



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**MOTIVATIONAL REASONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE  
PARTICIPATION OF REGISTERED NURSES IN THE NURSING  
DEGREE PROGRAM**

**JEYA DEVI COOMARASAMY**

**FPP 1998 1**

**MOTIVATIONAL REASONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF  
REGISTERED NURSES IN THE NURSING DEGREE PROGRAM**

**By  
JEYA DEVI COOMARASAMY**

**Project Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Science in Human Resource Development in the  
Faculty of Educational Studies,  
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

**October 1998**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Dr Abu Daud Silong for his invaluable guidance, patience and encouragement. My appreciation and thanks also goes to my lecturers Dr. Hj. Azimi Hj. Hamzah, Dr. Bahaman Abu Samah and Dr. Turiman Suandi for their critique, comments and advice.

I am indebted to Associate Professor Siti Rabikatun bt Mohd Zain, Head of Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya and Madam Cheah Keat Heng, Director of Nursing, Assunta Hospital. They were not only kind enough to give me permission to conduct the study amongst their students but also helped in a number of ways to ensure the success of this study.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the registered nurses who participated in this study.

Last but not least I would like to thank all my family members for helping me with the various activities involved when doing this project.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>  | iii       |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>   | vii       |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>  | x         |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>   | xi        |
| <b>ABSTRAK</b>  | xiii      |
| <b>CHAPTER</b>  |           |
| <b>I INTRODUCTION</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| The Problem and Its Context   | 1         |
| Statement of the Problem  | 5         |
| Objective of the Study  | 7         |
| Hypotheses of the Study   | 8         |
| Significance of the Study   | 10        |
| Assumptions and Scope of the Study  | 11        |
| Limitations   | 12        |
| Definition of Terms   | 12        |
| <b>II LITERATURE REVIEW</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| Concepts of Education, Lifelong Education, Adult<br>Education and Continuing Professional Education | 17        |
| Theories of Adult Learning  | 23        |
| Theories of Motivation  | 27        |
| Models of Adult Learning Motivation   | 31        |

|            |  |           |
|------------|--|-----------|
|            | Research on Motivational Orientations                                    | 35        |
|            | Other Characteristics  | 42        |
|            | Conclusion   | 46        |
| <b>III</b> | <b>METHODOLOGY</b>   | <b>47</b> |
|            | Design of the Study  | 47        |
|            | Theoretical and Research Framework                                       | 48        |
|            | Instrumentation  | 52        |
|            | Population and Sample  | 56        |
|            | Data Collection  | 57        |
|            | Data Analysis  | 58        |
| <b>IV</b>  | <b>RESULTS</b>   | <b>59</b> |
|            | Personal Information   | 60        |
|            | Professional Information   | 63        |
|            | Information About Respondent's Organisation                              | 69        |
|            | Response to Participation Reasons Scale                                  | 78        |
|            | Relationship of Selected Variables                                       | 87        |
|            | Summary of Findings  | 94        |
| <b>V</b>   | <b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> | <b>97</b> |
|            | Problems   | 97        |
|            | Objectives   | 98        |
|            | Significance   | 99        |
|            | Methodology  | 100       |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Results  | 101 |
| Major Conclusions and Discussion   | 103 |
| Objective One  | 103 |
| Objective Two  | 104 |
| Objective Three  | 106 |
| Objective Four   | 107 |
| Implications   | 108 |
| Recommendations  | 110 |
| <b>REFERENCES</b>  | 112 |
| <b>APPENDIX</b>  | 119 |
| A Research Questionnaire   | 120 |
| B Letter to Academicians to Validate Instrument                                  | 129 |
| C Letter to Head of Nursing Department, Faculty of Medicine<br>University Malaya | 130 |
| D Letter to Director of Nursing, Assunta Hospital                                | 131 |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</b>  | 132 |

