

Participation in Co-Curricular Activities of Undergraduate Nursing Students Attending the Leadership Promoting Program Based on Self-Directed Learning Approach

Pornnipa Taksin, Jutamas Wongchan, Amornrat Karamee

Abstract—The researchers' experience of student affairs in 2011-2013, we found that few undergraduate nursing students become student association members who participated in co-curricular activities, they have limited skill of self-directed-learning and leadership. We developed "A Leadership Promoting Program" using Self-Directed Learning concept. The program included six activities: 1) Breaking the ice, Decoding time, Creative SMO, Know me-Understand you, Positive thinking, and Creative dialogue, which include four aspects of these activities: decision-making, implementation, benefits, and evaluation. The one-group, pretest-posttest quasi-experimental research was designed to examine the effects of the program on participation in co-curricular activities. Thirty five students participated in the program. All were members of the board of undergraduate nursing student association of Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi. All subjects completed the questionnaire about participation in the activities at beginning and at the end of the program. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and dependent t-test. The results showed that the posttest scores of all four aspects mean were significantly higher than the pretest scores ($t=3.30, p<.01$). Three aspects had high mean scores, Benefits (Mean = 3.24, S.D. = 0.83), Decision-making (Mean = 3.21, S.D. = 0.59), and Implementation (Mean=3.06, S.D.=0.52). However, scores on evaluation falls in moderate scale (Mean = 2.68, S.D. = 1.13). Therefore, the Leadership Promoting Program based on Self-Directed Learning Approach could be a method to improve students' participation in co-curricular activities and leadership.

Keywords—Participation in co-curricular activities, undergraduate nursing students, leadership promoting program, self-directed learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

CO-CURRICULAR activities are the main responsibility of student associations or student affairs based on the organizational structure of Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi. Its main duty is to organize co-curricular activities for nursing students to graduate. Participating in activities allows students to develop learning about work processes as they learn and absorb morality, ethics and wisdom with interpersonal skills training to build responsibility, training in decision making, problem-solving, leadership development, communication, teamwork and

patience [1]. The educational administration process needs to promote undergraduate nursing students' ability to develop naturally to their fullest capacity. It needs to contain diverse learning processes and organize activities compatible with student interests [2]. Thus, student affairs in conjunction with the Academic Affairs Department, organize three activity hours per week for student participation based on student activity calendars. Some examples include health-promoting activities, art and culture activities, social development volunteer activities, academic promotion and education quality assurance activities and moral ethics promoting activities. Organizing quality activities requires both the professors and personnel of student associations or student affairs, particularly student leaders who initiate and conduct creative activities. They also persuade fellow students from the entire institution to participate in those activities [3] and offer opportunities for undergraduate nursing students to take part in college activities based on their interests under the supervision of advisory professors. The hope is that the student activities will allow the students to gain direct experience in working with other people. It is also hoped that they will create learning, social skills, emotion control, physical and emotional development as well as building a collegiate atmosphere and environment promoting inside and outside classroom learning for undergraduate nursing students.

Based on the experience of the researchers working in student affairs or student associations in conjunction with student associations during 2011 to 2013, student association members infrequently and inconsistently participate in co-curricular activities and are not ready to become student association members. This finding concurs with data from student group conversations that took place on June 3, 2014. Problems found to occur with co-curricular activities include disinterest in participating in the activities of student association members, no motivation to become student association members, no preparation for performing duties in student associations, inability to manage time due to heavy study load and failure to recognize the significance of the participation in co-curricular activity.

