

Moot Court as an Innovative Teaching Methodology in Nursing Education: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract

Background: Nursing professionals require not only clinical competence but also legal awareness, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking skills. Traditional teaching strategies often fail to adequately address these competencies. Moot Court, a simulation-based pedagogy widely used in legal education, may offer an effective active-learning approach for nursing students. **Aim:** To evaluate the effectiveness of Moot Court as a teaching methodology in improving legal knowledge, critical thinking, and professional confidence among undergraduate nursing students. **Methods:** A quasi-experimental, one-group pre-test–post-test design was conducted among 60 undergraduate nursing students. Participants underwent a structured Moot Court–based teaching intervention focused on medico-legal and ethical issues in nursing practice. Legal knowledge, critical thinking disposition, and self-reported professional confidence were assessed before and after the intervention using validated tools. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that there is no significant difference in legal knowledge, critical thinking, or professional confidence scores among nursing students before and after the Moot Court intervention. **Results:** Post-intervention scores showed statistically significant improvement in legal knowledge ($p < 0.001$), critical thinking disposition ($p < 0.01$), and professional confidence ($p < 0.01$). Students reported enhanced engagement, better understanding of legal responsibilities, and improved communication skills. **Conclusion:** Moot Court is an effective and innovative teaching methodology that enhances legal competence, critical thinking, and professional readiness among nursing students. Its integration into nursing curricula may strengthen preparedness for ethical and legal challenges in clinical practice.

Keywords: Moot Court; nursing education; simulation-based learning; legal education; critical thinking

1. Introduction

Nursing education aims to prepare students for complex clinical environments that demand sound clinical judgment, ethical decision-making, and legal accountability. Nurses frequently encounter medico-legal issues related to patient rights, informed consent, negligence, documentation, and professional accountability. However, traditional lecture-based teaching often fails to adequately engage students or to translate theoretical legal concepts into practical understanding [1].

Active-learning strategies such as simulation, case-based learning, and role play have demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing clinical reasoning and professional competence in nursing education [2]. Moot Court, a pedagogical approach originating in legal education, involves simulated court proceedings in

which learners analyze cases, apply laws, present arguments, and defend professional actions. This experiential approach aligns with adult learning theory and the principles of experiential learning [3]. Although mock trials and courtroom simulations have been explored in medical and allied health education, their application in nursing education remains limited. This study evaluates the effectiveness of Moot Court as a teaching methodology for enhancing legal knowledge, critical thinking, and professional confidence among nursing students.

2. Methods

2.1 Study Design

A quasi-experimental, one-group pre-test–post-test design was adopted.

2.2 Participants

The study included 60 third-year undergraduate nursing students from a selected nursing college in Mumbai. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Students who had completed foundational courses in nursing ethics and administration were included.

2.3 Intervention: Moot Court Teaching Module

A structured Moot Court module was developed focusing on common medico-legal issues in nursing practice, including negligence, informed consent, patient rights, and documentation errors. The intervention consisted of the following components, conducted over two weeks (6 hours total):

- Orientation to legal principles and court procedures
- Case allocation based on real-life nursing scenarios
- Role assignment (nurse defendant, patient advocate, legal counsel, judge)
- Preparation of written arguments and evidence
- Conduct of the Moot Court simulation
- Faculty-led debriefing and reflective discussion

2.4 Data Collection Tools

- Legal Knowledge Questionnaire (self-developed, expert-validated)
- Critical Thinking Disposition Scale
- Professional Confidence Scale

2.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Paired t-tests were used to compare pre-test and post-test scores. A p-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional ethics committee, and written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

3. Results

A total of 60 third-year undergraduate nursing students participated in the study. Participant age ranged from 19 to 23 years and above, with the majority (56.7%) aged 21–22 years, 30.0% aged 19–20 years, and 13.3% aged 23 years or older. Female students predominated the sample (86.7%), while males accounted for 13.3%. All participants were enrolled in the third year of the B.Sc. Nursing program. Regarding prior exposure to legal topics, 36.7% reported previous exposure, whereas 63.3% had not encountered formal legal education in nursing prior to the study. These demographic characteristics suggest a predominantly young, female cohort with limited prior experience in the legal aspects of nursing practice (Figure 3).

Table 1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores Following the Moot Court Intervention

Outcome Variable	Pre-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Post-test Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Legal Knowledge Score	12.4 $\pm$ 3.1	18.9 $\pm$ 2.4	6.5	11.28	<0.001*
Critical Thinking Score	68.2 $\pm$ 6.5	75.6 $\pm$ 5.8	7.4	6.91	<0.01*
Professional Confidence Score	31.5 $\pm$ 4.2	36.8 $\pm$ 3.9	5.3	7.02	<0.01*

*Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ (paired t-test).

