

SURVEY OF TEXAS NURSING INSTRUCTORS' ATTITUDES  
AND OPINIONS TOWARD LEGAL ABORTION

A PROFESSIONAL PAPER

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter

I.	ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY . . . . .	1
	Introduction . . . . .	1
	Statement of Problem . . . . .	5
	Specific Questions to be Answered . . . . .	6
	Null-Hypotheses . . . . .	7
	Assumptions . . . . .	7
	Definitions . . . . .	8
	Limitations . . . . .	8
II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	10
III.	METHODOLOGY . . . . .	14
	Methodology . . . . .	14
	Selection of Population . . . . .	15
	Development of Tool . . . . .	16
	Data Collection . . . . .	17
	Method of Analysis . . . . .	18
IV.	ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS . . . . .	19
V.	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES . . . . .	27
	Summary . . . . .	27
	Conclusions . . . . .	28
	Recommendations for Future Studies . . . . .	29
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	30
	APPENDIX A. Letter to Dean or Director . . . . .	32
	APPENDIX B. Questionnaire . . . . .	34
	APPENDIX C. Letter to Nursing Instructor . . . . .	36
	APPENDIX D. Formula for Statistical Computation . . . . .	38

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Sample Distribution . . . . .	19
2. Sample Responses in Percentages . . . . .	20
3. Significance of Difference in the Attitudes and Opinions of Nursing Instructors Toward the Existing Texas Abortion Law and the Proposed Law . . . . .	21
4. Significance of Difference in the Attitudes and Opinions of Nursing Instructors Toward the Person or Persons Responsible for Making the Decision of an Induced Termination of a Pregnancy . . . . .	22
5. Significance of Difference in the Attitudes and Opinions of Nursing Instructors Toward Legal Abortions in the Baccalaureate Degree Programs, the Associate Degree Programs, and the Hospital Diploma Programs . . . . .	23
6. Significance of Difference in the Attitudes and Opinions of Nursing Instructors Toward Legal Abortion in the Tax Supported and Privately Supported Schools . . . . .	24
7. Significance of Difference in the Attitudes and Opinions of Nursing Instructors Toward Legal Abortion in the Catholic and non-Catholic Schools . . . . .	25

## CHAPTER I

### ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

Abortions, apparently, raised no legal or moral controversy in this country until the post-Civil War period. Before this time, early United States had adopted the view of the common law of England, which declared that abortion before "quickening" was no crime; therefore, the matter of birth control and abortion was a private matter. In the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century, religious and civil leaders became interested in this matter and focused much of their attention on promoting or stifling abortion reforms. These reformers generally defined human sexual activity as chiefly procreative in function and nature, followed by bans being placed on contraception and abortion. Most of the states adopted statutes which upheld this point of view. Some enumerated definite circumstances which justified legal abortion and others had statutes which favored the physician acting in good faith to save the life of the mother. This legal power not only took from the family and physician the right to schedule the arrival of children, it offered little guidance to those faced with sensitive problems surrounding pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Roy Lucas, "Federal Constitutional Limitations on the Enforcement and Administration of State Abortion Statutes," The North Carolina Law Review, Vol. 46, No. 4 (June, 1969), pp. 730-32.

These statutes have influenced the attitudes and opinions of Americans for almost a hundred years. Nursing instructors have focused their teaching on the sensitive issues of family planning and marital autonomy, church-state relations, subjective sexual taboos, and the mysteries of human procreation, life and death.<sup>2</sup>

Not until the last few years has there been evidence of any changes being made in these laws. Mishandled criminal abortions and persistent flaunting by citizens of these laws written and enacted in the last century has stimulated public controversy and discussion.<sup>3</sup>

The drive for change was launched, and, if it was not met with strong opposition, it was at least discussed and thought about by almost every individual. Lader reports that the drive to make our abortion laws humane, to reformulate them so they will work, and to protect and improve the welfare of society has made rapid progress during the past few years.<sup>4</sup>

