Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Nursing Undergraduates in a University, Sri Lanka – A Pilot Study

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Background: Students are the key assets of any educational institute including universities. The students' performance plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates and is directly linked with social and economic development of any country. Nursing programs across the world use a variety of measures to determine the academic performance of nursing students including grade point average. Empirical studies have proven that numerous factors affected academic performance of nursing students.

Objectives: To determine academic and non-academic factors related to academic performance of nursing undergraduates in a selected university in Sri Lanka.

Methods: The secondary data include academic and non-academic data and the final grade point average of randomly selected 52 nursing graduates of department of nursing was included in this pilot study. Age, gender and religion were considered as non-academic factors while Z score in the General Certificate Examination Advanced Level (GCE A/L) which is the pre-admission qualification was considered as an academic factor. All data were retrieved from the student data base of the department/faculty. Administrative permission has been granted from the Head of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty.

Results: Majority of the students (71.2%) was female and all students were Sinhalese. The mean grade point average of female and male students were 2.88 (SD = 0.220) and 2.61 (SD = 0.204) respectively. Female students had a higher grade point averages than male students (P < 0.05). Pearson correlation analysis showed that final grade point average was positively correlated (P < 0.05) with gender (r = 0.483) while negatively correlated with age (r = -0.294) and Z score (r = -0.330). In regression analysis, only gender and Z score were found to be significantly associated with the final grade point average.

Conclusions: Nurse educators, administrators and policy makers may consider these variables in the admission and selection of nursing students.

Accreditation and its Relationship to the Performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination of Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines

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Background: The quality of nursing education in the Philippines was observed to be declining based on the decreasing national passing rate in the Nurse Licensure Examination. Quality assurance in the nursing programs offered by Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines is legitimately done through accreditation by government-recognized accrediting agencies.

Objectives: This study determined the relationship between accreditation and performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination. It looked into the significant relationship between level of accreditation and performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination, and it also determined the difference between the performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination of Higher Education Institutions with accredited and non-accredited Nursing Programs.

Methods: This is a descriptive correlation study that included 174 higher educational institutions with nursing programs in the Philippines categorized from outstanding, high, average, low, and very low performing schools.

Results: The results showed that Accredited Nursing Programs are located almost equally in the different regions except in Region Eight where there are not any accredited Nursing Programs. A majority of the 59 accredited Nursing Programs are level 2 and mostly accredited by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA). A Kendal r value of 0.314 probability level of 0.006 shows that performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination is dependent on the level of accreditation. The higher the level of accreditation, the higher the performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination. With a Kendal r value of 33.236 at probability level 0.001, showed that accrediting agency is independent to the performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination. Furthermore, with a Kendal value of 40.962 at probability level 0.000, it showed that performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination is significantly dependent on Accreditation.

Conclusion: The quality of and excellence in Nursing Education is reflected by the performance in the Nurse Licensure Examination; therefore, with the declining national passing rate in the Nurse Licensure Examination, the quality of Nursing Education in the Philippines is declining. Accreditation should be strengthened to improve quality of nursing education in the Philippines.

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