The researchers used the Self-directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLR) [4] which is composed of the following three elements: 1) Self-management 2) Desire for learning; and, 3) Self-control, to measure and promote the self-directed learning readiness of student leaders for participation in co-curricular

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activities. For participation in co-curricular activities, the researchers used the theory of [5] that divides participation into following three steps: initiation, decision making and deciding to operate; 2) Implementation 3) Benefits; and, 4) Evaluation. The research findings will be used in the development of a leadership promoting program based on self-directed learning approach with suitable quality, benefits and

effectiveness based on the needs of nursing students. The findings can also be used to ensure that every student association member has more opportunities to participate in student association activities. It hoped that the student association members will be molded into good and happy people as well as graduates with desirable qualities meeting the philosophy and intention. (See Fig. 1)

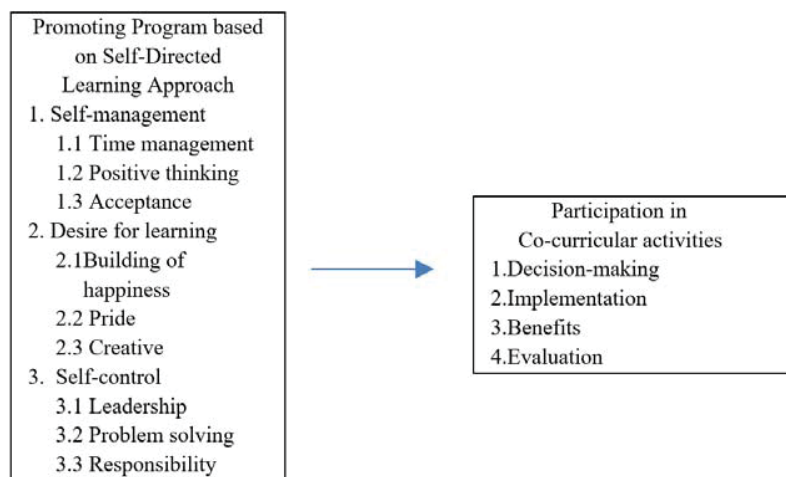


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework

II. METHODOLOGY

This research was a one-group quasi experimental research design with pretest and posttest evaluation aimed at studying the participation in co-curricular activities of student association members attending the leadership promoting program based on self-directed learning approach of 35 undergraduate nursing student association of Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi for academic year of 2014.

A. Population and Samples

The population was composed of 585 nursing students at Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi, including 120 first year nursing students, 75 second year nursing students, 80 3rd - year A nursing students, 84 3rd-year B nursing students,

112 4th-year A students and 114 4th-year B students. A sample group of 35 was purposively selected as director of student association of Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi for the 2014 academic year. Of these, six students were first-year students, 10 were second-year students, six third-year- A students, nine third-year-B students, three fourth-year-A students and one fourth-year-B student. The samples were willing to participate in the research.

B. Instruments

The research instruments were composed of the following two parts:

Part I - The leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach was developed by the researcher based on the concept of [4]. The program was composed of the following three components: 1) Self-management activities - time management, positive thinking, and acceptance; 2) Desire for learning activities-building of

happiness, pride and creative; and 3) Self-control activities-leadership, problem solving and responsibility, divided into six activities, namely, breaking the ice, decoding time, creative SMO, Know Me-Understand You, positive thinking and creative dialogue. The program was validated by three qualified experts and tested in 35 student association members in student associations during the 2014 academic year.

Part 2- The questionnaire about participation in Co-Curricular Activities was a questionnaire with four level rating scale from high participation, moderate participation, low participation and no participation. The instrument contained 30 questions developed by the researcher based on the participation concept of [5] and divided into the following four aspects: Decision-making (questions 1-6), Implementation (questions 7-16), Benefits (questions 17-22) and Evaluation (questions 23-30). Levels of participation were divided into low (mean score 1.00-2.00), moderate (mean score 2.01-3.00) and high (mean score 3.01-4.00). The instrument was validated by three qualified experts and implemented in a pilot study with 35 student association members of Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi for the 2014 academic year. The results obtained were used to calculate the Item-Objective Congruency Index (IOC), which was +0.6 - 1.0. Reliability was 0.85.

C. Data Collection

This research was approved by the Institutional Review Board on Ethics in Research Involving Human Subjects of Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi. In addition to the research objectives, the researcher explained to the sample group that all data was classified and the findings would only be presented from an aggregate perspective.

