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Nursing Education in Saudi Arabia: History and Development

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Abstract
In the past, Saudi Arabia's nursing education system was heavily influenced by traditional methods, and there were very few formal training courses. However, the Kingdom recognized the importance of nurses in healthcare delivery and embarked on a comprehensive reform effort to enhance nursing education. This shift has led to the emergence of specialized nursing schools as well as the need for innovative teaching methods and new curricula. In recent decades, Saudi Arabia has partnered more with foreign institutions and organizations in an effort to adopt nursing education practices from other countries. This present study evaluates the scenario in terms of secondary data and presented the same as review study. The time line of the data was from 2010 to 2022.
Keywords: Nursing Education, Hospitals, Nurses, development, History.

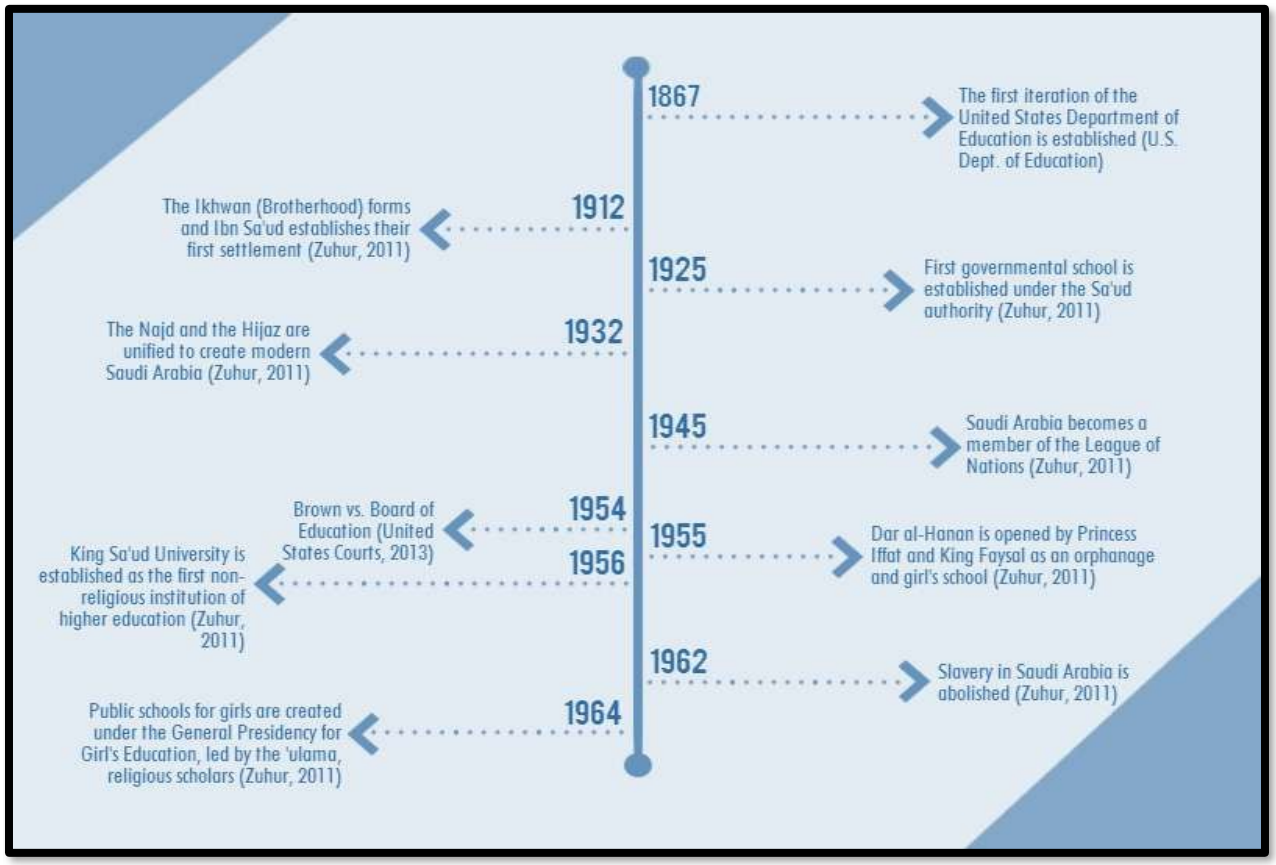
Introduction

A dynamic journey marked by significant turning points or paradigm shifts may be seen in the evolution of Saudi Arabia's nursing curriculum. The nursing profession has seen a tremendous transition over the years, and this has been greatly influenced by the Kingdom's commitment to enhancing healthcare services and developing a skilled healthcare workforce. The advancement of nursing education in Saudi Arabia demonstrates the country's dedication to meeting the evolving healthcare needs of its citizens while also staying up to date with international norms. **Alharb et al (2017)**; **Alomran et al (2017)** In the past, Saudi Arabia's nursing education system was heavily influenced by traditional methods, and there were very few formal training courses. However, the Kingdom recognized the importance of nurses in healthcare delivery and embarked on a comprehensive reform effort to enhance nursing education. This shift has led to the emergence of specialized nursing schools as well as the need for innovative teaching methods and new curricula. In recent decades, Saudi Arabia has partnered more with foreign institutions and organizations in an effort to adopt nursing education practices from other countries. Collaborations such as this have facilitated the exchange of resources, experiences, and insights, which has improved nursing programs across the country. Technology advancements and the use of evidence-based practices have also had a big impact on Saudi Arabian nursing education today. **Almalki et al (2011)**

As part of Saudi Arabia's broader healthcare strategy, nursing education must be modified to satisfy the country's healthcare requirements. **Saleh et al (2019)** This journey demonstrates the nation's commitment to strengthening its nursing workforce to meet the complex and varied healthcare demands of the contemporary future. This study will look at the evolution of nursing education in Saudi Arabia over time,

taking into account significant historical occurrences, legislative initiatives, and emerging trends. King Saud University is composed of several institutions, including the College of Nursing, located in Riyadh. From the College of Nursing's founding in 1977 (1396 AH), a bachelor's degree in nursing has been granted. In 1988, the first nursing master's degree was offered. **Mitchell (2020)**