The impact of the Moot Court teaching methodology on nursing students' legal knowledge, critical thinking, and professional confidence was evaluated using pre-test and post-test measures. The mean legal knowledge score increased significantly from 12.4 ± 3.1 at baseline to 18.9 ± 2.4 post-intervention, a mean difference of 6.5 ($t = 11.28$, $p < 0.001$), indicating substantial improvement in students' understanding of medico-legal concepts. Critical thinking scores also showed significant enhancement, rising from 68.2 ± 6.5 pre-intervention to 75.6 ± 5.8 post-intervention, a mean difference of 7.4 ($t = 6.91$, $p < 0.01$), reflecting strengthened analytical and reasoning skills. Similarly, professional confidence improved from 31.5 ± 4.2 to 36.8 ± 3.9 , a mean difference of 5.3 ($t = 7.02$, $p < 0.01$), demonstrating that the intervention positively influenced students' perceived readiness to handle ethical and legal challenges in nursing practice (Figure 1). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for all three outcome measures. Collectively, these results suggest that the Moot Court methodology is an effective active-learning strategy for enhancing knowledge, critical thinking, and professional self-efficacy among nursing students.

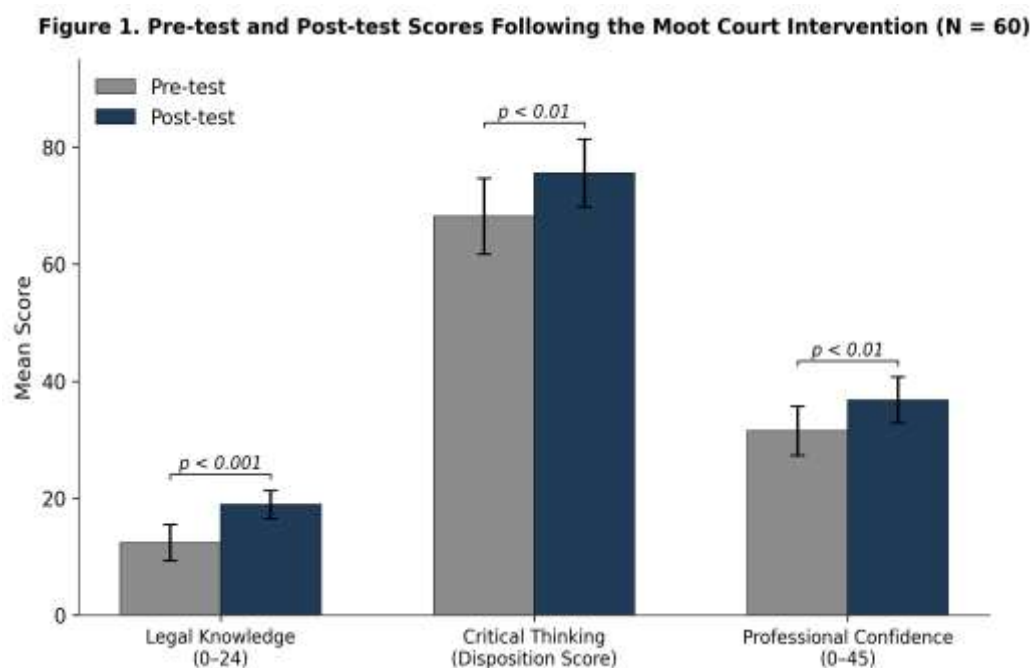


Figure 1. Pre-test and post-test scores following the Moot Court intervention (N = 60). Error bars represent standard deviation.

Following the Moot Court intervention, students provided feedback on the effectiveness and acceptability of this teaching methodology. A majority of participants (91.7%) agreed that the activity improved their understanding of legal responsibilities, while 6.6% remained neutral and 1.7% disagreed. Regarding enhancement of critical thinking and reasoning, 88.3% of students agreed, 8.4% were neutral, and 3.3% disagreed. Similarly, 86.7% of students indicated increased confidence in handling ethical dilemmas, with 10.0% neutral and 3.3% disagreeing. The interactive nature of the learning was highlighted, as 93.3% agreed that the session was engaging, 5.0% were neutral, and 1.7% disagreed. Finally, 90.0% of participants supported inclusion of Moot Court in the nursing curriculum, indicating strong acceptability and perceived educational value (Figure 2). Overall, the feedback indicates that the Moot Court methodology was well received, fostered engagement, and enhanced perceived competence in the legal and ethical aspects of nursing practice.

