

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

It has become generally accepted in the past among health care professionals that continuing education is important to both institutions and individuals (10), and important to nursing practice and the quality of patient care (11). Continuing nursing education is important to nursing practice because it enables the nurse to provide care that is based on life-long learning and research, thus enhancing technical and psycho-social aspects of patient care (12). Early studies that identified reasons for participation in continuing education program attempted to find links with demographic variables such as age, sex, marital status, previous study level, and income (13). Not all research confirmed the relationship between these variables and continuing education participation. Some researchers found that age, parental status, and marital status were not significant predictors of participation in continuing education program (14). Other researchers also found that demographic variables weren't significant predictors of continuing education participation (15).

Federal and statutory requirements demand and professional associations, health care agencies, and the benefits of professional nurses included competence, improved quality of care, personal benefits, such as self-satisfaction, and social benefits, such as shorter hospital stays for patients (16).

A 1988 study found no significant differences in the self-reported nursing behaviors between nurses who did not attend these offerings, and those who attended. It might not be realistic to expect a significant change in nursing practice from attendance at short-term continuing education offerings (16). Other studies, however, suggest that continuing education results in increased knowledge, changed performance, and changed attitudes. Using the nursing audit, it was found that continuing education offerings facilitated improved techniques, more confidence, greater knowledge and skills in nursing personnel, increased awareness of patient needs, and increased abilities in dealing with patients and family (17). Other also found that nurses who participated in continuing nursing education incorporated newly gained knowledge into their clinical practice (18). In the continuing nursing education, the motivation, the attitudes and skills of continued

learning, which should be carefully developed and nurtured in the basic nursing program, are used by the individual learner in her on-going development.

Some studies do support the belief that continuing education does improve nursing practice and patient care. One study found, in it's study of week program to improve professional nurses' abilities to assess and manage clients with rheumatological disorders that continuing education did improve practice. Nurses were contracted three to four months after completion of the program and still reported statistically significant gains. After the program were conducted, they found that nurses who attended program were more knowledgeable about arthritis and more likely to use new knowledge in patient care (19). It is the individual nurse who must identify learning needs and plan continuing education activities. Nurses are fortunate to have a variety of methodologies available to pursue professional lifelong learning in developed country. Nurses engaged in planned education program such as staff development conference and workshop as the primary methods for earning the required credit hours; reading is usually not a part of their mandated learning activities(20). Nurses who have completed refresh courses have found gainful employment in a variety of meeting and have remained in those

settings. The majority of the respondents demonstrated eagerness and professional responsibility in continuing to expand their knowledge and skills in clinical practice by attending in service, continuing education, and academic offerings.

It is anticipated that program will be "**demanding**" and participation will increase, with the rapidly expanding medical field, public and private sectors, to meet the need and interests of the market segments comprising the nursing community. It is essential that continuing education providers know the preferences of this community.



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