

Correlational Relationship of the Perceived Level of Difficulty and the Licensure Exam Performance among Nursing Licensure Exam Takers in November 2022 of Isabela State University Echague-College of Nursing

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Abstract:- The Nursing Licensure Examination (NLE) is a test mandatory to all aspirants for registration as professional nurses as ordered by RA 9173. It serves as a means of maintaining the quality of the nursing profession after they have been trained and schooled in their respective institution. It measures the competencies of the nursing professionals who are believed to have acquired the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitude in the practice of their profession. Unfortunately, the testimonies during the recognition of the NLE passers from Isabela State University- Echague (ISU-E) College of Nursing (CON) perceived other subjects as very difficult, difficult and easy. This enabled the researchers to determine the significant relationship between the licensure exam performance and perceived level of difficulty among NLE takers in November 2022 of ISUE-CON. This study covered ninety-five (95) nursing graduates from ISUE-CON who passed the PNLE in November 2022 regardless of where they took the exam. All the participants voluntarily submitted their board rating results to the researchers ensuring confidentiality. The researchers used a descriptive correlational design to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the licensure exam performance and perceived level of difficulty of the participants. The data revealed, Medical Surgical Nursing is the most difficult among 11 nursing subjects during the NLE perceived by the participants. And the board ratings of the participants have a good result. Hence, data revealed that the level of difficulty perceived by the participants in different nursing subjects has no significant relationship to their licensure exam performance.

Keywords:- Board Performance, Level of Difficulty, Nursing Subject.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term "Nursing Education" describes formal instruction and preparation in the field of nursing. This includes the duties and obligations associated with giving patients physical care as well as the blending of several

professions that expedites and supports the patient's recovery from disease.

The four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing program consists of general education, major, and professional nursing courses. Risk reduction, illness prevention, health promotion, and health restoration are its four primary principles. Throughout the years, aside from lectures, clinical classes and related learning experiences are embedded in this program, which focuses on various nursing principles. One of the hardest degrees to earn is a bachelor's degree in nursing, which is well known. This program improves students' memorization skills in addition to their general intelligence. It also challenges them to build new talents and make more complex decisions in order to save lives even in the direst situations. In fact, a student must prepare his heart and mind for the idea that dealing with people's health, especially the sick, is his primary obligation as soon as he decides to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing.

In order to authorize someone to practice professional nursing, the Nurse Licensure Examination (NLE) verifies that the licence holder possesses the minimal, first, or entry-level competencies necessary to safely perform nursing duties within the scope of professional nursing practice.

Nursing Licensure Examinations (NLE) serve as a means of maintaining the quality of the nursing profession after they have been trained and schooled in their respective institution. It measures the competencies of the nursing professionals who are believed to have acquired the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitude in the practice of their profession.

By Board Resolution No. 18 series of 2006, the Board of Nursing approved, published, and distributed the "Philippine Nurses' Licensure Examinations (PNLE) Covering Nursing Practice I, II, III, IV, and V" in March of that year. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) updated and modernised the Bachelor of Science in Nursing curriculum, which was mandated by CHED Memorandum 30, (CMO 30) series of 2001, and updated the law. Together, these two factors led to the adoption of the new PNLE

Framework, which is also known as the "Philippine Nursing Act of 2002" (Republic Act No. 9173) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. The new test framework, likewise, was also based on the Core Competency Standards promulgated through Board Resolution No. 112 series of 2005. The NLE Competency-based Test Framework was implemented in June 2006 and the subsequent Nurse Licensure Examination.

The Board of Nursing created the 500-item multiple-choice NLE exam to assess nursing competence at the novice level. The five test subjects, each with 100 questions, are the broad areas of nursing and other associated disciplines taken into consideration in accordance with the goals of the nursing programme. An examinee must score at least 75 percent overall and no less than 60 percent in any of the five test subjects in order to pass the exam. Article IV, Section 12 of the Philippine Republic Act No. 9173 stipulates that "all applicants for a licence to practise nursing shall be required to pass a written examination, which shall be given by the Board of Nursing (BON) in such places and dates as may be designated by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), provided that it shall be following Republic Act No. 8981, otherwise known as the PRC Modernization Act of 2000". Moreover, the board examination is vital, primarily because it assesses students' performances. In connection with the assessment of performances in students, the board examination is also used to identify what specific part of the examination needs improvement.

