

Nurses' Attitudes Towards Continuing Formal Education: A Comparison by Level of Education & Geography



Tanya K. Altmann, PhD, RN
Sacramento State University

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Purpose

To examine:

- the attitudes of nurses toward continuing formal education at the BSN level &/or beyond
- whether these attitudes change over time
- do they differ for RNs who have returned
- whether nurses' attitudes change related to geography



Background

1. Patient safety & outcomes

- ↓ in morbidity, mortality, & practice related disciplinary actions

2. The nursing & faculty shortage

- Not motivating or supporting return to school
- APN education vs. teaching

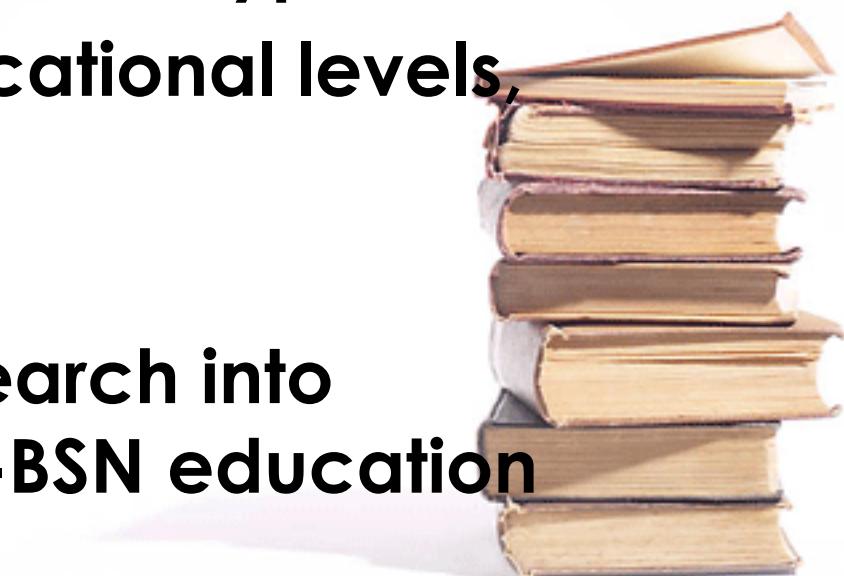
3. Nurses' attitudes & actions

- ↑ professional values =
↑ positive attitudes toward education,
↑ occupational commitment, &
↓ work burnout



Gaps in the Literature

- small samples,
 - few re: continuing formal education,
 - restricted geographies,
 - questionnaires with Likert-type scales,
 - RNs at different educational levels,
 - > 10 years old
-
- Recommended research into attitudes toward RN-BSN education



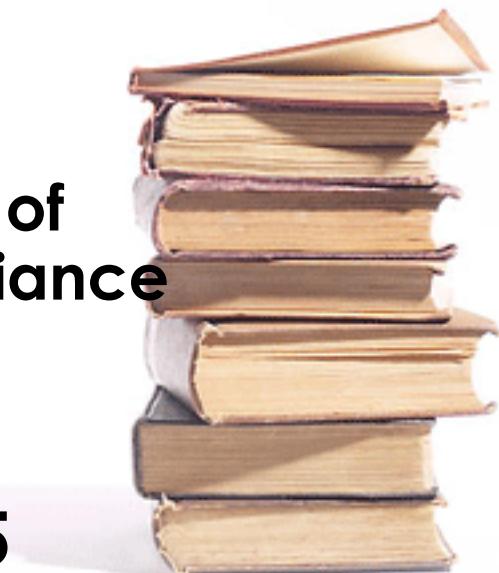
Method

- **Exploratory, comparative, & descriptive**
- **Random sample of RNs**
 - 3 states selected based on ADN:DN programs
 - Sample size predetermined & adjusted
- **2 mailed questionnaires**
 - 2700 packets mailed Nov. '07 & 1600 packets Jan. '08
- **Framework: Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985)**
- **IRB approved**



