

Perceived Faculty Support and Burnout among Students' of Nursing Faculty

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Abstract

Nursing education is considered as one of the most crucial element for improving the quality of professional identity of future nurses. Students face situations related to their profession and academic development that may be assessed as stressors. Burnout among students in the area of health, specially nursing students and the levels of burnout found are alarming. Faculty members as gatekeepers to the profession are in a very influential position in regards to the future career of their students. **The aim** of this research was to investigate relationship between perceived faculty support and burnout among faculty nursing students. **Setting:** The study was carried out at Faculty of Nursing, Beni-suef University. **Subjects:** 334 baccalaureate nursing students. **Tools:** three tools were used for data collection. The first tool predesigned questionnaire includes (personal characteristics). The second tool was Perceived Faculty Support Scale (PFS). The third tool: Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS). **Results:** Findings of the present study revealed that nursing students have high perception among burnout and faculty support and there is high statistically significant correlation between mentioned two variables as p-value <0.000**. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that there was a positive statistically significant correlation between total faculty support and total burnout among faculty nursing students. **Recommendations:** There should be a collaborative effort among academic staff members to remove unnecessary stressors and provide a supportive learning environment.

Keywords: Faculty Support, Burnout & Nursing Students.

Introduction

Nursing education is considered as one of the most crucial element for improving the quality of professional identity of future nurses. Undergraduate nursing education is a very important stage in a nurse's career. During their undergraduate education, students experience heavy course load competitive entrance exams, theoretical and practical course work, research activities, difficulties finding time to study and aspects of professional practice, such as contact with health professionals and patients. In addition, students through nursing training face both physical and psychosocial risks because they have clinical duties related to patient care in clinical environments. Thus, students face situations related to their profession and academic development that may be assessed as stressors (King, 2019).

Faculty support results from interactions between teachers and students that involve the development of trust and a therapeutic, working relationship. Faculty support has the greatest power to influence and optimize psychological outcomes and academic outcomes. Psychological faculty support includes encouragement, caring, and promoting a sense of competence and self-worth. Functional faculty

support involves activities that help students perform tasks and achieve goals. Increased faculty support by way of psychological support as well as provision of functional support services will be beneficial in aiding students' overall success and helps to mediate stressors (Mariveles, 2019).

Faculty members as gatekeepers to the profession are in a very influential position in regards to the future career of their students. Nursing faculty is critically important in the achievement of nursing students' clinical education. The term 'faculty member' is used interchangeably with nurse educator, nurse teacher to describe someone who is responsible for facilitating, guiding, assisting and helping student nurses achieve optimal learning outcomes (Labrague et al., 2020). Faculty members often emphasize the acquisition of knowledge, so they often neglect the emotional feelings of students during teaching process, which can lead to emotional stress and burnout. When faculty members do not provide an appropriate timely support to over stressed students, the instability of these emotions can easily initiate unusual behaviors, which then affects the learning achievements and adjustment ability of the students (Bayoumi, 2015).

Students enter a nursing program and find that it may be much harder than expected. When faculty, motivate students by being approachable, encouraging, and instilling confidence, students look to the faculty member as a role model and learn and behave professionally. Students who perceive that they are supported by faculty have increased academic motivation, academic self-concept, and reduced symptoms of burnout (Keeler, 2018). Although stress levels are found to be high amongst undergraduate nursing students, research has shown that there is insufficient support to undergraduate nursing students, and little is being done to confront the issue of high stress in this population. For instance, interventions to relieve stress are not being supported by nursing faculty members (Turner & McCarthy, 2017 & Delgado et al., 2018). Starting situations of stress and emotional instability that can lead these students to the development of burnout syndrome (Tomaschewski-Barlem et al., 2014)

Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and low professional efficacy that frequently occurs among individuals who participate in activities that are mentally and psychologically similar to work, like students. It is caused by chronic stress in the environment and results in three distinct symptoms: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced professional achievement. Burnout syndrome differs from depression because it is workplace-specific, whereas depression extends to other nonprofessional contexts (Abbas et al., 2019).

