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The Relationship Between Pre-Licensure Employment and Student Nurse Self-Efficacy

Khristina L. Grimm, PhD, RN-BC

Abstract

Lack of self-efficacy in nursing practice contributes to high levels of stress as new nurses enter the workforce, which causes turnover during their first year of practice. Little is known about how the type and amount of pre-licensure employment affects the self-efficacy in nursing practice of the student nurse.

Problem

The **transition to practice** in nursing is **difficult** for newly licensed nurses.

Newly licensed nurses voice concern over **feeling unprepared** for the reality of nursing practice.

Healthcare experiences **high turnover rates** among newly licensed nurses.

Projected 16% **increased need** for nurses over the next decade.

Healthcare leaders seek interventions to increase retention and improve **self-efficacy in nursing practice**.

Although many student nurses are **employed** during their preparation, little is known how the **type and amount of pre-licensure employment** effects the **self-efficacy in nursing practice**.

Purpose

Guided by Bandura's social cognitive theory, the purpose of this cross-sectional survey study was to examine the relationship between **type and amount of pre-licensure employment** and **self-efficacy in nursing practice** of student nurses' in their final semester of college.

Relevant Literature

Bandura's **social cognitive theory** posits that self-efficacy shares a bi-directional relationship with performance accomplishment and vicarious experience (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1999).

Positive modeling results in the acquisition of behavior patterns that result in favorable performance and **self-efficacy** (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1999).

Student nurses believe they have the requisite nursing knowledge needed to begin their practice. However, they **do not feel confident and competent** in their nursing skills and abilities (Casey et al., 2011; Chappy et al., 2010; Guner, 2014; Woods et al., 2015).

Student nurses believe increased clinical time, smaller class sizes, increased technical skill experience, and experiential experience would improve **readiness for practice** (Casey et al., 2011; Chappy et al., 2014; Woods et al., 2015).

Transition scores were significantly higher for nurses who completed **pre-licensure employment** than those who did not complete pre-licensure employment (Phillips et al., 2013).

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the relationship between the type of pre-licensure work experience and self-efficacy of student nurses?

RQ2: What is the relationship between the amount of pre-licensure work experience and self-efficacy of student nurses ?

RQ3: What is the relationship between the type of pre-licensure work experience, amount of pre-licensure work experience, and self-efficacy of student nurses?

RQ4: What combination of type of pre-licensure work experience and amount of pre-licensure work experience best predicts positive self-efficacy of student nurses ?

Procedures

Participants were recruited from 5 nursing schools in southwest Michigan.

A convenience sample of 277 senior nursing students yielded a 49.8% response rate as 138 surveys were returned.

Participants (92.8%) worked an average of 24.7 hours a week (SD = 12.94; range = 2–90 hours a week) during the past year with 81.9% reported having healthcare experience.

Data were collected using an adapted version of The Casey-Fink Readiness for Practice Survey© .

- Section I: Demographic data related to **type and amount of work experience** completed in the past year.
- Section II: **Self-efficacy in managing the patient care assignment**.
- Section III: **Self-efficacy in nursing practice**.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics provided the means, standard deviations, and range scores for each of the variables.

Independent samples t-test, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis were conducted to evaluate the research questions.

Findings

RQ1 – RQ3: No significant correlations existed.

RQ4: Model did not predict self-efficacy.

Additional analysis: was completed using data collected in the second section of the Casey-Fink Readiness for Practice Survey measuring self-efficacy in managing the patient care assignment of 2, 3, and 4 patients.

Analysis revealed healthcare experience was the best predictor of positive self-efficacy in managing a patient care assignment of 3 patients ($F = 4.60, p = .01$) and 4 ($F = 3.42, p = .04$).

Limitations

The results may have been limited in generalizability as the participants were recruited using a convenience sample of senior nursing students in southwest Michigan.

Although bachelor of nursing students were included for recruitment, the number who participated from the bachelor of nursing program was small (8%).

Conclusions

Findings from this study revealed no significant relationships exist between type and amount of pre-licensure work experience and self-efficacy in nursing students in their final semester of college.

Studies have found self-reported self-efficacy in nursing skills, such as delegation of task, communication with patients, and use of evidence based practice, is generally high in all nursing students (Karabacak et al., 2013).

The presence of healthcare experience does predict positive self-efficacy in managing a patient care assignment of three and four patients.

Studies report observation of expert role models in the clinical setting increases self-confidence of nursing students (Chesser-Smyth & Long, 2013; Franklin et al., 2015).

Social Change Implications

The need for RNs is anticipated to increase by 16%. Thus, it is imperative new RNs feel ready for practice. We must ensure nursing students are provided with opportunity to increase their confidence in their nursing skills and ability. Results of this study support changes in the structure of clinical experiences to provide increased opportunity for students to receive modeling from experienced nurses and apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills to a larger patient assignment prior to program completion.

Dr. Eileen Fowles, Committee Chairperson, Dr. Leslie Hussey, Committee Member, and Dr. Mattie Burton, University Reviewer