Many years of debate regarding perceived differences in subject difficulty have taken place, and this may be to blame for a lesser interest in some "important" subject areas. Teachers gave advice based on what each student would enjoy and find valuable for future schooling or work, even though topic difficulty was a key factor. Teachers concurred that each student's unique strengths played a major role in whether or not they found a certain subject to be challenging. Students also concurred that while some courses "stood out" as generally appearing to be more challenging than others, whether or not they found a subject challenging depended on their capabilities. Many nursing students got pressured into what subject they must focus on. To help nursing students deal with this issue, it is important to identify what specific part of the examination needs improvement.

In the Last 3 years of Philippine Nursing Licensure Examination performance of ISU-E CON, it shows that July 2021 first takers had 100%, repeaters of 85.71%, Overall Performance of 88.89%, November 2021 had 66.67%, National passing rate of 78.30%, Overall national passing rate of 51.46%, May 2023 first time takers resulted to 95.24%, overall performance of 86.11% and a National Passing Rate of 74.94%.

Therefore, this study aimed to identify the most difficult different nursing subjects of 2022 Board Takers of Isabela State University Echague- College of Nursing (ISU-E-CON) as a starting point for reinforcing effective and creative teaching strategies to raising passing rates and enhancing board exam candidates' performance in a particular test

category that nursing graduates find challenging. The researcher aims to get an unbiased result that the researcher can use for a proposal to the Nursing department for improving the performance in the next board exams and thus, serves as a basis to enhance preparation and prediction in the board exam performance.

The College of Nursing - Echague Campus passers of the Nursing Licensure Exam (NLE) in November 2022 are an ideal subject for this research to determine the most difficult nursing subject in the examination and whether there is an impact on the participants' board ratings.

The study will address the quality of education as it will benefit the students to obtain the information, abilities, and effective learning strategies necessary for workplace global competency and improve the curriculum and performance in the next board exams. Given that one of Isabela State University's academic objectives is to comply with the Sustainable Development Goals, one of those goals is to support and provide students with a quality education.

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design*

In the study, the researcher applied a descriptive correlational research approach. This design serves to both establish the relationship between various variables and generate statistical images of situations. This would determine the board rating performance of the participants in relation to the profile and perceived level of difficulty of different nursing subjects.

➤ *Locale of the Study*

The study was carried out under the direction of Mrs. Edmelyn B. Cacayan, RN, MSN, who holds the position of first and current dean of the Isabela State University Echague Campus College of Nursing in San Fabian, Echague, Isabela. In the year of 2021, the PNLE performance of ISU-ECON, it shows that July 2021 first takers 100%, repeaters 85.71%, Overall Performance 88.89%, November 2021 66.67%, national passing rate 78.30%, Overall national passing rate 51.46%, May 2023 first time takers 95.24%, overall performance 86.11, national Passing Rate 74.94%.

The College of Nursing views a nursing student as creative, capable, and scientifically prepared with the knowledge and abilities needed to meet the demands of the nursing profession in advancing and preserving health. The mission of the Isabela State University College of Nursing is to equip nursing students with foundational nursing skills based on competency in order to generate competent, professionally knowledgeable, and devoted nursing graduates.

The faculty is composed of 21 under Contract of Service faculty members and seven (7) permanents who are all specialists in different fields. They have the proper qualifications and experience to deliver the best nursing instruction to their students.

The college is also equipped with the required facilities such as nutrition, lab, simulation room, and audiovisual rooms, which passed the requirement of the Commission on Higher Education. It also has a responsive program to enhance the knowledge and skills of students in taking their board exams and performing their responsibilities as novice nurses.

➤ *Respondents of the Study*

Respondents of the study were selected using random sampling. The 2022 graduates from ISU-E College of Nursing who passed the PNLE in November 2022, regardless of where they took the exam. It is composed of one hundred twenty-five (125) total respondents and a sample size of ninety-five (95).

➤ *Data Gathering Instrument*

Prior to the actual data gathering the researchers made a questionnaire containing the Likert scale in determining the perceived level of difficulty of the different nursing subjects by the NLE takers and conducted a pilot testing. The researchers used 10 participants who are not part of the actual participant of the study from 125 populations. The questionnaire was sent through google form. After processing the data gathered from sample participants the researcher conducts a Cronbach alpha. The researcher computed a .815 which shows a good internal consistency.

After proving that the questionnaire is good in gathering data the researcher gathered data using Google survey from which was sent and communicated to the respondents through messenger chat and Facebook accounts. The google form contains the profile of the respondents as follows; sex, age, socio-economic status, type of in-house review, and type of national intensive review. And to determine the board performance and perceived level of difficulty of the nursing licensure exam in November 2022 of ISUE-CON, it is a Likert scale form which was originally made by the researchers as an instrument in gathering data. On the other hand, board performance of the November 2022 NLE takers was taken through the help of the research adviser and the College of Nursing to ask permission to access the NOA of the participants.

