THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING COURSE TO ENHANCE THE CAREER PLANNING COMPETENCY OF NURSING STUDENTS

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were 1) to develop of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students and 2) to compare students' career planning competency, before and after the implementation. The simple group of this study consisted of 30 third-year with mixed abilities (strong, medium, and weak) nursing students of Wei fang Nursing Vocational College were sampled through random cluster. The research instruments included 1) training course based on information processing theory and 2) career planning competency test. The assessment questions aim to assess three sub-variables within the dependent variable including: 1) career pathways in nursing, 2) stress management and work-life balance, and 3) cultural competency and communication competency. The data were analyzed by mean, standard deviation and t-test for dependent sample. The results revealed the followings:

1. Training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students which consisted of 1) principle 2) objectives 3) contents and time 4) training methods 5) learning media/resources, and 6) assessment and the course evaluation results were at higher and better level.

2. Comparing of their career planning competency and abilities before and after implementation, the average score in pre-test evaluation was 80 of full score 120, and in post-test evaluation was 106 of full score 120. It was found that after learning was higher than before learning by statistically at the 0.01 level. That was consistent with the research hypothesis.

Keywords: Training Course, Career Planning, Nursing Students

Introduction

The development of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students was an ongoing process. As the nursing profession continues to evolve and demand increases, training courses were constantly being refined and updated. For a long time in the past, training courses mainly focused on imparting nursing skills and knowledge, but with the changes in society and the development of the medical field, more and more attention

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was paid to the career planning ability of students. Career planning was a pivotal element in shaping the future employment prospects of college students, serving as an essential component of their overall career development. According to Smith (2020), effective career planning sets the stage for ongoing personal and professional growth, enabling students to navigate the complex job market with greater ease. By designing a well-thought-out and realistic personal career plan, college students laid the groundwork for their professional journey, marking the initial steps toward long-term success. In addition to basic planning, Smith emphasized the importance of self-assessment, industry research, and networking in the career planning process. He suggested that students should engage in deep introspection to understand their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and values, as this self-awareness was crucial in aligning their career paths with personal aspirations and market demands. Smith also highlighted the significance of thorough research into potential industries and roles, which helped students "gain valuable insights into the job market and identified emerging opportunities that align with their competency and interests.

Furthermore, the role of networking in effective career planning, stating that it was "an indispensable tool for uncovering job prospects and gathering firsthand industry knowledge from experienced professionals." Platforms such as LinkedIn, alumni associations, and professional events could provide invaluable opportunities for students to connect with industry leaders and peers alike. Therefore, Smith concluded that proactive career planning was not merely about making informed decisions but also about equipping oneself for the ever-changing landscape of the workforce. (Smith, 2020)

In recent years, as the economic and societal landscapes had evolved, an increasing number of universities had begun to integrate career planning courses into their curricula, recognizing the importance of equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the modern job market. However, challenges persisted due to various systemic issues. According to recent studies by Thompson et al. (2022) and Wang (2023), many educational institutions still fell short in adequately emphasizing career planning. These deficiencies stemmed from factors such as insufficient funding for career services, the absence of a structured career development and planning framework, and inadequate educational organization.

The critical shortage of professional career planning guidance teams within universities. This lack led to students having nebulous career objectives, subjective self-assessments, diminished awareness of the importance of planning, and misaligned valued orientations towards their future careers. Wang highlighted the repercussions of these shortcomings, noting that students faced challenges in aligning their academic pursuits with realistic career paths, resulting in a mismatch between their skills and market demands (Thompson et al., 2022).

Many college students did not attach enough importance to the issue of career planning and do not play a guiding role in effective pre job preparation. There were several obvious tendencies in job preparation: there was a tendency to overestimate or underestimate, showing significant bias; When understanding career information, too much attention was paid to whether the career meets their own needs, while ignoring the matching degree between career needed and their own qualities; Most students were relatively passive in investing in the career planning preparation (Brown, S.D., & Lent, R. W.,2016).

In the dynamic landscape of today’s economy and society, a growing number of universities had recognized the importance of integrating career planning courses into their curricula. Despite this positive trend, systemic challenges continue to impede the effectiveness of these initiatives. According to a study by Rodriguez and Patel (2022), insufficient emphasis on career planning within university curricula, coupled with a lack of dedicated funding, significantly undermines the potential benefits of these programs. Furthermore, as highlighted in the research by Kim and Chang (2024), many institutions lacked a cohesive career development and planning system, suffered from inadequate organizational structures for delivering career education, and faced a shortage of professional career planning teams.

