

# Correlation between Positive Psychological Capital and Professional Commitment and Learning Burnout in Undergraduate Nursing Students

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**How to cite this paper:** Miao-Qing Zhuang, Hong-Fang Chen, Huan-Ze Li. (2020) Correlation between Positive Psychological Capital and Professional Commitment and Learning Burnout in Undergraduate Nursing Students. *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Medicine Research*, 4(4), 167-174.  
DOI: 10.26855/ijcemr.2020.10.008

**Received:** July 7, 2020

**Accepted:** August 18, 2020

**Published:** September 10, 2020

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To investigate the positive psychological capital and the relationship between professional commitment and learning burnout. **Methods:** A total of 442 from freshman year to junior year undergraduate nursing students from a medical college in Shaanxi province were involved in this study. The general information questionnaire, College Students' Psychological Capital Questionnaire, Nursing professional commitment scale, and College students learn burnout scale were used to investigate. **Results:** Positive psychological capital serves for 66.19%, professional commitment serves 55.79%, learning burnout points won 59.01%. Positive psychological capital is negatively correlated with academic burnout ( $r=-0.251$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), professional commitment is negatively correlated with academic burnout ( $r=-0.230$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), and professional commitment are positively correlated with academic burnout ( $r=0.299$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** Nursing undergraduates have a high learning burnout level, professional commitment and positive psychological capital are important influences of learning burnout.

## Keywords

Nursing Undergraduate, Positive Psychological Capital, Professional Commitment, Learning Burnout, Correlation

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of medicine, the nursing discipline has put forward higher requirements on the professional quality, professional accomplishment, knowledge, and skills of nursing personnel in China, which requires more nursing talents with high education to join the nursing industry. Therefore, higher nursing education continues to expand enrollment, the number of nursing undergraduates is increasing [1]. These nursing students who have received higher education are about to face greater learning pressure. Once the score fluctuates, they will feel low and even have negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and a low sense of self-worth, thus resulting in the phenomenon of learning burnout. This will not only affect the learning quality of nursing students, in serious cases will damage their mental health, and even affect the stability of the development of a nursing career in China. At present, the brain drain in higher nursing is serious in China, one of the important reasons is that nursing students' commitment to the nursing profession is not high. Professional commitment is an attitude, which is the core and spirit of professionalism [2]. In addition to increasing one's career stability, it also enables one to achieve one's career goals in general [3]. Nursing professional commitment refers to the nursing staff's willingness to identify

with the profession, work hard for the profession, and continue to engage in the nursing profession and the positive evaluation of nursing work. Nurses' loyalty to their profession and their tendency to remain, nurses, are the main characteristics of nursing professional commitment [4]. With the development of positive organizational behavior, the definition of "psychological capital" has been put forward and widely applied in the education industry. Positive psychological capital, referred to as psychological capital, refers to an individual in the process of growth and development of a positive psychological state [5]. As high-quality nursing talents who are about to enter the nursing industry, nursing undergraduates are an important and precious resource in the nursing labor market. Their learning attitude, professional recognition, and psychological state will directly affect their career development, and even affect the healthy and stable development of the nursing industry in China.

Previous studies mostly focused on clinical nurses but neglected the study of nursing students in school, especially undergraduate nursing students. This study takes undergraduate nursing students as the research object to discuss the current situation and relationship between positive psychological capital, professional commitment and learning burnout, to provide the basis for improving the professional identity level of undergraduate nursing students, enhancing their psychological capital, and thus effectively alleviating their learning burnout level.

## **2. Research objects and methods**

### **2.1 Research object**

Using the convenient cluster sampling method, 442 full-time nursing undergraduates from freshmen to juniors of a medical college in Shaanxi were selected for the questionnaire survey, among which 395 were female students and 47 were male students; 162 freshmen, 138 sophomores, 142 juniors; Rural students 310, urban students 132. Senior nursing students were not included in the sampling range because they were not on campus, during the internship and the staff was relatively scattered. The sample size of the study on influencing factors of relevant variables is at least 5-10 times that of the number of variables. The number of variables investigated in this study is 19. According to the 1:5 standard, considering 20% turnover, the sample size of the study is at least 119 people.

