

ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อความสำเร็จในการฝึกปฏิบัติงานในคลินิกครั้งแรก
ของนักศึกษาพยาบาลยุคใหม่: การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ

Factors Affecting the Success of Generation Z Nursing Students
During Their First Clinical Placement: A Qualitative Study

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อความสำเร็จในการฝึกปฏิบัติงานครั้งแรกของนักศึกษาพยาบาลยุคใหม่ ผู้ให้ข้อมูลหลัก คือ นักศึกษาพยาบาลศาสตรบัณฑิต ชั้นปีที่ 2 วิทยาลัยพยาบาลบรมราชชนนี เชียงใหม่ จำนวน 24 คน ประกอบด้วยหญิง 20 คนและชาย 4 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล คือ แบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างเกี่ยวกับประสบการณ์การฝึกปฏิบัติงานครั้งแรก วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยการวิเคราะห์แก่นสาร

ผลการวิเคราะห์แก่นสารพบว่า ปัจจัยที่มีผลความสำเร็จของนักศึกษาพยาบาลยุคใหม่ในการฝึกปฏิบัติงานครั้งแรก ประกอบด้วย 3 ประเด็นหลัก ได้แก่ 1) การมีความหวังและมองโลกในแง่ดี 2) ได้รับการสนับสนุนด้านจิตใจและจิตวิญญาณจากบุคคลใกล้ชิด 3) และการได้รับการยอมรับ จากผลการศึกษาดังกล่าวสถานศึกษาพยาบาลและแหล่งฝึกปฏิบัติมีความจำเป็นอย่างยิ่งที่จะต้องส่งเสริมสภาพแวดล้อมทางคลินิกที่สำคัญสำหรับนักศึกษาพยาบาลเพื่อส่งเสริมประสบการณ์และความสำเร็จการฝึกปฏิบัติของนักศึกษา รวมถึงการหล่อหลอมให้นักศึกษาก้าวไปสู่การเป็นพยาบาลวิชาชีพในอนาคต

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Abstract

The objective of this qualitative study was to explore factors related to factors affecting the success of generation Z nursing students during their first clinical placement. The key informants were undergraduate second-year nursing students at Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chiang Mai, comprising 20 females and 4 males. The research instrument was a semi-structured interview regarding the experiences and views on clinical placements of generation Z nursing students during their first clinical placement. The data were analyzed by thematic analysis.

The results from thematic analysis showed that factors affecting the success of generation Z nursing students during their first clinical placement included three themes: 1) being hopeful and self-optimistic; 2) receiving mental and spiritual support from surrounding people; and 3) experiencing trustworthy. The findings demonstrate that it is imperative for nursing schools and clinical placements to provide nursing students with a positive and supportive environment in which to study and gain experience. This will enhance their academic success and enable them to become registered nurses in the future.

Keywords: Factors Affecting the Success, Generation Z Nursing Students, First-Time Nursing Practice, Clinical Environment, Qualitative Research

Introduction

Studies have found that there is a significant turnover rate in the nursing profession and that there are serious nurse shortages worldwide (Marć, Bartosiewicz, Burzyńska, Chmiel, & Januszewicz, 2019). The World Health Organization identified that there was a shortage globally of 5.9 million (World Health Organization, 2020). In many countries, the response has been a drive to increase recruitment to nursing schools. It is important to ensure that students have high-quality learning experiences that provide practical application of knowledge, therefore preparing them for the real world of nursing practice (Torbjørnsen, Hessevaagbakke, Grov, & Bjørnnes, 2021). In the UK, Willis's report in 2015 identified the need to improve the way that student nurses learn within the clinical practice environment in hospital and community practice. In order to improve nursing education as well as decrease the high turnover rate of registered nurses, the report recommends better management of the way graduates transition

from nursing school to practice (Lobo, Paul, & Crozier, 2021). Therefore, the profession has to be mindful of the need to support nursing students so that they can successfully graduate and build up nursing numbers. Russ, Whiteing, and Aggar (2023) conducted an integrative review that identified that support in clinical placements was a key component of students successfully completing their degree and entering the workplace.

Today, the typical undergraduate nursing student is a member of Generation Z nurses, being the first generation to grow up without experiencing a period before the internet, may be classified as digital natives who extensively utilize and engage with technology throughout their day (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018). Members of this generation range in age from early to mid-20s, having been born between the turn of the millennium (1995–2001) and the middle of the 2010s (2012–2018) (Allen, 2021). Schmitt and Lancaster (2019) identified traits that may need to be addressed in nursing practice for this generation of learners, including a short attention span and an underdeveloped ability to communicate face-to-face with patients and others. Nursing practice requires face-to-face social interaction and soft communication skills. Although nursing students come from different generations, the clinical practicum remains the central component of nursing education (Lobo, Paul, & Crozier, 2021).

