The Relationships among Academic Stress, Major Satisfaction, and Academic Achievement according to Type of Achievement Goal Orientation in Nursing Students

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Abstract. The purposes of this study were to determine the types of achievement goal orientation exhibited by nursing students and to analyze the relationships among achievement goal orientation, academic stress, major satisfaction, and academic achievement in such students. Data were collected from 231 sophomore and junior nursing students, and analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation analyses, with SPSS WIN 18.0. Academic stress was higher in students with performance avoidance orientation than those with performance approach or mastery approach orientations. General satisfaction with major was higher in students with mastery approach orientation than those with performance avoidance orientation. The findings show the necessity of identifying the type of academic achievement goal orientation in nursing students.

Keywords: achievement goal orientation, academic stress, major satisfaction, academic achievement

1 Introduction

Current university education in Korea focuses on job performance competency for successful adjustment to changes in the social environment and on the reinforcement of abilities to solve given tasks flexibly. In the field of nursing education as well, efforts are being made to develop education systems that promote the key competencies nurses need to perform various clinical tasks and to improve the students’ competencies The Korean Accreditation Board of Nursing Education [1] provides nursing education accreditation for upgrading domestic nursing education programs to a certain level and cultivating professional nurses. In order to enhance the competencies required of nursing students and to improve their expertise as future nurses, we need to assess

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nursing students’ characteristics in learning situations and to examine the relationship among important variables.

Academic achievement goal orientation refers to the kind of thinking framework according to which learners interpret the meanings of various behaviors or results observed in academic achievement situations and determine how to respond to the meanings [2]. The current demand in nursing education is for nurses with professional competency for holistic nursing; therefore, it is essential to examine current nursing students’ characteristics in terms of achievement goal orientation. Learning outcomes also vary depending on the subtype of achievement goal orientation, and therefore, the present study, by examining the types of achievement goal orientation exhibited by nursing students, makes a valuable contribution to existing knowledge.

Thus, this study attempted to examine the relationships among academic stress, major satisfaction, and academic achievement in relation to achievement goal orientation in nursing students. The results will provide basic information for developing and applying customized education programs for nursing students, and suggest specific roles and support methods for teachers.

2 Methods

• Data collection and participants: The participants were 231 students majoring in nursing recruited from two universities in G Metropolitan City and Jollanam-do. The data collection period was from March 1 to June 31, 2013. As for ethical considerations, the purposes of the research and measures taken to ensure anonymity of data were explained to the participants, and those who consented to participate were asked to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher.

• Measurements

  Achievement goal orientation. This was assessed using a scale developed by Elliot and Church [3] and revised and translated by Han [4]. This scale consists of 6 items under each of three subtypes, for a total of 18 items, all of which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

  Academic stress. This was measured with the scale developed by Schaufeli et al. [5] and translated by Bae [6]. This scale consists of 5 items on emotional burnout, 4 on cynicism, and 6 on reduced efficacy, for a total of 15 items, all of which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale under three subfactors. A high score indicates a high level of academic stress.

  Major satisfaction. This was measured with Ha’s scale [7], which was devised by revising and supplementing the Program Evaluation Survey developed by the University of Illinois. The present study used 16 items, excluding items related to school satisfaction and relational satisfaction. This scale consists of 5 items on curriculum satisfaction, which pertain to the contents of the major curriculum; 5 on general satisfaction, which examine general interest in the major discipline; and 6 on perception satisfaction, which examine social perception of the major. All items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, and a high score implies high major satisfaction.
Academic achievement. This variable was computed on the basis of each student’s average grade in the 1st semester of 2013, the period of the questionnaire survey.

• Data analysis: Data analysis was conducted with SPSS for Windows, version 18.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA). First, descriptive statistics were calculated and reliability testing was performed for each measure. Second, differences in academic stress, major satisfaction, and academic achievement by achievement goal orientation were analyzed. Third, correlations among the variables by achievement goal orientation were analyzed. An alpha level of 0.05 was used for all tests.

3 Results

3.1. Differences in academic stress, major satisfaction, and academic achievement by achievement goal orientation

The average age was 20.60 ± 1.08 years. Of the sample, 112 (62.6%) were sophomores while 67 (37.4%) were juniors, and 193 (83.5%) were female while 38 (16.5%) were male. [Table 1] shows mean scores for academic stress, major satisfaction, and academic achievement by achievement goal orientation. Participants with performance avoidance orientation had the highest mean score on academic stress (33.65), and those with mastery approach orientation had the highest mean score on major satisfaction (64.30). In addition, [Table 1] shows that academic stress was highest for participants with performance avoidance orientation, followed by those with performance approach and mastery approach orientations. General major satisfaction was higher in participants with mastery approach orientation than performance avoidance orientation. However, academic achievement and the subfactors of major satisfaction, such as curriculum satisfaction and perception satisfaction, did not did not significantly differ by achievement goal orientation.

4 Conclusions

This study offers the following directions for future research: First, this study experientially examined nursing students’ achievement goal orientation, academic stress, major satisfaction, and academic achievement.
Table 1. Differences in academic stress, major satisfaction, and academic achievement by achievement goal orientation (N = 231)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of achievement goal orientation</th>
<th>Mastery approach typea (N = 92)</th>
<th>Performance approach typeb (N = 56)</th>
<th>Performance avoidance typec (N = 83)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Scheffé</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic stress</td>
<td>26.05±6.56</td>
<td>28.83±7.68</td>
<td>33.65±5.72</td>
<td>29.46***</td>
<td>a&lt;b&lt;c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional burnout</td>
<td>16.55±4.27</td>
<td>17.46±4.70</td>
<td>19.74±3.34</td>
<td>13.80***</td>
<td>a&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>8.50±3.28</td>
<td>9.37±3.70</td>
<td>10.90±3.48</td>
<td>10.65***</td>
<td>a&lt;b&lt;c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced efficacy</td>
<td>14.47±3.61</td>
<td>15.35±4.35</td>
<td>16.37±3.08</td>
<td>5.93**</td>
<td>a&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major satisfaction</td>
<td>64.30±8.81</td>
<td>62.82±11.78</td>
<td>60.91±8.97</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General satisfaction</td>
<td>18.81±3.26</td>
<td>17.91±3.61</td>
<td>17.09±3.38</td>
<td>5.60**</td>
<td>a&gt;c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum satisfaction</td>
<td>20.19±3.48</td>
<td>20.23±4.31</td>
<td>19.18±3.48</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception satisfaction</td>
<td>25.29±3.99</td>
<td>24.67±5.18</td>
<td>24.63±4.20</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>3.46±0.39</td>
<td>3.29±0.55</td>
<td>3.37±0.44</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

References

1. Korean Accreditation Board of Nursing Education, http://www.kabon.or.kr/