1. At pretest, 35 student association members assessed their participation in co-curricular activities.
 2. The research team conducted the research on the student association members with the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach composed of the following three components:
 - 2.1. Self-management-to develop leadership in time management and planning by using the self-directed learning approach with training on basic knowledge about participation in co-curricular activities for two hours from 6 to 8 pm.
 - 2.2. Desire for learning –self-directed learning by experts in co-curricular activities covering five dimensions and promoting ability to analyze, focus on the use of lesson decoding activities and the creative dialogue process for two hours from 6 to 8 pm.
 - 2.3. Self-control-Self-directed learning through the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach, including six activities conducted over the six-week period for two hours per activity held every Sunday from 6 to 8 pm for a total of 12 hours.
 - Week 1, Activity 1 (Breaking the Ice)–The activity focused on allowing student association members to engage in creative dialogue and exchange experiences in conducting co-curricular activities. The objective was to build pride and acceptance among the student association members. The student association members voluntarily sat in circles paired up with partners and took turns telling stories about life and experiences for 30 minutes per person over a one-hour period. The researchers then sampled 5 student association members to tell the entire group about their experiences and summarize what they had gained from the activity.
 - Week 2, Activity 2 (Decoding time)–The activity was focused on letting student association members get training on time management for both studies and co-curricular activities for maximum efficiency. The objective was to enable the student leaders to express self-control and take responsibility for the work. The researchers handed out decoding time activity sheets to the student leaders to be returned in three days. Next, the researchers sampled 10 student association members to present their work and summarize what they had gained from the activity.
 - Week 3, Activity 3 (Creative SMO)–The activity was focused on building pride in student association members in the performance of their duty as directors of student associations and their experiences in sharing, creativity and problem solving. The student association members were divided into seven groups with five persons per group. The student association members were asked to draw pictures under the topic "Creative SMO") on A4 paper. They were also asked to color or paint their pictures. The student association members of each group presented their "Creative SMO" for five minutes per group. During the presentations, the researchers asked for permission to record the student association member's voices. They were also asked to summarize what they had gained from the activity.
 - Week 4, Activity 4 (Know Me-Understand You)–The activity was focused on building creative, positive thinking, recognizing self-worth and the worth of others and modifying attitudes for the student association members. The objective was to build positive perspectives for the benefits of the student association and Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Chonburi. The student association members were asked to meditate for five minutes. They were then asked to write the characteristics of good student association members on a piece of paper. Student association members with similar characteristics were grouped together. Next, they were asked to find ways to improve personal characteristics aimed at personal satisfaction. Group representatives were asked to present for the group and summarize what they had gained from the activity.
 - Week 5, Activity 5 (Positive thinking)–The activity was focused on allowing student leaders to develop positive thinking and ability to generate personal happiness and share happiness with others. The student association members were divided into five groups of seven people each. The student leaders were asked to tell the group members about a happy story occurring in daily life. Next, two people were selected from each of the five groups to share the happy stories with everyone and summarized what they had gained from the activity.
 - Week 6, Activity 6 (Creative dialogue) – The activity was focused on training the student association members in self-management by taking on the role of good speaker and listener, emphasizing attentive listening and accepting other people. The objective was to promote leadership among student association members. The researchers informed student association members about the rule of the "dialogue, one speaker and multiple listeners". The researcher placed a rock in the middle of the group. The student association members holding the rock shared experiences from working in the student association to the group without direction or coercion from the group. The discussion continued until the experiences of 35 people had been shared. The student association members were asked to summarize what they had gained from the activity.
3. Posttest, the 35 student association members completed the evaluation form on student leader participation in co-curricular activities.

D. Data Analysis

The researchers used the data collected in data analysis by implementing the SPSS program with the level of statistical significance set at 0.05.

1. Data on the participation in co-curricular activities of the student association members who had participated in the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach was used to calculate percentage, mean and standard deviation.
2. The participation in co-curricular activities of the student association members who had participated in the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach was analyzed and compared pre- and posttest with t-test (t-test Dependent Observation).

