

ARAŞTIRMA/RESEARCH

THE EFFECT OF INTERNSHIPS ON STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR NURSING EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This study aims to determine the effect of nursing internships on nursing students' satisfaction with their nursing education.

Methods: The study population for this research comprised 321 nursing interns studying in the Nursing Faculty at Atatürk University between May and June 2017. The study sample included 285 students who agreed to participate in the study between these dates. The research data were collected using Personal Information Form, the Nightingale Internship Program Evaluation Scale (N-IPES) and the Student Satisfaction Scale-Short Form (SSS-SF). The research data were evaluated using arithmetic mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentile and correlation analysis through the SPSS package program.

Results: The mean age of the participating students was 22.4 ± 1.17 years, 70.2% of them were female, 49.5% were regular high school graduates, and 63.5% willingly selected the nursing profession. A statistically significant and positive relationship was found between students' total scores on the N-IPES and SSS-SF, and also between all of their mean scores on the subscales of these two scales, except the subscale of participation in decisions ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Internships were found to increase students' satisfaction with nursing education

Keywords: Internship; nurse; satisfaction; student

ÖZ

İntörn Uygulamasının Öğrencilerin Hemşirelik Eğitiminden Aldıkları Doyuma Etkisi

Amaç: Bu araştırma, hemşirelik intörn uygulamasının öğrencilerin hemşirelik eğitiminden aldıkları doyuma etkisini belirlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirildi.

Yöntem: Araştırmanın evrenini Mayıs-Haziran 2017 tarihleri arasında Atatürk Üniversitesi Hemşirelik Fakültesi'nde okuyan toplam 321 hemşirelik intörn öğrencisi oluşturdu. Örneklemi ise bu tarihler arasında araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 285 öğrenci oluşturdu. Veriler, 'Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Nightingale İntern Programı Değerlendirme Ölçeği (N-İPDÖ) ve Öğrenci Doyum Ölçeği-Kısa Form ile toplandı. Verilerin değerlendirilmesi; SPSS paket programı kullanılarak aritmetik ortalama, standart sapma, frekans, yüzdeler ve korelasyon analizi ile yapıldı.

Bulgular: Araştırmaya katılan intörn öğrencilerinin yaş ortalamasının 22.4 ± 1.17 yıl olduğu, %70.2'sinin kadın, %49.5'nin düz lise mezunu olduğu ve %63.5'inin mesleği isteyerek seçtiği belirlendi. Nightingale İntern Programı Değerlendirme Ölçeğinin alt boyut ve toplam puanları ile Öğrenci Doyum Ölçeğinin alt boyut ve toplam puanları arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişki olduğu saptandı ($p < 0.05$).

Sonuç: İntörnlük uygulamasının öğrencilerin hemşirelik eğitiminden aldıkları doyumu arttırdığı tespit edildi.

Anahtar kelimeler: İntörnlük uygulaması; hemşire; doyum; öğrenci

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INTRODUCTION

Nursing education includes theoretical and clinical applications aimed at providing students with the qualities required for their professional careers. Clinical training in nursing education gives students the opportunity to transform their theoretical knowledge into practical experience (1-3). A daily 8-hour internship 4 days per week for one academic year, including clinic fieldwork and night watch, offers students the opportunity to gain this necessary experience.

Clinical training in nursing education consists of both theory and practice. The theory component includes the basic knowledge for students to perform clinical applications properly and safely. The practical component allows students to transform their theoretical knowledge into practice in a clinical environment in order to achieve their learning goals (4-6). Nursing students emphasize clinical training as an important element of clinical fieldwork, as it allows students to develop their problem-solving and decision-making skills and to communicate with healthy/sick individuals using their professional knowledge. Hence, well-organized, positive clinical settings and internship programs are important factors that enable future nurses to strengthen their self-confidence, professional identity, and occupational satisfaction (7-12).