Students cannot apply what they have learned in the classroom without first gaining hands-on experience in a clinical setting (Hashemiparast, Negarandeh, & Theofanidis, 2019). Additionally, analysis and critical reflection on nursing students' clinical experiences will make explicit the areas in which they need more knowledge and experience (Lobo, Paul, & Crozier, 2021). Those experiences in clinical practice play an important role in developing nursing students' learning, so clinical experience provides students with opportunities to practice the theory they have learned outside the practice setting and helps them develop a professional identity (Brown et al., 2021). Clinical placement can enhance the student's engagement in a clinical area and increase their ability to apply clinical reasoning to the situation. Furthermore, nursing students develop their cognitive ability as well as psychomotor skills (Gaberson, Oermann, & Shellenbarger, 2015). through 'hands-on' approaches to caring. To enhance the clinical experience for nursing students, it is necessary to provide students with appropriate support and supervision in the clinical setting (Lobo, Paul, & Crozier, 2021).

From this point of view, the clinical placement provides the possibility for the nursing student to be able to apply theories to practice, provide patient care in a real setting, optimize

communication with patients and families, and develop critical thinking and decision-making skills (Lobo, Paul, & Crozier, 2021). This, in turn, creates opportunities to develop a professional identity (Schmitt & Lancaster, 2019). However, there are many and varied reasons why students leave or stay in nursing, but among them is the exposure to clinical skills development in the real-world healthcare environment (Lobo, Paul, & Crozier, 2021). Our aim in this study was to identify Generation Z student nurses' perceptions of facilitators of success during their first clinical placement. To date, this topic has been little studied in Thailand.

Objective

This qualitative descriptive study aimed to explore factors related to factors affecting the success of generation Z nursing students during their first clinical placement.

Conceptual Framework

The study was based on the global assumptions of interpretivism by emphasizing individuals' subjective experiences of the external world and the ontological belief that reality is socially constructed (Creswell, 2008). It was therefore important to explore the subjective experiences of individual students through interviews and, by doing so, create new knowledge and concepts (Cresswell, 2008). Understanding Generation Z and the challenge of one-on-one interviews made the choice of focus groups a more suitable method to gather experiences. The goal was to learn more about the experiences of nursing students based on the following assumptions: (a) there are multiple social realities because people have different experiences; (b) personal, interactive data collection is the best way to learn.

Methods

Population and Sample

The setting was a nursing college in northern Thailand. The homeroom teacher provided a list of volunteers, and the principal investigator (PI) subsequently contacted prospective participants to discuss the study in their class. It is thought that choosing individuals who are similar to one another in terms of their experiences, viewpoints, and traits will encourage open dialogue and engagement (Gray, 2017). Second-year students who were progressing as expected in the year and who were due to go to their first clinical placement were eligible to join the

study. The researchers selected second-year nursing students because they had no previous clinical placement experience. Volunteers who satisfied the inclusion criteria were asked to participate in the study focus groups after their clinical placement had concluded.

Measurement

A qualitative descriptive approach was conducted by using focus group discussions (FGDs) to gather data. This is a practical method of choice when a straightforward description of the phenomenon is required without concentrating on the interpretation of the meaning of what participants say. Focus groups are a very efficient way to elicit opinions and gain a rapid and early understanding of an area (Morse & Niehaus, 2016).

Validity and Reliability of Measurement

To establish whether the findings are trustworthy, credibility and verification must be examined (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Through the use of member checking, we were able to verify the accounts of students within each focus group. Individual participants were asked if they recognized the findings as a reasonable account of the discussion that took place. The team also used peer debriefing to clarify disputes around the analysis of findings. Each theme was discussed in the group to reach consensus among the researchers. Thus, this study's credibility was established (Holloway & Galvin, 2016).

Data Collection

There were 24 participants who were divided into four groups of six. Each group took part in one focus group discussion (FGD). A research assistant acted as a note-taker, and all groups agreed to have audio recorded. The research team carefully developed the discussion's guiding questions using pertinent literature (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013).

Data Analysis

The researcher verbatim transcribed recordings of each FGD. The transcriptions and other notes taken during FGDs by the research assistant were content analyzed by the researchers using the process described by Graneheim and Lundman (2004). The data were prepared and verified through member checking prior to data analysis. This involved three main phases: preparation, organization, and reporting of results, and began as soon as possible following each FGD. All transcribed data was read repeatedly until familiarity with the data was achieved. The keywords, phrases, and sentences about facilitators in successful practice were extracted and underlined as meaning units, and then they were coded and condensed by reading the

transcript data line-by-line. When all interview transcripts had been coded, themes were developed by clustering together the condensed meaning units that shared common content (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). These codes and themes were then reviewed by the researcher and her co-researchers until consensus was reached.