## LIST OF TABLES

| Table |  | Page |
|-------|--|------|
| 1     | Summary of Scales Reliability.....   | 56   |
| 2     | Number of Respondents According to Age.....  | 60   |
| 3     | Number of Respondents According to Marital Status.....                               | 61   |
| 4     | Number of Respondents with Children.....   | 61   |
| 5     | Number of Children Respondents have According to<br>Marital Status.....              | 62   |
| 6     | Number of Children Respondents have Under the Age<br>of twelve.....                  | 63   |
| 7     | Number of Respondents According to Position.....                                     | 65   |
| 8     | Number of Respondents According to Length of Years<br>as Registered Nurse.....       | 66   |
| 9     | Number of Respondents who had Attended Post Basic<br>Courses.....                    | 67   |
| 10    | Number of Post Basic Courses Attended by<br>Respondents.....                         | 67   |
| 11    | Responses to Whether Post Basic Courses was<br>Mandatory for Career Advancement..... | 68   |
| 12    | Attendance to Present Course According to Position....                               | 68   |
| 13    | Responses to Whether Present Course was Mandatory<br>for Career Advancement.....     | 69   |

|    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 14 | Number of Respondents According to Organisation.....  | 71 |
| 15 | Number of Years Respondents Worked with Current<br>Employer.....  | 72 |
| 16 | Current Monthly Income of Respondents According to<br>Position.....   | 73 |
| 17 | Number of Respondents who had Superiors<br>Encouragement to Attend the Program.....                                   | 74 |
| 18 | Superior's Awareness of Respondents Attending the<br>Degree Program.....  | 75 |
| 19 | Number of Respondents who Had Organisation's<br>Support.....  | 76 |
| 20 | Type of Support Received by Respondents from<br>Organisation.....   | 77 |
| 21 | Estimate of Scale Reliability (Alpha Coefficient) of Five<br>Predetermined Factors.....                               | 78 |
| 22 | Rank Order, Percentage Distribution and Standard<br>Deviation of Responses to the Participation Reasons<br>Scale..... | 80 |
| 23 | Rank Order of Average Mean Scores Based on<br>Responses of Predetermined Factors.....                                 | 87 |
| 24 | Correlation Matrix of Selected Variables with Factor<br>Scale Scores.....   | 90 |
| 25 | Analysis of Variance of Factor Scores by Position.....  | 91 |



|    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 26 | Analysis of Variance of Factor Scores by Length of<br>Years as Registered Nurse..... | 92 |
| 27 | Analysis of Variance of Factor Scores by Income.....                                 | 93 |
| 28 | Analysis of Variance of Factor Scores by Method of<br>Attending Current Course.....  | 94 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure |  | Page |
|--------|--|------|
| 1      | Chain of Response Model in Adult Learning<br>Motivation..... | 34   |
| 2      | Theoretical Model of the Study.....                          | 50   |
| 3      | Research Framework.....                                      | 51   |

Abstract of project paper presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master Of Science.

**MOTIVATIONAL REASONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF REGISTERED NURSES IN THE NURSING DEGREE PROGRAM**

By

**JEYA DEVI COOMARASAMY**

**October 1998**

**Supervisor: Professor Dr Abu Daud Silong**

**Faculty : Educational Studies**

The nursing degree program is becoming popular among the registered nurses in Malaysia. This is despite the fact that most organisations do not make it a compulsory criterion for upward mobility or promotion. Therefore, it is important for nursing educators or HRD managers to understand why registered nurses participate voluntarily in the nursing degree program.

The purpose of this study is to identify the motivational reasons influencing the participation of registered nurses in the program. It is aimed to determine: (1) the major reasons for participation in the nursing degree program; (2) the differences in motivational reasons for participation between registered nurses in clinical, management and teaching positions; (3) the relationship between selected personal, professional and organisational variables and the reasons for participation and (4) whether nurses doing the program full time had different reasons for participation compared to nurses doing the program part time.

The study was based on a descriptive / correlational design and employed a survey methodology. The instrument used was the four-section questionnaire: personal, professional, organisational data and the 30 statement Participation Reasons Scale.

A total of 107 valid responses was analysed. The highest ranked statement was centered around the maintainance of professional competence. The above findings support existing studies where professional knowledge and skills were found to be the strongest motivators. The predetermined factor which had the highest average mean score was Professional Improvement and Development, followed by Professional Service, Professional Commitment and Reflection, Collegial Learning and Interaction and Personal Benefits and Job Security. There were no significant relationships between selected personal, professional and organizational variables with reasons for participation. However, a significant difference in relationship was found between nurses doing the program full time and part time with one participation factor – Professional Service. Further analysis showed that the Nursing Sisters doing the program part time had low mean scores for reasons associated with Professional Service compared to the other group of nurses. This requires further research to determine the underlying reasons behind it.

The study findings indicate that registered nurses were highly motivated towards the nursing degree program. It is highly recommended that HRD managers and educators take advantage of this current positive behaviour. Attempts should be made to increase the accessibility and availability of degree opportunities for nurses while maintaining the credibility of the program.

