



NURSES' EXPERIENCE ON CONTINUOUS NURSING EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this qualitative study is to obtain nurses' experience on continuous nursing education. Descriptive phenomenological research design will be used to accomplish the purpose of this study, and these questions will be asked during the interview. The interviews were conducted for nurses who are employed as a registered nurses and midwives. Two registered nurses and three midwives were selected to be interviewed in one of the healthcare organization using Non-probability convenience sampling. From findings it is obvious that Continuous Nursing Education is not their priority due to the various reasons such as financial barriers, time constraints, lack of family support and lack of institutional support and lack of support from higher education providers. These findings have revealed the various aspects that affect nurses physically, psychologically and the environmental aspects that contributes as barriers to nurses continuing their education. It can be concluded that, in this research, the barriers were holistically approached.

KEYWORDS : Nurses, continuing nursing education, qualitative study, holistic nursing.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of Continuous nursing education (CNE) for nurses has been increasingly emphasized in nursing literatures since the beginning of the nursing profession (Lorraine, Gallagher, 2006). Continuous professional education is imperative in facilitating the professionalization of nursing in Malaysia (Mei, 2011). In 2008, the Malaysian Nurses Board require all nurses to participate in a minimum number of hours of education and training each year, mandating that health care is dynamic and that nurses must update their knowledge and skills to keep pace with changes.

The academia world of nursing profession had evolved into several stage of qualification offerings such as Diploma/ Advance Diploma, Degree/Bachelor, Master and Doctor of Philosophy to fulfill the requirement by the Ministry of Health, Malaysia Qualification Assurance and Ministry of Higher Education (Sowtali, 2018). Nurses roles now expands and not only limited to clinical setting but require various expertise in academic, research and top division management of the Nursing profession (Sowtali, SN, 2018).

The CNE sessions and training are not just for career enhancement, but it is also anticipated to bridge the gap between academic and clinical, aiming and seeking to map out the future of the nursing profession into the next decade as a way to prepare for and meet the ever- evolving healthcare changes (Future of Nursing 2020-2030).

In spite of plenty of CNE offers, many nurses do not participate in these activities (Wellings, Gendek, & Gallagher, 2017).

Numerous barriers were mentioned in various literatures, including lack of institutional support, time constraints, financial considerations and family commitments (Eslamian, Moeini, & Soleimani, 2015; Marzuki, Hassan, Wichaikhum, & Nantsupawat, 2012).

The debate about bad experiences of nurses on continuing nursing education hinders all effort to improve, sustain, and develop clinical practice. Negative experiences are often used as reason for nurses not wanting to continue their education, or as a reason not to attend educational activities (Chappell, 2017). Hence, difficulties in measuring outcomes of nursing education are often experienced. (Gil-Lacruz, Gracia-Pérez, & Gil-Lacruz, 2019). The drawback of nurses' bad experiences is correlated with the findings of Marzuki et al (2012), stating that continuing education does not improve knowledge base and skill level, neither can change behaviors and attitudes to expand, maintain, and improve clinical practice. All these unpleasant experiences by nurses, contributes to negative concerns and converted into a setback far from the primary purpose of CNE.

The primary goal of this qualitative study is to obtain nurses' experience on continuous nursing education. Descriptive phenomenological research design will be used to accomplish the purpose of this study, and these questions will be asked during the interview.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was set in one of the healthcare organization in the Middle East. The interviews were conducted for Malaysian

nurses who are employed as a registered nurses and midwives. Two registered nurses and three midwives was selected to be interviewed in one of the healthcare organization located in the Middle East using Non-probability convenience sampling. The inclusion criteria for this sample are; they must be Malaysian registered nurses with at least 1 year working experience in the Middle East. The sample's participation in this study is based on voluntary, basic and implied consent. Nurses who are on maternity leave, study leave, unpaid leave, or long medical leave was excluded from this study. Audio recording was used in this study because it will be more appropriate to continuously capture the interview session without interruptions. A thematic data analysis will be proposed. Data is proposed to be analyzed by themes and highly inductive themes emerge from data.

Ethical consideration

Approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Nursing-Lincoln University College. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study in advance, so that they know what to expect. They were informed that their participation is voluntary and refusal to participate in the research will not affect their working performance or education and they may withdraw from the research at any time for any reason. Participant's involvement is considered anonymous and the data kept confidential.