These shortcomings result in students grappling with vague career objectives, unrealistic self-assessments, diminished planning awareness, and skewed value orientations—factors that collectively hinder their employment prospects. Rodriguez and Patel (2022) argued for a more structured approach to career education, while Kim and Chang (2024) emphasized the need for universities to invest in professional guidance teams and develop systematic planning frameworks. Addressing these issues could significantly enhance the clarity and effectiveness of career planning for college students, thereby improving their readiness and success in the job market. Many college students failed to recognize the importance of career planning, neglecting its crucial role in effective pre-job preparation. This oversight led to several common trends in their approach to entering the workforce. As identified by Parker and Morgan (2022), there was a notable tendency among students to misjudge their capabilities and prospects, resulting in significant overestimation or underestimation of their career readiness. This bias skewed their approach to job preparation and undermined their potential success. Furthermore, when it comes to gathering career information, students tended to focus narrowly on whether a job aligns with their personal desires, overlooking the critical aspect of compatibility between their own skills and the demands of the position, as discussed in research by Chen and Liu (2023).This self-centered approach could lead to poor job fits and unsatisfactory career trajectories. Moreover, the majority of students exhibit a passive stance toward career preparation, as noted by Parker and Morgan (2022). Rather than proactively seeking opportunities to enhance their employability, they adopted a reactive posture, waiting for opportunities to present themselves. This passivity in career preparation can significantly hinder their ability to secure desirable positions post-graduation. To address these issues, it was imperative that educational institutions and students themselves recognize the value of active, informed career planning and preparation, aligning personal strengths and market needs to foster more effective job search strategies and career development paths (Burke, L. A., & Hutchins, H. M. ,2007).

How to scientifically and effectively guide and support college students in career development planning was an important task in university work. This article mainly elaborated on the analysis of how to help students process cognitive information through training, and continuously improved their career planning abilities by recognizing themselves inwardly and the environment outwardly.

In a concise and rigorous structure, training programs provided students with the opportunity to acquire important career planning competency and information. The length, format, and content of these projects may vary, but they typically cover career exploration, goal setting, job search strategies, and networking. Through a combination of classroom teaching, group activities, and individual exercises, students gain the necessary knowledge and competency to make informed judgments about their future employment (Creed, P. A., Fallon, T., & Hood, M. 2014).

Career planning was also called "career planning". In academia, people also liked to call it "career planning". In some areas, some people liked to call it "life planning", but the content was really the same. Also known as career design, it referred to the combination of individuals and organizations, on the basis of measuring, analyzing and summarizing the subjective and objective conditions of personal careers, comprehensively analyzing and weighing their interests, hobbies, abilities and characteristics, combined with the characteristics of the times, determine best career goals according to your career orientation, and made effective arrangements to achieve this goal (Gallagher, K. 2021).

The impact of training course on students' career planning competency. For example, an integrated model of career development (Patton and McMahon, 2014) suggested that the development of career planning competency was influenced by a variety of personal, social, and contextual factors that interacted in complex ways. Using various theoretical frameworks to address these questions, training course helped develop career planning competency.

Research indicates that training course could enhance students' capacity for career planning. A National Bureau of Economic Research study, for instance, indicated that

participation in a one-month job training course led to a considerable boost in employment and wages for low-income persons (Bloom et al., 2019). A separate study discovered that a six-week job exploration program enhanced students' career self-efficacy and enthusiasm to pursue their selected career pathways (Zamarripa & Hackett, 2021).

In conclusion, training course offered a potential approach for increasing students' career planning competency. By equipping students with the knowledge and competency they needed to make educated decisions about their future jobs, these programs could minimize underemployment and job discontent and boost economic mobility generally. Yet, it was crucial to ensure that these programs were of good quality, accessible to a diverse student population, and adapted to address the specific requirements of different student groups. Educators and governments assisted ensure that all students had opportunities to accomplish their career objectives by investing in the creation and delivery of excellent training programs. Finally, this study was conducted to compare students' career planning competency, before and after the implementation to fully illustrate the necessity of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students

Concept Definition and Research Hypothesis

1. Definition of research object

1.1 To develop of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students.

1.2 To compare students' career planning competency, before and after the implementation.

2. Research hypothesis

After the implementation training courses to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students, the students' career planning competency has been improved obviously.