### **2.2 Research methods**

#### **2.2.1 Survey method**

A questionnaire survey was conducted by two nursing graduate students as investigators. After unified training, the purpose, significance, and matters needing attention of the research were explained to the respondents. Questionnaires were distributed to the class as a unit. Students answered the questions anonymously and withdrew them on the spot. In this study, 475 questionnaires were issued and 442 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective rate of 93.1%. The data collection process follows the principle of informed consent and voluntary.

#### **2.2.2 Research Tools**

##### **(1) General information questionnaire**

There are nine categories, including gender, grade, registered residence, admission intention, the reason for study, grades, position held, per capita monthly income of the family, and whether to consider changing majors.

##### **(2) Positive psychological Capital Scale**

The positive psychological capital scale compiled by Zhang Kuo was selected [6]. This questionnaire includes 26 items in 4 dimensions of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, and adopts a 7-point scale. The higher the score, the higher the level of psychological capital. In this study, the Cronbach coefficient of the scale was 0.868, showing good reliability and validity. The scale is rigorous in design and mature in the application.

##### **(3) Nursing professional commitment scale**

The professional commitment scale developed by LvGuiyun [7] and others are adapted to target the professional commitment of nursing staff by applying the two-dimension theory. In 2006, the scale was revised to include 23 items in three dimensions, namely, professional effort intention, professional career residence intention, and professional value recognition. The higher the score, the higher the level of professional commitment. In this study, the Cronbach coefficient of the scale was 0.93, and the re-targeted-test reliability was 0.81 [8].

##### **(4) College students learn burnout scale**

The learning burnout Scale compiled by Lian Rong et al. [9] was selected. The questionnaire included 3 dimensions of low mood, inappropriate behavior, and a low sense of achievement, and 20 items, each of which was rated by Likert level 5. The higher the score, the higher the learning burnout level. In this study, the Cronbach coefficient of the scale was 0.865, and the score half reliability was 0.880, indicating good reliability and validity of the scale.

### 2.2.3 Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS19.0. The statistical methods included descriptive analysis, T-test, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation analysis, and Spearman correlation analysis, with test level =0.05. The frequency and composition ratio of the count data was used, and measurement data were mean  $\pm$  standard deviation ( $\bar{x} \pm s$ ).

## 3. Results

### 3.1 General information about nursing undergraduates is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. General Information for undergraduate nursing students

Variables	Number of cases	Composition ratio
Gender		
Male	47	10.63
Female	395	89.37
Grade		
A freshman	162	36.65
A sophomore	138	31.22
Junior year	142	32.13
Residence		
Township and village governments	310	70.14
The county	55	12.44
County-level city	53	11.99
Provincial Capital municipality	23	5.20
Volunteer		
The first volunteer	79	17.87
The second volunteer	54	12.22
The third volunteer	28	6.33
The fourth volunteer	55	12.44
Regulate admission	226	51.13
Studying reason		
They like	24	5.43
Parents' opinions	74	16.74
Good looking for a job	177	40.05
Other	167	37.78
Grade		
Excellent	5	1.13
Very good	74	16.74
Good	261	59.05
Pass	100	22.62
Fail	3	0.68
Position		
Student Union cadre	74	16.74
The class cadre	69	15.61
No job	99	22.65
Income (RMB)		
$\leq 500$	43	9.72
500-1000	139	31.45
1001-1500	103	23.30
1501-2000	73	16.52
$\geq 2000$	84	19.00
Consider changing your major		
Will	170	38.46
Not sure	171	38.69
Don't	101	22.85

General information: There were 442 undergraduate nursing students, including 395 female students (89.37%) and 47 male students (10.63%). 310 registered students (70.14%). A total of 79 students (17.87%) were admitted and 226 students (51.13%) were admitted. There were 24 students (5.43%) for the reasons they liked. 177 students (40.05%) were enrolled to find a job.

