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Determinants of achievement in national Saudi health specialties certifying examination

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Background: Certifying examinations are considered mandatory for ensuring graduates competency before embarking into their future career. The Saudi certifying examination is newly mandated for graduates of Saudi governmental universities. Graduates failure in passing the national certifying exams carries immense costs for nursing education programs as well as health care organization. Interventions should be developed to strengthen graduates' efforts for achieving certifying exam requirements. In doing so, efforts to explore perceived determinants of students' exam success would be considered important to direct nursing students' exam preparation.

Methods: A cross sectional study design was used to explore nursing students perceived determinants of achievement in National Saudi Health Specialties Certifying Examination at King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Jeddah. All senior nursing students who are allowed to sit for the exam were invited to participate in the study. Seventy-two items questionnaire was developed to explore determinants of certifying exam success. Study tools showed high reliability and content validity. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were carried out.

Results: A total of 188 students within an average age of 22.96 ± 1.12 years and mean cumulative grade point average of 3.44 ± 0.54 . Thinking skills had the highest agreement distribution among respondents (4.02 ± 0.81), followed by exam preparations (3.90 ± 0.62), readiness (3.72 ± 0.90), stress (3.70 ± 0.97), anxiety (3.70 ± 0.89) and perceived support (3.70 ± 0.69). General exam perception had the least mean agreement (3.54 ± 1.02).

Conclusion : The study identified the most and least perceived determinants of exam success among nursing students who were preparing for their first national certifying examination. The results demonstrated the need for nursing programs to provide both academic and non-academic support to nursing students for achieving success in certifying exams. It is hoped that current results could help faculty in their efforts to promote students' success and to enlighten future students of influential factors to their achievements in the certifying exam.

Key words: Certification exam, Nursing, Achievement

Biography

Hala Mohamed Bayoumy BSc, MSc, DSc is an Assistant Professor in King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences. She is an author of many research articles (18) published in reputed journals. She has presented papers in numerous international conferences. She is in the Editorial Board of International Journal of Nursing & Clinical Practices. She was Editor- for the special issue: Self Care Skills and Quality of Life of Patients - which was published under that Journal. She is also Reviewer for multiple journals and member of many academic bodies. Her research interest centers around advances in nursing education as well as exploring impact of different illness conditions, treatment modalities and nursing interventions.

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