16.9	157	98.1	149	93.1	29.5	0.00**	10.12	0.00**

(**) Highly statistically significant at P <0.01.

(χ2) Chi-square

Figure 3 shows that the perception of nurse interns' self-marketing was high (4.3%) during the preintervention phase. However, self-marketing perceptions become high (95%) at

postintervention. Additionally, self-marketing perceptions declined to 88.1% during the follow-up intervention.
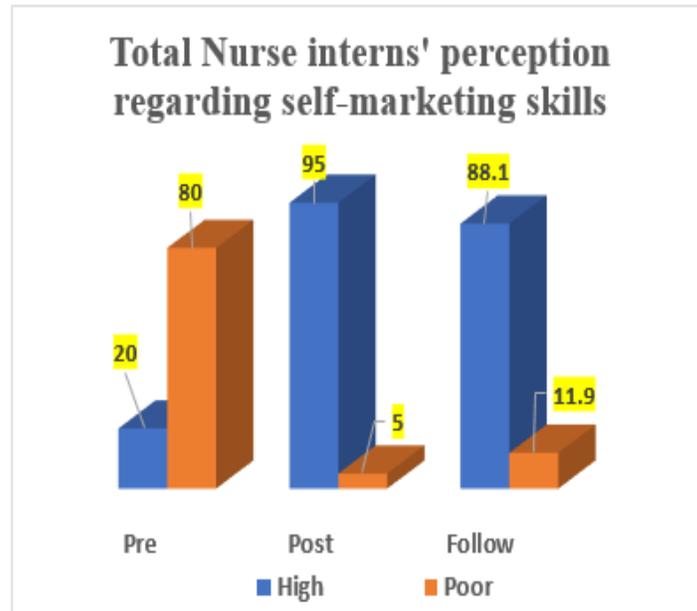

Figure 3: Total nurse interns' perceptions of self-marketing skills throughout the program phases (n=160)

Table 4 shows that the majority (85.6%) of the nurse interns had high levels of self-esteem regarding the negative personality dimension during the preintervention phase. The majority (92.5%) of the nurse interns had a high level of self-esteem regarding the social personality dimension at the post follow-up intervention phase. Additionally, there were statistically significant enhancements at the postintervention phase, with some decreases at the follow-up phase. The differences were statistically significant (P<0.00).

Table (4) Nurse interns' level of self-esteem dimensions throughout the program phases (n=160)

Self-Esteem dimensions	High level of self-esteem (60%+)						P1		P2	
	Pre		Post		FU					
	N	%	N	%	N	%	χ2	P value	χ2	P value
Positive personality	40	25	140	87.5	129	80.6	12.81	0.00**	6.76	0.00**
Negative personality	137	85.6	77	48.1	61	38.1	14.08	0.00**	7.99	0.00**
Social personality	61	38.1	148	92.5	136	85	17.8	0.00**	9.41	0.00**

(**) highly statistically significant at P <0.01.

(χ2) Chi-square

Figure 4 shows that nurse interns' self-esteem was high (25%) during the preintervention phase. Self-esteem reached a high level at 92.5% after the intervention. Additionally, self-esteem declined to 85% during the follow-up intervention.
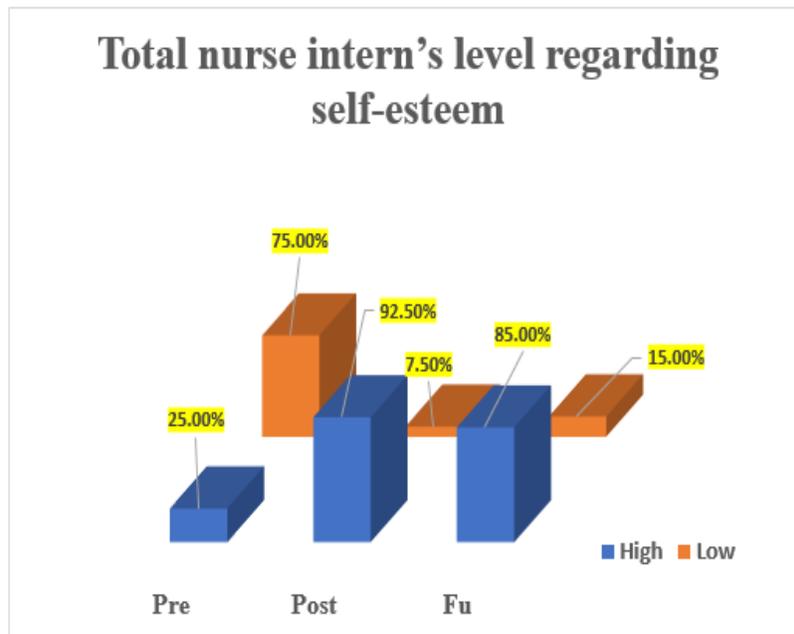
Figure (4): Total level of self-esteem among nurse interns throughout the program phases (n=160)