**3.2 The total psychological capital scores and scores of each item of undergraduates are in Table 2.**

**3.3 The total score of undergraduate students' professional commitment and scores of each item are shown in Table 3.**

**3.4 The total scores of learning burnout and scores of each item of undergraduates are in Table 4.**

**3.5 The correlation between positive psychological capital and professional commitment and learning undergraduate nursing students are shown in Table 5.**

**Table 2. Undergraduate psychological capital total score and each item score**

Items	Score ( $\bar{x}\pm s$ )	Average score	Score rate (%)
Self-efficacy	31.64±6.01	4.52	64.56
Optimistic	30.30±5.59	5.05	72.14
Hope	29.18±4.41	4.86	69.48
Toughness	29.23±4.46	4.18	59.66
Total score	120.46±14.90	4.63	66.19

**Table 3. Undergraduate student professional commitment total score and each item score**

Items	Score ( $\bar{x}\pm s$ )	Average score	Score rate (%)
Professional effort willingness	24.41±6.54	2.71	54.52
Willingness to stay in a professional career	18.36±6.36	2.30	45.90
Professional value recognition	21.37±4.05	3.56	71.23
Total score	64.14±7.91	2.79	55.78

**Note:** Scoring rate = actual score of each item/theoretical maximum score×100%

**Table 4. Total scores of learning burnout of undergraduates and scores of each**

Items	Score ( $\bar{x}\pm s$ )	Average score	Score rate (%)
In low spirits	21.32±5.50	2.67	53.30
Misconduct	17.98±2.75	3.00	59.93
Low sense of achievement	19.80±3.35	3.30	65.99
achievement	59.01±6.77	2.95	59.01
Total score	59.01±6.77	2.95	59.01

**Table 5. Correlation between positive psychological capital of undergraduate nursing students and professional commitment and learning burnout (Non-normal Spearman)**

Items	Psychological capital	Professional commitment	Learning burnout
Psychological Capital	1	-	-
Professional Commitment	0.299 <sup>a**</sup>	1	-
Learning burnout	-0.251 <sup>b**</sup>	-0.230 <sup>b**</sup>	1

**Note:** "a\*\*" means Pearson correlation analysis, "b\*\*" means Spearman correlation analysis, \*\* $P<0.05$ .

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Survey status of general conditions of undergraduate nursing students (See Table 1)

According to the survey data in this study, the proportion of female students, students from rural towns, and students of adjustment are relatively high. This is consistent with Zhou's findings [10]. The number of female students is relatively high, which may be because, in recent years, male nurses have shown more and more obvious advan-

tages in nursing, and the global demand for male nurses is increasing year by year, especially the shortage of male nurses in China. As a result, some medical colleges and universities increased enrollment of male nurse, but this part of students due to social status, professional prejudice and gender characteristics, the influence of such factors as the great pressure, thus hinders the more male nurse to join this predominantly women among the industry for a long time, as a result, the object of investigation is still predominantly female; in this study, more than half of protecting them from rural town, presented as the improvement of living standards, the students gradually reduce the trend, the reason may be that the degree of living environment, economy, culture, education background factors such as difference, causes the personality characteristics of nursing students, professional cognition, employment expectations are different, this part of the students hope that by selecting the employment rate is relatively high professional to meet parents' career expectations, alleviate the financial burden of the family at the same time; Adjust relatively high proportion of students, it may be caused by the career of one's social status is low, high risk, low pressure, a sense of accomplishment and the influence of many factors, therefore, in enter oneself for an examination when the volunteers, most of the boys is not voluntarily chooses the nursing profession, but to continue to enhance the level of education, were forced to adjust to the nursing profession.

#### **4.2 Current status of positive Psychological Capital, Professional Commitment and Learning Burnout of undergraduate nursing Students**

##### **4.2.1 Analysis of the Current Situation of positive Psychological Capital of undergraduate nursing students (See Table 2)**

In this study, the positive psychological capital of undergraduate nursing students was all 4.63, higher than the medium critical value of 4, which was consistent with the survey results of the psychological capital of domestic college students [11], indicating that the level of psychological capital of nursing students was ok. However, the overall score was not high ( $120.46 \pm 14.9$ ) points. The scores of each factor of psychological capital were successive: optimistic > hope > self-efficacy > toughness, among which the highest score of optimism factor was ( $30.30 \pm 5.59$ ), and the lowest score of toughness was ( $29.23 \pm 4.46$ ). It can be seen that nursing students can make positive attributions to their current and future achievements, be full of hope in sticking to goals and achieving goals, and have confidence in completing challenging tasks, but still need to be improved in terms of resilience. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the training of the tenacity and willpower of the nursing students and strengthen the willpower, which is not accomplished overnight but requires long-term efforts and persistence. When encountering difficulties, one should never give up easily, dare to challenge, and seek change steadily, to solve the difficulties.