Research design and variable measurement

1. Research design

1.1 Population and Samples

Population: There were 300 third-year students majoring in nursing of Wei Fang Nursing Vocational College. Divided into 10 classes, each class has 30 students.

The Sample Group: Through random cluster sampling, 30 third-year, class 2 nursing students with mixed abilities (strong, medium, and weak) of Wei fang Nursing Vocational College were sampled.

1.2 Contents

This research proposes to carry out training based on cognitive information processing theory to improve college students' career planning competency. Include Knowledge Teaching of Cognitive Information Processing Theory, Carry out group activities, Practice by yourself and other items. This research only studies the career planning competency of juniors.

The training course consists of 5 units: 12h

1) Career Pathways in Nursing, 4 hours
2) Stress Management and Work-life Balance, 4 hours
3) Cultural Competency and Communication, 4 hours

1.3 Research Instruments

The development of training course based on Cognitive information processing theory to improve the career planning of Nursing students. The research Instruments was as follows:

1) Training course to improve the career planning competency of nursing students.
2) Career Planning competency test.

2. Variable measurement

2.1 Independent Variable: Training courses to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students that consisted of 1) principle 2) objectives 3) contents and time 4) training methods 5) learning media/resources, and 6) assessment

2.2 Dependent Variable: Career planning competency that categorized into 1) Career Pathways in Nursing 2) Stress Management and Work-life Balance 3) Cultural Competency and communication competency.

3. Conceptual Framework

The research framework of the development of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students.

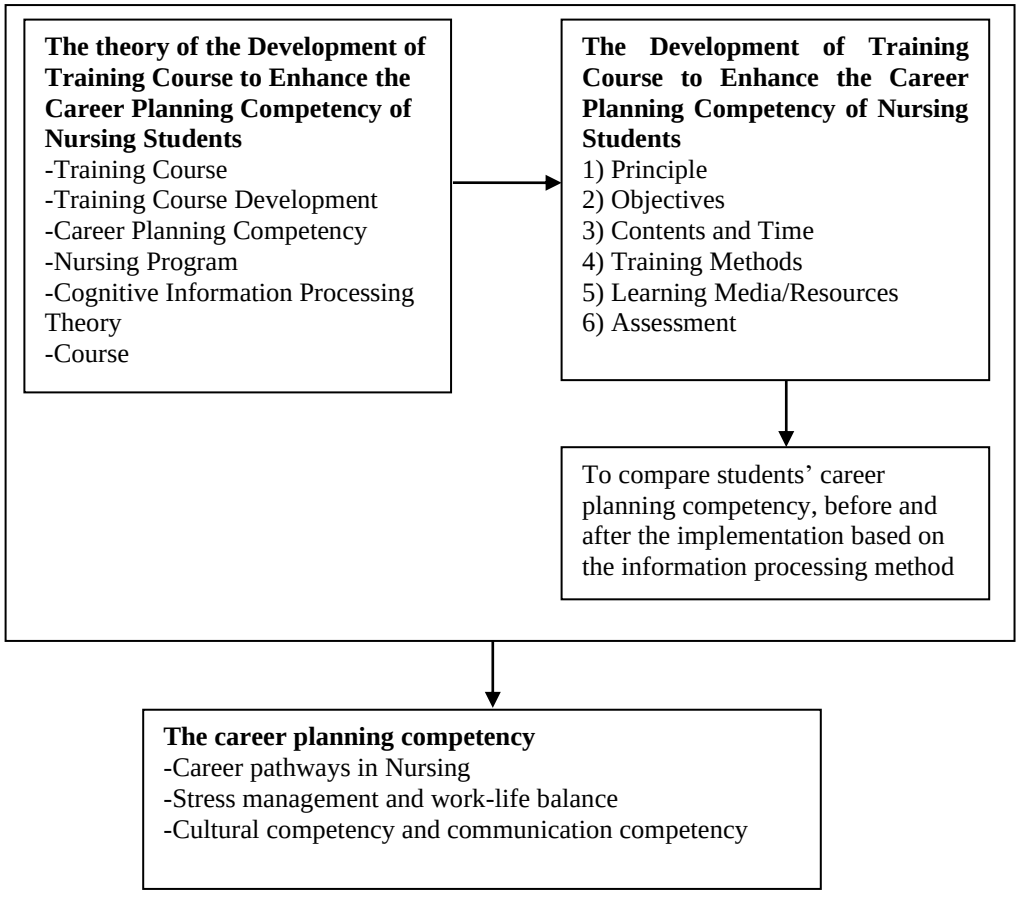


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Statistical analysis

In this paper, SPSS 20.0 were used to analyze the relevant data in the empirical study. The detailed research methods include: reliability analysis, validity analysis, results of research data analysis. There were as below:

