Reviewer's report

Title: Nursing students motivation toward their studies - a survey study

Version: 1  Date: 7 September 2007

Reviewer: Lorna K Suen

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Data analysis: was there any framework/rationale behind the categorization? How to ensure the validity of findings and categorization of data? (e.g. member checking).

The implication of a low response rate (53%) was not discussed. Did it reflect the usual attendance rate of the classes? Any relationship of this turn up rate with the overall motivation of students?

Some discussions of the findings were not well-justified: e.g.

- what was the relationship between ‘high score in semester four’ and ‘the content in the courses in this actual nursing school focusing on clinical skills’ (p.8)? Also, does it mean that other semesters were not focused on clinical skills?

- why did ‘a consciousness of the future professional demand when the students enter their last clinical course and do their final degree paper’ be used to explain the ‘low graded score for semester five’?

- low motivation score of the male nursing students (why not females) might have been influenced by wrong career choice. Any specific reasons?

- Be more specific what kind of ‘tutorial support’ should be given to students to increase motivation (p.11).

Limitations of study not addressed (e.g. only one motivation scale used, low response rate, using a different cohorts for comparison). Suggest to put under a separate subheading such as ‘Limitations and recommendations for future directions’.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The differences in scoring among students in different semesters were compared using simple descriptive statistics (mean value). Have the authors consider other factors that may affect the scoring during analyses, especially when it was not
the same cohort of students e.g. change in curriculum, teaching staff etc.
Inconsistent format of referencing - both APA (e.g. p.10) and Vancouver style were appeared (e.g. the rest of paper).

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Using only one motivation scale could not fully reflect the students' condition. May consider to use more well-established quantitative scales in future studies e.g. self-efficacy, life situation, learning attitudes, academic performance such as grade point average.

The authors mentioned that low graded score for semester five was observed (5.7) – would it be due to the influence of the extreme value (0 score given by one student) that may, to certain extent, affect the overall picture?

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests below.