

Factors affecting Attrition Rate among Nursing Students College of Health Sciences, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Student attrition is a major concern of nursing college administrator's science application of university preparatory year, the attrition rate become very high so; The Aim of the Current Study is to assess factors affecting Attrition Rate among College of Health Sciences, Yanbu Campus, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia., The current study follow descriptive and correlative study Design. This study is conducted at College of Health Sciences, Yanbu Campus, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. Total proposed subjects were 300 students covering all levels of the nursing college, using convenience data collected according to participant willingness structured interview questionnaire had been developed by the researcher to collect data from the study subject. The tool includes 2 parts presented as followings: **Part one** include Socio demographic and academic data for students while **Part two** interview questionnaire sheet developed by the researchers after review of literatures composed of possible factors contributing to increase in attrition rate. Pilot study was carried out on 10% of nursing students who attended the classes to test the clarity and relevance of the tool .Data was collected duration three months from (September 2015 to December 2015)In conclusion, there are as false expectations of the curriculum content, image of nursing and academic workload, So the current study recommend , explanation session about curriculum content , requirements and commitment is imperative and recommended in the beginning of the first semester to alleviate the student's stressors and raise retention rate

Keywords: Saudisation, Nursing students, attrition, stressors

Introduction

The term Saudisation in the literature is defined as replacing foreign workforce in Saudi Arabia with suitable national workforce who has the required qualifications and skills⁽¹⁾. The Saudisation plan highlighted the economic and social risks of relying heavily on a foreign workforce, and stress the fact that history, glory and pride are made only by the national hands⁽¹⁾. Nursing is one of the largest occupations in Saudi Arabia and is a key focus for Saudisation. The Ministry of Health (MOH) determined that achieving the Saudisation's objective would require training nearly 13,000 Saudi nurses in 2012 an increase from 6,000 in 2007 ⁽²⁾.

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This target is partially achieved but many obstacles still remain, the challenges that may affect successful implementation and achieving Saudisation plan may include:

Lack of fully accredit nursing education program, low staff retention rate, poor work environment and negative perception of the nursing profession⁽³⁾. More ever the high attrition rate among nursing students ranked the highest of the obstacles that face the Saudisation of nursing career in Saudi Arabia especially with the noticeable growing of population rate which expected to reach 45 million by 2025⁽⁴⁾.

Attrition is defined as the discontinuation of an educational program before the students has successfully completed the requirements⁽⁵⁾. Students who leave the program may experience certain problems in many aspects of their life as personal, financial, social and economical⁽⁶⁾. However, leaving schools and changing the career specialty may reflect a positive action when students realize that the current career, which he joined to, is not suit his capabilities and will not meet his plan⁽⁶⁾.

Attrition measured by the number of students enrolled in first year of the program and do not complete the following or graduation year⁽⁷⁾.

Anticipation and calculation of attrition rate is very crucial for any academic organization and it will impact the university efficiency and resources allocation⁽⁸⁾

The persistent attrition of students will affect the health care of the community and it will be reflected as the failure to meet the requirements of nurses to care for the patients especially with the increasing in the population in the future⁽⁹⁾. With the increasing in the awareness of the demands for quality of health care , it is becoming more important to have , and train the qualified health professions, So , the attrition rate doesn't affect the university only but also it will affect the community⁽⁹⁾.

Many previous studies focused mainly on the remaining students who completed the program, although the focus on the withdrawer will help in giving the keys to solve this issue⁽¹⁰⁾.

Also in Saudi Arabia there is no previous studies which investigate either the attrition rate or the factors contributing to this attrition as an attempt to achieve the objective of Saudisation plan, So this study will be conducted to investigate the factors affecting attrition rate among nursing students in King Saud University.

The Aim

The Aim of the Current Study isto assess factors affecting Attrition Rate among College of Health Sciences, Yanbu Campus, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia.

Design:

The present study is descriptive and correlative study.

Setting:

This study was conducted at College of Health Sciences, Yanbu Campus, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia.

Subject:

Total proposed subjects were 300 students covering all levels of the nursing college, using convinces data collected according to participant willingness.

Tool for the data collection:

A structured interview questionnaire had been developed by the researcher to collect data from the study subject. The tool includes two parts presented as followings:

Part 1: Socio demographic and academic data for students include; age, marital status, family type, residence & transportation, means of transportation academic level of student enrollment, like's or dislike's as regards studied subjects, Attitudes of teaching staff towards the student & the place of clinical experience.

Part 2: interview questionnaire sheet developed by the researchers after review of literatures composed of possible factors contributing to increase in attrition rate as academic factors, and cultural factors

Methods**1. Administrative approval:**

Permission was obtained through an official letter to the director of College of Health Sciences, Yanbu Campus, and Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. To carry out the study, after explanation of the aim and methods of the study & process for data collection. The structures interview questioner was developed based on litterer review to collect needed information about the study subjects. Pilot study was carried out on 10% of nursing students who attended the classes to test the clarity and relevance of the tool. According to the results of pilot study, necessary modifications in the sheet were done. Based on the pilot; the meaning of some questions was vague for the students, so the research omitted it. In addition, some of questions were difficult in language presentation & modified to suite the student level & legalistic standards.

