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Assessment of Stakeholders Needs Regarding Desirable Characteristics of Graduates of Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing

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Abstract

This research is an evaluation research with the objectives to assess stakeholders' needs regarding desirable characteristics of graduates of Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing. The sampling group consisted of 400 stakeholders involved with graduates produced, acquired by multi-stage random sampling. Research instruments included a 42-item needs assessment questionnaire in a dual response format, in which respondents indicate their needs regarding desirable characteristics of graduates on a five-level rating scale. The data was analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics and the needs were ranked with the use of Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{Modified}). The research results show that the top three most desirable characteristics of graduates were capability in nursing in hyperbaric medicine, foreign language proficiency, and transformational leadership for the organization.

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Keywords: Desirable Characteristics of graduates, Needs Assessment, Stakeholders' needs;

1. Introduction

The National Education Act B.E.2552 and the amended act B.E.2545 (ONEC, 2009) stipulate the provision of educational quality assurance consisting of internal quality assurance and external quality assurance. The Ministry of Education thus issued the Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Nursing B.E. 2552 to be used as guidelines for educational institutes to bring them in line regarding the higher education standards and educational quality assurance. These guidelines cover curriculum development, learning and teaching management, and

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providing quality education with comparable goals (Ministry of Education, 2009) for institutes on both national and international levels (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2009).

The B.E.2551 nursing program offered by Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing, Naval Medical Department, is an undergraduate program with the aim to develop in learners the ability to integrate knowledge in various related fields and apply it in providing holistic nursing in a well-organized and systematic manner at all levels of public health service. Students should also recognize the value of human life and demonstrate professional and social responsibility, kindness, compassion, sacrifice, good attitudes towards the profession, creativity, professional leadership, ability to make decisions and solve problems reasonably, good human relations, ability to work with other people effectively, desire for continuing self-development, as well as sufficient knowledge in preliminary military science to work for the Royal Navy (Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing, 2551). The learning and teaching management is accordingly aimed to produce graduates with desirable characteristics in line with the identity of Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing. These characteristics are in accordance with the qualifications framework for higher education in nursing and military characteristics. To date, there has been no study of the current characteristics of nursing graduates and the characteristics desired by stakeholders to allow educators to produce graduates better matched to the requirements of their future positions. It is therefore important to assess stakeholders' desired characteristics for graduates from Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing so that the information obtained can be used in curriculum development and learning and teaching management according to the qualifications framework, while also meeting the needs of the organizations at which the graduates will go on to work.

2. Research Objectives

To assess desirable characteristics of graduates from Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing based on the needs of stakeholders.

3. Conceptual Framework

This research is a needs assessment evaluation research (Witkin and Altshuld, 1995) assessing stakeholders' needs regarding desirable characteristics for graduates from Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing based on the qualifications framework for higher education in nursing, consisting of the following six elements, namely: (1) virtues and ethics, (2) intellectual skills, (3) knowledge and identity, (4) interpersonal relationship skills and responsibility, (5) skills in numerical analysis, communication, and technology, (6) practical professional skills (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2009) along with desirable military characteristics that fit the identity of Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing, totaling 7 elements in all (National Defense Studies Institute, 2011).

4. Method

4.1 Sample

The population in this research includes stakeholders in the learning and teaching management of Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing, comprising super ordinates, employers, and coworkers.

The sampling group includes stakeholders in the learning and teaching management of Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing, super ordinates, employers, and coworkers, a total of 400 persons in all acquired by multistage random sampling.

4.2 Research instruments

The research instruments included a 42-item needs assessment questionnaire in a dual response format, in which respondents indicate their desirable characteristics of graduates on a five-level rating scale. The content validity was tested, resulting in an IOC value between 0.67-1.00, and reliability was tested resulting in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89.

4.3 Data analysis

The ranking of the needs in this research relied on the use of Modified Priority Needs Index (PNI_{Modified}) (Wongwanich and Wiratchai, 2005). To get standard scores, the needs were assessed by finding the differential value between desirable characteristics of graduates (I) and current characteristics of graduates (D), by determining the needs at the real level (Wongwanich, 2005). The formula for the calculation is as follows:

$$PNI_{Modified} = (I - D) / D$$

- PNI = priority needs index.
- I = mean of desirable characteristics in graduates (Importance).
- D = mean of current characteristics in graduates (Degree of success).

