Factors Influencing Retention of Students in an RN-to-BSN Program

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Problem

- **Justification**
  - Retention a benchmark for program success
    - ➢ Schools must identify reasons RN-to-BSN program students leave
      - – Little to no evidence of studies

- **Significance**
  - RN-to-BSN enrollment up; attrition rates +50%
    - ➢ Retention tracked; More data needed

- **80% of nurses should have BSN by 2020 (ANA, 2008 & IOM, 2011)**

Purpose

- **Describe factors that restricted or promoted retention among RN-to-BSN students**
  - Examine any difference in the measure of these factors between juniors and seniors

- **Ultimate goal to inform faculty**
  - Develop and guide interventions
  - Assist universities to meet nursing organization suggestions

Theoretical Basis

- **Philosophical underpinnings – Comte's positivism concept**
  - Goal of knowledge is only to describe the phenomena

- **Conceptual framework**
  - Jeffreys (2004) **N**ursing **U**ndergraduate **R**etention and **S**uccess (NURS) model; Focus on retention

Review of Literature

- **Few studies among RN-to-BSN students**
  - Persistence, minority retention, and online orientation
  - Direct interaction of faculty & students a constant theme
  - Faculty availability and timely feedback most important

- **Jeffreys – extensive research**
  - Identified five factors that restrict/support student retention
    - Environmental factors
    - Institutional interaction and integration factors
    - Personal academic factors
    - College facilities factors
    - Friend support factors

Methodology

- **Research design**
  - Non-experimental, descriptive, comparison study, using convenience sample from RN-to-BSN students at one liberal arts university

- **Instrumentation**
  - SPA-R and demographic questionnaire
    - ➢ Reliability and validity

- **Protection of human subjects – IRB approval**

- **Midwest liberal arts university**
  - Two main campuses in separate states

- **Learning environment**
  - Face-to-face and blended
  - Geographically separated sites

- **Learning cohorts**
  - Community hospitals and community colleges

Overview of Results

- **Invitation sent to 208 individuals**
  - 84 (40.38%) entered survey site

- **The sample**
  - White females, mid-30's, married, full-time jobs
  - Continuously enrolled with average grade of A

- **Question 1 – What are the descriptive values for five identified factors among a sample of RN-to-BSN students?**

- **Question 2 – What is the rank order of the means of the scores for the measures associated with each of the five factors among this sampling?**

Descriptive Statistics for the Scores of the Research Variables (N = 77)

Variable	M	SD	range	n
Environmental factors	.23	.46	-.80 to 1.40	77
College facilities factors	.25	.27	-.40 to .80	76
Personal academic factors	.29	.72	-1.20 to 2.00	77
Institutional integration factors	.33	.32	-.40 to 1.20	77
Friend support factors	1.23	.61	.00 to 2.00	77

Integration of Findings with Literature

- **Environmental Factors**
  - Least supportive factor; Congruent with Jeffreys (2007)

- **Institutional Interaction & Integration Factors**
  - Congruent with Jeffreys' (2004, 2007) studies; Active mentoring by faculty seen as most beneficial

- **Personal Academic Factors**
  - Congruent with Jeffreys (2007)
  - Students challenged to balance responsibilities
  - Able to prioritize; Skill used daily in nursing practice

Integration of Findings with Literature (Cont'd)

- **College Facilities Factors**
  - Not perceived as most restrictive or supportive
  - Differences encountered in current study

- **Friend Support Factors**
  - Perceived as most supportive
  - Support of family and friends linked to retention

- **Differences encountered in current study**
  - None; Seen by juniors and seniors as key to staying in program

Implication of Findings

- **Nursing Education**
  - Study focused on infrequently studied students; Sensitize faculty to supportive and restrictive factors

- **Nursing Practice**
  - More emphasis needed on strategies other than financial aid

- **Nursing Research**
  - Low retention rates in degree completion programs (AACN, 2010)
  - Retention likely to lead to advanced nursing education

Limitations

- **Testing and instrumentation**
  - Low inter-item reliability
  - Survey items not specific

- **Generalizability**
  - One population
  - Small sample size

Recommendations For Future Studies

- **Qualitative study**

- **Mixed methods study**

- **Increase sample size and/or calculate power analysis for a large effect size**