

## ABSTRACT

Garza, Viola S., Persistence as a Function of Social Support, GPA, Marital Status, and Age in Mexican-American Nursing Students. Doctorate of Education (Ed.D), August 2008, 101 pages, 16 tables, 64 references, 52 titles.

In nursing education research, efforts have been made to relate student retention to many factors but, an area that has been neglected is persistence in Mexican-American nursing students. The purpose of this paper was to investigate persistence as a function of social support (perceived social support from family and friends), GPA, marital status, and age in Mexican-American nursing students at a university along the Texas/Mexico border. The methods used for data analyses were: (1) Descriptive (numerical) statistics, (2) Inter-Correlation Matrix between the dependent variable (persistence) and the independent variables and among independent variables (social support, GPA, marital status, and age), (3) Bivariate correlation and multiple linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between and among the variables, and (4) Logistic regression analysis which combined the independent variables into a single regression against the dependent variable, thus accounting for or explaining variance on the criterion variable. The instruments used were a Demographic Information Form, the Perceived Social Support from Family (PSS-Fa), and Perceived Social Support from Friends (PSS-Fr). No identifying information was requested of the participants to protect their anonymity. Seventy-three participants volunteered to take part in the study. The participants

consisted of sixty-two students who were enrolled in the first semester senior level baccalaureate nursing courses and eleven students who had left the program. In this study, the results indicated that persistence is a function of perceived social support from family and friends, GPA, marital status, and age in Mexican-American nursing students. Of significance were two independent variables of perceived social support from family and friends which explained 51% of the total variance between persistence and not persisting. The independent variables of GPA, marital status, and age only accounted for 4% the total variance. The findings of this study have implications for nurse educators and administrators who desire a better understanding of institutions enrolling large numbers of minority students, specifically Mexican-American students.