As a result, stress and burnout, gradually develop throughout the academic years. These interconnected problems influence each other and could lead to serious health consequences such as “anxiety disorders, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, thoughts of dropping out, reduced empathy, low motivation for learning, and low academic conduct (Pagnin & Queiroz, 2015 & Fares et al., 2016)

Positive emotions are key elements to human adaption and learning, and while high-intensity emotions may impair attention, focus and motivation, low-intensity. Faculty members who can perceive and understand student emotions add to the students' positive perception of the educational environment, making it more conducive to learning). If students do not have proper stress management techniques and adequate faculty support, physical and emotional stress symptoms negatively impact their clinical and academic performance (Lu et al., 2019 & Pekrun et al., 2020).

According to Allendoerfer, et al., 2016 who stated that understanding undergraduate students' perceptions of the support received from faculty is of

interest because faculty interaction with students is an important factor in students' academic integration, which in turn plays a key role in recognizing the experience of burnout. Being able to explain and teach clearly, being accessible to nursing students, answering nursing students' queries correctly, and helping nursing students critically think and reason out appropriately are indicative of nursing faculty's teaching abilities. Furthermore, a clinical environment characterized by an open, authentic communication with positive nursing faculty members and faculty nursing students' interactions is critical for the formation and enhancement of nursing students' learning outcomes. Such outcomes include the enhancement of caring behavior's, critical thinking, clinical judgment, decision-making, clinical competence, increased motivation and confidence (Labrague et al., 2020). Incorporating faculty support into education may help students alleviate their stress and improve learning outcomes (Horton-Deutsch & Sherwood, 2017).

Significance of the study

Demanding clinical and academic environments can put nursing students under extreme pressure, to the point that they feel exhausted, empty, burned out, and unable to cope. National and international studies have focused on burnout among students in the area of health, specially nursing students and the levels of burnout found are alarming, since this syndrome can affect professional growth, put patient safety at risk and generate consequences to the physical and mental health of the student, such as: sleep disturbances, depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation, alcohol and other drug abuse (Jackson et al., 2016 & Dyrbye & Shanafelt, 2016).

In Brazil, a study showed that 64.04% of nursing students in the sample had emotional exhaustion, 35.79% had a high level of cynicism, and 87.72% had a low level of professional efficacy (Silva et al., 2014). In Egypt, a study conducted among nursing staff in the emergency hospital of Tanta University revealed that 66.0% of participants had moderate levels and 24.9% had high levels of burnout (Abdo et al. 2016). With such a workload awaiting nursing students with burnout, it is necessary for early detection of burnout which is known to reduce optimal healthcare delivery. If the determinants of burnout can be identified amongst these students and early detection made a priority, the morbidity associated with this condition could be reduced (Nijm et al., 2018).

Faculty support is critical to academic integration, which in turn is an essential element of persistence in college. Nursing faculty members play a pivotal role in the achievement of nursing students' learning

outcomes. Understanding students' perceptions of faculty support in varied settings can provide insight into student satisfaction, performance, persistence in programs and the morbidity associated with burnout could be reduced (Labrague et al., 2020).

This study focuses on perception of faculty support and its relation with burnout syndrome among faculty nursing students at Beni-suef University.

Aim of the research

This study aims at investigating relationship between perceived faculty support and burnout among faculty nursing students through:

- Assessing perceived faculty support among nursing students
- Identifying burnout among nursing students
- Finding out relationship between perceived faculty support and burnout among nursing students

Research questions

- What are the nursing students' perceptions of faculty support?
- What is the prevalence of burnout syndrome among nursing faculty students?
- Is faculty support significantly related to Burnout among students' of nursing faculty

Methodology

Research design: A descriptive correlational design was utilized.

Study setting: The study was conducted at faculty of nursing, Beni-Suef University.

Study Subjects: Subjects in this study were baccalaureate nursing students, a convenient sample of 334 students who were available at the time of the study. *Sample criteria:* student nurses in the final year of their program and having just undertaken their final year clinical placement.

Tools of data collection:

Data was collected by using the following tools:

Tool I: Demographic questionnaire:

It was used to assess participant students' age, gender, and marital status, residence during faculty years, qualification pre-faculty enrollment and employment status (during faculty years).

Tool II: Perceived Faculty Support Scale (PFS):

developed by (Shelton, 2003) aims at measuring the students' perception of faculty support in their nursing faculty. It consists of two parts are named Psychological support (14 items) and Functional support (10 items). Randomized positioning of the items minimized response set bias. Item responses indicated the extent to which students agreed or disagreed with statements related to the behaviors of most faculty members.

Scoring system: The students' responses were presented in five point Likert scale; where 5 means "strongly agree" and 1 means for "strongly disagree".