Abstrak kertas projek yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian daripada keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains.

**SEBAB-SEBAB MOTIVASI JURURAWAT BERDAFTAR MENYERTAI  
PROGRAM IJAZAH KEJURURAWATAN**

Oleh

**JEYA DEVI COOMARASAMY**

**Oktober 1998**

**Penyelia:      Profesor Dr Abu Daud Silong**

**Fakulti:      Pengajian Pendidikan**

Program Ijazah Kejururawatan semakin popular di kalangan jururawat berdaftar di Malaysia, walaupun ijazah ini tidak diperlukan oleh organisasi untuk kenaikan pangkat. Oleh itu, adalah penting bagi para pendidik jururawat atau pengurus pembangunan sumber manusia untuk memahami faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penyertaan sukarela jururawat dalam program ini.

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti sebab-sebab yang memotivasikan jururawat berdaftar untuk mengikuti program ijazah kejururawatan. Secara khususnya, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan: (1) sebab-sebab utama yang memotivasikan jururawat berdaftar untuk mengikut program ijazah; (2) perbezaan sebab-sebab yang memotivasikan jururawat berdaftar yang memegang jawatan klinikal, pengurusan dan pengajaran; (3) perhubungan di antara angkubah-angkubah individu, profesional dan organisasi dan sebab-sebab penyertaan dalam program ijazah dan

(4) perbezaan sebab-sebab bagi penyertaan di antara jururawat yang mengikuti program sepenuh masa dan jururawat yang mengikuti program separuh masa.

Kajian ini mengikuti rekabentuk diskriptif / korelasi dan menggunakan kaedah soal-selidik (survey). Instrumen yang digunakan mengandungi empat bahagian yang merangkumi data individu, profesional, organisasi dan "Participation Reasons Scale" yang mengandungi 30 kenyataan.

Sejumlah 107 respon telah dianalisa. Pernyataan yang paling banyak diberi ialah berkaitan dengan kecekapan profesional. Hasil soal-selidik menunjukkan bahawa pengetahuan dan kemahiran adalah pendorong utama. Faktor yang dikenal-pasti memperolehi purata tertinggi ialah Peningkatan dan Kemajuan Profesional. Empat faktor yang lain ialah Perkhidmatan Profesional, Komitmen Secara Profesional dan Refleksi, Pembelajaran "Collegial" dan Interaksi dan Faedah Peribadi dan Kestabilan Pekerjaan. Hubungan dengan angkubah peribadi, profesional dan organisasi tertentu menunjukkan bahawa tiada perbezaan yang nyata dengan sebab menyertai program ijazah. Bagaimanapun, perbezaan yang ketara wujud di antara jururawat yang menyertai program ini secara sepenuh masa dan separuh masa dengan faktor Perkhidmatan Profesional. Analisa selanjutnya menunjukkan bahawa Ketua Jururawat (Nursing Sister) yang menyertai program secara separuh masa memperolehi markah purata yang lebih rendah untuk sebab-sebab yang berkaitan dengan Perkhidmatan Profesional berbanding dengan kumpulan jururawat yang lain. Penyelidikan lanjut perlu dibuat untuk menentukan sebab-sebabnya.

Hasil penyelidikan menunjukkan jururawat berdaftar bermotivasi tinggi terhadap program ijazah kejururawatan. Para pengurus pembangunan sumber manusia

dan pendidik harus mengambil kesempatan berdasarkan tingkah laku positif ini. Oleh itu tindakan harus diambil untuk meningkatkan peluang bagi jururawat-jururawat mengikuti program ini sambil mengekalkan keredibilitinya.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **The Problem and its Context**

One of nursing's early founders, Florence Nightingale, identified the need for nurses of her day to continue learning after their training (Cooper and Hornback, 1973). Today this need is even far greater. Technical and scientific advances in medicine and science is occurring in such rapid pace that nurses are constantly being challenged to keep current with new information. There is a possibility that half of what is being learned today may become obsolete tomorrow. Furthermore, there is an increasing demand by the Malaysian public for professional accountability in the delivery of health care services. This has also made it vital for nurses to seek continuing education to maintain their competence. Similarly, the changing roles and functions of nurses in Malaysia not only suggest the need for further education but also demand it. Due to the shortage of some health care professionals namely the physicians, the practice of nursing is changing. Some of the activities traditionally performed by physicians are now being transferred to nursing. The expansion of the nurse's responsibilities demands proficiency in performing new technical skills associated with expanded role expectations.