Nursing instructors, as citizens and teachers, are affected by the ethical and medical considerations that underlie this present controversy. In their personal and professional life, they will hold to values and attitudes according to their religious, secular, and civil backgrounds. These attitudes and opinions will influence their students. Heidgerken has much to say about the instructors' influence on the student. Their objective and subjective attitudes and opinions

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Lawrence Lader, "The New Abortion Laws," Reprint from Parents' Magazine, April, 1968.

on current health problems can influence the attitudes and opinions of their students. The instructor's scientific knowledge and skill, as well as her philosophy of education and life, are important factors in nursing education. She is a vital link in the progress of individual and community health and education. Heidgerken states: "A portion of what is learned today is forgotten tomorrow; what remains and becomes the basis for further growth is that which enters into the total personality, changing habits and attitudes, reconstructing ideals, enlarging interests."<sup>5</sup> Any change in the present abortion law would modify nursing education and nursing service. If the law is not changed, modification in these areas would not be expected; but, in either case, the attitudes and opinions of a group of teachers whose teaching involves the health and welfare of man, and is regulated by law, deserves to be acknowledged.

The present statute is limited to the preservation of the mother's life, and it has been in force since the middle of the nineteenth century. The proposed law would permit termination of pregnancy when pregnancy threatens a mother's mental or physical health, results from rape or incest, or is likely to produce a child with severe physical or mental defects.<sup>6</sup>

The present law, because of its rigidity and moral history, was straightforward and concise to teach. There was not much room for liberal interpretations, and the principles in teaching were stated in

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<sup>5</sup>Loretta E. Heidgerkin, Teaching and Learning in Schools of Nursing (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1965), p. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Herman Schwartz, "Abortion and the Law," Reprint from Buffalo Alumnus, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1966.

moral and legal laws. The recent drive for change has opened up many channels for more liberal and broader interpretations. The proposed law allows provisions for abortion in cases of rape, incest, defective children, and other dangers to the woman's health;<sup>7</sup> therefore, a greater responsibility is placed on the nursing instructor in the teaching of these principles to her students and her patients. Teachers, as well as her fellow man, have for many years shaped their thoughts and actions around the principles of the present law.

The teacher-student interaction is viewed by Leen as one of our most significant interpersonal relationships. It is one which is conducive to the changing of attitudes and opinions in the student, as well as in the teacher.<sup>8</sup> If the abortion law is changed, it will necessitate a change in teaching. A change in teaching will necessitate a change in attitudes and opinions.

Leen has much to say about the teacher molding the character of students; not by mere lecturing, but by being what she is and what she hopes her pupils to become. The prevailing tone and atmosphere of the school slowly forms the character of the student. The prevailing tone and atmosphere is a creation of those who are placed over it to guide its destinies.<sup>9</sup>

The aim of this survey was to measure attitudes and opinions nursing instructors have toward a current health problem; also, to

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Edward Leen, What is Education? (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1944).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

observe their attitudes and ~~opinions~~ with relation to the institution they teach in. The data ~~collected~~ reflected the attitudes and opinions nurses have toward ~~their state's~~ abortion law and the teaching of these principles.

Present day nurses ~~can be as~~ important in the present birth control movement as Margaret Sanger was in the early day American movement.<sup>10</sup> The Texas ~~abortion law~~ issue requires the attention of responsible nursing educators.

#### Statement of Problem

The purpose of this survey was to measure attitudes and opinions toward legal abortion of instructors who teach nursing in the baccalaureate degree, associate degree, and hospital diploma nursing programs in Texas. The study was directed toward determining their attitudes and opinions of the present Texas abortion law, and the proposed abortion law which was presented in the 1968 Texas Legislature. The present law permits induced termination of pregnancy only to save or preserve the life of the mother. The proposed law would permit induced termination of pregnancy when pregnancy threatens a mother's mental or physical health, results from rape or incest, or is likely to produce a child with severe physical or mental defects.<sup>11</sup> The other area studied was the determination of who should be responsible for making the decision of the termination of pregnancy; the pregnant woman, her

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<sup>10</sup>Garrett Hardin, "The History and Future of Birth Control," Reprinted from Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, Vol. 10, No. 1., (Autumn, 1966).