The higher the score, the greater the perceived faculty support, with scores ranging from 24 to 120

Tool III: Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS): developed by Maslach and Jackson (1986); modified by Schaufeli et al., (2002), it aims at assessing the students' experience of burnout. It consists of three dimensions which has been named emotional exhaustion includes 5 items, cynicism (depersonalization) includes 4 items and academic efficacy includes 6 items.

Scoring system: The subjects' responses were presented in five point Likert scale; where 5 means "strongly agree" and 1 means for "strongly disagree". The results of the MBI-SS consists of three separate scores, on for each dimensions a combination of high scores on emotional exhaustion and cynicism (depersonalization) and low scores on academic efficacy as the following:

- $75 \leq$ **sever degree of burnout** is reflected in high scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization dimensions and low scores on the academic efficacy subscale
- $60 \leq 75$ **moderate degree of burnout** is reflected in average scores on the three dimensions
- < 60 **mild degree of burnout** is reflected in low scores on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization dimensions and in high scores on the academic efficacy dimensions.

Content Validity and reliability:

Validity

The tools were tested for face and content validity by a jury group. Five academic experts specialized in nursing administration and psychiatric mental health nursing. Jury group had reviewed the study tools to judge its clarity, comprehensiveness and accuracy, and relevance. Jury responses were agreed or disagreed and there is no modification done.

Reliability of tools:

For testing the internal consistency of the instrument a Cronbach's alpha was used. Cronbach's alpha for the faculty support scale tool was 0.940 and the reliability of MBI-SS was 0.894

Pilot study:

A pilot study was carried out on 10% of the sample size (33 student nurses) to test the content of the questionnaire as well as to estimate the time needed for data collection and the necessary modifications was done. Those who shared in the pilot study were excluded from the study sample.

Fieldwork:

The fieldwork of this study was accomplished through two phases as following:

First phase: concerned with preparing the data collection tools through search in many scientific journals, textbooks, as well as internet search. The questionnaire was accompanied with a cover letter

that explained the purpose of the study to the participants.

Second phase: it aimed at determining participant nursing students' perception of faculty support, as well as measuring the level of burnout among them. Actual fieldwork started at the beginning of September 2019, and was completed by the end of December 2019. The researchers collected data by themselves through meeting the subjects and explaining the aim of the study and how to participate in the study. Then the questionnaire distributed to all subjects present at the time of study. Each one received a copy of the questionnaire. The average time of filling the questionnaire was 15-20 minutes.

Administrative and Ethical Considerations:

Official approval to conduct the study was obtained from the dean faculty of nursing, Beni-Suef University. Individual oral consent was also obtained from each participant in the study. All principles of ethics in research were followed. The participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of

the study, and their verbal informed consent was obtained. They were informed about their rights to refuse participation or withdrawing at any time. They were also reassured that all obtained information will be confidential, and will only be used for the purpose of research, and anonymity of the subjects was assured through coding of all data.

Statistical Design:

Data entry and statistical analysis were done using SPSS 20.0 statistical software package. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables, and means and standard deviations and medians for quantitative variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the reliability of the tools through their internal consistency. Qualitative categorical variables were compared using chi-square test. Statistical significance was considered at p-value <0.05.

Results:

A total 334 questionnaires were distributed to students at faculty of nursing Beni- Suef University, who attended the 4th grades of the undergraduate course. A total of 334 questionnaires were answered and handed back.

Table (1): Frequency Distribution of Studied Students Regarding Personal Characteristics (N=334).

Personal characteristics	No	%
Age		
<23	124	37.1
23+	210	62.9
Mean ±SD		
Gender		
Male	104	31.1
Female	230	68.9
Marital status		
Single	258	77.2
Married	76	22.8
Residence during faculty years		
With your family	292	87.4
With relative	15	4.5
College town	25	7.5
Students' private house	2	0.6
Qualification pre faculty enrollment		
General secondary	215	64.4
Technical nursing institute	71	21.3
Technical healthy institute	48	14.4
Employment status		
Unemployed	264	79.0
Part time	68	20.4
Full time	2	0.6

