Perceived Sources and Types of Social Support and Academic Success Among Male Nursing, Social Work, and Occupational Therapy Students

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We transform.

Introduction

- Health care disparities continue to exist in the US (1)
- Gender diversity in nursing, social work, and occupational therapy provides collaborative quality care (2)
- The Institute of Medicine (3) report suggests reducing barriers is to transform the health educational system for a more diverse health care work force.

Background

- Males represent 11% of the US nursing workforce, social work (SW) is less than 10%, and 6% in occupational therapy (OT) (4) (5)
- Educational and social barriers for males in these predominate female professions (6)
- Social support is effective for managing stress and stability (7) (8).
- Educational barriers and lack of support can lead to high attrition rates (9-11)

Purpose of Study

- Guided by Tinto's Theory of Student Departure and Allport's Contact Theory
- This quantitative research study was to examine the relationship between perceived social support of family, peers, faculty and role model/mentors and academic success among male students in the three programs.

Research Questions

- Is perceived family, peer, faculty, and role model/mentor social support related to academic achievement/success?
- Are there any differences in the levels of support between male nursing, social work, and occupational therapy students?
- Are there differences in the importance of social support for family, peers, faculty, and role model/mentors among males in the three programs?

Methods

- A descriptive quantitative cross-sectional research study using a survey
- Convenience and snowball sampling
- Modified Student Social Support Scale (16)

Study Participants

- 127 male nursing, SW, and OT students
- Two four-year degree universities within the Midwest region
- Excluded from the study were RN-BSN students and graduate nursing and social work students
- Students age ranges 19-40, majority of students were Caucasian, single and GPA greater than 3.0
- 70% of the student received financial aid and 62% were first generation college students

Results

✅ **Supported:** Perceived social support and relationship between academic achievement/success: Significant correlation noted among family support and CGPA $(r(125) = .149, p = .04)$

Correlations of Social Support and CGPA

CGPA	r	p
CGPA	-------	
1. Mean Family Support	.149*	.04*
2.Mean Peer Support	.035	.37
3.Mean Faculty Support	-.137	.06
4.Mean Role Model/Mentor Support	-.018	.42
5.Mean Total Support	.32	.36

✅ **Supported:** Differences in importance of social support among the three programs: Significant difference on the importance of family support were noted $(F = 4.85, p = .01)$ among the three academic programs

Comparison of Importance of Social Support Among the Program Types

Level of Support	Nursing M(SD)	OT M(SD)	SW M(SD)	F	df	p	Post Hoc
Importance of Family Social support	2.31 (.36)	2.07 (.38)	2.33 (.48)	4.82	2	.01*	Nur-OT* Nur-SW OT-SW*
Importance of Family Support	**2.31(.36)**	**2.07 (.38)**	**2.33(.48)**	**4.82**	**2**	**.01***	**Nur-OT* Nur-SW SW-OT***

✅ Significant results related to demographics and levels of social support: Peer support and marital status (t = 2.00, df = 125, p = .04), Family support and first-generation college student (t = 3.21, df = 69.72, p = .00)

Demographic Comparisons Among Levels of Social Support

Levels of Support	Mean Score	SD	t	p
Mean Peer Support				
Marital Status			**2.00**	**.04***
Not Married	4.38	.88		
Married	3.99	.81		
Mean Family Support				
First Generation College Student			**3.57**	**.00***
No	4.97	.67		
Yes	4.42	1.08		

✅ Significance was noted among race and importance of peer social support (t = .-1.28, df = 125, p = .02)

Demographic Comparison and The Importance of Social Support

Importance of Social Support	Mean Score	SD	T	p
Mean Peer Support				
Race			**-1.28**	**.02***
Non-White	1.96	.51		
White	2.10	.42		

Discussion

- Specifically, male nursing students correlate family support and academic success
- Family emotional support promoted the student's commitment to their studies and student retention (8) (12)
- Male social work and occupational therapy identified male faculty and self as a source of support (13) (14).
- Significant differences were noted among males in the three programs on the importance of family support.
- Consistent with other studies, the family variable was higher among nursing and SW program types than OT. (13) (14).
- Previous studies, male nursing, SW, and OT students had a negative perceptions of faculty in the classroom and clinical/fieldwork sites that contributed to academic challenges and retention (13) (15)
- There are limited studies related to demographic information, social support, and males in the three programs.
- Demographics may play a role in the levels and importance of social support used.

Implications to Practice

- Family open forums regarding positive impact of males within these professions
- Faculty training of male student learning styles and various teaching modalities
- Further research using a larger sample size, further studying males in each program, and what is the current impact of males within these professions.

References

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