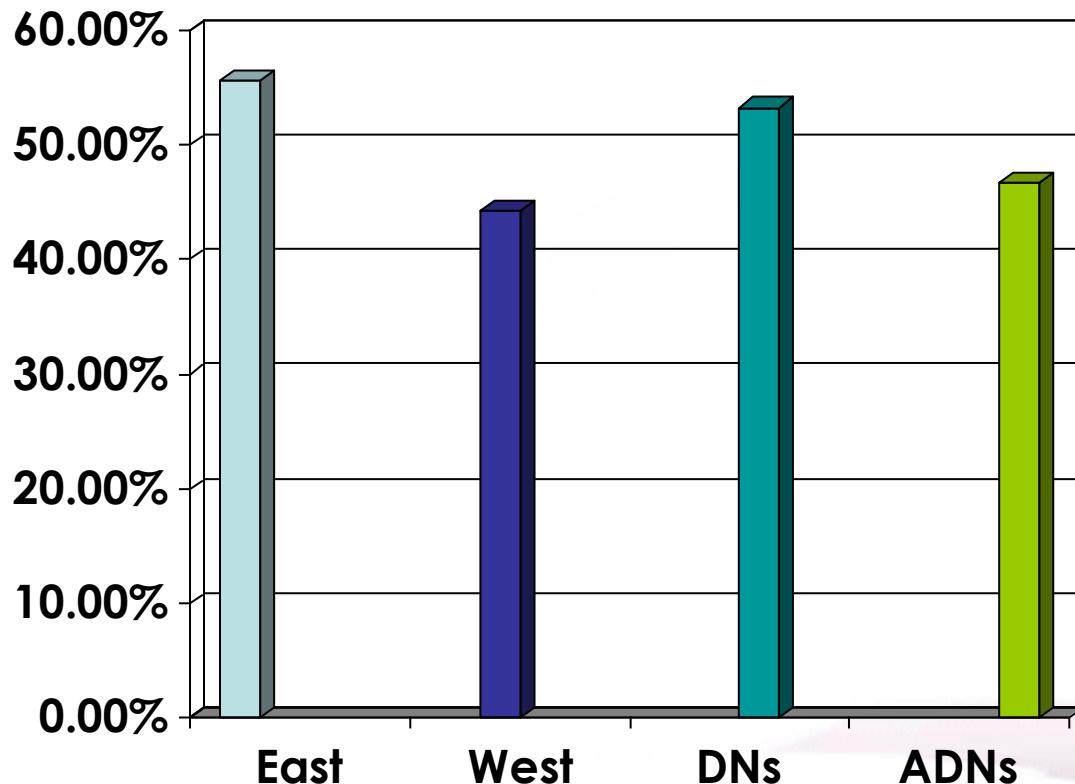
Data Analysis

- Socio-demographic questionnaire:
 - Descriptive statistics
- Attitudes toward BSN Education Scale:
 - As adjective pairs & composite scores:
ANOVA & MANOVA
 - Question 1: MANOVA robust
 - Questions 2-4: Met assumptions of normality & homogeneity of variance
 - Cronbach's alpha = .96
- Statistical significance: $p < .05$



Response Rates

914 responses (33.9%); 535 useable (19.8%)



- Participants demographically resembled the U.S. population of RNs
- 52.4% had been encouraged during their initial program
- 20.4% felt pressure to return to school
- 88% reported net annual incomes above the U.S. median however, only 40.8% reported income was solely earned



1. What are the attitudes?

- ADNs scored significantly higher than DNs

2. Do attitudes change over time?

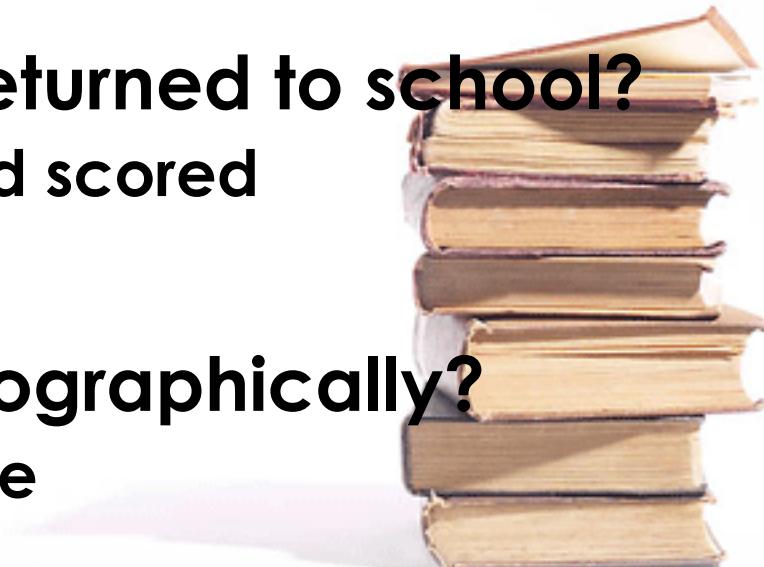
- No significant differences
- If $p = .06$ & power = .70, older RNs scored significantly higher

3. Do attitudes differ if returned to school?

- Those who had returned scored significantly higher

4. Do attitudes differ geographically?

- No significant difference



Conclusions

- 1. Generalizable to U.S. RNs**
- 2. RNs have positive, but weak, attitudes toward continuing formal education that do not change over time**
- 3. RNs who have returned to school have more positive attitudes**
- 4. Linked salary to advanced education; even at the BSN level**
- 5. Few felt social pressure to return**