III. RESULT

1. Most of the student association members for the 2014 academic year (25 student association members) were females (71.43 %) and 10 were males (28.57 %); 17 of the

student association members were 20 years old (48.57 %), 10 were 19 years old (28.57 %) and four were 21 years old (11.43%).

2. The overall degree of participation was high (Mean= 3.05, S.D.=0.76). When classified individually, the degree of participation was high in three aspects, with the highest being Benefit (Mean=3.24, S.D.=0.83), Decision-making (Mean=3.21, S.D. = 0.59) and Implementation (Mean=3.06, S.D.=0.52). Furthermore, the degree of participation was moderate in one aspect, namely, Evaluation (Mean=2.68, S.D.=1.13) (See Table I).

TABLE I
 PARTICIPATION IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE PRETEST AND POSTTEST

Participation in Co-Curricular Activities	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	S.D.	Level	Mean	S.D.	Level
1.Decision-making	3.00	0.59	Moderate	3.21	0.59	High
2.Implementation	2.88	0.96	Moderate	3.06	0.52	High
3.Benefits	3.12	1.01	High	3.24	0.83	High
4.Evaluation	2.72	0.87	Moderate	2.68	1.13	Moderate
Mean of Participation in Co-Curricular Activities Level	2.93	0.86	Moderate	3.05	0.76	High

3. The pretest and posttest comparison of the degree of participation before and after participating in the program support the set hypothesis. In other words, the posttest degree of participation was higher (Mean=3.05, S.D.=0.76). The level of statistical significance for the variances was 0.01 (t = -3.299, p-value = .009). (See Table II)

TABLE II
 COMPARISON OF PARTICIPATION IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE PRETEST AND POSTTEST

Variable	Pretest		Posttest		t	p-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Participation in Co-curricular Activities	2.93	0.86	3.05	0.76	-3.299	.009*

*p < .05

IV. DISCUSSION

1. The degree of participation in co-curricular activities of student association members participating in the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach was high (Mean=3.05, S.D.=0.76). When classified by individual dimensions, the findings were as follows:

Hypothesis I-The degree of student association members development activity participation in decision-making was high for the student association members participating in the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach (Mean=3.21, S.D.=0.59). This finding might have been due to the fact that undergraduate nursing students were directors of student associations who volunteered to perform their duties and sacrificed time for student

associations or clubs. This was good internal motivation. Based on the motivation theory, building internal motivation is building capacity for self-directed learning on the part of the learner because learners with internal motivation learn things based on personal interest (1). The aforementioned finding concurs with data from the student association members creative dialogues which stated, "...participation in co-curricular activities unknowingly results in the increased skills because the problems encountered in any activity can lead to self-improvement". The student association members participating in operational conference, leadership development and teamwork were able to take part in the meeting to set up operational plans for student associations. The result was a higher degree of leadership and positive attitudes about student association members because the processes of meetings based on quality curriculum have numerous exciting activities [6]. This finding concurs with the study of [7] which found the degree of leadership in nursing students at Boromarajonani College of Nursing in terms of personality to be high. It also concurs with the study of [8] which found the overall degree of readiness for self-directed learning of undergraduate nursing students at Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Lampang to be high (Mean =3.82, S.D.=0.88).

Hypothesis II-The degree of participation in student development activities in the implementations of student association members participating in the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach was high (Mean=3.06, S.D.=0.52). According to the student leaders' creative dialogue, "...in working, the focus is on the beginning and end results. Therefore, somewhere between the beginning

and end, more planning allows us to learn how to manage better. This will lead to more efficient work planning". The aforementioned finding concurs with the study of [9] which found the overall level of opinion of undergraduate nursing students at *Boromarajonani* College of Nursing, Jakkiraj on student activity participation to be high. The finding also concurred with the research of [10] which found the degree of participation in student's volunteer development activity to be moderate.

