Choice Based Credit System in Nursing Education: Attitude of Undergraduate Nursing Students at a Selected Public University in the South of Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Choice Based Credit System presently is considered a new system in nursing education in Vietnam which provides flexibility, inter-institution transferability of students, enhanced learning opportunities and quality of education. Therefore, students' attitude towards Choice Based Credit System is a pivotal factor determining the effectiveness of educational process. This study aims to examine attitude of nursing students towards the Choice Based Credit System and associated factors. In this cross-sectional descriptive study, a sample of 140 undergraduate nursing students at a public university in Can Tho, Vietnam was through total population sampling technique. For data collection, a 5-likert scale questionnaire with 20 items was used to examine students' attitude and a demographic questionnaire was used to investigate their demographic data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Nursing students exhibit a positive attitude towards the Choice Based Credit System (mean = 3.83, S.D. = 0.71). The findings indicated there was a significant difference of attitude towards the Choice Based Credit System between male and female students (t=2.64, p=0.009). Meanwhile, locality-wise and year in university were not associated with students' attitude. Despite showcasing a positive level, attitude towards the Choice Based Credit System among female students needs enhancement. The results provide insights for future research as well as inciting counseling services and support that would promote students' highly favorable attitude towards Choice Based Credit System and subsequent higher level of quality of education.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of education is enhancing students' knowledge, skills, and competence. Quality of education plays a vital role in national development because it develops an effective workforce. In recent years, the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) has been introduced and used in many countries as a modern flexible educational system[1,2]. In Vietnam, CBCS is a significant reform which focuses on students as the center of the educational process. Students are not only allowed to determine their own learning plans individually but also provided more advanced learning opportunities, flexibility, and inter-institution transfer-ability. The evaluation is based on learning process as well as designed to recognize the capability and talent of a student. Besides, learning and teaching with the CBCS stimulate the effective work and comprehensive capacities of teachers and students as well as enhance students' independent learning in the educational process[3].

According to the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, the CBCS has outlined several advantages including matching learners' scholastic needs and aspirations; enhancing independent work, teamwork skills, professional development and maturity of students; and improving educational quality and excellence. Thus, applying the CBCS could increase students' competitiveness in accordance with the requirements of the national and international labor markets[4].

NEED FOR STUDY

Since 2001, the CBCS has been introduced at many universities in Vietnam. However, there are many barriers in the transition from traditional education system to a credit one including principles and policies of the organization of the educational process, control over students' knowledge, professional competence of teachers, effective instructional materials, and students initiative[5]. Among those barriers, the most significant one regarding the effectiveness of applied CBCS in Vietnam is perception and attitude towards the credit educational system. Literature revealed that students had different attitudes regarding this new form of curriculum as well as examination system[5-7]; Moreover, students' background and gender were significantly associated with students' attitude[8,9]. Literature demonstrated that understanding nursing students' attitude towards the CBCS applied in nursing education might consequently help the educators to enhance the quality of nursing education.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A study to assess attitude of undergraduate nursing students towards the CBCS and its associated factors at a selected public university in the South of Vietnam.

OBJECTIVES

(1) To assess the attitude of undergraduate nursing students towards the CBCS at a selected public university in the South of Vietnam.

(2) To examine associations between the attitude towards the CBCS and selected demographic variables of undergraduate nursing students.

HYPOTHESIS

H_1: There will be a significant association between undergraduate nursing students' attitude towards the CBCS and selected demographic variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Approach: A quantitative research approach was used in the study

Research Design: A cross-sectional descriptive design has been used in the present study.

Sample: In this study, the sample comprises 140 undergraduate nursing students who have at least 1 year experience with the CBCS.

Sampling Technique: An entire sampling technique has been used.

Setting: In this study, a public university of medicine and pharmacy in the South, Vietnam has been selected to be the study setting.

Population: the target population consisted of undergraduate nursing students in a selected public university in the South, Vietnam.

Description of tool: the self-report questionnaire included two parts:

Part 1: It was used to investigate students' demographic data including age, gender, locality-wise, year of university education.

Part 2: It was a 5-likert scale with 20 items developed by Tran (2020). Among them, there were 8 items regarding advantages and 12 items relating students' willingness to participate in learning activities of the CBCS. Total mean score was calculated by average of all item scores. It ranged from 1 to 5. The higher score indicates a more positive attitude relating to the CBCS[4]. According to

Tran, students' attitude scores could be divided into two levels of negative and positive. The score between 1-3 was negative as well as 3.01-5 was positive[5].

A pilot survey was undertaken to ensure that the questionnaire was as meaningful to the average respondent as they were to the researcher. The questionnaire was distributed to 30 nursing students for the pilot study. In this study, the internal consistency reliability was 0.89.