Nursing students consent was taken. The purpose of the study was explained to each nursing student before starting the interview to gain her confidence, cooperation and to alleviate her fear and anxiety. Data was collected during the period for duration three months (from September 2015 to December 2015)

Methods of data Analysis:

Statistical analysis: Data entry and statistical analysis were done using SPSS 14.0 statistical software package. Quality control was done at the stages of coding and data entry. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables, and means and standard deviations for quantitative variables. Qualitative categorical variables were compared using chi-square test. Statistical significance was considered at p-value <0.05.

Results

Part I. Socio-demographic and health characteristics and study habits.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of students in the studied subjects

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age (years):		
<20	89	29.6
20-	127	42.4
22+	84	28
Range	18-35	
Mean \pm SD	20.6 \pm 1.8	
Pre-college education:		
Public	200	66.7
Private	100	33.3
Marital status:		
Single	245	81.7
Engaged	21	7.0
Married	31	10.3
Divorced	3	1.0
Birth order:		
1	68	22.7
2-4	125	41.7
5+	107	35.6

Table 1 describes the socio-demographic characteristics of students in the studied subjects. Regarding age, more than two-fifth (42.4%) of the subjects was in the age group 20-21 years. The age ranged from 18-35, with mean \pm standard deviation 20.6 \pm 1.8 years. The majority of students (66.7%) had public pre-college education, and were single (81.7%), while about one-tenth (10.3%) were married.

Table: Study load as reported by students in the studied subjects.

Variables	Range / mean	
Study load:		
No. of subjects studied per day:		
Range	0-7	
Mean \pm SD	0.7 \pm 0.9	
No. of subjects studied per week:		
Range	0-15	
Mean \pm SD	1.9 \pm 2.2	
No. of study hours per week:		
Range	0.72	
Mean \pm SD	5.4 \pm 8.6	
Weekend study:	Frequency	%
Less than weekdays	181	60.3
As weekdays	30	10.0
More than weekdays	89	29.7
Planning study:		
No planning	127	42.3
Timetable	173	57.7
Study at college:		
Yes	95	31.7
No	205	68.3
Prefer study at:		
Home	280	93.3
College	20	6.7

Table 2 presents study load and preferences among students. On average, they reported studying less than one subject per day (0.6 ± 0.9), less than two subjects per week (1.9 ± 2.2), and about five hours study per week (5.4 ± 8.6 hours). The weekend study was mostly less than weekdays (60.3 %). More than half of the students planned study by use of timetable (57.7%). The majority preferred studying at home (93.3%)

Table 3: Students' opinions about instructors' attitudes

Attitudes of clinical training teachers as perceived by students among studied subjects.

Attitudes [@]	Agree		Uncertain		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Positive:						
Supportive	145	48.3	66	22.0	89	29.7
Encouraging	143	47.7	69	23.0	88	29.3
Careful about student learning	146	48.7	65	21.7	89	29.7
Careful about each individual student	119	39.7	88	29.3	93	31.0
Use constructive criticism	149	49.7	73	24.3	78	26.0
Careful about building student capacities	139	46.3	72	24.0	89	29.7
Negative:						
Sarcastic	89	29.7	69	23.0	142	47.3
Use destructive criticism	79	26.3	78	26.0	143	47.7
Humiliating	66	22.0	72	24.0	162	54.0
Arrogant	69	23.0	120	40.0	111	37.00

The perception of students of clinical training instructors' attitudes towards them is illustrated in Table (3). About half of the students agreed upon the positive attitudes of being supportive, encouraging, careful about student learning, & Use constructive criticism 48.7%, 47.7%, 48.7% and 49.7%, respectively. On the other hand, more than one-third of them disagreed upon the negative attitudes of being sarcastic (47.3%) and using destructive criticism (47.7%).

Table 4: Students' opinions about the clinical training process

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Knowledge about theoretical part of clinical training:		
Before practice	120	40.0
During practice	69	23.0
After practice	100	33.3
Any time	11	3.7
The plan of clinical practice is clearly explained in the beginning of practice	76	25.3
Allowed to be with your friends at the same group in clinical area	45	15.0
Assigned to a group work activity	112	37.4
Blamed by instructor in front of peers	34	11.3
Blamed by instructor in front of patients	33	11.0

Concerning students' opinions about the clinical training process, table () shows that more than third of them (40.0%) got knowledge about the theoretical part of clinical training before practice, & 33.3% of them was after practice. while (37.4%) mentioned that they were assigned to a group work activity, while only 15.0% that they were allowed to be with friends in the groups.

