The Relationship between Nursing Student Test-taking Motivation and the Exit Examination Score

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Introduction
Studies reveal that test-taking motivation has a role in test performance. When higher levels of test-taking motivation were identified, higher scores on standardized examinations were more likely to occur. Enhancing nursing students’ test-taking motivation can augment the nursing students’ performance on the exit examination.

Purpose
A primary objective of nursing programs includes nursing student first-time success on the NCLEX-RN®. As the nursing shortage continues, it is essential to have qualified nursing graduates pass the NCLEX-RN®. An approach some nursing programs have implemented to identify nursing students’ probability of success on the NCLEX-RN® includes the administration of an exit examination. The purpose of this descriptive, correlational study was to investigate if a relationship exists between nursing students’ test-taking motivation and the exit examination score.

Methods & Materials
- Convenience sample of 150 senior nursing students in 4 nursing programs.
- Eligible participants included nursing students required to take an exit examination prior to graduating.
- Data was obtained from the nursing students immediately after taking the exit examination.
- The Student Opinion Scale was utilized to determine statistical associations between test-taking motivation and the exit examination score.

Results
Demographics
- 88% Female; 90% were Caucasian
- GPAs ranged from 2.5-4.0 (M=3.37, SD=0.37)
- Participants ages ranged from 19—46 (M=26.7, SD=6.36).
- Majority were 21-25 years old (62%)

Distribution of Exit Examination Scores among the participants

Medium positive correlation between Total Motivation Score and the exit examination score, \( r=0.311, n=150, p<0.001 \).

Perceived Effort Subscale Scores were moderately correlated with higher exit examination scores, \( r=0.350, n=150, p<0.001 \).

Small correlation between perceived importance of the exit examination and the exit examination score, \( r=0.198, n=150, p=0.15 \).

Only demographic variable that resulted in statistical significance was GPA.
- Small positive correlation was noted between GPA and exit examination scores, \( r=0.292, n=148, p<0.001 \).

A significant difference between the high-stakes and low-stakes groups and exit examination scores (t(13.5) =3.25, p=0.006) was identified.
- High-stakes group (M=86.20, SD=12.32)
- Low-stakes group (M=61.43, SD=28.23)

Limitations
- Study’s design cannot imply a casual conclusion
- Convenience sample from one state in US
- Instrument was a self-report tool
- Possible social desirability bias influenced some participants.
- Timing of the administration of the survey

Conclusion

Nurse Educators
- Accurate interpretation of exit examination scores
- Identify nursing student readiness for NCLEX-RN®
- Importance in enhancing nursing student test-taking motivation

Nursing Programs
- Careful consideration is essential when determining the exit examination stakes
- Determining remediation and progression policies based on the exit examination score.

References