The research adviser was provided with the researchers' instrument for preliminary inspection. The statistician has examined and pre-reviewed the instrument for additional validation.

➤ *Data Gathering Procedure*

The researchers are unable to physically float the questionnaires because the respondents live in different municipalities and are busy with their work. As a result, the researchers turned to a more feasible process to collect data from the respondents. The researcher used Google form and Messenger to act as a communication channel.

The list of July 2022 graduates of Bachelor of Science in Nursing who took PNLE on November 2022 was taken from the College of Nursing through the help of the research adviser and College Secretary. The researchers asked

permission and help from the research adviser to give a consent letter to the participants to conduct research, after approval, the researchers sent the Google form during the vacant time of the participants within two (2) weeks after the board exam. Following the collection of data, the answers were totalled, arranged, explained, and examined in light of the things identified in the instruments.

➤ *Statistical Treatment Data*

After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed, interpret, and summarize the data using the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) software;

- *Frequency.*

It is used to ascertain the average age of the people in the profile, variance in socio-economic status, variance in the type of review or preparation, and average frequency of review.

- *Percentage.*

It is used to compare one quantity against another, with the second quantity rebased to 100. The frequency within the category is multiplied by 100% after being divided by the total number of cases.

- *Weighted Mean.*

It is utilized to treat the participants' responses on several parts under information proper.

- *Mean Score.*

The researchers utilized the five levels of scale to score the perception in each subject or item. The scoring indicated is used to address the perception of the difficulty of the board exam among November 2022 NLE takers from Isabela. The scale was used to interpret the respondent's perception of the difficulty of the Nursing Licensure Examination in each subject and set. State University Echague College of Nursing.

- *Chi-Square.*

Used to ascertain whether there is a discrepancy between the participants' perceived level of difficulty and the board ratings among those who took the November 2022 NLE from Isabela State University Echague is due to chance, or if it is due to a relationship between variables.

- *Pearson Correlation Coefficient.*

The analysis of the relationship between the Board performance and the difficulty of the subject.

- *Likert Scale.*

Determine or describe the level of perception 2022 NLE takers of Isabela State University- Echague. Scale composed of five (5) levels (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). One (1) was labelled "Very easy", two (2) evaluated as "Easy", three (3) indicated as "Neutral", four (4) considered "Difficult" and five (5) to be the highest labelled as "Very Difficult". The questions were presented in structured, closed-ended, and declarative forms.

To interpret the level of perception of the difficulty of the nursing subjects, the arbitrary statistical ranges were used as follows:

Table 1 Likert Scale for the Level of Difficulty.

Sr No.	Ranges	Interpretation
1	4.21 - 5.00	Very Difficult
2	3.41 -4.20	Difficult
3	2.61 -3.40	Neutral
4	1.81 -2.60	Easy
5	1.00 -1.80	Very Easy

To interpret the performance of the Board takers of November 2022 the guide is as follows;

Table 2 Board Ratings.

Ranges	Interpretation
90- 100	Excellence
85 - 89	Very Good
80 - 84	Good
75 - 79	Fair
74 - below	Failed

The following information were applied in order to understand the correlation coefficient:

Table 3 Reference Value of Pearson Correlation.

Coefficient Correlation	Interpretation
± 0.90 – 1.0	Very High Correlation (VC)
± 0.70 – 0.89	High Correlation (HC)
± 0.40 – 0.69	Moderate Correlation (MC)
± 0.20 – 0.39	Low Correlation (LC)
Less than ± 0.20	Negligible Correlation (NC)

III. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The respondents voluntarily participate and give the necessary data for this study without being pressed or constrained. Respondents are advised that they have the freedom to remove their data at any moment., without giving a reason and without cost. All data were filed in one computer where only the researchers have access to. No data was shared to other people not involved in this study. During data processing, respondents are entirely anonymous wherein each respondent was assigned a number to maintain confidentiality. All data will be deleted after publication is done.

➤ Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

The analysis and interpretation of the results are presented in this chapter in relation to the problem statement and goals. Table presentations are available to render more significant findings.

