Consequences for Nursing Graduates of Failing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX)

Julius Atemafac, Walden University

Date of Conferral
2014

Degree
Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

School
Education

Advisor
Wendy Edson

Abstract

Little information is available regarding the consequences of new nursing graduates who fail the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). The purpose of this study was to understand how these graduates could successfully pass this examination in subsequent attempts. Guided by Fisher's personal change model, the key research questions addressed the consequences of failing the NCLEX-RN exam and the actions the new graduate took after failing it. A phenomenological design was employed with a purposive sample of 17 new nursing graduates in the metropolitan area who had failed the NCLEX-RN. An inductive approach using a constant comparison, content analysis was used to analyze data. NVivo software was used to assist in identifying and clustering codes to form a thematic label. Emergent themes were extracted and then triangulated with those themes emerging from each respondent's interview. Results of the study indicated that students who failed the NCLEX-RN exam were depressed, isolated, and financially strained as they continued to pay their student loans during their unemployment. The findings indicated that schools of nursing seldom offer support for graduates who do not pass the exam. This finding informed the development of an NCLEX-RN preparation course to aid students to pass the NCLEX-RN exam, either on their first attempt or after failing the exam. Positive social change may occur as nursing school program directors and faculty use the results of the study to modify curriculum and develop strategies to ensure higher NCLEX-RN success rates.