1. Reliability and validity analysis

Taking instruments to 3 experts to verify the validity. The Career planning competency test consistency the index of congruency was between 0.60-1.00. Cronbach's a values were all above 0.70, which shows that the coefficient has good measurement reliability, the internal

consistency of the questionnaire was good, and the scale passes the test of reliability coefficient.

2. Results of research data analysis

The study focused on 30 nursing students from the Weifang Nursing Vocational College as research subjects, aiming to enhance the career planning competency from the training course by cognitive information processing. The detailed results of the pre-test and post-test through training course were shown as in Table 1.

Table 1 Learning score between pre-test and post-test

Learning Content	n	Full Scores	Pre-test		Post-test		D
			$\bar{X}$	SD.	$\bar{X}$	SD.	
1. Career pathways in Nursing	30	40	28	0.846	32	0.986	4
2. Stress management and work-life balance	30	40	22	0.824	28	0.752	6
3. Cultural competency and communication competency	30	40	24	0.622	36	0.632	12
Total		120	74		96		22

From the Table 1, the changes in the scores of three learning content of nursing students about training course of career planning competency were as follows: 1) Career pathways in Nursing: The average score before learning was 28 points, and the average score learning was 32 points, with an average difference of 4 points. 2) Stress management and work-life balance: The average score before learning was 22 points, and the average score learning was 28 points, with an average difference of 6 points. 3) Cultural competency and communication competency: The average score before learning was 24 points, and the average score after learning was 36 points, with an average difference of 12 points. Therefore, the training course could enhance the career planning competency of nursing students.

The application of learned competency in real-world settings, such as clinical environments or job interviews, was a crucial indicator of the course's practical effectiveness. Completion and dropout rates can shed light on the course's overall appeal and effectiveness. External evaluations by educational or professional bodies contribute an objective perspective on the course quality. Specific improvements in career planning competencies, like enhanced resume writing and interview performance, were direct measures of success. Lastly, the job placement rates of participants post-course can significantly indicate the course's effectiveness in aiding students' career planning and development.

Table 2 Comparison of career planning competency by pre-test and post-test with training course

Learning content		n	Full Point	$\bar{X}$	SD.	t	p
Total score	Pre-test	30	120	80	1.965	9.96	.00
	Post-test	30	120	106	1.16		

Statistically significant at level .01 ($p < .01$)

From the Table 2, it could be observed that the career planning competency post-scores were higher than pre-scores, which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The average score of students before learning training course was 80 points, and after learning training course, it increased to an average of 106 points, with an average difference of 26 points. The results indicate that after learning training course was better.

Research conclusion and discussion

1. Conclusion

According to the research topic, the study on enhancing the career planning competency of nursing students was summarized as follows:

1.1 Development of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students, training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students which consisted of 1) principle 2) objectives 3) contents and time 4) training methods 5) learning media/resources, and 6) Evaluation. The course evaluation results were at highest level.

1.2 Comparing students' career planning competency, before and after the implementation. For comparing of their career planning competency before and after implementation, the average score in pre-test evaluation was 80 of full score 120, and in post-test evaluation was 106 of full score 120. It was found that after learning was higher than before learning by statistically at the 0.01 level. That was consistent with the research hypothesis.

2. Discussion

Research on the development of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students was conducted in the first semester of the 2023 academic year. It involved the study of career planning competency for 30 nursing students in Weifang Nursing Vocational College using cognitive information processing. The research could be discussed from two parts.

2.1 Development of training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students, from the first result, there were discussion as follows:

The principle of the Career Planning Competency Training Course was to equip nursing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective career management. This includes understanding the wide array of career opportunities within the nursing field, honing professional skills, and setting realistic and achievable career goals. Research of Zhang (2020) was consistent with this. The study of Zhang shows that the career planning ability training course has a significant role in promoting the career development of nursing students. By participating in the course, nursing students can better understand the career opportunities in the nursing field, improve their professional skills, and set practical career goals. This will help nursing students to stand out in the future workplace competition and realize their career ideals.