##### **4.2.2 Analysis of Professional Commitment Status of Undergraduate Nursing Students (See Table 3)**

In this study, the professional commitment of undergraduate nursing students was all 2.79, which was less than the medium threshold value of 3, indicating that most nursing students' professional commitment was at the medium level, which was similar to the research level of Ying Li et al. [12]. All dimensions of nursing professional commitment are in the order of professional value identification > professional effort willingness > professional career residence willingness. The professional career stay intention score is ( $18.36 \pm 6.36$ ), which is low, which may be the main factor for the low level of professional commitment in nursing. The professional value identity score is ( $21.37 \pm 4.05$ ), indicating that undergraduate nursing students are more positive about the professional value and future development of nursing, especially after nursing becomes the first-level discipline, it has a broader prospect and is gradually recognized by people. However, some nursing students are not willing to work in this industry in the future. This may be because nursing students choose a nursing major at the suggestion of their families or considering future employment, and nursing students are not interested in nursing. Therefore, during the school period, the school should pay attention to the cultivation of nursing students' professional quality, highlight the professional characteristics and future employment prospects, strengthen nursing students' correct understanding of their major, cultivate their interest in learning, and change the traditional ideas.

##### **4.2.3 Analysis of the Current Situation of learning burnout among nursing undergraduates (See Table 4)**

In this study, learning burnout was divided into 2.95, which was less than the medium critical value of 3, indicating the phenomenon of learning burnout in undergraduate nursing, which was consistent with Lian Rong's research [13]. Under the influence of some factors, the degree of learning burnout will gradually increase, so the phenomenon of learning burnout of nursing students should not be ignored. The ranking of the scores of each factor of learning burnout was the low sense of achievement > improper behavior > low mood. The mean score of low achievement was higher than the mean score of burnout, while the mean score of depression was lower than the mean score of burnout. This is inconsistent with the results of Ye Jiao's study [14]. When nursing students face heavy learning tasks, they tend to lose their motivation and passion for learning, fail to master professional knowledge well, and are difficult to achieve established goals. Therefore, they seldom experience the satisfaction brought

by learning and are prone to generate negative emotions such as anxiety and depression. Therefore, nursing educators should always pay attention to the emotional changes and abnormal behaviors of nursing students in the teaching process and give targeted psychological prevention and intervention.

### **4.3 The relationship between positive psychological Capital with professional commitment and learning burnout of undergraduate nursing students**

#### **4.3.1 The positive psychological capital of undergraduate nursing students is positively correlated with professional commitment (see Table 5).**

This study shows that positive psychological capital is positively correlated with professional commitment ( $r=0.299$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), which is consistent with the research of Kyle Luthans et al. [15]. Namely, the higher the degree of positive psychological capital, the higher the level of professional commitment, which is consistent with the research of Song Weiqing [16] and other scholars. There are relatively few direct studies on the relationship between positive psychological capital and professional commitment. Professional commitment is derived from professional commitment, and improving professional commitment is an attribute of professional commitment. Therefore, clarifying the relationship between occupational commitment and psychological capital has certain reference significance for discussing the relationship between professional commitment and psychological capital. Research shows that psychological capital can stimulate students' enthusiasm for professional learning and accept challenges in professional learning through motivation, to increase investment in professional learning. Therefore, it can be inferred that the higher the level of psychological capital, the stronger the stimulating effect on professional commitment and the higher the level of professional commitment. Due to the social status and low economic level of the nursing profession, nursing is survival in a certain degree of professional inferiority. Therefore, in the teaching process, nursing educators should pay attention to improving nursing students' comprehensive and correct cognition of their major, building professional confidence, letting students see the hope of professional development, improving students' self-efficacy in professional learning, and promoting the improvement of students' professional commitment level.

