Title:
Predictors of Academic Performance of Nursing Students at a University in the Western Cape, South Africa

Felicity M. Daniels, PhD, MPH
School of Nursing, University of the Western Cape, South Africa, Cape Town, South Africa
Katlego D. Mthimunye, MSN
School of Nursing, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa

Session Title:
Research Poster Session 3
Slot (superslotted):
RSC PST 3: Sunday, 30 July 2017: 9:45 AM-10:15 AM
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Academic performance, Bachelor of Nursing programme and Predictors of success

References:


Abstract Summary:
A non-experimental quantitative research study and a cross-sectional predictive design was used to determine the predictive power of specifically selected cognitive and non-cognitive variables on the academic performance of second-year nursing students at a University in the Western Cape, South Africa. The cognitive predictor variables had the strongest predictive power.

Learning Activity:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<tr>
<td>The learner will be able to advise programme designers on the predictive power of the tested variables</td>
<td>The cognitive and non-cognitive variables will be described according to the South African Context. Findings on the predictive power of each variable on the performance of second year nursing students will be discussed</td>
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<td>The learner will be able to understand the implications the findings have for the recruitment and selection of students for the Bachelor of Nursing programme</td>
<td>The implications of the research findings for higher education in general and nursing education specifically will be described</td>
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Abstract Text:

Purpose:

The overall purpose of the study was to determine whether specifically selected predictor variables (cognitive, non-cognitive) influence academic performance of second-year nursing students at a University in the Western Cape, South Africa.

Methods:

A non-experimental quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional predictive design was applied. The selected sample (n=226) included all first-time enrolled Bachelor of Nursing students for the years 2012 – 2013 at a University of the Western Cape, South Africa. An all-inclusive sampling method was applied. Data were obtained from the online Student Administrative System Integrated (SASI) and recorded in the data collection check list designed for the study purpose. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 23.0 was used to sort and analyse the data. Descriptive analysis was done.

Description of variables

Cognitive variables:

- Grade 12 high school grade (admission points)

Grade 12 high school grade was calculated according to the university’s approved point system. These points are also referred to as the Student’s Admissions Points. The grade obtained for each high school subject is captured from the student’s official transcripts submitted on application to the university. The sum of the grades obtained for all high school subjects determines the student’s admission points. A student must achieve at least 27 admission points for acceptance to the higher education institution and a desired score of 30 or more points for admission to the Bachelor of Nursing programme.

- Previous nursing qualifications

This variable was designed to identify those students who entered the Bachelor of Nursing programme with previous nursing qualifications at certificate, diploma or degree level.

- National Benchmark Test

The student’s average score on the National Benchmark Test consisted of three components namely: academic literacy (AL), quantitative literacy (QL) and knowledge health science.

Non-cognitive variables:

- English as a second language

This non-cognitive variable is defined as the student’s home language or mother tongue as indicated on the application forms received by the university.

- Student’s place of residence
This variable is defined according to whether the student lived in or out of the university residence during their second-year registration on the Bachelor of Nursing programme.

**Ethics:** The study was approved by the university's Senate Research and Ethics Committees and permission to conduct study was granted by the university's Registrar and the Director of the School of Nursing.

**Results:**

The study found that the cognitive predictor variables, including Grade 12 high school grades; previous nursing qualifications and student's average score on the National Benchmark test, had the strongest predictive power in relation to student performance in comparison to the non-cognitive predictor variables which included English as a second language and the student's place of residence.

**Conclusion:** The study found that the grades which students achieved in grade 12 of high school and the National Benchmark Test, both referred to cognitive predictors, are able to predict a student's academic performance in the second year of a Bachelor of Nursing programme.