Abstract

【Purpose】 Globally, critical thinking (CT) is an essential component of nursing practice and an important educational outcome including in Laos. However, assessment of nursing students' CT in Laos has not been researched. Therefore, the purpose of this study was the development of CT ability assessment tool for undergraduate nursing students using the Delphi process, and to examine the tool's inter-rater reliability. 【Methods】 The study was an observational and descriptive design. Data were from an expert Delphi panel of faculty members and clinical teachers' discussions of the CT assessment tool. A questionnaire and individual interview with 14 panel members was conducted twice; then a panel discussion with 13 panel members was held. Descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis were used. The level of consensus on the criteria was set at a median of 2.0 or higher for the second survey. Panel members conducted a simulated evaluation of nursing students using the CT assessment tool. The inter-rater reliability was examined through the simulated evaluation using Krippendorff's Alpha. A formative evaluation was conducted with 11 panel members. 【Results and Discussion】 This study developed a CT assessment tool for undergraduate nursing students. The tool consisted of 30 descriptions of criteria for cognitive skills and 32 descriptions of criteria for habits of mind and could assess CT ability comprehensively and continuously, ensuring the consistency and fairness of evaluation. However, the low Krippendorff's Alpha (.479) inter-rater reliability indicated that the interpretation of the evaluation criteria differs among the evaluators depending on their values, knowledge, and thinking ability as nurses. The findings suggested the need to develop criteria for a scale of students' achievement levels. The results of the formative evaluation showed high satisfaction with the research, the needs of nursing educators were met, and expectations for using the developed evaluation tool. The development process of the assessment tool was also a process of consensus building regarding a common language around CT among faculty members and clinical teachers, and fostered the subsequent implementation. The combination survey of a questionnaire and individual interview was effective to garner the panel's opinion without being influenced by panel members' opinions. 【Conclusion】 This study developed the first CT assessment tool for undergraduate nursing students in Laos through a Delphic consensus building panel. It is necessary to review the simulated evaluations performed and discuss the correct evaluation results in the context of nursing in Laos to have the same interpretation of the evaluation criteria for subsequent implementation. (Approval number 19-A025)