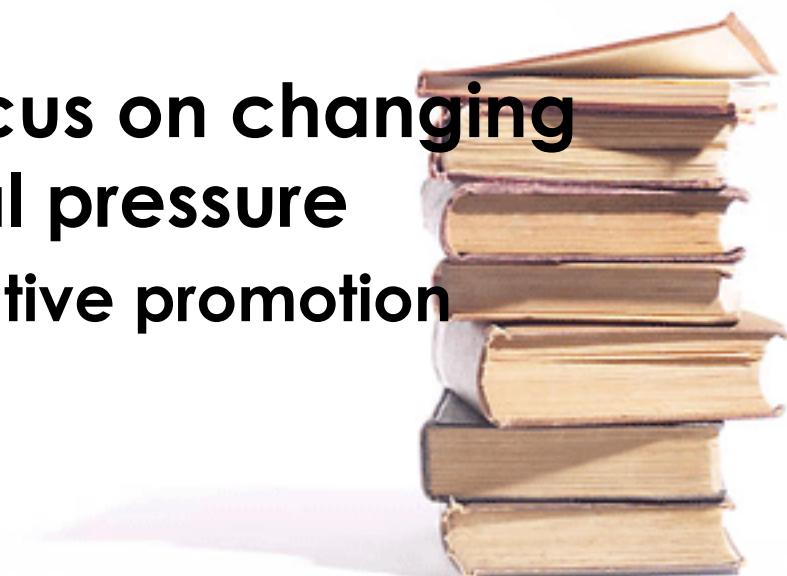


6. Faculty in ADN & DN programs are not consistently encouraging their students to continue
7. Employers apply some pressure, but have not improved their support
8. California is not as progressive as touted
9. The resurgence of DN programs is not indicative of a less positive attitude



Recommendations

- Need more research on how & when to improve the attitudes of RNs toward BSN education
 - Recommend: longitudinal mixed modal study
- Enticement should focus on changing attitudes & ↑'ing social pressure
 - Recommend: more active promotion & support



- Professional development & advanced education linked to job satisfaction
 - Recommend: employers ↑ their support
- Students need more encouragement & information
 - Recommend: survey nursing faculty re: their attitudes
 - Recommend: ↑ numbers of articulated programs & students' knowledge of these (Supports IOM recommendation #4)



- A BSN education is not highly valued
 - Recommend: research on the benefits of a BSN education be repeated for validation & better disseminated



The Beauty of Mathematics

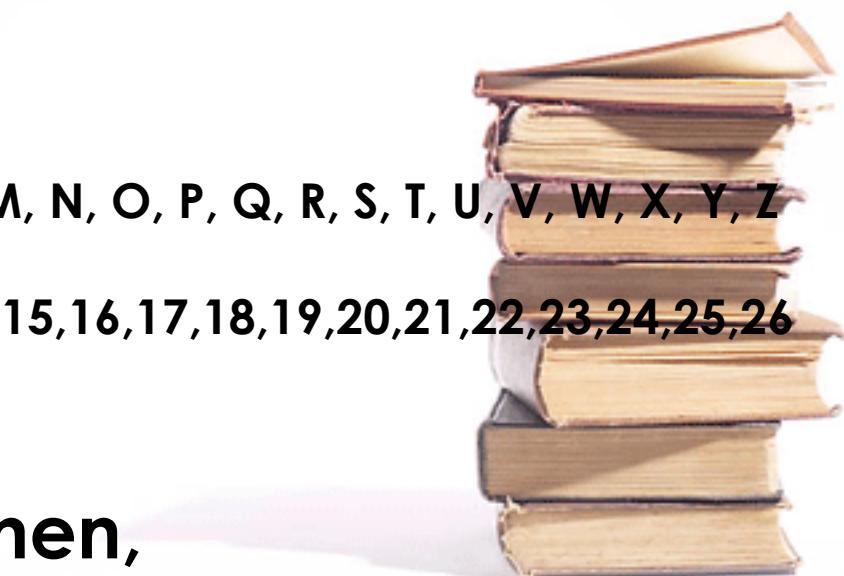
by Wonderful World

If the letters in the alphabet were
sequentially represented as numbers
1 through 26,

A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z

1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26

Then,



Hard work:

$$8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98\%$$

Knowledge:

$$11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = 96\%$$

BUT.....

ATTITUDE:

$$1+20+20+9+20+21+415 = \underline{100\%}$$



**Therefore, one can conclude
with mathematical certainty
that:**

**while hard work & knowledge
will get you close,
ATTITUDE
will get you there !**

