An Analysis of Factors That Affect Social Support of Students in a Nursing University

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Abstract: This study was conducted with nursing students to investigate the level and influence of factors of social support. It was performed with 220 nursing students in K University located in D city from May 20 to June 17, 2014. SPSS for Windows Version 16.0 was used for data analysis. Average social support of the nursing students was 3.68 points. Among the general characteristics, age and reason for application displayed significant results. These data can be used as the basis for analyzing factors that affect the social support of nursing students and to plan programs for department adaptation and guidance.

Keywords: Nursing, Nursing Student, Social Supports

1   Introduction

Nurses are important health experts; thus, it is critical for them to embrace their roles and develop necessary expertise, as well as to adapt well and be prepared to grow into healthy members of society at school. [1][2]. Nursing students, in particular, do not think much about or make an assessment of their career path, because they have already decided on their career before attending university, and their employment rate is higher than that of other majors [3].

Therefore, it is thought to be necessary to emphasize career path exploration behavior for rational career selection and for schools and departments to provide detailed and systematic guidance, which can aid in the development of students' ability to make desirable career decisions [4].

In addition to career path exploration, activities to help students maintain the support that they receive are necessary, such as identifying the level of social support and resources received by the lower grades, in order to help them adapt well to their studies. In fact, an understanding of the level and type of social support received by students is meaningful and important for career exploration among nursing students making career decisions [5].

2   Method

2.1   Study design

This study is a descriptive survey study of students in a nursing university to identify and investigate factors that affect social support.

2.2   Sampling and data collection

This study was conducted between May 20, 2014 and June 17, 2014 with 250 students at K University located in D city. The participants understood the purpose of this study and wished to participate. The questionnaire was distributed to all of the participants and responses from 220 participants were analyzed.

2.3   Instruments

There were 25 questions related to social supports and each question was worth 5 points [5]. The reliability of this study was measured as Cronbach`s α=.94.

2.4   Data analysis

 With regard to the collected data, frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were calculated using SPSS for Windows Version 16.0. T-test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze differences in social supports according to general characteristics of the participants.

3   Results

3. 1 General Characteristics of the Participants

Table 1. General Characteristics of the Participants

(N=220)

Characteristics	Categories	N(%)
Gender	Male	24(10.9)
	Female	196(89.1)
Age	Under 20 years old	20(9.1)
	20--21 years old	182(82.7)

	22 years old and above	18(8.2)
Religion	Buddhism	17(7.7)
	Christianity	96(43.6)
	Catholicism	45(20.5)
	No religion	62(28.2)
Region of Origin	Seoul and the capital area	45(20.5)
	Daejeon	89(40.5)
	Chungcheongarea	58(26.4)
	Others	28(12.7)
Current living arrangement	Staying with parents	65(29.5)
	Living on one's own	56(25.5)
	Dormitory	87(39.5)
	Others	12(5.5)
Reason for application	Interested in nursing	73(33.2)
	Parental recommendation	39(17.7)
	Employment considerations	61(27.7)
	Based on school grades	29(13.2)
	Others	18(8.2)
Desired work after graduation	Hospital nurse	110(50.0)
	Industry nurse	18(8.2)
	Public health nurse	45(20.5)
	Nursing major instructor	15(6.8)
	Others	32(14,5)

3. 2 Level of the Participants' Social Support

An analysis of the level of participants' social support demonstrated a mean of 3.68±0.25 points (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of the Participants' Social Support

(N=220)

Variables	Mean±SD
Social Support	3.68±0.25

3. 3 Level of Social Support Based on the Participants' General Characteristics

With respect to analyzing differences in the level of social support based on participants' general characteristics, age and reason for application displayed significant results (Table 3).

Table 3. Level of Social Support Based on the Participants' General Characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	Social Support			
		M±SD	F/K[1]	P	scheffe
Gender	Male	4.23 ± 0.562	0.004	0.948	
	Female	4.24 ± 0.604			
Age	Under 20 years old	4.47 ± 0.475	6.213[1]	0.045*	b < c
	20--21 years old	4.20 ± 0.615			
	22 years old and above	4.57 ± 0.391			
Religion	Buddhism	4.39 ± 0.519	0.589	0.623	
	Christianity	4.33 ± 0.623			
	Catholicism	4.19 ± 0.736			
	No religion	4.19 ± 0.565			
Region of Origin	Seoul and the capital area	4.18 ± 0.607	0.259	0.855	
	Daejeon	4.30 ± 0.622			
	Chungcheongarea	4.25 ± 0.517			
	Others	4.19 ± 0.685			
Current living arrangement	Staying with parents	4.24 ± 0.634	0.858	0.465	
	Living on one's own	4.25 ± 0.532			
	Dormitory	4.28 ± 0.616			
	Others	3.58 ± 0.820			
Reason for application	Interested in nursing	4.33 ± 0.528	9.811[1]	0.044*	d < e
	Parental recommendation	4.16 ± 0.490			

	Employment considerations	4.19 ± 0.717		
	Based on school grades	3.94 ± 0.599		
	Others	4.64 ± 0.321		
	Hospital nurse	4.36 ± 0.591		
	Industry nurse	4.22 ± 0.537		
Desired work after graduation	Public health nurse	4.06 ± 0.619	1.561	0.189
	Nursing major instructor	4.36 ± 0.632		
	Others	4.16 ± 0.557		

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01

4   Discussion

We identified that active encouragement and support from close people were most important for nursing students to improve their academic performance and to enable them to address career developmental tasks well. In particular, friends' support had a positive influence on career development. This is because college students are in the post-adolescence period, separate from their parents during this period, and building relationships with various people. In addition, they are affected by various factors in the surrounding environment, especially mass media, friends, and senior students at school [5]. In other words, it is necessary to provide assistance through education and consultation on career paths for students to maintain continuous support from others. In particular, college students who receive a lot of social support and encouragement from people close to them are clearly aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and their framework of self-perception is clear and well formed.

In this way, in order to help nursing students make well-suited and intelligent career decisions, it is necessary first to deepen students' understanding of tasks by age, reason for application, and their major, and then use this information when planning programs for department adaptation and guidance.

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