

## Creating Healthy Work Environments 2019

### Non-Academic Factors and Outcomes on the NCLEX® for RNs Among Non-Traditional Learners

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#### **Background**

The socio-economic changes observed nowadays, along with the effects of a globalized society, are factors leading to the evolving of changes in the academic sector, specifically in the composition of learners entering higher education. Hussar and Bailey (2016) reported that for the period of 1999 to 2013, 41% of the enrollments in higher education between the ages of 25 to 34, who had a previous educational background, family responsibilities, and worked full time. These descriptors are features associated with the definition of non-traditional adult learners and their characteristic profile. Non-traditional adult learners can make a valuable contribution to nursing academia and nursing practice due to their practical skills, motivation and other personal characteristics, which combined, could help to improve outcomes in the nursing profession. Nonetheless, understanding the extent to which their characteristics may hinder their attainment of academic and professional goals is important for scholars, as well as for administrators and policy makers for several reasons: to understand the root of the cause for not meeting the proposed outcomes, and to developing interventions that could assist non-traditional students/graduates to achieve their professional goals. The available literature is limited in regards to the number of studies that identify, describe, explore, or predict the factors associated with NCLEX-RN performance, specifically amongst nontraditional adult learners after graduation. Research organizes the variables describing a non-traditional group of adult students into three categories, (a) demographic, (b) environmental, and (c) psychological; which are believed to have a positive or negative effect on an individual's chance of passing NCLEX-RN. The literature describes demographic factors as age, gender, language proficiency, level of education, time since last attendance at school and prior educational experience (high school or other educational degree at the associate degree level or higher. Environmental factors are described by the individual's family obligations (head-of-household or single parent), employment responsibilities and financial situation. Psychological factors include dispositional motivation, attitude to the educational process, self-directedness and goals in life.

#### **Purpose**

The study will attempt to analyze how the demographic, social, and psychological factors observed in the nontraditional adult learner characteristics profile are related to NCLEX- RN performance amongst graduates from an Associate Degree in nursing program. The purpose of this study is to address an important gap in the nursing education literature in regards to the effects of the non-traditional student's personal, environmental and psychological factors observed in their characteristics profile to predict NCLEX- RN performance amongst graduates from an Associate Degree in nursing program. Because the readiness process for NCLEX-RN varies in regards to the student's ability to cope and manage the different factors surrounding their life, this proposed study will be addressed to examine any relationships and to predicts if these factors will have a significant impact, positively or negatively, in their NCLEX-RN performance.

#### **Philosophical Underpinning and Theoretical Framework.**

The foundations of this study are supported by two pillars of the research philosophy: The post positive Paradigm and The Adult Learning Theory, commonly known as Andragogy.

The Positivism Paradigm, as the philosophical underpinning, is chosen because it allows to empirically analyze the non-academic factors sought to have an effect in the student's NCLEX outcomes, by means of the application of the scientific process. From the epistemological terms of this paradigm, the verification of the nonacademic factors through the scientific method, will allow to draw conclusions of the presume relationships and outcomes.

The ontological perspective of this paradigm is applied in this study by the theoretical stands of the Andragogy theory, which attempt to explain the characteristic's profile and behavioral response of the

adult learner under the assumption of 4 principles: Adult learners are involved in their own learning, Self-direction (ability to actively participate in their learning process); Make meanings of their learning process, as they become mature; Their previous experience are the foundation for further learning and may promote academic success; Learning activities have a relevance to the personal life or career. Andragogy theory, as the theoretical framework of this proposed study, acknowledges four principles that adjust to the adult learner characteristic profile, and are assumed to influence the learning capacity and coping abilities adopted to overcome the demographic, social, and psychological factors that exist in the nontraditional adult student's characteristic profile.

**Methods.**

A quantitative, non-experimental study will be applied, which will follow a correlational and regression design to analyze the established hypothesis. The Appraisal-Revised 2 (SPAR-R-2) (Jeffreys, 2007) tool will be used to collect the social and psychological aspects of the participants, and a demographic questionnaire will provide information about their demographic status as well as their NCLEX-RN outcomes. The wellbeing of the participant will be ensured by strictly following ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice, which will be documented in an informed consent, and consistently applied throughout the data collection and analysis.

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**Title:**

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**Keywords:**

NCLEX-RN Outcomes, Non-Traditional adult learners and Non-academic factors

**References:**

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### **Abstract Summary:**

It is been discussed that Non-Traditional students in nursing face many challenges due to non-academic factors which are believed to have an effect in their NCLEX-RN results. This quantitative, no-experimental study intends to analyze any relationship between these non-academic factors, as well as if they can predict NCLEX-RN outcomes.