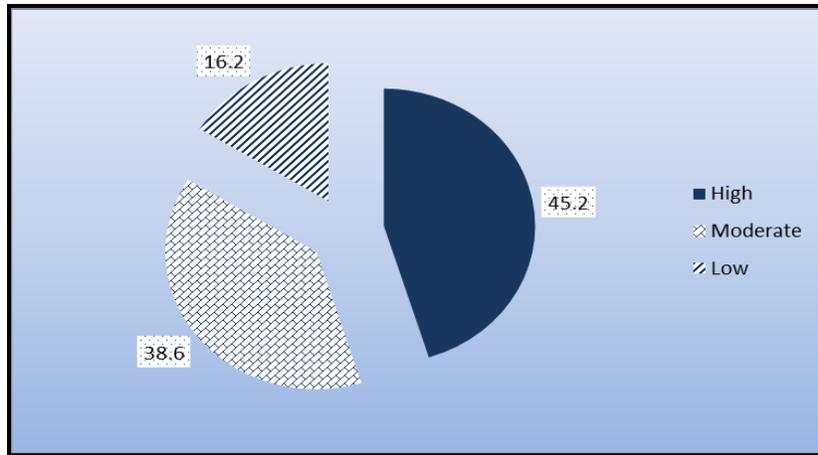


Figure (1): Percentage Distribution of Studied Students 'level of Perception Regarding Total Faculty Support

Table (2): Mean and Standard Deviation of Studied Students Regarding Total Faculty Support Score

Items	Min	Max	Mean	±SD	%score	Ranking
Total psychological	26.00	70.00	52.02	9.63	74.3	2
Total Functional	15.00	50.00	37.40	7.02	74.8	1
Total faculty support	41.00	120.00	89.43	16.08	74.5	

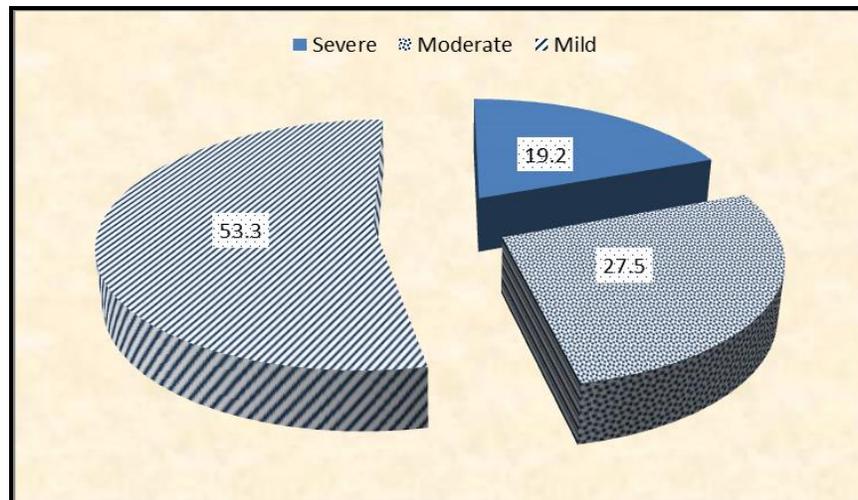


Figure (2): Percentage Distribution of Studied Students' Perception Regarding Total Burnout

Table (3): Mean and Standard Deviation of Studied Students Regarding Total Burnout Score

Items	Min	Max	Mean	±SD	% score	Ranking
Total emotional exhaustion	5.00	25.00	17.89	4.309	71.6	2
Total cynicism	4.00	20.00	12.55	3.478	62.8	3
Total academic efficacy	6.00	30.00	22.61	5.227	75.4	1
Total burnout	.00	75.00	53.06	11.27	70.8	

Table (4): correlation matrix between total psychological, function of faculty support and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, academic efficacy of burnout

Items		Total psychological	Total Functional	Total emotional exhaustion	Total cynicism	Total academic efficacy
Total psychological	r	1	.859**	.127*	.150**	.292**
	p-value		.000	.020	.006	.000
	N	334	334	334	334	334
Total Functional	r	.859**	1	.162**	.096	.342**
	p-value	.000		.003	.078	.000
	N	334	334	334	334	334
Total emotional exhaustion	r	.127*	.162**	1	.718**	.639**
	p-value	.020	.003		.000	.000
	N	334	334	334	334	334
Total cynicism	r	.150**	.096	.718**	1	.481**
	p-value	.006	.078	.000		.000
	N	334	334	334	334	334
Total academic efficacy	r	.292**	.342**	.639**	.481**	1
	p-value	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	334	334	334	334	334

Table (5): Correlation between total faculty support and total burnout

Items	Total faculty support	
	r	p-value
Total burnout	-0.36	0.000**

Table (6): Statistically relation between total burnout and students personal characteristics