5. Research results

5.1 Preliminary data regarding the sampling group.

The sampling group comprised 400 persons. The majority were women (87.50%), superordinates/employees of graduates (66.25%), professional nurses (91.25%), and worked in hospitals belonging to the Royal Navy (85.50%).

5.2 Analysis results regarding desirable characteristics of graduates from Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing for stakeholders

Stakeholders were of the opinion that desirable characteristics of graduates on the whole were at the high level (M = 4.47, SD. = .57). Considered item by item, it was found that expectation was highest for ability to practice nursing with compassion, kindness and care, followed by loyalty to the nation, the religion and the monarchy, respect for human value and dignity. Meanwhile, expectation of desirable characteristics in graduates was lowest for nursing ability in hyperbaric medicine (3.76 ≤ M ≤ 4.78, .46 ≤ SD ≤ .90).

Stakeholders were of the opinion that the current characteristics of graduates on the whole were at the average level (M = 3.23, SD. = .69). Considered item by item, the current characteristic of loyalty to the nation, religion and monarchy was highest, followed by respect for the democratic government, respect for human value and dignity, and practicing nursing with compassion, kindness and care. The current characteristic of graduates with the lowest score was nursing ability in hyperbaric medicine (2.37 ≤ X ≤ 4.22, .58 ≤ SD ≤ .95). The top three characteristics of graduates most desired by stakeholders were nursing ability in hyperbaric medicine, foreign language proficiency, and transformational leadership for the organization (PNI_{modified} = .85, .83 and .56 respectively). Details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholders’ most desirable characteristics of graduates from Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing

Characteristics of graduates	Desirable characteristics of graduates			Current characteristics of graduates			PNI _{modified}
	M	S.D.	Meaning	M	S.D.	Meaning	
Characteristics of nurses							
1. Knowledgeable of nursing and other related sciences	4.56	.56	very good	3.16	.58	fair	.49
2. Ability to apply nursing science in practice fundamental nursing	4.55	.57	very good	3.14	.68	fair	.53
3. Ability to study at a higher level	4.32	.69	good	3.10	.76	fair	.50
4. Ability to practice nursing in hyperbaric medicine	3.76	.90	good	2.37	.85	poor	.85

Characteristics of graduates	Desirable characteristics of graduates			Current characteristics of graduates			PNI _{modified}
	M	S.D.	Meaning	M	S.D.	Meaning	
5. Ability to practice holistic nursing	4.59	.56	very good	3.18	.68	fair	.52
6. Ability to practice nursing at all levels of health service facilities	4.40	.62	good	3.20	.69	fair	.45
7. Practice health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, nursing, and health rehabilitation for service users of all ages	4.43	.62	good	3.15	.69	fair	.49
8. Practice nursing with considerations of personal and cultural differences	4.28	.86	good	3.32	.70	fair	.35
9. Practice nursing by using nursing art and science	4.59	.59	very good	3.28	.70	fair	.48
10. Practice nursing by using empirical evidence	4.38	.64	good	3.13	.71	fair	.48
11. Practice nursing according to law and professional ethics	4.68	.55	very good	3.55	.74	good	.38
12. Systematic, reasonable and discreet thinking in nursing practice and general situations	4.59	.56	very good	3.22	.72	fair	.51
13. Creative problem-solving both in nursing practice and general situations	4.50	.62	good	3.15	.71	fair	.51
14. Ability in numerical and statistical analysis in nursing	4.14	.74	good	2.91	.75	fair	.54
15. Professional virtues and ethics, and way of living	4.56	.59	very good	3.49	.74	fair	.37
16. Respect for human value and dignity	4.70	.52	very good	3.61	.81	good	.40
17. Practice nursing with compassion, kindness and care	4.78	.46	very good	3.61	.80	good	.41
18. Responsible for own actions, to the organization and to the profession	4.66	.53	very good	3.46	.82	fair	.45
19. Human relations towards service users, co-workers, and super ordinates	4.63	.56	very good	3.37	.84	fair	.49
20. Possessing transformational leadership for the organization	4.45	.62	good	3.10	.80	fair	.56
21. Ability to communicate effectively	4.54	.59	very good	3.27	.77	fair	.48
22. Foreign language proficiency	4.21	.73	good	2.65	.85	fair	.83
23. Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team	4.48	.59	good	3.26	.71	fair	.44
24. Organizational management ability according to duties and responsibilities	4.41	.62	good	3.28	.66	fair	.40
25. Ability to continue personal, professional, and social development	4.42	.63	good	3.23	.71	fair	.44
26. Knowledge and ability in information technology regarding nursing and communication	4.36	.64	good	3.28	.72	fair	.41
27. Ability to use necessary basic computer programs	4.40	.66	good	3.35	.81	fair	.48
28. Faith in the nursing profession	4.66	.56	very good	3.38	.82	fair	.42
29. Belief in nursing and self-esteem	4.65	.54	very good	3.50	.81	fair	.45