Hypothesis III-The level of participation in undergraduate nursing students development activity in terms of benefits of student association members attending leadership promoting program based on self-directed learning approach was high (Mean=3.24,S.D.=0.83).This might have been due to the fact that most student activities resulted in the participants having fun, putting free time to good use, getting to meet new friends, gaining personality development and assertiveness training, and opportunities to display existing abilities in addition to having opportunities to perform activities in which they had competence and interest. As a result, the student association members were satisfied and reaped benefits from participating in co-curricular activities. They had opportunities for personality development, recognition of self-worth and ability to put self-worth to good use [11].This concurs with the data from the creative dialogue, "...participation in co-curricular activities leads to better self-awareness. It allows students to consider themselves and how they can become good role models for members to follow properly. Student association members should be good role models" and "...feel proud. Seeing people happily participating in activities can already partly relieve our fatigue". In addition, the student leaders received admiration from family members. According to the creative dialogue, "...my working here makes my parents proud because I have become more mature," "...my child works at the student association; she's become an able person who can do many things," and "...although the participants do not get to see the work from the start, they see the end results, so I felt proud when someone says what we do is okay". This concurs with the study of [12] which was conducted to examine the factors influencing participation in the internal and external activities of undergraduate nursing students of Phetchabun Rajabhat University. According to the findings, the undergraduate nursing students wanted to create improvement in the surrounding vicinity, while promulgating the reputation and honor of the university. A leadership personality was developed which resulted in more participation in the activities.

Hypothesis IV-The degree of participation in student development activities in terms of the performance evaluations of student association members participating in the leadership promoting program based on the self-directed learning approach was moderate (Mean=2.68, S.D.=1.18). According to data from the student association members creative dialogue, "... may be looking from just one side, but the results are that we receive both positive and negative perspectives from members" and "It's like everyone see pluses and minuses. The pluses are encouragement for team members and

the minuses, which are different, help us learn to correct our mistakes". Furthermore, it might be due to the fact that student association members have burdens in studying and student association management. Hence, the student leaders did not analyze and evaluate projects/activities. This concurs with the research of [13] which was conducted to examine participation in the student activities of undergraduate students at Suranaree University of Technology for the 2013 academic year. According to the findings, study time was the most frequently encountered key barrier to student participation in activities.

2. Participation in the co-curricular activities of the student association members participating in the program increased, possibly due to the fact that most student leaders were 20 years old. This finding concurs with the concept of humanism, seeing human nature and self-directed learning where the experiences of the learner are the source of knowledge for learning [14]. Self-directed learning concurs with psychological development and natural processes. It is a development from childhood that is reliant on other people for self-development toward independent adulthood because a person needs to be self-directed in order to learn and possess learning capability [15]. The aforementioned concept concurs with the education reform framework on developing the new generation of Thais to possess learning motivation and self-learning capacity with life-long knowledge seeking [16]. This finding concurs with the study of [17] which discovered the overall self-directed learning readiness of nursing students to be high. It also concurred with the study by [18] that examined self-directed learning models by using questions as a base for the teaching of life science physics. According to the findings, the posttest effectiveness of self-directed learning with t-test in experimental and control groups differed with statistical significance (0.05). Readiness for learning motivation was the highest, followed by self-control and self-management, respectively. The findings also concur with the study of [19] which was conducted to study learning administration development to develop self-directed learning characteristics of community college students and found that 30 community college students in the experimental group receiving self- directed learning administration had higher mean scores for post-learning self-directed learning characteristics than the control group with statistical significance (0.01). The findings also agreed with the study of [20] which was conducted to examine the effects of nursing student development with contemplative education on self-directed learning readiness and found the pretest and posttest SDLR of the experimental group of nursing students to be different with statistical significance (0.05).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The college should set clear student association members development policies. In particular, leadership promotion and development should be carried out annually, allowing opportunities for student association members to change their

status to senior leaders who take part in developing new sets of student association members in a cycle. In addition, studies should be conducted to construct moral ethics development programs for student association members.

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