Personal characteristics	severe (n=64)		Moderate (n=92)		Mild (n=178)		X ²	p-value
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Age								
<23	24	37.5	32	34.8	68	38.2	0.309	0.857
23+	40	62.5	60	65.2	110	61.8		
Gender								
Male	29	45.3	25	27.2	50	28.1	7.442	.024*
Female	35	54.7	67	72.8	128	71.9		
Marital status								
Single	54	84.4	73	79.3	131	73.6	3.431	0.18
Married	10	15.6	19	20.7	47	26.4		
Residence during faculty years								
With your family	56	87.5	79	85.9	157	88.2	4.497	0.61
With relative	2	3.1	7	7.6	6	3.4		
College town	5	7.8	6	6.5	14	7.9		
Student house private	1	1.6	0	0.0	1	0.6		
Qualification pre faculty enrollment								
General secondary	38	59.4	65	70.7	112	62.9	4.293	0.368
Technical nursing institute	16	25.0	19	20.7	36	20.2		
Technical healthy institute	10	15.6	8	8.7	30	16.9		
Employment status								
Unemployed	50	78.1	77	83.7	137	77.0	2.766	0.598
Part time	14	21.9	14	15.2	40	22.5		
Full time	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	0.6		

Table (1): Revealed socio demographic characteristics of studied students, 68.9 % were female, the most of them older than 23years old 62.9%. As to marital status, 77.2 % were single, and 22.8 % were married. Furthermore, most of them 87.4 % lived with their families and only 0.6% lived in student private house. Concerning qualification pre faculty enrollment 64.4% of them were from general secondary, 21.3% of them from technical nursing institute and only 14.4 % were from technical health institute. Regarding Employment status, 79.0% reported unemployed and 20.4% employed part time and only 0.6% of them have full time employment.

Figure (1): Illustrated that (45.2%) of them had high level of perception of faculty support (FS) 38.6 % of them had moderate level of perception and only 16.2 had low of level perception of (FS).

Table (2): Presented the highest score (74.8%) corresponded to total functional points of faculty support.

Figure (2): showed that more than half (53.3%) of studied students had mild perception of burnout, (27.5%) had moderate perception, and only 19.2% of them had sever perception of burnout.

Table (3): Found that the highest mean 22.61 with 75.4% corresponded to total academic efficacy while the lowest mean 12.55 corresponded to total cynicism of burnout.

Table (4): Reported positive correlation between total psychological and function items of faculty support and burnout dimensions namely emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and academic efficacy.

Table (5): Noted that highly statistically significant correlation between total faculty support and total burnout among studied students where p- value 0.000**.

Table (6): Presented that there were statistically positive correlation between male nursing student and burnout suffering from as p-value .024*.

Discussion

The present study was designed in an attempt to investigate perceived faculty support and burnout among baccalaureate nursing students.

In present study regarding burnout dimensions; emotional exhaustion had the highest percentage score was to item of (I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day at faculty). This might be explained by the fact that studying at faculty of nursing at Beni Sueif University is mainly practical. Students have to begin their training very early. In addition most students live in remote villages so they take long to arrive on time. Moreover the students have to attend lectures after the training. This supports the research completed by (Chahid et al., 2018) who reported that the students feel extreme

fatigue due to faculty workload and feel depleted of their physical and emotional resources which makes this emotional exhaustion a regulation strategy to distance oneself emotionally and physically of the workload (Maslach et al., 2019).

In addition to Tomaschewski-Barlem et al., (2014) who have shown that the Emotional Exhaustion factor had the highest average of the instrument indicating the existence of depletion in students, especially at the end of the day when they had class, whether theoretical or practical or laboratory or internship activities, as well as when they rise to face another day of faculty, in the classroom or lab. These situations are faced with an average frequency close to "once a week".

In relation to cynicism dimension of burnout it was found that the highest percentage was 26.6% for the item of (I have become less interested in my studies since my enrollment at faculty) and the lowest percentage was 12.3% for item of (I doubt the significance of my studies).

In concern to academic efficacy dimension of burnout the study cleared that the highest percentage of perception was for the item (I feel stimulated when I achieve my study goals) 36.5% while the lowest percentage was for item of (in my opinion I am a good student) 4.8% this is in the same line with Tomaschewski-Barlem et al., 2014 who showed a value of, indicating that students realize they are being effective in their studies, especially for learning many interesting things during the course, and consider themselves good students, with a frequency close to "a few times a week".