Within the College of Applied Medical Sciences, the college was one of eight academic divisions. The Council of Ministers made the decision to establish the Department of Nursing as a separate organization in 2004. **Zahran et al (2020)** According to a literature assessment, King Saud University's lack of resources made it difficult to find enough information about the beginnings of nursing education and the development of the nursing profession across the country. **Hibbert et al (2017)** Furthermore, there is a lack of literature on some nursing-related subjects and advancements at King Saud University, such as the contribution of female nurses to the growth of the healthcare workforce, the development of nursing education programs, and the nation's nursing education aspirations.



Source: Sources: (U.S Department of Education, 2012, United States Courts, 2013, Zuhur, 2011)
Figure 1: History of Education in Saudi Arabia

Therefore, this study aims to provide a succinct summary of the development of nursing education at King Saud University, addressing subjects like the history of the profession, the laws controlling it, and the different stakeholders involved. **Alomran et al (2017)**; **Al-Dossary et al (2018)** A nurse specialist with a bachelor's degree in nursing or its equivalent from an accredited educational institution in the issuing country currently falls into the first of the three categories. Senior nurse specialists with a master's degree in nursing and at least two years of clinical experience fall into the second category. A nurse consultant who holds a Ph.D. in nursing and has at least three years of clinical experience following graduation falls into the third group. **Jradi (2013)**

According to nursing registration data, 13,862 Saudi registered nurses with bachelor's degrees in nursing, 620 senior specialists, and 46 nurse consultants, 50% of whom are Saudi nationals, are currently registered to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A review of the literature found that there were not enough reliable sources in Saudi Arabia to obtain sufficient information regarding the history of nursing education and the growth of nursing as a profession nationwide. **Tumulty (2021)**; **Almalki et al (2011)** Additionally, there aren't many published papers about some nursing trends and issues in Saudi Arabia, like the development

of nursing education programs, the contributions of female nursing education to the healthcare workforce, and future plans for nursing education in the nation.
Furthermore, little is known about the general evolution and history of nursing education, starting with the Arabian-American Oil Company in 1948 and continuing to the present. Thus, the purpose of this study is to give a concise overview of the history and evolution of nursing education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, together with information on the stakeholders involved in nursing regulations and their contributions to this evolution. **Mitchell et al (2020)**

Research Process

By using the integrative literature review approach, the study used a large number of sources. Whittemore and Knafl developed an integrated framework that consists of five stages: problem identification, study search, data assessment, analysis, and presentation. Several bibliographic databases, including PubMed, Web of Science, EBSCO-CINAHL, Ovid, and Google Scholar, were searched for articles that mentioned Saudi Arabia. Peer review and English writing were requirements for the articles. They also have to be unique to King Saud University's College of Applied Medical Sciences (KSU) nursing program. Government sources were included, particularly those in Arabic. Discussion papers, editorial letters, and articles with shaky citations were excluded. Direct database searches yielded 200 articles, and supplemental sources, including government publications, yielded 48 items. After removing duplicates, 230 articles were obtained. Following the initial screening and full-text review, thirty sources were determined to be pertinent. The hunt continued until November of 2024, when this paper was being published. **Zaharan (2012)**