The objectives of the course were multifaceted. Primarily, it aims to provide nursing students with a comprehensive understanding of career planning and development. Additionally, it seeks to enhance students' awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, and career aspirations. The course also offers practical tools and techniques for career management and aims to build confidence in students to make informed career decisions. Wang (2020)'s research was consistent with this. The study of Wang (2020) shows that nursing students need to improve their professional quality and competitiveness through systematic career planning education and practice. This complements the objectives of this course and further verifies the importance and practical value of this course.

The course content was divided into several modules, each lasting one to two hours. The modules cover topics such as the importance of career planning, self-assessment, goal setting, exploring various career options within nursing, resume writing, job application processes, interview skills, professional development, and strategies for career advancement. These topics were designed to provide a holistic approach to career planning and equip students with the necessary skills for their professional journey. The study in Terese, W.M.S. (2019) was consistent with the curriculum content designed in this paper, both emphasizing the importance of career planning for personal development. Through the study of this course, students will be able to master a complete set of career planning methods and skills to lay a solid foundation for their future development.

Training methods employed in the course include lectures, workshops, group discussions, role-playing, case studies, and guest speakers. These methods were intended to provide both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Lectures and presentations offer foundational knowledge, while workshops and role-playing provide hands-on practice. Group discussions encourage the exchange of ideas, and guest speakers provide valuable industry insights. Smith (2022) study coincides with the training method used in this paper. His research points out that diversified training methods can effectively improve the learning effect and satisfaction of students and enhance the effectiveness of the training.

The course utilizes a variety of learning media and resources to enhance the educational experience. These include printed materials, online resources, multimedia presentations, career planning software, and library resources. These diverse materials ensure that students have access to comprehensive information and tools to aid their learning. Jones (2021)'s research was consistent with this. Research by Jones (2021) shows that diverse learning media and resources can effectively improve students' learning experience and effectiveness.

Assessment in the course was conducted through quizzes, tests, assignments, participation, feedback, and a final project. These assessments were designed to evaluate the students' understanding of theoretical concepts, practical skills, and overall engagement with the course material. The final project, which involves presenting a comprehensive career plan, serves as a culmination of the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course.

The course evaluation results indicate that the training program was highly effective and well-received. Students reported a significant increase in their understanding of career planning concepts and felt more confident in their ability to manage their careers. The course content, training methods, and resources were rated highly, contributing to the overall success of the training program. Brown (2023)'s research was consistent with this. The research Brown (2023) suggests that effective career planning training should include the cultivation of the understanding of career planning concepts, self-awareness, goal setting, planning, and continuous learning. Our training program covers exactly these aspects, thus achieving good training results.

2.2 Comparing students' career planning competency, before and after the implementation, from the second result, there were discussion as below.

Once the course content was developed, the next steps were Implementation and Evaluation. The implementation phase involves the actual delivery of the course, organizing logistics like scheduling, securing instructors or speakers, and setting up necessary resources and technology. Maintaining flexibility to adjust the course based on ongoing feedback was crucial during this phase. The evaluation phase involves gathering and analyzing feedback from students and instructors to assess whether the learning objectives were met, the relevance of the content, and the effectiveness of the teaching methods. Cai (2017)'s research was consistent with this. His research found that the implementation and evaluation phases were critical to the success of the course. Through effective implementation and evaluation, the quality of the course content and the teaching effect can be improved. Therefore, educational institutions should pay attention to the curriculum implementation and evaluation links, and continuously optimize the curriculum design to improve the quality of education.

Additionally, practical outcomes such as improvements in students' career planning abilities, resume creation, interview performance, and overall job market readiness were evaluated. Finally, insights from the evaluation were used for continuous improvement of the course, which might involve updating the content to keep pace with changing industry trends, modifying teaching methods to better engage students, or addressing logistical challenges encountered during implementation. Smithoule.A (2017), research was consistent with this. In the Smithoule.A (2017)'s study, the curriculum was constantly updated to ensure that students have up-to-date industry knowledge. At the same time, the teaching methods were also adjusted to attract students to participate more effectively and improve their learning enthusiasm.

Through these steps, developing a training course to enhance the career planning competency of nursing students requires careful planning and execution, focusing on creating relevant, engaging content and a rigorous implementation and evaluation process to ensure the course meets its objectives and effectively aids students in their career planning and development.

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