#### **4.3.2 The positive psychological capital of undergraduate nursing students is negatively correlated with learning burnout (see Table 5).**

This study shows that there is a certain negative correlation between positive psychological capital and learning burnout ( $r = -0.251$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), that is the higher the level of positive psychological capital, the lower the level of learning burnout. This is consistent with the research of Wang Jiankun [17], Liu Lu [5], and other scholars. When nursing students have a high level of psychological capital, that is, they are confident in their future career development and make positive efforts, and they can adjust themselves in the face of failure, dilemma, pressure, and frustration, so they can play a positive role in learning burnout of nursing students. Studies have shown that psychological capital is a positive resource to combat learning burnout of nursing students [3]. It is an individual positive psychological state that can be explored and measured and can promote learning. Therefore, it plays a positive role in improving students' learning pleasure and alleviating their learning burnout level. It can be seen that nursing educators should strengthen the cultivation of positive psychological capital and carry out early psychological intervention for nursing students with learning burnout while carrying out psychological support education for nursing students, which is conducive to promoting the physical and mental health of nursing students and thus reducing the level of learning burnout.

#### **4.3.3 Professional commitment to nursing undergraduates is negatively correlated with learning burnout (See Table 5).**

This study shows that professional commitment is negatively correlated with learning burnout to some extent ( $r=-0.230$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), that is, the higher the level of professional commitment, the lower the level of learning burnout, which is similar to the findings of other scholars. Lian Rong [18] found through relevant studies that college students are likely to suffer from learning burnout if they are unable to express full recognition or acceptance of their major. Bu Xuejiao [19] conducted relevant research, and the results showed that if nursing students have a clear understanding of the nursing specialty and strong professional will, they will strengthen their study of nursing specialty and actively improve their ability, to actively participate in a nursing career. In short, undergraduate nursing students with a low level of professional commitment cannot have a strong interest in their major. If the current situation of learning burnout can be improved, nursing students must improve their professional commitment to a certain extent.

## **5. Summary**

The results of this study show that the proportion of female students, rural towns, and the number of dispensing

students is relatively high. Therefore, enter oneself for an examination by volunteers, professional speaking, in the process of career planning, nursing educators should be men's physical, psychological, rational thinking, easily accepted by gay, highlight the advantages of the scientific research management to the greatest extent, alleviate or even eliminate pressure source, and give enough support and encouragement, to attract more male nurse into the nursing team. With the vigorous development of China's medical cause, the social status of the nursing profession is constantly improving, and its future development prospect will be recognized by more people. Therefore, when recruiting students, it is necessary to objectively introduce the current situation and development prospect of nursing major, abandon the ideological shackling of traditional ideas, and let more students voluntarily apply for the nursing major.

Positive psychological capital, professional commitment, and academic burnout of undergraduate nursing students were correlated. Nursing educators should pay attention to nursing students learning burnout phenomenon, eliminate the effective nursing students learning burnout strategy, for example, the cultivation of nursing students professional interest, for nursing educators for undergraduate nursing students positive beliefs, believe each nursing students heart there is a positive attitude, have to develop talents and skills; Do a good job of career planning for nursing students so that they can see their career development in recent years and even a longer period. Have confidence in yourself and make a realistic plan for your future career and take action. Through the above measures, we can effectively avoid undergraduate nursing students learning burnout.

There is a negative correlation between positive psychological capital and learning burnout. Therefore, from the perspective of positive psychology, we should consciously manage and improve the psychological capital of undergraduate nursing students, always pay attention to the psychological state of nursing students, and pay attention to the burnout level of nursing students. For example, at the school level, professional cultural activities should be actively organized to establish a good campus culture and form a good system that pays attention to the improvement of students' psychological capital.

Professional commitment is negatively correlated with learning burnout. Research on professional commitment in general in our country is still in the early stages of exploration if undergraduate nursing students can care as his life ideal, and the nursing profession has deep feelings, is good for professional identity, can play a more important subjective initiative to learn, to improve the condition of learning burnout of nursing students. For example, carry out career education, change the traditional professional thinking mode, contact with excellent nursing workers and high-quality nursing works, actively cultivate clinical thinking and nursing thinking, and truly let the nursing profession have its strengths and irreplaceable fields. Thus improve the professional identity of undergraduate nursing students, reduce the level of learning burnout.

Therefore, nursing educators should focus on cultivating the positive psychological quality of undergraduate nursing students, so that nursing students have a comprehensive understanding of nursing specialty, improve professional pride, enhance learning interest, improve learning burnout level, and thus improve learning efficiency. Due to the limitations of time and manpower, this study only selected undergraduate nursing students from one university, and the universality of the research results was limited. Therefore, future studies need to expand the sample size and research scope, and further explore the indirect effects and path analysis of the three.

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