<sup>11</sup>Herman Schwartz, "Abortion and the Law," Reprint from Buffalo Alumnus, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1966.

closest relatives and her attending physician, or a judicial body which governs all people in all circumstances. Other purposes of this survey was to measure the attitudes and opinions nursing instructors have toward legal abortion in the baccalaureate degree, associate degree, and hospital diploma programs; to measure the attitudes and opinions nursing instructors have toward legal abortion in Catholic and non-Catholic supported schools, and to measure the attitudes and opinions nursing instructors have toward legal abortion in tax supported and privately supported schools.

#### Specific Questions to be Answered

1. What are the attitudes and opinions Texas nursing instructors have toward legal abortion?
2. What are the attitudes and opinions Texas nursing instructors have toward legal abortion in the three types of programs which prepare a student to become a registered nurse?
3. What are the attitudes and opinions Texas nursing instructors have toward the person or persons responsible for making the decision of an induced termination of a pregnancy?
4. What are the attitudes and opinions Texas nursing instructors have toward legal abortion in the tax supported and privately supported schools?
5. What are the attitudes and opinions nursing instructors have toward legal abortion in the Catholic and non-Catholic supported schools?

### Null-Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward the existing abortion law, and the proposed law presented in the 1968 Texas Legislature.

2. There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward the person or persons responsible for making the decision of an induced termination of a pregnancy.

3. There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward legal abortion in the baccalaureate degree programs, the associate degree programs, and the hospital diploma programs.

4. There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward legal abortion in the tax supported and privately supported schools.

5. There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward legal abortion in the Catholic and non-Catholic schools.

### Assumptions

It was assumed this sample was representative of instructors in schools of nursing in Texas, and the answers given were made according to the values and past experiences of that individual.

### Definitions

Abortion: The term abortion in this paper means acts taken to terminate a woman's pregnancy in its early stages, at least before the embryonic movement, after fourteen or more weeks of pregnancy.<sup>12</sup>

Spontaneous Abortion: The term spontaneous abortion means fertilized human eggs or embryos which fail to develop correctly and dies in the uterus, resulting in the expulsion of this wastage.<sup>13</sup>

Therapeutic Abortion: The term therapeutic abortion is the common term used to designate hospital abortions for medical indications.<sup>14</sup>

Induced Termination: The term induced termination of pregnancy means the intentional termination of a pregnancy other than by a live birth.<sup>15</sup>

Proposed Abortion Law: The term proposed abortion law means the proposal made in the 1968 session of the Texas Legislature concerning a change in the present Texas abortion law.

### Limitations

This population was assumed to be a representative sample of Texas nursing instructor's attitudes and opinions toward the problems

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<sup>12</sup>Roy Lucus, "Federal Constitutional Limitations on the Enforcement and Administration of State Abortion Statutes," Reprint from The North Carolina Law Review, Vol. 46, No. 4, (June, 1968) p. 731.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 743.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 731.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 742.

in this survey, but is limited as being a representative national sample. There were limitations in the method of collecting data. A two choice answer for a question, such as the one used in this survey, reflects positive and negative attitudes and opinions, but does not reflect the intensity of any of these answers.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The American Law Institute became concerned in the 1950's at the flaunting of abortion laws. They saw the use and misuse of these statutes as endangering the lives of many women.<sup>1</sup> After a careful study of this problem, the Institute drafted a model therapeutic abortion law and recommended the enactment of a more modern law to the states.<sup>2</sup>

Since this time, a deluge of material concerning this problem has appeared in the literature reflecting the attitudes and opinions of many groups and individuals. Both professional and nonprofessional people have expressed their opinions and attitudes freely about this problem, and have not hesitated to engage in public discussions. Birth control, until recently, was a private matter; then, for various reasons, it became a public matter. This combination of private and public interest has stimulated individuals and groups of individuals all over the world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Herman Schwartz, "Abortion and the Law," Reprint from Buffalo Alumnus, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1966.