Table (5) shows that total nurse interns' knowledge of self-marketing skills, perception of self-marketing skills, and self-esteem levels were statistically significantly positively correlated (p=0.00).

Table (5): Correlation between total nurse interns' knowledge of self-marketing skills, perception of self-marketing skills, and self-esteem levels n= (160)

Intervention phases		Total self-marketing Knowledge		
		Pre	**Post**	**FU**
Total self-marketing perception	R	0.716	0.296	0.731
	P	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
Total self-esteem	R	0.608	0.711	0.676
	P	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
Intervention phases		**Total self-marketing perception**		
		Pre	**Post**	**Fu**
Total self-esteem	R	0.794	0.479	0.712
	P	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**

DISCUSSION

Marketing involves the processes and strategies used to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange services or offerings that benefit nurses, clients, partners, and society. It is a tool that influences how organizations perceive, attract, and retain stakeholders. In the nursing field, marketing highlights the role of nurses, their professionalism, and their contributions to national and global healthcare [36].

Nurses' knowledge regarding self-marketing

The present study revealed that nurses' knowledge was generally low during the preintervention phase. However, there were highly statistically significant improvements in nurse interns' knowledge regarding all dimensions except personal brands during the postintervention phase. Additionally, there were highly statistically significant enhancements in nurse interns' knowledge regarding all dimensions in the follow-up phase.

These results could be attributed to the fact that nursing interns may have had minimal formal training in self-marketing before the program. Most nursing curricula focus on clinical and technical skills, with little emphasis on career development skills such as networking, branding, and job search strategies. The intervention likely provided structured content, examples, and practice opportunities—helping interns connect theory to practice. A similar finding was reported in a study conducted in Egypt by Sarıköse & Çelik [37], which revealed that intervention group nurses achieved significantly higher scores three months post-implementation than did the control group.

Total Nurse interns' knowledge regarding self-marketing dimensions

The findings of the present study revealed that nurse interns' knowledge was generally low during the preintervention phase. In addition, a highly statistically significant improvement in nurse interns' knowledge during the post-program phase, and a highly statistically significant increase in nurse interns' knowledge during the follow-up phase. This could be due to self-marketing, such as presenting one's strengths, building a professional image, and networking, which are rarely integrated into traditional nursing education.

This study finding was inconsistent with that of a study conducted in Poland by Binda & Qadir [38], revealed that more than half of the nurses had a high level of knowledge of self-marketing.

Nurses' interns' self-marketing skills dimensions as perceived

The current study indicated that nurses' self-marketing skills were generally low during the preintervention period. Although some decreases were observed during the follow-up stages, statistically significant increases were observed during the postintervention phases. This may be due to structured guidance; interns may have learned how to present their strengths, experiences, and skills effectively during interviews, which improved their self-evaluations and perceptions of their abilities in this area. These results agree with those of a study conducted in Egypt by Mostafa et al. [34], which revealed that intern nurse students perceived nearly the same mean percentage across all dimensions of self-marketing skills.

Overall perceptions of self-marketing skills among interns

The current study indicated that nurses' perceptions of self-marketing skills were generally low during the preintervention period. However, there were statistically significant enhancements at the postintervention phase, with some decreases at the

follow-up phase. This could be because nurse interns usually have little formal exposure to self-marketing concepts (such as CV writing, networking, social media branding, or interview skills). Once interns receive structured training, workshops, or simulations, they gain confidence and awareness. This result was in line with the findings of the study conducted in Malaysia by Nasreen et al. [39], which revealed a high perception of the studied nurses regarding verbal communication.

Nurse interns' level of self-esteem dimensions

The level of self-esteem was generally low during the preintervention period. However, there were statistically significant enhancements in the postintervention and follow-up phases compared with the preintervention phase. This could be because nurse interns often transition directly from being students into demanding clinical environments. However, interventions (such as workshops, mentoring, simulation training, counseling, or skill-building sessions) provide knowledge, structured practice, and emotional support.