Student satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to students' subjective evaluations of educational experiences and outcomes (13). According to Elliott and Shin (2002), student satisfaction positively affects students' motivation and recall. Higher levels of student success and happiness is related to higher levels of their satisfaction with education. According to the literature, student satisfaction creates a more effective learning environment (13) and affects the success and quality of a university (14). Determining students' satisfaction provides important information for assessing the qualifications of schools, making comparisons between schools, making improvements to the provided services, and predicting students' intentions for leaving their schools (14-16). Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the effect of internships, which were newly integrated into some nursing programs, on students' satisfaction with their nursing education

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Type of Study: This study is a descriptive research.

Study place and features: This descriptive study was carried out in the Nursing Faculty at

Nursing Faculty at Ataturk University between May and December 2017.

Study population-sample: The study population for this research comprised 321 nursing interns studying in the Nursing Faculty at Ataturk University between May and June 2017. The study sample included 285 students who agreed to participate in the study and completed the survey form between these dates.

Data collection tools: The research data were collected using the Personal Information Form, the Nightingale Internship Program Evaluation Scale (N-IPES) and the Student Satisfaction Scale-Short Form (SSS-SF).

Personal information form: This form consists of four questions on students' age, gender, previous school, and willingness to select the nursing profession.

Nightingale internship program evaluation scale (N-IPES): This scale was developed by Şahin, Can, Eşkin, Kaya, Şenyuva, Balcı et al. (2016) with the aim of developing a valid and reliable clinical evaluation tool specific to nursing and which allows students studying in nursing schools to evaluate clinical practice and nursing internship program adequacy based on self-report. This is a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging as follows: I strongly disagree - 1 point; I disagree - 2 points; I have no idea - 3 points; I agree - 4 points; and I strongly agree - 5 points. It consists of 39 questions under 6 sub-scales (professional development (11 items), personal development (9 items), guidance / counseling (5 items), general features of the program (7 items), application area properties (4 items), and communication with patients and their relatives (3 items)). For an evaluation of the scale, the total score taken from each sub-scale can be divided by the number of items in that sub-scale; thus, the arithmetic average is received. Accordingly, the mean scores for each sub-scale and total scale vary between 1 and 5. Students' evaluation of the internship program becomes negative as the mean scores for each sub-scale and total scale approach 1, and it is evaluated as positive when these mean scores are close to 5 (17).

Student Satisfaction Scale-Short Form: This scale was developed by Baykal, Sökmen and Korkmaz (2002) to determine the satisfaction of nursing students and was revised by Baykal, Harmancı, Eşkin, Altuntaş and Sökmen (2011). This is a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging as follows: I strongly disagree - 1 point; I disagree - 2 points; I have no idea - 3 points; I agree - 4 points; and I strongly agree - 5 points. Cronbach's

alpha coefficients of the scale ranged from 0.83 to 0.97 (18, 19). The scale consists of 53 questions under six sub-scales: teaching staff (12 items 1-12), school management (9 items; 13-21), participation in decisions (7 items; 22-28), scientific-social and technical facilities (12 items; 29-40), and quality of education (13 items; 41-53). The highest and lowest scores that can be taken from the scale are 265 and 53, respectively. The total mean score was calculated using sub-scale mean scores. Students' satisfaction decreases as the mean scores for each sub-scale and total scale approach 1 and increases as these mean scores approach 5.

Data collection process: After the researchers gave necessary explanations of the study in the classroom environment, survey forms were distributed to the participant students. The survey application took about 5-10 minutes. The students who were not present in the class on the day and time the questionnaire was given, the students who did not accept to participate in the study and the students who did not complete the survey form were excluded from the evaluation.

Internship features: An internship is an application that aims to make students, who have successfully completed vocational courses in the first three years of university education, gain the vocational consciousness and experience required for the nursing profession. The internship program consists of two courses: Internship I (7 weeks) and Internship II (7 weeks). In this internship process, fourth-grade nursing students gain practical experience in "Internal Medicine Nursing", "Surgical Nursing", "Child Health and Surgery Nursing", "Women's Health and Disease Nursing", "Mental Health and Disease Nursing" and "Public health nursing". The internship comprises one hour of theory and 16 hours of practical application per week during the 8th semester. Interns kept two night watches per week for each course: one night watch (16 hours) on week days, and one night (16 hours) on weekends.

Data evaluation: The research data were evaluated using arithmetic mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentile and correlation analysis through SPSS package program.