The basic nursing education that a nurse receives can only be a foundation for professional competence. This foundation has to be built up through the years by undertaking carefully selected educational programs to improve further the knowledge and skills one have. As suggested by Houle (1961), a practising professional needs to gain professional competence through:

- I. keeping up with new knowledge related to his profession
- II. establishing mastery of the new conceptions of his own profession
- III. continuing his study of the basic discipline which supports his profession
- IV. growing as a person as well as a professional.

Continuing education can no longer be viewed as an extra requirement but rather a necessity for personal and professional competence.

The role of the nurse has undergone a long evolution from a form of Victorian servitude to a modern profession (Reverby, 1981). It is still continuing to evolve. Educators and theorist are constantly urging nurses to move away from their subordinate positions to the medical profession and to be proactive and independent. The development of greater professional self-confidence can only be gained through further professional education.

In Malaysia, the preparation for a career as a registered nurse begins in a hospital based diploma program. Following the completion of the three-year basic program the graduates are eligible to take the Nursing Board of Malaysia's licensing examination. The graduates may legally practise as Registered Nurses (RN) only when they have successfully passed this exam. Unlike many other countries, nurses in Malaysia are still being "trained" rather than being "educated" into their role (Siti

Rabikatur, 1993). The traditional nurse-training program does not allow the individual nurse to develop her potential to the full. If nurses aspire to become independent and play a more proactive and productive role in bringing about changes in the health care system, they must learn to seek ways to further improve their knowledge and skills. Only then can they meet society's needs for professional nursing.

Today, universities in Malaysia have begun to contribute towards assisting nurses in their continuous learning efforts. Since 1993, University Malaya took the lead by providing opportunities for registered nurses to pursue the Bachelor of Nursing Sciences degree. It recognised the fact that broadly educated nurses matched well with the complexities of the health care system (Anuar, 1993). Their program had been specifically designed to cater for registered nurses with clinical experiences. The whole program consists of three years with two semesters per year. However, registered nurses are allowed to go into Year 2 if they have post basic qualifications such as Orthopaedics, Paediatrics and Coronary Care Nursing. They are also allowed direct entry into the final year if they have an advance certificate or diploma in nursing administration or nursing education from its own Medical Centre or its equivalent. Since the program started in 1993, University Malaya has produced around 94 graduates. (Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, 1998). Another 20 registered nurses have sat for their exams and will be graduating in August 1998. Presently 66 registered nurses are pursuing the program. All these nurses are experienced and holding various nursing positions in private or government health care organisations throughout Malaysia.

Seeing there is a potential market, a number of private health and educational institutions are taking steps to offer the degree course in nursing. Most of them are planning to do it through twinning programs with universities from other countries such as Canada, USA, United Kingdom and Australia. Unlike the University of Malaya's program that is offered on a full time basis, most of the private institutions are trying to offer their program part time through distant learning. One such private institution is the Assunta Hospital in the Klang Valley. It has already started the two-year degree program known as the Bachelor of Health Sciences in Nursing. Their twinning program with a university in Australia is open for registered nurses working in private and government sectors. Since the commencement of its program in 1995 it has produced about 74 graduates (Department of Nursing, Assunta Hospital, 1998). Another 36 registered nurses from Sabah and Sarawak are currently pursuing the program. The goal of all these planned continuing professional education programs is to produce nurses with in-depth knowledge in the field of nursing sciences and medicine. The nurse learners, regardless of age are taught to guide their own learning and intellectual development.

In adult learning, one of the fundamental principles is that learning cannot be forced. Adults are said to learn when they are ready and have a genuine desire to learn (Knowles, 1970; Kidd, 1973). Thus, an understanding of what motivates registered nurses to participate in continuing professional education or more specifically in the nursing degree program has important implications for program planners and educators. Not only program planning and teaching strategies can be designed specifically to

learner needs but the program itself will be able to help attract more participants when it is structured to meet the registered nurses needs and preferences.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In many institutions in Malaysia, the degree program is yet to be considered an essential criterion for promotion or upper career mobility. This is despite the call by the Malaysian Nurses Association, the nurses' professional body to consider the degree in nursing as a pre-requisite for all teaching and administrative positions in nursing. Some private sectors have taken this into consideration. In the Public Service provisions had been made for registered nurses applying directly for the position of a Nursing Sister (U7) or Matron (U6) to have a nursing degree. However, it is not a criterion for promotions within the organisation.