Table 5: Academic factors as sources of stress as perceived by students in the studied subjects

Academic Factors	Agree		Uncertain		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Increased study workload	150	50	99	33	51	17
Anticipation of graduation	22	7.3	120	40.0	158	52.7
Lower grade than anticipated	142	47.3	102	34	65	18.7
Change of Major (Career)	100	33.3	130	34.4	70	23.3
Vast differences between lectures at school and actual practice	44	14.7	185	61.7	71	23.6
Image of nursing (culture view)	185	61.7	44	14.7	71	23.6
Teaching contents are far from what I expected	195	65	60	20	45	15
Serious argument with instructor	4	1.4	4	1.4	261	89.7

Concerning stressors reported by students, table (5) demonstrates that the most frequent academic factors perceived as sources of stress were teaching contents far from what expected, image of nursing followed by increased study work load (65%, 61.7% and 50% respectively).

Discussion

For most fields it is easy to see and observe the critical consequences of students attrition, In which attrition for any type of educational program in that ,coast are incurred with respect to time , resources and tuition for students ,faculty , institutions and all member in the community ⁽¹¹⁾ . In the nursing profession, the lack of available and qualified professionals to meet the demands of health care in the part of the society continues to be a concern ⁽¹²⁾. Therefore, attention to this important issue should be given and the aspects of that issue should be well manipulated to find a solution.

The current study was conducted in order to assess factors affecting attrition rate among nursing students. The results of this study revealed that the participants were in the age group 20-21 years, the majority were had public pre- college education and single.

Regarding to the study load and study preference, the study indicate that the average students prefer to study only one subject per day and prefer to study at home. Regarding to the perception of the students of clinical instructor's attitude towards them , the results showed , about half of the students agreed to found them supportive , encouraging and careful about students learning and use of constructive criticism , and also disagreed upon the negative attitude of being sarcastic, It can be clarified by the fact that the clinical instructors were young age and the age gap between students and their instructors were narrow ,so they friendly communicate , usually speak the same language so the students accepted advices and criticism easily .

Concerning the opinions of the students about clinical training process, more than two thirds of students revealed that they gain the theoretical knowledge of clinical training before practice , near to quarter of them revealed that they gained it during practice and about one third revealed that they gained it after practices , the variation founded in this items can be clarified by the variety of teaching styles that the instructors used some of them prefer to prepare their students before practice , some prefer to discover it during practice and the rest prefer the students to conclude it after practice , but in the end all the required knowledge were gained in spite of the variation of the used teaching styles . Also about only one quarter of the students revealed that the plan of clinical practice is clearly explained in the beginning of practice, In this respect Chan, So & Fong ⁽¹³⁾who stated that , in most nursing curriculum , the nursing students spend approximately half of their education with the clinical areas , so it is noticed that they view the clinical practice as incredibly stressful , So the plan of clinical practice should be clearly explained to them ,and they must be involved in developing it to be familiar with coming situations .

Only a small percentage of the students were allowed to be with their friends in the same group in the clinical area in addition, they revealed that the instructors in front of both peers and patients blamed them.

Regarding to the stressors reported by the students about two thirds of them experienced the teaching contents which are far from their expectations as the major stressor for them , it may be justified by ,the students enrolled in the nursing program with certain expectations , and after they started they surprised and shocked with the actual situations which included numbers of teaching hours per day either clinical or theoretical and many required assignments also the style of teaching shifted from teacher center to student center from passive to active learning ,however , clear explanation of the curriculum contents , hours ,requirement and commitment become mandatory in the beginning of the study , This comes in line with Walcott ⁽¹⁴⁾ who stated that informative sessions about nursing curriculum , student's expectations , and their commitments is useful in alleviating the future stress that may face the newly nursing students in the early semester , Moreover , Kaiesr⁽¹⁵⁾ said that , giving an overview of the curriculum how committed the students should be for the all next semesters and stressed that nursing is different than any other courses will narrow the gap between the actual situations and the student's expectations .

The second stressors perceived by the students in the current study was the image and the culture view of nursing , it may clarified by the fact that nursing and nurses still considered as undesirable career in the Saudi society especially it required work in open setting and need to deal and communicate with different people from both sexes which is still rejected in Saudi Arabia , this comes in line with Anurage⁽¹⁶⁾who stated that , there is still a destructive opinion from the public toward nursing as a career and justify what he said by many problems including salary , changing nature of the job and work environment . On the other hand, there are many countries in Middle East as Bahrain and Jordan were satisfied with the image of nursing ⁽¹⁷⁾ .

Increased work load comes to be the third stressors as perceived by the nursing students in this study , this comes in line with Pulido , Augusto & Lopez ⁽¹⁸⁾who identified that the most common sources of stress perceived by students are related to academic workload , assignments , examinations and combing clinical work with academic work , In contrast Prymachik and Richards ⁽¹⁹⁾found that , stress in nursing students arises from combination of personal and extracurricular factors rather than from the educational program or its associated requirements .

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, attrition rate is high among College of Health Sciences, Yanbu Campus, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. Due to several factors perceived by the students during their academic life as false expectations of the curriculum content, image of nursing and academic workload, so explanation session about curriculum content, requirements, and commitment is imperative and recommended in the beginning of the first semester to alleviate the student's stressors and raise retention rate.

Limitations

This study is limited only to College of Health Sciences, Yanbu Campus, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. so generalization cannot be done. In addition, there is no available standardized tool to assess the causes of attrition

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