Characteristics of graduates	Desirable characteristics of graduates			Current characteristics of graduates			PNI _{modified}
	M	S.D.	Meaning	M	S.D.	Meaning	
Military characteristics							
30. Responsibility	4.63	.56	very good	3.43	.79	fair	.35
31. Ability for military command	4.39	.66	good	3.10	.85	fair	.42
32. Emotional maturity	4.51	.62	very good	3.25	.76	fair	.39
33. Self-confidence and decisiveness	4.49	.64	good	3.32	.73	fair	.35
34. Sacrifice for the common good	4.58	.56	very good	3.35	.81	fair	.37
35. Patience	4.61	.56	very good	3.33	.87	fair	.38
36. Dignity	4.55	.58	very good	3.49	.79	fair	.30
37. Respect for democratic government	4.59	.59	very good	3.75	.82	good	.22
38. Abiding by the institute's rules and regulations	4.58	.58	very good	3.57	.85	good	.28
39. Abiding by military protocol	4.53	.62	very good	3.34	.95	fair	.36
40. Punctuality	4.68	.55	very good	3.40	.90	fair	.38
41. Unity in the group	4.65	.60	very good	3.51	.85	good	.32
42. Loyalty to the nation, religion and monarchy	4.77	.51	very good	4.22	.81	good	.13
Total	4.47	0.57	good	3.23	0.69	fair	.38

6. Discussion

The top three most desirable characteristics of graduates according to stakeholders are nursing ability in hyperbaric medicine, foreign language proficiency, and transformational leadership for the organization, which was in line with the research of Wiratchai, Wongwanich and Reungtrakool (2003). This is probably due to the fact that the majority of the respondents were of super ordinates status, working in hospitals belonging to the Royal Navy. These hospitals' mission is to provide treatment and care, and their vision focuses on excellence in maritime medicine and nursing in hyperbaric medicine, which is a division of nursing in maritime medicine. Stakeholders thus have the highest need for this capacity. Meanwhile, Thailand is entering into the Asean Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, which will result in social, economic and cultural changes affecting all professions. This is particularly true for the nursing profession, one in the seven professions that are highly relevant for the AEC. As a result, stakeholders require foreign language proficiency and transformational leadership for the organization to quickly adapt to changes.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations in applying the research results

1. Royal Thai Navy College of Nursing should improve its learning and teaching management so that learners get more experience in hyperbaric medicine. This also involves curriculum improvement. The teaching and learning should focus on the use of English so that learners can use English better both in their work and daily life.

2. There should be activities both within and outside the curriculum that focus on developing transformational leadership in learners.

3. The needs assessment results should be used to improve learning and teaching management as well as to instill the students with desirable characteristics.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

1. There should be comparative studies of desirable characteristics of graduates according to stakeholders.
2. The needs assessment conducted in this research study mainly identified the needs and ranked them. The underlying reasons for the needs and alternative strategies for developing desirable characteristics in graduates have not yet been studied. A complete needs assessment is thus recommended for further research so that even clearer approaches to developing graduate qualities can be achieved.

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