Despite that many nurses are voluntarily taking up the degree program. Hence, it is important to understand the decision making process of the nurse learners so that more support and assistance can be provided with their learning activities (Morstain and Smart, 1977). Central to any educational programs is the participation of the learners in the learning activity. Thus, any data obtained will give educators an insight into the process that affects or enhances participation (Rockhill, 1983). In Malaysia, there is scarcely any research studies that have been done on why nurses participate in continuing professional education and more specifically in the degree program.

As educators and administrators involved in continuing professional education it is important for us to have knowledge in three general areas of practice. (O'Connor, 1986). These include:

- I. the adult learner's needs and motives for continuing education and modes of learning;
- II. the professional nurse's specialised learning needs and the multiple foundation for learning represented in the diverse paths of professional and nursing education currently available, and
- III. the health care system's needs for skilled practitioners of nursing, now and in the future.

The main area to focus upon is around the needs, motives and modes of the nurse as an adult learner. O' Connor (1986), believes that to increase nurse participation, continuing educators must understand what promotes adult learner involvement. In many studies active involvement in continuing professional education have been equated with motivational factors and selected demographic variables (Aburuzzese, 1988; Urbano, et.al, 1988; O'Connor, 1986). Such relationships are important to make predictions about future trends in participation (Miller, 1967). Any motivational studies done will help to advance the field of not only nursing education but also adult education (Tough, 1978). Thus, the subject of motivation in continuing professional education appears to be a fascinating one and an area worthy of investigation and learning.

The major question to be answered by this research study will be: **“What motivational reasons influence the participation of registered nurses in the Nursing Degree Program?”** However, the following questions were used as a guide in the conduct of the present study. These questions were:

1. What are the motivational reasons which registered nurses identify, according to the Participation Reasons Scale (PRS) for participating in the nursing degree program?
2. What are the differences in the reasons for participation in the nursing degree program among the nurses in clinical, management and teaching positions?
3. What are the relationships between personal, professional and organisational variables and reasons for participation of the registered nurses undergoing the nursing degree program?
4. What are the differences in the reasons for participation between the nurses doing the nursing degree program full time and those who are doing it part time?

### **Objective of the Study**

#### **General Objective**

The objective of this study is to identify the motivational reasons that influence the participation of registered nurses in the nursing degree program.

#### **Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the motivational reasons of registered nurses for participating in the nursing degree program.
2. To find out if there are any differences in reasons for participating in the nursing degree program among nurses in clinical, management and teaching positions.

3. To ascertain if there is any relationship between selected personal, professional and organisational variables and the reasons for participation in the nursing degree program.
4. To determine if there are any differences in the reasons for participation between the nurses doing the degree program full time and those nurses doing the program part time.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- I. A significant difference in participation reasons exists among nurses in clinical, management and teaching positions.
- II. A significant difference in the reasons for participation in the nursing degree program exists amongst respondents:
  - a) from different age groups
  - b) from different income groups
  - c) with different number of years of experience as registered nurses
  - d) from different types of organisations.
- III. Nurses with post basic courses have different reasons for participation in the degree program compared to nurses without post basic courses.
- IV. Significant differences in reasons for participation exist between registered nurses doing the degree program full time and the registered nurses doing the program part time.

Hypotheses I was based on existing study that the reasons for participation in any continuing professional education depends on the area the nurse works in. It is generally assumed that nurses involved in education (Nursing Tutors) are more concerned with Professional Improvement and Development. Whereas, nurses working in clinical (Staff Nurses) and in management (Nursing Sisters) areas have been found to place more importance in participation reasons related to Professional Service in order to give quality care to their clients.

Hypotheses II was based on selected variables, which were thought to have an impact on nurses' attempt to further their studies. A number of existing studies have indicated a positive correlation between age and reasons for participation. Studies have shown that nurses in the 30 to 39 years age group place more importance to participation reasons related to Professional Service compared to those in the 40 to 49 years and 50 to 59 years age group.

Similarly, it has been found that nurses who have been registered nurses for longer period of time attach greater importance to participation reasons related to Professional Service compared to those nurses who have been registered nurses for lesser period of time.

The variable income has been widely studied in relation to motivational reasons for participating in continuing education. Registered nurses in the lower salary range have been found to place greater importance on participation reasons related to Professional Service. Whereas, registered nurses in higher salary range were more interested in Collegial Learning and Interaction.