

# Outcomes of Participation in a Nurse Externship Program

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# Background

- Nurse externship programs were initially developed by healthcare institutions as a recruitment tool for new nurses.

  Rush, et al, 2013; Kilpatrick & Frunchak, 2006; Starr & Conley, 2006)
- Literature has demonstrated the positive outcomes of the program on the participants, but during times of economic difficulties, health care institutions discontinue the program.
- There are studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of the program in recruitment and 2-year retention of the newly graduate nurses. (Cantrell, Brown, & Lupinacci, 2005; Tritak, et al, 1997)
- There is a need to demonstrate the long-term retention return on investment of this program. (Cantrell & Brown, 2006; Lott et al, 2011)

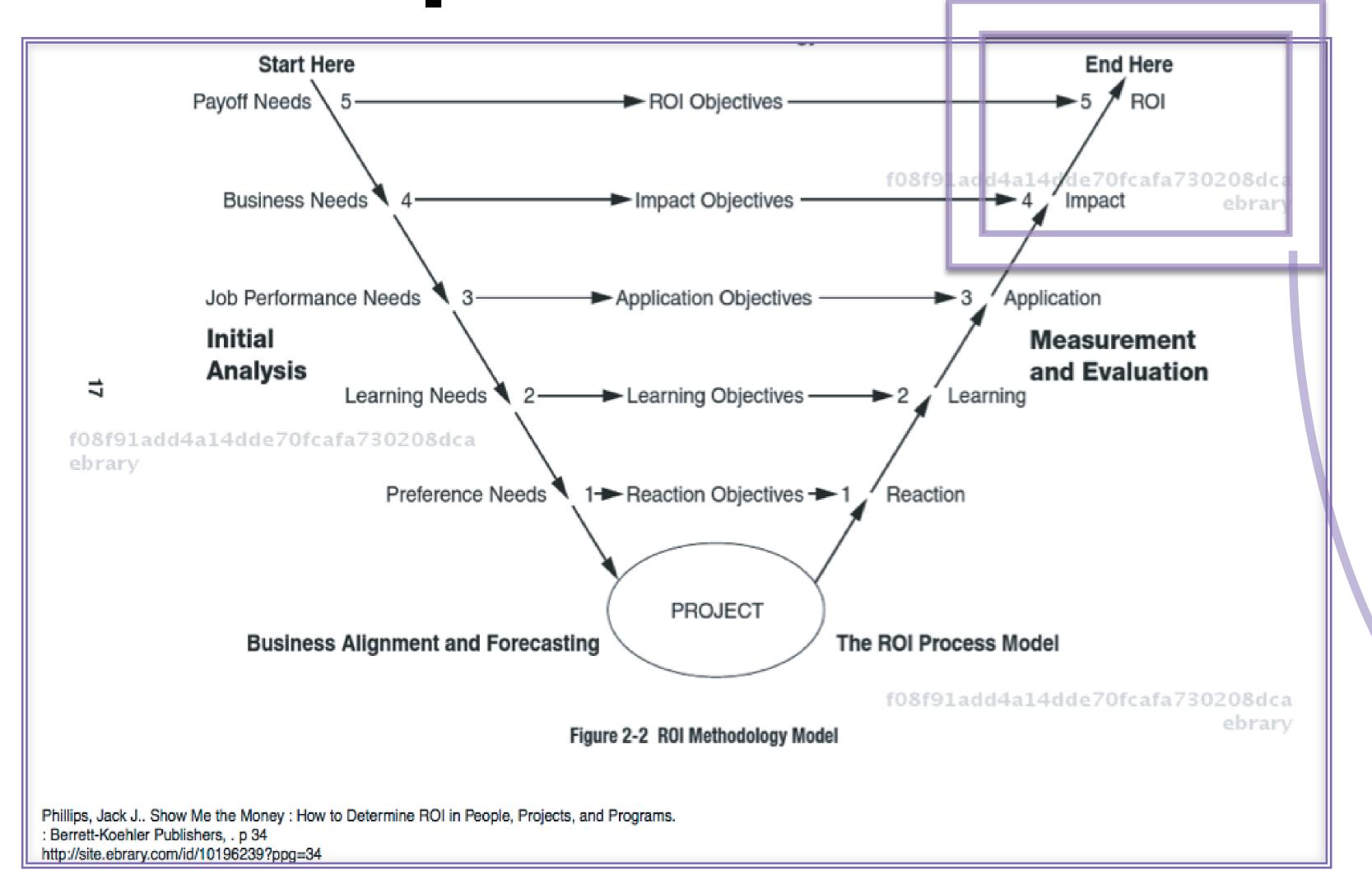
#### Research Questions

- 1. What is the relationship between student nurse externship experience and extension of the new graduate, unit-based orientation?
- 2. What is the relationship between student nurse externship experience and working full time over the first 5 years of RN employment?
- 3. What is the relationship between student nurse externship experience and adherence to select quality care indicators?

#### Research Aims

- 1. Determine the relationships between nursing student externship,