<sup>2</sup>Garrett Hardin, "The History and Future of Birth Control," Reprint from Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, Vol. 10, No. 1, (Autumn, 1966), pp. 1-18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-4.

The Roman Catholic Church is the strongest group opposition to any change in the present Texas law, or any other state which allows abortion. No survey of attitudes and opinions of this church membership came to the attention of this researcher. Most Catholic spokesmen respect the philosophy of the church; therefore, they maintain that men and society possess an absolute obligation to respect the life of the fetal "human being." A moral obligation such as this does not lend itself to public discussion or compromising.<sup>4</sup> There is, however, a strand of discontent of the law as it is with some individuals within this church group. These individuals do support some change in the present law.<sup>5</sup>

The Association for the Study of Abortion reports many groups and individuals who endorse various amounts of reform in the abortion law. Some of these are: The Texas Federation of Business and Professional Women, The National Council of Jewish Women, Texas Commission on the Status of Women, The American Civil Liberties Union, American Public Health Association, American Bar Association, American Medical Association, Planned Parenthood-World Population, United Methodist Church, American Baptist Convention, and Presbyterian Church U.S.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ronald M. Green, "Abortion and Promise-Keeping," Reprint from Christianity and Crisis, (May 15, 1967).

<sup>5</sup>F. L. Mayhew, "Abortions: Two Sides and Some Complaints," Catholic Nurse, (March, 1968), pp. 38-41.

<sup>6</sup>Newsletters, Association for the Study of Abortions, 120 West 57th Street, New York City, 1968.

In December, 1965, The Association for the Study of Abortion sent questionnaires to the total membership of the American Psychiatric Association in order to survey their opinions regarding indications for interruption of pregnancy. Of the 12,974 questionnaires sent to the United States member, 5,289 (40.6 per cent) were returned. Over four-fifths of those responding favored liberalization of the legally permitted basis for interruption of pregnancy.<sup>7</sup>

In a survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center in December, 1965, a representative sample of 1,484 adult Americans were asked their views on the conditions under which it should be possible for a woman to obtain a legal abortion. The survey results clearly showed the majority of the American population support abortion as a safeguard of maternal health or as prevention of the anguish associated with bearing a deformed child. When Catholics were compared to Protestant or Jewish respondents, there was very little religious group difference. Although official Catholic doctrine makes no allowance for abortions in the event of sexual assault or possible deformity in the fetus. Any suggestion of abortion as a last-resort means of birth control is firmly rejected by the majority of American adults in the N.O.R.C. sample.<sup>8</sup>

There is an abundance of literature on this subject. There are other surveys of attitudes and opinions of professional groups, not

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<sup>7</sup>Ralph M. Crowley and Robert W. Laidlow, "Psychiatric Opinion Regarding Abortion: Preliminary Report of a Survey," American Journal of Psychiatry, (October, 1967), p. 124.

<sup>8</sup>Alice S. Rossi, "Abortion Law and Their Victims," Reprinted from Trans-action, September/October, 1966.

reported here, but no survey of nursing instructors or any specific group of nurses has come to this researcher's attention. The A.N.A. House of Delegates voted for abortion law changes in 1968, and there seemed to be a favorable attitude toward the possible change of the law at the A.N.A. Convention in Dallas, Texas in 1968, but no formal survey was made at that time.<sup>9</sup>