Table 4 The Demographic Profile of the Participants (Objective 1)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age	22	53
	23	42
Sex	Male	14
	Female	81
Type of in-house review	Face to Face	49
	Online	19
Type of National Review	Self-Review	4
	Both face to face and online	23
Family Income	Face to Face	60
	Online	2
	Self-Review	1
	Both face to face and online	32
	10,000 below	26
	10,001 - 20,000	25
	20,001 - 30,000	12
	30,001 - 40,000	6
	40,001 - 50,000	4
	50,001 and above	22

The table above shows that among the 95 participants, there were more passers who are just 22 years old, with regards to their sex. There are 81 female and 14 male, when it comes to the type of in-house review, there were 49 passers who reviewed face to face, 19 online and 23 who chose both face to face and online in-house review. On the other hand,

there were 60 passers who chose to review from face to face, 2 from online and 32 both face to face and online type of national review resulting in more passers who chose to review from face to face. It is also shown above that there were 26 passers whose family income ranges from 10,000 below and 22 passers ranging from 50,001 above family income.

Table 5 The Level of Difficulty Perceived by the Participants (Objective 2)

	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Theoretical Foundation of Nursing	3.33	Neutral
Fundamentals of Nursing	3.42	Difficult
Community Health of Nursing	3.28	Neutral
Communicable Disease Nursing	3.40	Neutral
Maternal Nursing	3.81	Difficult
Pediatric Nursing	3.77	Difficult
Medical and Surgical Nursing	4.44	Very Difficult
Psychiatric Nursing	4.15	Difficult
Leadership and Management Nursing	3.44	Difficult
Nursing Law and Jurisprudence	3.59	Difficult
Emergency and Disaster and Disaster Nursing	3.22	Neutral
Weighted Mean	3.62	Difficult

The November 2022 NLE takers perceived the Theoretical Foundation of Nursing, Community Health Nursing and Communicable Disease Nursing, as neutral. On the other hand, the subjects Fundamental of Nursing, Maternal Nursing, Pediatric Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing, Leadership and Management, Nursing Law and Jurisprudence and Emergency and Disaster Nursing is

perceived as Difficult. As can be gleaned, Medical-Surgical Nursing is the Very Difficult subject perceived level of difficulty of November 2022 NLE takers from Isabela State University with a total mean of 4.44.

Objective 3. Board Ratings of the participants during the NLE 2022

Table 6 Frequency, Percentage and Mean of Participants According to the Board Ratings

Range of Board Ratings	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Interpretation	
Nursing Practice 1	61 - 70	1	1%	83.85	Good
	71 - 80	14	15%		
	81 - 90	79	83%		
	91 - 100	1	1%		
Nursing Practice 2	61 - 70	2	2%	81.39	Good
	71- 80	29	31%		
	81 - 90	64	67%		
	91 - 100	0	0%		
Nursing Practice 3	61 - 70	4	4%	78.26	Fair
	71 - 80	65	68%		
	81 - 90	26	27%		
	91 - 100	0	0%		
Nursing Practice 4	61 - 70	1	1%	79.64	Fair
	71- 80	57	60%		
	81 - 90	37	39%		
	91 - 100	0	0%		
Nursing Practice 5	61 - 70	2	2%	79.33	Fair
	71 - 80	56	59%		
	81 - 90	37	39%		
	91 - 100	0	0%		
General Average	61 - 70	0	0%	80.5583	Good
	71- 80	52	55%		
	81 - 90	43	45%		
	91 - 100	0	0%		

Table 6 shows the Board ratings of the participants during the NLE 2022. In NP1, there were 1% who got 61-70 which is the lowest, 1% who got the highest score of 91-100 and 83% of the participants had a score of 81-90 which resulted in a mean of 83.85 that can be interpreted as “Good”.

In NP 2, 2% of the participants got scores of 61-70, no one got a score of 91-100 and 67% got 81-90 with a mean of 81.39 which can also be interpreted as “Good”. In NP 3, the board ratings have a mean of 78.26 since there was only 4% who got 61-70, 0% in 91-100 and 68% got a score of 71-80, the result was interpreted as “Fair” same goes with NP 4 wick

has a mean of 79.64, most of the participants got a score of 71-80 as 60%, no one got a 91-100 and only 1 got 61-70. NP 5 has an almost the same result from NP 4, 2% of the participants got the lowest score of 61-70, 59% got 71-80 and no one got a 91-100 resulting in a mean of 79.33 which is also interpreted as “Fair”.

The overall mean on the board rating of the five test categories of November 2022 NLE takers from ISU-E is 80.5583 or described as “Good”. This data implies that the board's performance is good.

The table above indicates that Nursing Practice 1 (NP1) was the highest in terms of ratings which is 83.85, the findings agree with the study of Soriano (2016) that Nursing Practice 1 was the highest in terms of ratings.