Ethical consideration: Approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee in the Nursing Faculty at Ataturk University (dated 31/05/2017 and numbered 2017-5 / 8) to conduct the study, and written permission was received from the institution in which the survey was carried out. In addition, written and verbal approval was obtained from the individuals

participating in the survey after the purpose of the study was explained to them.

Study limitations: This study is limited to interns studying in the Nursing Faculty at Atatürk University.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean age of the participants was 22.46 ± 1.17 years. Of the them, 70.2% were female, 49.5% were regular high school graduates, and 63.5% were willing to choose the nursing profession (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics (n: 285)

	n	%
Gender		
Female	200	70.2
Male	85	29.8
High school graduation		
Anatolian-science high school	126	44.2
Regular high school	141	49.5
Other vocational high schools	18	6.3
Willingness to choose the profession		
Yes	181	63.5
No	104	36.5
Mean Age (Mean \pmSD)	22.46 ± 1.17	

The students' mean total score on N-IPES was 3.88 ± 0.74 , while the highest mean score was on the sub-scale of communication with patients and their relatives (4.02 ± 0.87), followed by the sub-scales of professional development (3.96 ± 0.80), guidance / counseling (3.93 ± 0.95), personal development (3.86 ± 0.82), application area properties (3.76 ± 1.02) and general features of the program (3.75 ± 0.93) (Table 2).

Internships in nursing education are not common in Turkey and have been recently integrated into some nursing programs, as they are important in terms of contributing to students' satisfaction with nursing education.

The present study determined that students positively evaluated internship programs in general, and many previous studies have also found that students were generally satisfied with internship programs (10, 12, 20-29).

According to the present study results, students reported the highest mean score on the sub-scale of communication with patients and their relatives, followed by the sub-scales of professional development and guidance/counseling services. Previous studies have determined that internships improve students' communication skills, awareness / compliance of ethical rules, and ability to advise

patients / individuals (20, 23, 27, 29). The relevant literature emphasizes that intern training also increases students' professional development (27-29). The present study also found that internships

increased students' ability to recognize malpractice, and strengthened their self-confidence, theoretical / practical skills and caregiving skills.

Table 2. Students' Mean Scores on N-IPES and Its Sub-Scales

	N	Min	Max	Mean ± SD
Professional development	285	1.27	5	3.96 ± 0.80
Personal development	285	1	5	3.86 ± 0.82
Guidance / counseling	285	1	5	3.93 ± 0.95
General features of the program	285	1	5	3.75 ± 0.93
Application area properties	285	1	5	3.76 ± 1.02
Communication with patients and their relatives	285	1	5	4.02 ± 0.87
N-IPES	285	1.72	5	3.88 ± 0.74

In the present study, students obtained high scores on the sub-scale of guidance/counseling, and reported being satisfied with the clinic guide nurses at the clinics where they were enrolled. In addition, students stated that clinic guide nurses had sufficient knowledge and experience in the relevant field and supported students in times of need. Students also stated that the counseling faculty had knowledge in the field of internship application. This result is important to show that students have achieved the desired goal of internship. Many studies in the literature indicate that conscious, experienced, professionally orientated, and positive role model nurses and other members of the healthcare team working in clinics are important in terms of

achieving the practical goals of internship programs (28, 30-32).

The present study determined that students' overall satisfaction with the general features of the program was lower than the other sub-scales. This suggests that the program should be revisited and the problematic areas in the program need to be identified and corrected.

The students' mean total score on SSS-SF was 3.39±0.63, while the highest item mean score was on the sub-scale of teaching staff (3.57±0.61), followed by the sub-scales of scientific, social and technical facilities (3.40±0.75), quality of education (3.37±0.80), school management (3.31±0.79), and participation in decisions (3.20±0.88) (Table 3).