- a. extension of new graduate, unit-based orientation and
- b. working full time over the first 5 years of employment.
- 2. Determine the relationship between nurse externship and adherence to the following quality care indicators:
- a. Acute myocardial infarction (AMI);
- b. Heart failure (HF);
- c. Pneumonia;
- d. Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP);
- e. Immunization;
- f. Stroke; and
- g. Venous Thrombosis.
- 3. Develop a ROI formula that can be utilized to explain the cost effectiveness of a nurse externship program.

### Conceptual Framework



# Study Methodology

Study Design	Study Sample	Study Setting
Non-experimental, retrospective, descriptive, correlational design	Nonrandomized, all new graduate RNs hired from January 2003 to December 2008	•

# Study Sample

		Externship Experience	No Externship Experience
Total	123	20	103
Gender			
Male	32 (26%)	5 (25%)	27 (26.2%)
Female	91 (74%)	15 (75%)	76 (73.8%)
Age			
Median		34	38
Mean		37	40
Race			
Asian	73 (59%)	11 (55%)	62 (60%)
Black-American	4 (3.3%)	1 (5%)	3 (2.9%)
Hispanic/Latino	21 (17.6%)	4 (20%)	17 (16.5%)
White	25 (20%)	4 (20%)	21 (21%)

## Findings

**Aim 1** a – A negative relationship was found between 20 newly graduate nurses with externship experience and 103 newly graduates nurses without externship experience and extension of unit based orientation,  $X^2(1) = 4.8$ , p < .05.