Ethical consideration

The study was approved by the The Ethical Review Board of Can Tho University of Medicine and Pharmacy (Ethical Approval No: 22.114.SV/PCT-HĐĐĐ, May 10, 2022). All eligible students were provided with an explanatory statement and consent form and advised that participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time and were reassured that this decision would not affect their academic results. Computerized data files were password-protected, and all participants' data were only used for this research.

Plan for data analysis

The data analysis will be done according to study objectives by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The plan of data analysis would be as follows:

(1) Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation will be calculated to describe study variables.

(2) Independent t-test and One-way ANOVA will be used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained are divided into sections for easy and accurate interpretation of data. The data finding has organized under the following section:

Section A: Description of the demographic variables.

Section B: Description of the attitude of undergraduate nursing students towards the CBCS.

Section C: The findings related to the association between the attitude and selected demographic variables.

Section A: Description of the demographic variables of the study respondents

The demographic data consists of 4 items seeking information about the age, gender, locality-wise, and year in univerisity of nursing students respondents (see in the table 1).

Age: The mean age among participants was 19.89 ± 1.03.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the nursing student respondents   **(N=140)**

Demographic characteristics		N	Percentage
Gender	Male	49	35.0
	Female	91	65.0
Locality-wise	Rural students	59	42.1
	Urban students	81	57.9
Year in university	2nd year students	61	43.6
	3rd year students	40	28.6
	4th year students	39	27.9

Gender: The table 1 revealed that among 140 students, more than half of participants were female (65%).

Locality-wise: Table 1 depicted that out of 140 students 57.9% lived in urban areas, 42.1% lived in rural areas.

Year in university: The most common group was second-year students (61 respondents, 43.6%). 28.8% students were third-year, and 27.9% students were fourth-year.

Section B: Description of the attitude of undergraduate nursing students towards the CBCS.

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data regarding the attitude towards CBCS among undergraduate nursing student respondents. Using descriptive statistics, the study finding indicated that undergraduate nursing students had a positive level of attitude towards the CBCS (mean = 3.83, S.D. = 0.71). In addition, nursing students had a highly favorable attitude relating to the advantages of CBCS (mean = 3.83, S.D. = 0.76) and agreed to be involved in learning with CBCS (mean = 3.83, S.D. = 0.72) as shown in table 2.

Table 2 Attitude towards the CBCS among nursing students   **(N=140)**

	Mean	S.D.	Range
Attitude towards the CBCS	3.83	0.71	1-5
Subscales			
Attitude towards advantages of the CBCS	3.83	0.76	1-5
Willingness to participate in learning activities of the CBCS	3.83	0.72	1-5

Section C: The findings related to the association between the attitude and selected demographic variables

Table 3 showed that there was a significant association between gender and the attitude towards CBCS among nursing students. In other words, male and female nursing students significantly differed in terms of their attitude towards the CBCS. Male students had higher scores of attitude than female students (*p*=0.009). Meanwhile, there was no difference of attitude between rural and urban students (t=-0.59, p>0.05).

Table 3 Relationships between gender, locality-wise and of nursing students   **(N=140)**

Factors		Students' attitude (Mean ± S.D.)	t	p-value
Gender	Male (n = 49)	4.05 ± 0.78	2.64	**0.009**
	Female (n=91)	3.72 ± 0.66		
Locality-wise	Rural students (n = 59)	3.79 ± 0.74	-0.59	0.55
	Urban students (n = 81)	3.86 ± 0.71		

Table 4 Relationships between year of university education and attitude of nursing students (N=140)

Factors		Students' attitude (Mean ± S.D.)	F	p-value
Year in university	2nd year students (n = 61)	3.96 ± 0.82	2.13	0.13
	3rd year students (n = 40)	3.66 ± 0.67		
	4th year students (n = 39)	3.81 ± 0.53		

Table 4 presented that the mean scores of attitude towards the CBCS among 2nd year students were higher compared with 3rd and 4th year students. However, the difference was not statistically significant (p>0.05).

CONCLUSION

CBCS is essential for university education. This system significantly enhances the all-round competence of students. Then, it increases the quality of education and future workforce. The present study aims to assess the attitude towards CBCS and its associated factors among undergraduate nursing students at a public university in the South, Vietnam. The quantitative research approach and cross-sectional descriptive correlational design was adopted for this study. The study finding revealed that the nursing students have mostly positive attitudes towards the CBCS (mean = 3.83, S.D. = 0.71). It is also shown that there is an association between gender and attitudes towards the CBCS (p=0.009). Hence, discussion, support, and counseling services should be developed in order to increase students' academic achievement and success.

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