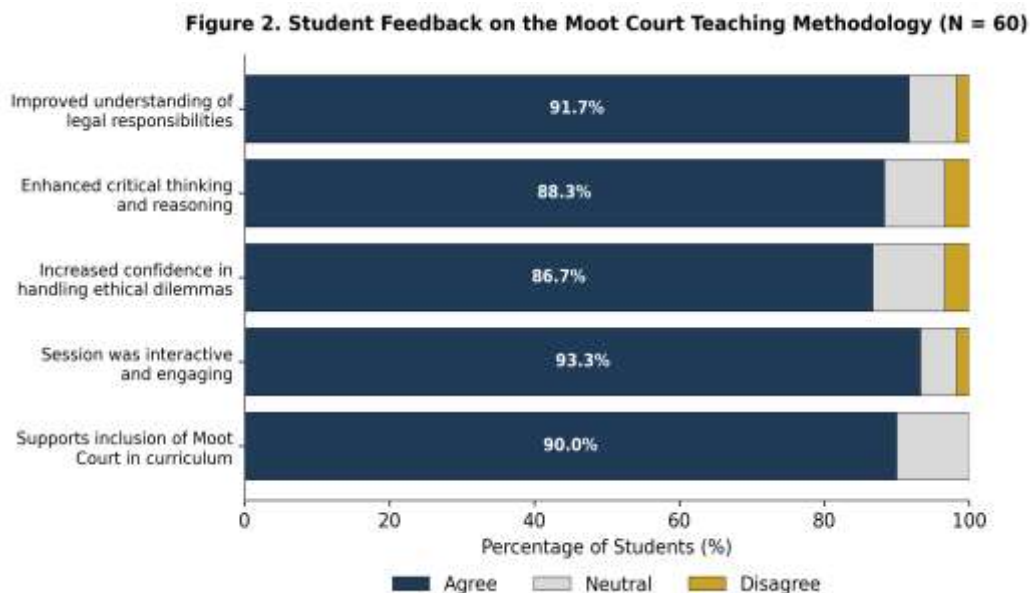


Figure 2. Student feedback on the Moot Court teaching methodology (N = 60).

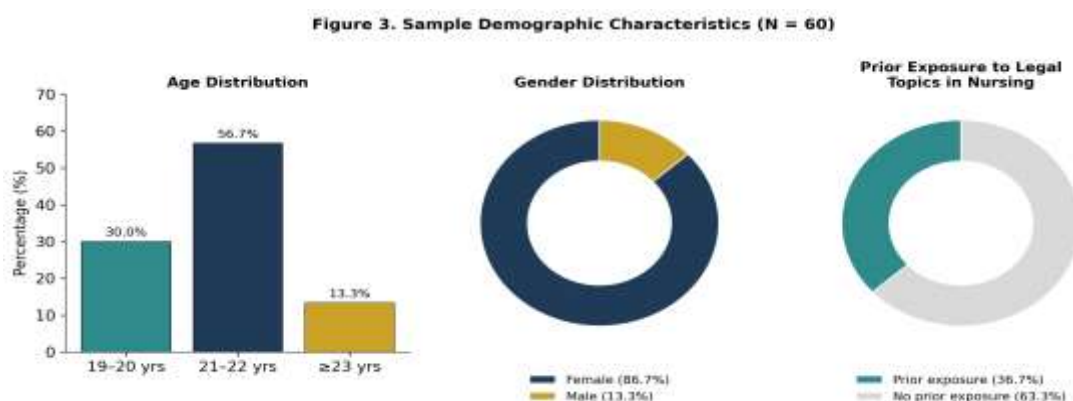


Figure 3. Sample demographic characteristics (N = 60).

Discussion

The findings indicate that Moot Court is an effective teaching methodology in nursing education. The significant improvement in legal knowledge supports previous evidence that experiential learning

enhances comprehension and retention of complex concepts [4]. The observed enhancement in critical thinking aligns with research demonstrating the benefits of simulation-based learning in nursing [5].

Moot Court uniquely bridges the gap between legal theory and nursing practice by contextualizing professional accountability within real-world scenarios. The interactive nature of the methodology fosters communication skills, teamwork, and ethical reflection, all of which are essential for safe nursing practice.

Limitations

The study was limited by the absence of a control group and a relatively small sample size. The findings are based on a single institutional setting, which limits generalizability. Future studies should employ randomized controlled designs and multi-center samples.

Implications for Nursing Education

Integrating Moot Court into nursing curricula can:

- Enhance legal literacy and ethical competence
- Improve critical thinking and communication skills
- Prepare students for medico-legal challenges
- Promote student engagement through active learning

Faculty development and interdisciplinary collaboration with legal professionals may further strengthen implementation.

Conclusion

Moot Court is an innovative, experiential teaching methodology that effectively enhances legal knowledge, critical thinking, and professional confidence among nursing students. Its incorporation into nursing education can contribute to the development of legally aware, ethically grounded, and professionally competent nurses.

References

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