Ethical Consideration

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chiang Mai, and the research settings. The participants heard verbal information regarding the study before each group discussion. They were informed of their rights to confidentiality and anonymity, as well as the purpose and methodology of the study. All students consented in writing and were given the opportunity to withdraw if they wanted.

Results

The selected participants comprised 20 female and 4 male students. Ages ranged from 19 to 21 years old with a mean age of 20 years old. Data analysis resulted in three major themes.

Being Hopeful and Positive About Myself

Being hopeful and positive about myself is the participant's sense of good things happening to them every day and a genuine self optimism about life. Even in the face of adversity, participants' attitudes toward themselves were optimistic. For whatever endeavor they undertake in life, they strive to do their best.

Sub- theme 1: Believing good things will happen was part of participants' perception of themselves. Believing good things will happen is a personality trait for certain people, they said, especially when confronted with an unpleasant or unexpected occurrence: for example:

"...Although it was extremely exciting, I had a lot of laboratory experience before I gave the patient my first fluid infusion. I told myself, "I can do this," to myself. Finally, I'm capable of doing it correctly..." (FGD2).

Sub- theme 2: Self-optimism refers to participants' perception of how individuals feel they have adjusted to their new surroundings. They described clinical wards as the settings where they had to practice caring for patients. Students were clear that to be successful they needed to follow the clear steps for each procedure. This would ensure acceptance as a 'good student' by the clinical staff. One of them said, in part:

“...Because each patient ward has somewhat distinct working processes, I strive to understand how the nurses carry out their duties in each operation. The staff nurses will accept me if I follow each procedure exactly as it is supposed to be done...”. (FGD2).

Mental and Spiritual Support from Surrounding People

Mental and spiritual support from surrounding people refers to the participants' impressions of the help they felt they got from surrounding people such as instructor and friends in terms of mental and spiritual support. They stressed the value of having a confidante or friend at their side under trying circumstances. The participants' opinions of the assistance that instructor and friends provided when they needed it. Instructor and friends offered a variety of forms of help for their mental and spiritual support. Spiritual support forms an importance part of Thai culture so going to pray in their mind and ask for help for ways to manage difficulty is an accepted way of being. The majority of participants talked about how they dealt with their concerns and worries:

“...There were numerous problems that stressed me out during my time of clinical practice. Every night, with a friend who practices alongside me, we would discuss our experiences while supporting one another, so we both cheer up and get back on track...”. (FGD3)

“...I am going to the temple with my friend and make a wish from the Buddha. I hope that whatever is being obstructed or troubled during clinical practice, I could go through it with peace of mind and without trouble...”. (FGD1)

“Friends always support me during the clinical placement. We supported and helped each other not only on clinical placement but also when we did a nursing care plan” (FDG4)

Being Perceived as Trustworthy

In practice placements, students valued having their supervisors view them as trustworthy. This sense of value improved their personal self-regard and their professional self-esteem.

Sub- theme 1: Being perceived as trustworthy by nursing instructors refers to participants' perceptions of the instructors' teaching methods. They perceived that instructors always supported them. Even when participants could answer some questions, instructors continued to teach directly without asking. This teaching method empowered their confidence. Many of the participants explained as follows:

“...When I was practicing in the medical ward... the instructor asked about other related points that I had not read...but she continued to teach...I thought, ‘it’s good to teach me like that because I am not under the pressure mode...” (FDG2).

“...When the second time that I prepared an intravenous fluid for a newly admitted patient, the instructor let me do it by myself, I was very proud that she trusted me...I will not forget that moment” (FDG1)

Sub- theme 2: The behavior of the staff nurses during clinical training refers to participants’ perception toward the staff nurses’ behavior. They perceived that sometimes in the ward nurses were friendly with them during clinical practice time. This situation makes them relax. More than half of participants revealed their feelings as follows:

“...Some staff nurses looked at student nurses like they were a novice. Some of them try to teach nursing procedure for us. ... doing something with a real patient with us. It was good to have senior nurses like them...” (FDG4).

“...For my first practice, I got an assignment from the instructor to do an intravenous injection, staff nurse helped me to do it I felt good with them...” (FDG1).

Discussion

Participants perceived that being hopeful and optimistic facilitated their success during their first-time clinical placement. Amattayakong and colleagues (2020) stated that optimism could be attained if a positive attitude was applied to life situations, and self-optimism boosts life satisfaction and makes one more willing and able to persevere through difficult times (Kupcewicz, Mikla, Kadučáková, Schneider-Matyka, & Grochans, 2022). When they were going to be participating in an activity in clinical practice, students who were naturally inclined in this way used the technique to enhance their self-belief and confidence to achieve the tasks that were in front of them.