In relation to perceived faculty support variable the study revealed that in psychological items the highest percentage of perception was for the item of (Demonstrate confidence in student) 30.5% these supported by finding of a research study in Iran which found that the most important attribute among nursing students was that the instructors were respectful to students and had positive sharing behaviors (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). Instilling confidence in students through caring ranked as the second most important attribute, according to Torregosa et al., (2016) who stated that nursing students in the United States had similar perceptions of their instructors, with the highest-ranking attribute being "instills confidence through caring".

Faculties' role in building student confidence is highly important. Students' level of confidence contributes to both their success in nursing faculties and the nursing profession. Their perceptions of their own skill level can be an indicator of their ability to perform well in clinical practice (Watson et al., 2019). Building students' level of confidence is recognized as one of the most effective methods of

teaching nursing students (Valiee et al., 2016). Instructors who exhibit positive and caring behaviors promote students to build confidence and become more ready to join the professional nursing field (Labrague et al., 2019).

But this is in contrast with (Torregosa et al., 2016) who found that non-white students had an increased perception of their instructors caring overall. When students perceived caring in their faculties, who showed a personal level of care and helped students build their confidence, students were better to listen and learn. Also other study found that Students' perceptions of their instructors' caring behaviors are instrumental in motivating them to continue learning. The capacity of faculty caring plays a significant role in students' success (Henderson et al 2020)

The result of the study cleared that there was highly statistically significant correlation between total faculty supports and total burnout among faculty nursing students. This is Constance with (Thomas CM et al 2019) who insisted that burnout can be due to a variety of reasons (e.g., employment requirements, working in understaffed environment, and lack of support). Also (Velea P. et al 2017) revealed that the strongest predictors of depersonalization were low perceived social support.

In present study there was no statistically significant correlation between student demographic data and perceived faculty support but this is in contrast with (Mariveles, 2019) who studied predictors of perceived faculty support in pre-licensure registered (PLRN) nursing students and found that PLRN students employed full-time reported the highest levels of perceived faculty support for both perceived psychological faculty support, and perceived functional faculty support, followed by PLRN students who were unemployed and those who were employed part-time. He also found that there were significant differences in levels of perceived faculty support, perceived psychological faculty support, and perceived functional faculty support between single, married, and PLRN students with a partner. Married PLRN students reported the highest levels of perceived faculty support, perceived psychological faculty support. In addition he found that sex was not found to have a significant association with perceived psychological faculty support, and or perceived functional faculty support. Being female did predict higher levels of perceived psychological faculty support

It was found that there were statistically positive correlation between male nursing student and burnout suffering from **This might be explained by the fact that** male student in faculty of nursing are recently attending in Upper Egypt this agreed with Amosum & Dantil (2013) who reported that male students had

significantly higher scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales, and significantly lower scores on the academic efficacy subscale, than female students

This is in contrast with several studies having shown that the severity of students' burnout varies by gender, girls are more at risk (Banks and smyth, 2015) also Institute of Child and Adolescent Health, 2007 reported that female faculty students had higher scores on Emotional Exhaustion than male students. In addition to that (Chahid et al., 2018) reported that girls are more affected than boys, which is consistent with other studies that show that faculty students' burnout severity varies according to gender (girls are at higher risk than boys). Indeed, girls are more emotionally sensitive and fragile than boys (Salmela-Aro et al., 2008 & Meylan et al., 2011).

In general, previous studies showed that male nurses are more likely to experience cynicism than female nurses, while female nurses are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion than male nurses. Our results are in line with the study of (Lahana et al.2017), but not with the study of (Lasebikan & Oyetunde, 2012) which found that female nurses suffer from burnout more than male nurses. But in totally (Zohreh, et al., 2018) whose findings did not show a significant difference between academic burnout and gender among nursing students.

Conclusion:

Based on the study findings, it was concluded that baccalaureate nursing students at faculty of nursing Beni-Suef University had high level of perception of faculty support and had moderate level of burnout. And there was a positive statistically significant correlation between total burnout and total faculty support among nursing students.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings recommended to:

- Ensure a collaborative effort among academic staff members to remove unnecessary stressors
- Provide a supportive learning environment.
- Replication of the study on other categories of nursing student and other settings is highly recommended to achieve generalizable results.

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