Discussion

Saudi Nursing Schools In the kingdom, Saudi women can enroll in nursing programs. Saudi Arabia's nursing needs greatly exceed its supply, making the shortfall a severe problem. Approximately 35,000 foreign nurses work in the Kingdom. Less than 2,000 Saudi-educated nurses are needed for the Saudization program for advanced clinical specialty nurses (such as those in school nursing, primary care, midwifery, maternal-child health, medical-surgical, and psychiatric/mental health), as well as manager, instructor, researcher, and nurse administrator positions. Women are underrepresented in the nursing profession because few of them decide to pursue careers as registered nurses. Numerous cultural and economic factors are mostly to blame for this. A significant scarcity of registered nurses exists in most developed countries as well as many developing countries. **Borowy et al (2020)**
If current trends continue, the Kingdom's health delivery initiatives may be at jeopardy due to the nursing shortage. It has been difficult to find qualified nurses to cover unfilled posts. One phrase would be used to characterize all nurses in deceptive terminology. As a profession, nurses' levels of expertise vary widely. **Thakur et al (2021)** Although it is one of the skills taught to certain nurses, a professional nurse does more than only attend to patients' physiological needs. The professional nurse behaves altruistically by responding to the patient's physical, mental, and social well-being for the benefit of the patient and their loved ones. **Johannessen et al (2020)**

Educational Programs

Self-organization is the only professional prerequisite for Saudi baccalaureate nurses. The Saudi Arabian Nurses' Association is currently being established. For almost seven years, the Ministry of Health, academic institutions, or nurses with advanced degrees have been debating the organization. In addition to patient care, a professional nurse's duties are expanding to include management, education, and research. As their work expands, nurses must gain greater knowledge. Both diploma and baccalaureate (professional) nurses are permitted to pursue further education within the Saudi Arabian government's established system. The qualified diploma nurse is strongly encouraged to enroll in one of the two bachelor's degree nursing programs now offered. **Seifer et al (2018)**
All qualified baccalaureate-level nurses are eligible to enroll in KSU College's recently established master of nursing program. Initially, two master's degree programs will be available: one in primary care nursing and one in nursing service administration. This program was chosen with the Kingdom's needs and the students' interests in mind. The number of additional master's degree programs will be determined by student demand and financial availability. The University's baccalaureate nursing program Aspiring nurses can complete four years of education and an internship at King Saud University and King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia. Since English is utilized for education, students must prove their proficiency in the language before being accepted into the programs. **McGain et al (2014)**

To raise an unsatisfactory test result, one or two terms of intense English language education might be required. Here is a brief summary of the nursing program at King Saud University's College of Applied Medical Sciences (CAMS). All health care careers require unified fundamental sciences courses, which are taken in the first year at Malaz's Women's College Campus. The first semester of nursing courses and the required core semester for all students are offered by the female portion of CAMS in the second year. In Years 3 and 4, nursing and related subjects including microbiology, nutrition, pharmacology, and growth and development are taught by the female portion of CAMS. Clinical practice is available at the University Hospital and a few nearby municipal hospitals. **Kim et al (2019)**

A nursing professor is always there to supervise the student's development. The student's basis for nursing knowledge is made up of science, nursing theory, and hands-on experience. Interns in their fifth year strive to improve their nursing abilities and boost their self-esteem. Nursing Theory and Practice, Nursing Foundations, Maternal and Child Health, Medical-Surgical, Mental Health, and Primary Care/Community Nursing are required nursing courses. **Saaty et al (2019)** In addition, during their last semester of study, students must complete a professional elective from any of the clinical specializations. One type of professional elective is nursing administration. **Foman et al (2021)**

Academic programs incorporate a variety of disciplines, including as nursing philosophy, the arts and humanities, and the hard and soft sciences, to prepare students for jobs as nurses. Students learn about wellness and how to encourage it in clients, patients, and their families in the first unit. Clinical nursing interventions are instructed and monitored. There is clinical practice. The nursing process is a worldwide approach to problem-solving that students learn. Educators use the five-step nursing process to assist students become more adept at making important nursing decisions. The process includes examining the patient, developing a nursing diagnosis, developing a nursing care plan, implementing the plan, and analyzing the outcomes. **Eckelman et al (2018)**