Table 3. Students' Mean Scores on SSS-SF and Its Sub-Scales

	N	Min	Max	Mean±SD	Item mean score
Teaching staff	285	2.17	5	42.85±7.36	3.57±0.61
School management	285	1	5	29.82±7.12	3.31±0.79
Participation in decisions	285	1	5	22.45±6.21	3.20±0.88
Scientific, social and technical facilities	285	1.25	5	40.80±9.01	3.40±0.75
Quality of education	285	1	5	43.84±10.48	3.37±0.80
SSS-SF Total	285	1.83	4.92	179.77±33.82	3.39±0.63

The participants' higher mean score on SSS-SF indicated that they received a high-level of satisfaction with nursing education. However, other studies found that students had low levels of satisfaction with nursing education (14, 33, 34). In addition, the participants in the present study obtained highest mean score on the sub-scale of teaching staff, followed by the sub-scales of scientific, social and technical facilities, and quality of education (Table 3). Özdelikara and Babur (2016) determined that students obtained the highest mean score on the sub-scale of teaching staff (33). However, the participants in

the present study received the lowest mean score on the sub-scale of participation in decisions (Table 3). To increase students' participation in decision-making, they should be informed about activities such as work, meetings, seminars, and actively participate in educational improvement activities. Further, student representatives should attend management board meetings at the hospital where students undergo their internship programs.

No statistically significant relationship was found between the students' mean score on the sub-scale of participation in decisions and their mean scores on the sub-scales of

professional development, personal development, guidance / counseling and communication with patients and their relatives. However, a statistically significant and positive relationship was found between the mean scores of N-IPES

and SSS-SF. In addition, a statistically significant and positive relationship was found between the mean scores on the majority of sub-scales of N-IPES and SSS-SF (Table 4).

Table 4. Relationship between The Students' Mean Scores on N-IPES and SSS-SF and Their Sub-Scales

	SSS-SF						
	Teaching staff	School management	Participation in decisions	Scientific, social and technical facilities	Quality of education	SSS-SF	
N-IPES	Professional development	r=217** p=0.00	r=0.267* p=0.000	r=0.050 p=0.404	r=0.267** p=0.000	r=0.212** p=0.000	r=0.250** p=0.000
	Personal development	r=202** p=0.01	r=189** p=0.01	r=0.026 p=0.667	r=0.208** p=0.000	r=0.173** p=0.003	r=0.198** p=0.001
	Guidance/counseling	r=204** p=0.01	r=277** p=0.00	r=0.173** p=0.003	r=0.346** p=0.000	r=0.358** p=0.000	r=0.357** p=0.000
	General features of the program	r=293** p=0.00	r=277** p=0.00	r=0.173** p=0.003	r=0.346** p=0.000	r=0.358** p=0.000	r=0.357** p=0.000
	Application area properties	r=283** p=0.00	r=254** p=0.00	r=0.160** p=0.007	r=0.343** p=0.000	r=0.327** p=0.000	r=0.337** p=0.000
	Communication with patients and their relatives	r=183** p=0.02	r=244** p=0.00	r=0.072 p=0.228	r=0.288** p=0.000	r=0.268** p=0.000	r=0.264** p=0.000
	N-IPES	r=274** p=0.00	r=284** p=0.00	r=0.100 p=0.091	r=0.329** p=0.000	r=0.294** p=0.000	r=0.317** p=0.000

A statistically significant and positive relationship was found between students' total scores on the N-IPES and SSS-SF, and also between all of their mean scores on the subscales of these two scales, except the subscale of participation in decisions (Table 4). This result shows that as students' satisfaction with internships increases, their satisfaction with nursing education, except participation in decisions, also increases. According to the studies, thanks to internship programs, nurses' decision-making skills became stronger, their problem-solving skills increased, their stress during patient care decreased, their ability to manage time appropriately improved, and their professional satisfaction increased. As a result, nursing students were satisfied with the internship component of their nursing education (35-37). Overall, internship programs increase students' satisfaction with nursing education by positively affecting their professional/personal

development, communication skills with clinical nurses/patients/patient relatives, and satisfaction with application areas.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study determined that participating students highly appreciated the internship program and were satisfied with their nursing education. The internship program was found to increase students' satisfaction with nursing education. Therefore, the authors recommend developing and integrating internship programs into all nursing education programs.

Conflict of interest: None of the authors report conflicts of interest.

Author Statements

Study design: EYK,GBT,

Data collection: GBT,FGO

Data analysis: EYK, GBT

Manuscript writing: GBT, EYK, FGO

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