RESULTS

Based on questions

1. Why do nurses experience financial barriers for continuing education?	
Respondent 1	Higher salary Financial liability
Respondent 2	Higher salary Dependence for spouse and children
Respondent 3	Low salary High cost
Respondent 4	Low income Financial crisis
Respondent 5	Salary wasn't enough Financial commitments
2. Why do nurses experience times constraints for continuing education?	
Respondent 1	Short staffing, work load and burn out Working in is extremely busy
Respondent 2	Workload lead to burnout Required to work extra shift
Respondent 3	Irregular working hours Working in shift duties, inability to juggle time
Respondent 4	Busy task in ward or department Time consuming and tiredness with working task
Respondent 5	Focus in my job There wasn't any staff coverage
3. Why do nurses experience the lack of family support for continuing education?	
Respondent 1	Family do not understand the importance for a nurses to update his or her knowledge about their job
Respondent 2	Lack of understanding with regard to the important of continuing medical education
Respondent 3	Household such as, cleaning, cooking
Respondent 4	Helping my family first
Respondent 5	Household such as, cleaning, cooking
4. Why do nurses experience the lack of the institutional support for continuing education?	
Respondent 1	Not oblige to send the staff for CNE
Respondent 2	Lack of opportunity or lack of fair access to attend CNE
Respondent 3	Sponsorship be bounded for extra years

Respondent 4	Not willing to approve any of the further education
Respondent 5	Not providing study leaves
5. How the higher education does provided support for nurses for continuing education?	
Respondent 1	Allow nurses to use study leaves Collaborate with medical sales representative for sponsor to attend CNE Provide healthy work environment by improving job satisfaction
Respondent 2	Organizing more in house CNE Collaboration with hospital management to allowed nurses for apply study leave
Respondent 3	Offering sponsorship Offering continuing medical education at the lower cost Mode of education and also flexible time table Easier payment schedule

Respondent 4 Pay my fees for the education
Respondent 5 Support on payment plans Collaborating with other institution for giving our sponsorship

DISCUSSION

Lack of family support

Respondents said "family do not understand the importance for nurses to update his or her knowledge about their job". According to Aceves et al., (2020) and Brown et al., (2014) there are different and sometimes unique way by which students learn and these affect their family relationships

Time Constraints

The nurses' experience on time constraints for continuing education was explored among 5 respondents. Respondents said "short staffing, work load and burn out" were experienced. According to Gonzales et al, (2017) nursing shortages and low staffing ratios are associated with unmet patient needs and negative nurse-sensitive outcomes, such as mortality, failure to rescue, cardiac arrest, patient falls, pressure injuries, nosocomial infections, and readmission rates. As a result, a shortage of nurses leads to a negative impact on the care provided to patients. That is why it is difficult to request for a continuous education as experienced by hospital nurses.

Higher education provider support

Respondents said that the higher education provider should schedule the timetable when "nurses are using study leaves". Eslamian et al., (2015) and May & Witherspoon, (2019) both agreed that in order to avoid stress and anxiety, which many working students experience at some point of their studies, it is important to take study leave. However, when students are working and attending schools part-time the results can be good or bad depending on his or her life situation. So it is sometimes best to withdraw from part time work and get a sponsor for education to have undivided attention with studying.

Institutional support

Nurses' role can be extended through continuous nursing education, which required their institutional support such as allowing their staff to attend CNE even though the department is busy they should maintaining and balancing their priority. Apart from that, the institution should support their staff by providing study leave and sponsorship so that their staff is more eager and committed in advancing their professional career. Moreover, the institution should act more fairly to their staff by allowing those who want to continue their study not depending on the seniority list, which can lead to lack of opportunity to attend CNE.

Financial barriers

The socio-economic financial status play important role

continuing education (Gazzaz, 2009). In some societies in the Middle East, people will get marry at the earlier and get pregnant soon thus requires more spending and financial debt (Mokdad et al., 2016). This is a big barrier for adults specially women very often who wants to pay for their education but needs to prioritize spending money for their families instead to their tuition fees.

Based on their interviews, it is obvious that Continuous Nursing Education is not their priority due to the various reasons such as financial barriers, time constraints, lack of family support and lack of institutional support and lack of support from higher education providers. These findings have revealed the various aspects that affects nurses physically, psychologically and the environmental aspects that contributes as barriers to nurses continuing their education. It can be concluded that, in this research, the barriers were holistically approached.

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