Generation Z suffers from increasing rates of anxiety and depression, which may be linked to the amount of time spent in front of screens, and the majority of them are not obtaining proper treatment for their conditions. Only one out of every five adolescents who suffer from anxiety receives treatment for it (Allen, 2021). The results of this study indicated, however, that even though almost everyone experienced stress during clinical placement, having emotional and spiritual support from others around them increased the likelihood of success. Students who had good social support and identified having someone to do something

enjoyable with boosted their ability to cope. Having friends that would be there when they needed help (Hashemiparast, Negarandeh, & Theofanidis, 2019) appeared important. Almost all participants were female; indeed, Baldwin-White, Kiehne, Umaña-Taylor, & Marsiglia (2017) found that women had a significantly higher need for belonging than men. Pålsson and colleagues (2017) pointed out that nursing students who were able to work with a friend during their real-life training felt more confident in their abilities.

Because nurse educators' instructional strategies should build on the skills of their students, support from a nursing instructor is necessary. Both remediation and orientation to the learning process are necessary for student achievement in relation to anxiety. Students also require assistance (Brown et al., 2021). Encouraging each other during clinical placement from surrounding people was leading to a positive clinical environment. Hence, these environments affect the achievement of learning outcomes and have an impact on preparation for practice as a nurse as well as student satisfaction with the nursing profession (Flott & Linden, 2016). Once the clinical environment is positive, it could create four attributes that affect nursing students learning experiences. These include 1) the physical space; 2) psychological and interaction factors; 3) the organizational culture; and 4) teaching and learning competencies. These attributes often determine the achievement of learning outcomes and students' self-confidence, according to Flott & Linden (2016). This fosters an increased capacity for self-direction and initiative, and an environment that stimulates, offers opportunities, and facilitates learning.

Findings revealed that being perceived as trustworthy by instructors and staff nurses affected their intellectual skills and their abilities to learn about caring for a patient. Hence, in the context of nursing education, trust is essential for teaching and learning. Poor academic performance among nursing students may be due to a lack of trust and trusting relationships in nursing education (van Dyk, van Rensburg, & van Rensburg, 2021). Due to a high workload, their free time to do other activities was limited, and they felt that they should encourage each other during clinical placement. Studies mention the characteristics and behaviors of faculty members that lead nursing students to trust them (Varagona & Hold, 2019; Barrett & Harris, 2020). Moreover, trust and trusting relationships are the foundation of human relationships and are crucial to the existence of humanity. In contrast, a lack of trust may have a negative impact on educators' and students' self-esteem and academic achievements (van Dyk, van Rensburg, & van Rensburg, 2021).

Nursing students learned how to take care of patients in real life and in various situations. It would help them in terms of developing their nursing competencies (Atakro et al., 2019). Anderson and colleagues (2016) revealed that there are things that help and things that make it hard for nurses to help students learn in the hospital. Some helpful things are having enough time and feeling ready to teach; therefore, nurses should know what they need to do to help students learn well. This study provides valuable insight related to the perception of success during their first time from the participant perspective. The hospital administrators need to promote policies to promote a training environment where students are supported and inspired.

Nursing instructors allowed nursing students to perform care and judge the situation for themselves. This develops decision-making skills in nursing students while providing a safe supervisory space. Decision-making is used to guide the nurse in assessing, assimilating, evaluating, and/or discarding components of information to make good judgments in clinical situations, but it can be challenging to do in new situations, so nursing instructor support is vital. Johansen and O'Brien (2016) claimed that decision-making is an important factor in educating nurses so that they develop good problem-solving skills.

Some methodological issues limit the study's findings. First, the generalization of these findings is limited by the differences in geographical background of the participants who took part in this study, and this alone may affect their own perception of success during their first clinical practice. Second, the majority of the group of participants were female, but the data from male students who took part did not diverge. Last but not least, the researchers focused on facilitators to success, but we did identify some barriers that needed to be overcome to achieve success, such as the behavior of instructors and the clinical environment. Those students who had experienced success in similar environments found it challenging that the same level of success was not immediate when faced with real patients in a clinical setting. Students needed support to overcome this sense of disappointment.

Implication

According to the findings of this study, nursing students will reap the benefits of being immersed in an atmosphere that is encouraging and supportive of their professional development; therefore, creating a clinical environment where students feel safe to stretch their abilities supported by trustworthy practitioners is key to success in practice.

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Recommendation for Further Study

Comparing traditional teaching methods with the effective utilization of instructional materials among nursing students may yield valuable insights into the impact of various approaches on learning outcomes and student engagement. Other approaches to learning in practice to bridge the gap between simulation and real life require further study.

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