These results agree with a study conducted in Egypt by Elshazly et al. [40], and revealed a decrease in the external locus of control, alongside a positive correlation between improved self-esteem and greater internal locus of control, where participants felt more in control of their outcomes.

Total nurse interns' level of self-esteem

The current study indicated that nurse interns' level of self-esteem was generally low during the preintervention period. However, there were statistically significant improvements at the postintervention and follow-up phases compared with the preintervention phase. This may be because the interns were likely more familiar with their clinical roles and had adapted better to their environment, naturally increasing their self-esteem over time.

These results agree with a study conducted at the University of Nigeria by Okoronkwo [41], and revealed the total level of self-esteem for nurse interns.

Correlation between total nurse interns' knowledge of self-marketing skills, perception of self-marketing skills, and self-esteem levels through the intervention phases

The present investigation indicated that total nurse interns' knowledge of self-marketing skills, perception of self-marketing skills, and self-esteem levels were statistically significantly positively correlated. There was a significant improvement after conducting the self-marketing skills training program.

Potential expositions may be the self-marketing skills training program, helping interns clearly define their roles and responsibilities during the internship year, and accept their new working environment and understand expectations, which helped smooth the transition period. These results were consistent with a study conducted in Egypt by Mostafa et al. [34] and revealed a highly significant positive correlation between.

Implications for Nursing Practice

This research highlights the vital role of targeted training intervention in improving nurse interns' knowledge and perceptions of self-marketing, which in turn positively influences self-esteem. Based on these findings, we suggested that practical and theoretical implications. For the theoretical framework is nurse interns should be encouraged to ask for feedback and build mentorship relationships with senior nurses or instructors. Develop guidelines to create a professional and consistent image across resumes, social media, and networking. For practical implications, innovative teaching methods aimed at enhancing students' self-marketing abilities should be created. Collaborative committees that include student members to generate ideas and formulate strategies for improving self-marketing skills should be established. Provide students with opportunities to actively engage in developing initiatives and approaches that increase their self-esteem. To develop training workshops to increase nursing students' knowledge of self-marketing skills and their effects.

Further studies in this field could explore several promising directions. One potential area is examining the effect of self-marketing training programs on newly graduated staff nurses, which could provide insight into how structured interventions improve their employability and career readiness. Another important avenue involves studying the role of digital literacy in online self-marketing among future nurses. Additionally, researchers may investigate the relationship between self-confidence and self-marketing behavior among nursing students, as understanding this link could help educators design strategies that strengthen students' professional identity. Finally, exploring the barriers and opportunities to self-marketing among nurse interns would offer valuable information on the challenges they face during the transition from education to practice, as well as the support mechanisms that could enhance their professional growth.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the beginning, the self-reports of the participants were one of the study's shortcomings. Although confidentiality and anonymity have been granted to all participants, reaction bias is still a possibility. Furthermore, the study's sample size was small—it included only nursing interns from Ain Shams University hospitals in the Egyptian governorate of Cairo. This restricted how broadly the study findings could be applied.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study findings revealed that the nurse interns in the study setting had unsatisfactory knowledge of self-marketing, low perceptions of self-marketing skills, and low levels of self-esteem during the preintervention phase. The implementation of the self-marketing skills training program effectively improved their knowledge, perception of self-marketing skills, and level of self-esteem. Thus, the set research hypothesis can be accepted; the implementation of a self-marketing skills training program improved nurses' self-esteem.

Data availability

All the required data are included in the research.

Declarations

Ethical approval and consent to participate

Every procedure and method used in this investigation was completed in compliance with all applicable laws and rules. The Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing at Ain Shams University in Egypt gave its approval for the study [code number: NUR 24.04.275 [1] according to the committee's standards, Ain Shams University's Faculty of Nursing. The dean of Ain Shams University's faculty of nursing submitted a formal letter outlining the title and purpose of the study to the director of each setting to secure permission from the hospital administrator to collect data in the aforementioned settings. Nurse interns gave their informed consent to participate in the study after all study requirements were met. Nurses and nursing students were not exposed to any diagnostic or treatment, either directly or indirectly, during the trial.

Consent for publication

We confirm that all the authors have approved the manuscript for submission.

Participants' consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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