As can be observed from the data, NP 3 has the lowest rating of 78.26, this contrasts with the study of Galingana et al., (2020) that the NP 3 was the highest. Nursing Practice 3 contains essential knowledge and learning in the Care of Clients with Physiologic and Psychological Alterations (Part A) or Care of Clients with Physiologic and Psychosocial Alterations (Part A).

Table 7 Significant Difference of Participants According to the Profile

Profile	Label	Significant difference	Interpretation
Age	22	.134	Not Significant
	23		
Sex	Male	.512	Not Significant
	Female		
Type of in-house review	Face to face	.207	Not Significant
	Online		
	Self-Review		
	Both Face to face and Online		
Type of National Review	Face to face	.338	Not Significant
	Online		
	Self-Review		
	Both Face to face and online		
Family Income	10000 below	.663	Not Significant
	10001 – 20000		
	20001 – 30000		
	30001 – 40000		
	40001 - 50000		
	50001 and above		

Table 5 presents that in terms of their age, the 22 and 23 years old shows a 0.134 significance difference which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

In terms of their sex, reveals a .512 significant difference which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The type of in-house review indicates a .207 significant difference which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The type of national review then shows a .338 significant difference which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, while in terms of family income with a .663 significant difference is still greater than 0.05 level of significance.

It is apparent in the table above that the profile of the participants has no significant difference which means that the score is regardless of the age, sex, type of in-house review, type of national review, and the literature.

Ocampo, N. (2015) the purpose of his study was to determine the potential causes of some nurses' self-review practices, what it takes for them to pass, and above all, how they go about doing it. The ramifications of nursing license are then discussed, along with the pedagogical implications for nursing education and future research directions. The study closes with a document titled "Marks of a Self-review Board Passer", created from the accounts of the case participants, showcasing their review techniques, useful advice, and takeaways to help future P.N.L.E. self-reviewees."

According to Baang (2016), the study emphasizes that the student's performance in the board exams will be greatly influenced by their general knowledge which the NLE is designed to show the graduates' understanding, competence, and capacities in a certain profession shows the significant difference of board ratings when grouped according to their profile.

➤ Objective 5

Table 8 Level of Difficulty and General Average of the Participants According to Pearson Correlation

		Level of Difficulty	GEN_AVERAGE	Interpretation
Level of Difficulty	Pearson Correlation	1	-.122	Negligible Correlation (NC)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.237	
	N	95	95	
GEN_AVERAGE	Pearson Correlation	-.122	1	Negligible Correlation (NC)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.237		
	N	95	95	

This table exhibits the significant relationship between the levels of difficulty to the board ratings of the November 2022 NLE from Isabela State University. The r value is equal to -.122 which is described as Negligible Correlation (NC) which means that the board ratings of November 2022 NLE are not related or the difficulty does not affect the board ratings of the taker. The sig. a value equal to a .237 which is higher than the 0.05 level of significance.

IV. CONCLUSION

➤ *The Following Conclusions were Formed from the Aforementioned Findings;*

- There were more 22-year-old participants, majority of the 95 were female and most of them enrolled in a face to face in-house and national review while majority of them have a family income that ranges from 10,000 and below.
- Among the 11 subjects that the participants rated, Medical-Surgical Nursing perceived as the most difficult.
- The board rating of the five test categories of November 2022 NLE is interpreted as “Good”. NP 3 has the lowest rating while NP 1 has the highest rating.
- The level of difficulty perceived by the participants in different nursing subjects has no significant impact on the board ratings of the takers.
- There is no significant relationship between level of difficulty and board ratings

RECOMMENDATION

➤ *Based on the Findings and Conclusions of the Study, the Researcher Suggests Putting the Following Recommendations in to Practice:*

- Researchers could propose specific approaches to the administrators. Together, the college of nursing and school administrators can give the nursing faculty the resources they require to analyze and revise exams and enhance student examination analysis. Mock board exams are another tool that the school can use to gauge how well nursing students are prepared for the actual examination.
- Students could be encouraged to strive for greater board examination percentages and concentrate primarily on the test categories that previous graduates struggled with to do well in that specific test category.

- Clinical instructors and lecturers would support innovative and successful teaching methodologies or methods on themes that nursing graduates regarded to be tough in order to expedite nursing students who are next in line for the NLE.
- Lecturers have the power to enlighten and inspire their students. They can also encourage them to be committed in using the resources at their access for learning and make recommendations when there are resources that they would want to employ to enhance their use of the syllabus and curriculum.
- The participants can be interviewed in-depth by the researchers in the future. Eventually, they might possibly carry out the study in several years with a bigger sample size and investigate additional factors that could have an impact on the participants’ performance.

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