Establishing Reliability of an Instrument Measuring Student Learning in a Service-Learning Environment

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Purpose: There is need for nursing programs to focus on learning experiences that not only contribute to students’ achievement of the program learning objectives but also demonstrate professionalism, increase social responsiveness, social accountability and community awareness. There is considerable literature supporting service learning as an effective tool for increasing student civic responsibility however there is little evidence establishing service learning as an effective means of increasing discipline specific nursing skills. The purpose of the project is to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Student Satisfaction and Self-Confidence in Learning Scale as a tool for measuring student self-confidence and satisfaction with learning pediatric nursing skills in a service-learning environment.

Currently there is no dedicated instrument for specifically measuring novice nurses’ beliefs and attitudes about learning clinical nursing skills in the service-learning environment. Historically student evaluation tools focused on measures of increasing civic responsibility and student satisfaction with the overall experience. An existing instrument, the Student Satisfaction and Self Confidence in Learning Scale (SCLS), developed and validated by the NLN to evaluate learning in a simulation environment, shows promise for being adapted as a service learning assessment tool. Establishing reliability of this instrument for this purpose will add to available research tools.

Methods: The SCLS is composed of 13 items that assess the students’ attitude toward satisfaction with instruction and self-confidence in learning the nursing curriculum through simulation (Jeffries and Rizzolo, 2006). The survey questions were adapted to reflect learning through pediatric service learning experiences. The survey was administered to novice nursing students during their final semester at a University in the Southern United States following completion of several service learning clinical experiences. Psychometric tests include item analysis, correlation, and internal consistency.

Results: 124 Completed Surveys. Responses on the SCLS were skewed, with most participants responding either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” on all items. The overall SCLS was 0.97. Alpha was 0.93 for the satisfaction and 0.95 for the self-confidence subscales, respectively. The correlation between the satisfaction and self-confidence subscales of the SCLS is very high; thus, satisfaction and self-confidence in learning cannot be considered conceptually or statistically independent. Correlation scores were all acceptable and ranged from .78 (item 11) to .9 (item 8).

Conclusion: Establishment of this assessment tool provides robust evidence to ensure that judgments made about service-learning educational practices, incorporation into clinical nursing courses, and student self-confidence in learning following service-learning experiences are beneficial and credible. Additional assessments comparing this scale with other established tools are needed to further establish instrument validity.
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Keywords:
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Abstract Summary:
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References:

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