



Research Article

Nurses' Educational Needs Assessment for Financial Management Education Using the Nominal Group Technique



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 14 April 2014

Received in revised form

20 January 2015

Accepted 13 March 2015

Keyword:

educational needs assessment

financial management

focus groups

nursing education

SUMMARY

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify the financial management educational needs of nurses in order to development an educational program to strengthen their financial management competencies.

Methods: Data were collected from two focus groups using the nominal group technique. The study consisted of three steps: a literature review, focus group discussion using the nominal group technique, and data synthesis.

Results: After analyzing the results, nine key components were selected: corporate management and accounting, introduction to financial management in hospitals, basic structure of accounting, basics of hospital accounting, basics of financial statements, understanding the accounts of financial statements, advanced analysis of financial statements, application of financial management, and capital financing of hospitals.

Conclusions: The present findings can be used to develop a financial management education program to strengthen the financial management competencies of nurse.

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Introduction

Financial management skills should be considered a core competence for nursing managers [1], as they continually influence healthcare decisions to advocate for more effective resource allocation [2]. According to the scope and standards of practice of the American Nurses Association, financial competency aids nurses in using resources effectively and in maintaining a high standard of nursing practice [2,3]. In American nursing units, nurse managers engage in a range of financial management including articulating business models, analyzing financial statements, managing financial resources, and educating team nurses on using their financial knowledge [1]. In Korea, competition between hospitals has recently intensified as a result of changes in their business environment [4]. According to the recent change, nurse managers now view financial management skills as a core competency due to their expanded roles in improving the financial performance of nursing units. Within the field of nursing, financial competencies include

not only the ability to check revenue but also proficiency in analyzing and applying financial information [5].

To obtain financial competency, the development of financial management education programs is needed for both nurses and nurse managers. In particular, such programs would ideally provide nurses with greater financial oversight, as well as strengthen the relationship between hospitals' nursing and finance departments [6]. Although financial management education programs are needed, there is a notable lack of such programs in Korea. According to a review of Korean financial management education programs, just 3 examples were included in 982 refresher education programs for nurses from August 2011 to July 2012 [7]. In addition, financial issues and contents are not sufficiently dealt with in undergraduate and graduate nursing curriculums. For example, Korea currently has over 200 nursing schools; however, only 3 colleges include a finance course as part of their graduate program. Due to this shortage, there is a need to develop a financial management education program for Korean nurses.

In order to develop an efficient financial management education program for nurses, it is first necessary to identify the pertinent financial knowledge that is currently lacking among nurses—in other words, their educational needs. Studies show that identifying

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educational needs is the first stage in preparing a continuing education program for nurses [8]. One way of identifying these needs would be through use of the nominal group technique (NGT), a systematic method for gathering the ideas or suggestions of individuals concerning a wide variety of items [9]. Such an approach is widely used within the healthcare environment and demonstrates suitable research priorities [10]. Through the collection of data from experts using NGT, researchers are able to identify creative ways to solve problems in the decision-making scenarios [11]. Previous studies have also reported that NGT is an effective tool for assessing the educational needs of nurses and in prioritizing items [12,13].

The purpose of the present study is to identify the educational needs of Korean nurses and to prioritize the desired components of financial management education programs that would strengthen financial management competency.

Methods

This study used the NGT with two focus groups in order to collect information on educational needs in the area of financial management. The NGT is a useful tool for reaching consensus by gathering information from participants. According to the guidelines suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [9], the NGT consists of four steps: card sorting, recording of sorted results, discussing the results, and voting on the results. To prepare for application of the NGT, the researchers first conducted a comprehensive literature review in order to collect content items related to the development of a financial management education program for nurses. Two focus group discussions were then performed using the NGT. The results were synthesized using the rank score of each component to determine the financial management educational needs of nurses (see Figure 1).

Study participants

The participants in this study were 11 nurses who had been working for more than 3 years in the hospital. Participants were divided into two groups for the focus group discussions. Group A consisted of six nurses (aged 27–49 years) who held an interest in the hospitals' financial management but did not major in nursing

management during their graduate studies. This group had an average of 13 years of hospital nursing experience and consisted of three staff nurses and three charge nurses who were working in the medical care unit, special care unit and outpatient unit. Group B consisted of five nurses (aged 33–46 years) that had majored in nursing management and who had an average of 16 years of hospital nursing experience. This group consisted of three staff nurses, one charge nurse and one unit manager that were working in the medical care unit, surgical care unit and outpatient unit. Among them, only the unit manager had any experienced of financial management.

Ethical considerations

After obtaining approval from the institutional review board from the Inha University Hospital (IUH IRB 12-1525), the researchers advertised for study participants from the hospital. Following an explanation of the purpose and procedure of the study, nurses who had voluntarily applied to join the focus group discussion were asked to provide their written informed consent. This consent form stated that the participants could withdraw at any time, and that their information would be used only for the purpose of this study.

Procedure

Preparation of cards following a literature review

In order to identify the key components for financial management education, the researchers conducted an integrative literature review and searched websites from June to September 2012. A wide range of references were included, such as web databases (Medline, CINAHL, and Research Information Sharing Service (RISS)), textbooks on financial management, financial course syllabi retrieved from nursing and healthcare, Korean hospital financial reporting standards reports and the managerial department homepages of 103 universities in Korea. Keywords such as financial management, finance, health, and nursing were entered into Internet search tools in order to identify potential source materials, while the two researchers performed the selection process. A total of nine syllabi related to both undergraduate courses and graduate courses in nursing, business, accounting, and

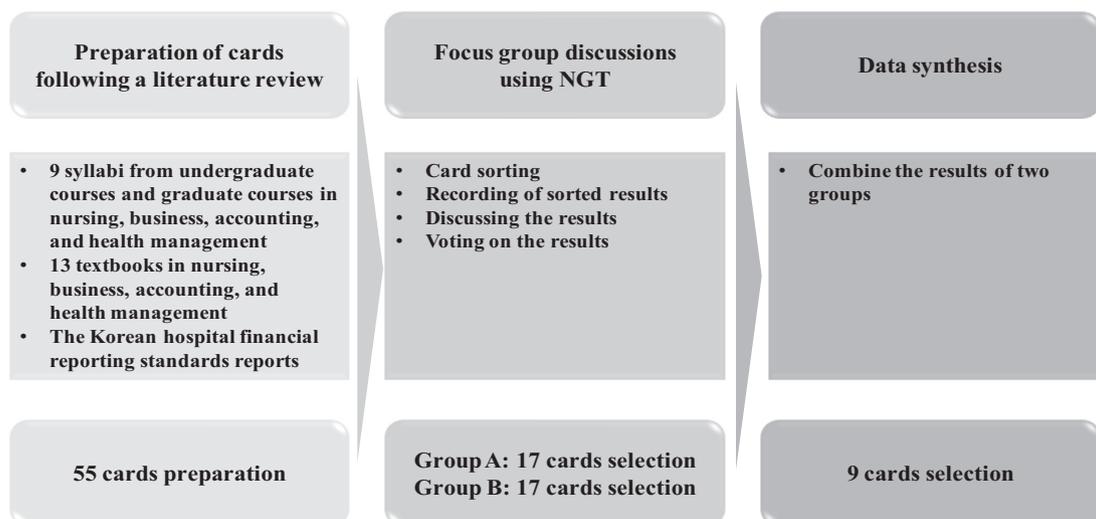


Figure 1. The study process. Note. NGT = nominal group technique.

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