One illustration of this is the collaborative role. In 1915, Abraham Flexner mentioned the role of nurses in conjunction with physicians. In certain encounters, he hinted that she might be practically a collaborator. In what is usually referred to as a collaborative role, doctors and nurses increasingly split up the duties involved in patient care. The nurse operates as a nurse and assumes personal responsibility for her care in this dynamic. Nurses serve as patient health educators in both emergency departments and general care settings. Decisions on health maintenance and promotion will increasingly involve educated people worldwide. **Tomson et al (2015)**

These patients are requesting—and will continue to request—more information from the physician or nurses on their dietary intake, sleeping patterns, degree of physical activity, and bowel movements. Because she meets the requirements of her chosen job path, this kind of nurse is commonly referred to as a professional nurse. Put another way, she organizes, carries out, and evaluates nursing care after taking personal responsibility for her actions and assessing her patients' needs. In the discipline of nursing, there is a scientific body of knowledge that is grounded in theory and expanded via research. For the particular terminology and taxonomy used in the area, nursing diagnosis is the accepted term.

Scenario of Nursing Education at PG Level

The SCFHS register shows that 956 Saudi Arabian students were enrolled in postgraduate nursing programs in 2017. The remaining ones are receiving financial assistance from foreign organizations, while the remaining 135 are enrolled in domestic institutions. Only female students were accepted for the first master's degree in nursing at King Saud University's College of Applied Medical Sciences in 1987. By 2013, male nurses could apply for master's degrees at the same university. Nursing master's degrees are being offered by numerous public universities. Only full-time courses are available for these two-year programs.

During the first semester of their chosen nursing specialization, students usually study advanced education & learning skills, nursing biostatistics, nursing theory, and other general nursing courses. Master's degree nursing programs consist of 42 credit hours of instruction, with the proportion of theoretical to clinical components depending by specialty, according to the Unified Law Organizing the Graduate Studies in Saudi Universities. Some of the main nursing disciplines that colleges provide are community health, mental and psychiatric health, nursing leadership and education, medical-surgical nursing, and maternal-child nursing. King Saud University became the only university in the country to provide a doctorate in nursing beginning with the 2019–20 academic year.

MME (Master of Medical Education) - The largest and first-ever Department of Medical Education in the Kingdom is located within the College of Medicine. In the area, the department was the first to offer a master's degree in health profession education. Since its launch in the 2006–2007 academic year, the

Master's Program has consistently had an annual enrollment of roughly 20 students. The curriculum is taught mostly in Riyadh, but it is also accessible by video conference at the other two locations.

The **College of Public Health & Health Informatics** provides a Master of Science in Health Informatics (MPHIS) degree. Master of Health Informatics program graduates should possess excellent technical, professional, and knowledge-based skills in addition to being well-versed in the subject. Graduates of this program are expected to be successful in a range of administrative, planning, and implementation responsibilities involving health information systems and to be able to effectively handle issues linked to these systems. In order to offer students, the most advanced and comprehensive master's degree in the country, this program was created and introduced in collaboration with the University of Illinois (UIC), Chicago, USA, a preeminent university in the field of health informatics.

MPH in Health Systems & Quality Management - With a focus on health systems management, this master's program in public health seeks to address the lack of qualified health systems administrators and managers. With the aim of being the premier location for health services management at the regional and national levels, the College of Public Health & Health Informatics provides it.

The **College of Public Health and Health Informatics** provides the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Master of Public Health (MPH) program (MPHEB). Get your MPH from the esteemed department of epidemiology and biostatistics with a focus on these fields. The MPH degree in these fields teaches health care providers how to apply research concepts and comprehend biostatistics and epidemiology data.

CEH Master of Public Health (MPH) - They currently have a Master of Public Health program at the Community & Environmental Health department. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is severely lacking in qualified public health experts, which is why this program was created. After the program, students will have the information and abilities needed to overcome obstacles to public health innovation and implementation in healthcare facilities and the general public.

 The **MSNM**, or Master of Science in Nursing is a two-year master's program that delivers a nurse-midwifery certificate or degree with a concentration in midwifery. Graduates who are certified nurse-midwives are qualified to serve as primary healthcare professionals for mothers and their infants. They must operate within a healthcare system that provides referral, collaboration, or consultation as needed by the client. SCFHS offers professional postgraduate programs that need students to complete 54 credits in order to obtain a master's degree in nurse-midwifery.

Conclusion

KSU's nursing program has similar beginnings to those in other countries. However, it is evident by examining the development of nursing education across time that steady advancements have been made, especially in the last 15 years. Initiatives to promote the nursing profession throughout the nation are closely linked to the Saudi government's Vision 2030. This demonstrates how crucial it is for academic nursing leaders to actively participate in the advancement of nursing education nationwide by developing nursing strategies and operational plans. Policymakers and planners must also actively support the development of nursing as a completely independent profession.

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