### **Content Outline:**

#### **A. Background of the Problem:**

- θ Increasing number of new nursing programs
- θ Impact in enrollments and retention rates,
- θ Challenges in meeting learning needs, integration of curricular models to fit the needs of a more diverse student population, and meeting programmatic outcomes (NCLEX-RN),
- θ Impact in their approval/accrediting status.
- θ The population of students pursuing further education has become much more diverse in terms of their demographic, cultural, and ethnic aspects.
- θ 41% of enrollments were students aged between 25 to 34 years old (NCES, 2011).
- θ Had previous educational background, family responsibilities, and worked full time.
- θ The AACC (2014) have projected an increase of 17% in college enrollments between 2013 and 2024.

#### **B. Who are considered Non-Traditional Adult Learners**

- θ Over 25 years old, who did not pursued higher education immediately after graduating from high school.
- θ May or may not continue college studies, and have returned to continue further studies in higher education
- θ Have family and work responsibilities, financial obligations, are financially independent, have children, spouse, single-parents and/or head of household.
- θ Are affected by other non-academic factors that may hinder them from gaining an academic degree.

## **II. Body**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **θ Problem Statement**

To examine the relationship and predictive effects of the demographic, environmental and psychological

factors presented in the characteristics profile of the non-traditional adult graduates from an ADN program, and the NCLEX- RN outcome.

#### *θ Purpose of the Study*

To examine the relationship and predictive effects of the demographic, environmental and psychological factors presented in the characteristics profile of the non-traditional adult graduates from an ADN program, and the NCLEX- RN outcome.

### **2. Significance of the Study**

θ Nursing education:

θ Nursing Practice

θ Nursing Research

θ Public policy

### **3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

θ Andragogy: Adult Learning Theory (Knowles, 1980)

o Four (4) principles which are assumed to describe the non-traditional adult student's characteristic profile.

o Maturation

o Self-direction

### **2. Conceptual framework**

θ Conceptual Model of Andragogy Applied to the Characteristics of Nontraditional Adult Graduates as Predictor of NCLEX-RN Performance (diagram).

### **3. Research Question and Hypotheses**

θ Is there a relationship between performance on the NCLEX-RN and the characteristics of the non-traditional learners graduated from an Associate Degree in nursing program?

θ To what extent do the characteristics of the non-traditional learners graduated from an Associate Degree in nursing program predict NCLEX-RN performance?

### **4. Review of the Literature**

θ Research related to nursing student academic success were mostly addressed to investigate graduates of baccalaureate nursing programs or accelerated nursing programs, using demographic and academic variables (e.g. age, gender, language spoken, grade point average [GPA], and learning style) to predict academic success in nursing programs.

θ Literature addressed to explore and describe academic success amongst non-traditional students are dated back to the 1980's, yet the evidence obtained is congruent with the information available nowadays.

θ Literature is consistent with the factors that hinders the ability of the non-traditional learner to achieve success; demographics, environmental and psychological factors.

### **5. Methodology**

θ Quantitative, Non-experimental

o Regression analysis design

o Correlation analysis design

θ Participants

o Non-Traditional adult learners, graduated from an approved ADN program

o Characteristics presented in the definition of non-traditional learner.

o Graduates between January 2016 and August 2018.

θ *Sampling strategy*

o Convenience sampling

### **6. Protection of Human Subjects**

### **7. Risk and Benefits of participation**

### **8. Instrumentation for data collection**

θ Student's Perception Appraisal –Revised 2 (SPA-R-2) (Jeffreys, 2007)

Υ Validity

o Used in number of research studies by the application of different research methodologies and statistical strategies,

o Validity performed by subject experts

Υ Reliability

o Cronbach alpha for internal consistency ( $\alpha$ .82)

Υ Scoring:

o Likert scale

θ Non-Traditional Adult Learner Demographic Questionnaire

o Demographic information

o NCLEX-RN outcome

**9. Process for data collection**

**10. General Statistic strategy**

θ The responses obtained from the questionnaire will be exported from the web-based platform Survey Monkey ®,

θ Collected data to be uploaded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences ® (SPSS) version 25,

θ Data Cleaning

θ Contingency cleaning

**11. General Statistic Strategy**

θ Descriptive

θ Mean

θ Central tendency

θ Normal distribution

θ Frequency distribution tables

θ Reliability Testing

θ Cronbach alpha of .7, with a statistical significance of  $p \leq 0.05$  will be acceptable to determine internal consistency.

θ data analysis

**12. Hypothesis Testing**

θ Hypothesis # 1

Υ Correlation analysis

Υ  $r \leq 0.5$  will be considered significant

θ Hypothesis # 2

Υ Regression analysis

Υ Pearson Chi square to assess the odds of predictability between variables.

**13. Limitations**

**14. Threats to Internal Validity**

θ Historical aspects

θ Maturation process

**15. Threats to External Validity**

θ Environmental conditions

First Primary Presenting Author

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**Author Summary:** Angela is a current student of the PhD Nursing education program at NOVA Southeastern University in Davie, FL. Angela has worked in the educational field for almost 12 years, and possess ample experience in the administrative and instructional filed of nursing education, especially with non-traditional students, which provides her with great experience in the identification and assistance of academic needs as well as to develop strategies to support students throughout their educational journey.