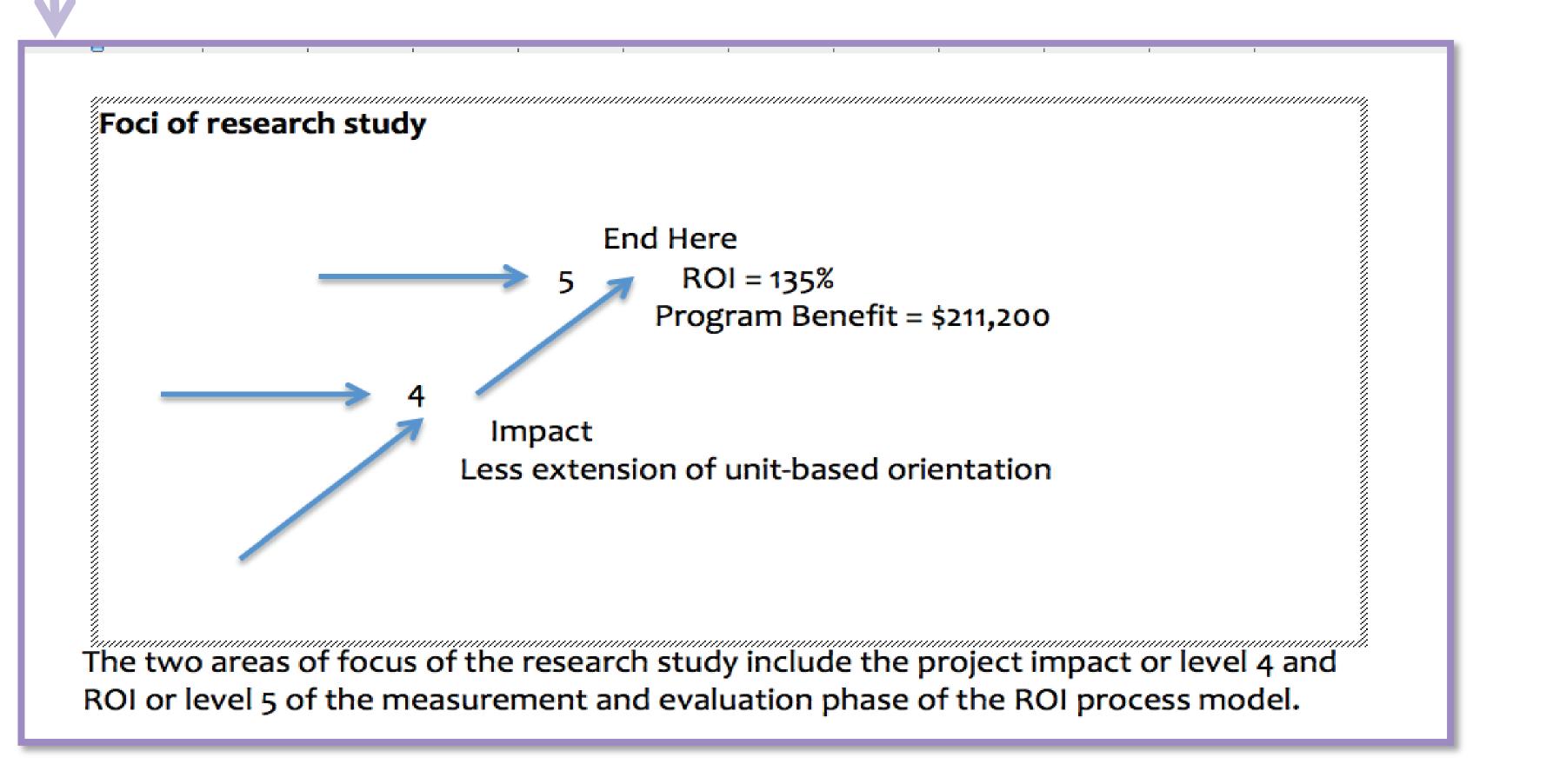
**Aim 1 b** - No relationship was found between the 20 newly graduate nurses with externship experience and 103 RNs with no externship experience and full time hours worked during the first 5 years of employment,  $X^2(1) = .03$ , p > .05.

**Aim 2** - No statistical relationship was found between newly graduate nurses with externship experience and those with no externship experience and adherence to select quality indicators,  $X^2(1) = .62$ , p > .05.

#### Aim 3

	Extern Experience	No Extern Experience
Extern salary (\$4,200 *20)	\$84,000	\$0
RN Preceptor differential (300 * 20)	\$6,000	\$0
Extension of orientation	\$28,160.00	\$239,360
Total cost	\$118,160	\$239,360.00

externs.



Unexpected and yet significant findings include: average number of hours of unit-based orientation is 100 hours and the importance of converting impact data into measurable outcomes

### Implications

- The findings and contribution of the study to existing literature include both the short term and long term impact of the externship program and is applicable to the nursing practice setting.
- The short term impact findings include nurses with extern experience extend orientation less than nurses with no externship experience and the average extension of unit-based orientation is 100 hours per new nurse.
- The long-term impact findings include there is no significance between the nurses with extern experience and those without in relation to long-term employment and adherence to documentation of core measures.
- The results of this study can be used in making decisions regarding the implementation and continuous sustainability of not only extern programs but also post-licensure residency programs in the hospital settings (Anderson, Hair, & Todero, 2012; Goode, Lynn, Krsek, & Bednash, 2009).
- The findings lead to the need to investigate and understand how preceptors
  are trained and recognized in the practice setting along with the importance of
  unit-based education in addressing the learning curve related to new initiatives
  such as quality indicators.
- Academic settings can use this newly found information to explain the positive impact of the program to the students' transition into their professional role and the financial impact to the hospital.

#### References

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