Jeanne D. Fonseca reminds the nurse she must look at her personal definition of nursing before she can face her professional responsibilities in the interrelationships which occur around the incidents of the induced abortion.<sup>10</sup> She did not conduct a survey, but she did report her own feelings and her observations of nurses' attitudes and actions toward induced abortions. Fonseca makes the following statement:

Recognition of induced abortion as a major problem necessitates a re-evaluation of nursing responsibilities in its prevention and in caring for such patients. The place to start is with each nurse's attitude toward the problem.<sup>11</sup>

The validity of a survey of nurses' attitudes is strengthened by another statement in the same article: "Sometimes when we are confronted by other people's standards, the impact helps us to understand our own values and how they affect our judgments."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>C. L. Buxton, "One Doctor's Opinion of Abortion Laws," American Journal of Nursing, (May, 1968), pp. 1026-28.

<sup>10</sup>Jeanne D. Fonseca, "Induced Abortions: Nursing Attitudes and Action," American Journal of Nursing, (May, 1968), pp. 1022-27.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Methodology

In a broad sense, research efficiency requires that one realize which type of study is most pertinent to the problem that has instigated the research. The aim in this study was to obtain descriptive information about a given social question and for the testing of hypotheses formed which were pertinent to that question. One method of data collecting for this type of survey was the questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> The level of questioning used was one in which the information sought was fixed and unchanging and was highly specific and close to the surface. The questions were designed to elicit a specific predetermined answer, and, for each respondent, there was only one answer true for him which was fixed and unchanging. The researcher was asking for a verbal response rather than action, but it involved what they had done or what they would do about an action. If the question involved a feeling or attitude, it was still a verbal response about that feeling or attitude, but in terms of the action it would elicit.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marie Jahoda, Morton Duetsch, and Stuart Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations, With Special Reference to Prejudice (New York: The Dryden Press, 1958), pp. 28-29.

<sup>2</sup>David J. Fox, Fundamentals of Research in Nursing (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Division of Meredith Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 206-07.

Descriptive and diagnostic are not limited to any one method of research. They may employ any or all of the methods of data collection, which include interviews, questionnaires, systematic direct observation, analysis of community records, and participant observation.<sup>3</sup>

### Selection of Population

The population for this study was nursing instructors from all Texas nursing programs which prepare registered nurses. A list from the Texas Committee on Careers in Nursing was used as a roster.<sup>4</sup> All programs were included in order to get a representative sample of baccalaureate degree, associate degree, and hospital diploma programs, to get a representative sample of the type of financial support afforded these schools, to get a representative sample of the Catholic and non-Catholic schools, and to get a representative geographical sample of the state.

This sample is assumed to be representative of the population, judging by the aspects of representativeness suggested by Fox:

There are two different aspects of representativeness:

(1) assuring that all significant aspects of the characteristics are represented in the sample, and (2) assuring that each aspect is the same proportion of the sample as it is of the population.<sup>5</sup>

A list of schools of nursing in Texas, furnished by the Texas Committee on Careers, was used as the roster for contacting the respective deans and faculties. In August, 1969, the researcher contacted,

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<sup>3</sup>Jahoda, pp. 28-9.

<sup>4</sup>List of Schools of Nursing in Texas, Texas Committee on Careers in Nursing, San Antonio, Texas, 1969.

<sup>5</sup>Fox, p. 155.

by letter (see Appendix A), the respective deans or director of each school of nursing in Texas requesting permission to include the faculty of that school in the survey. If permission was granted, the dean was asked to furnish a list of names and addresses of the faculty in order for the researcher to mail the questionnaire to each instructor individually (see Appendix C).

The total number of schools asked to participate in the survey was forty-two, and the total number of individual instructors was 424. The total number of the sample was thirty-nine schools and 318 individuals (see Table 1, page 19).

#### Development of Tool

A questionnaire type of research design was used in this survey. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and the questions and other information requested were pertinent to the information desired (see Appendix B). A paper and pencil type of design, such as the one used, is considered reliable when measuring knowledge, attitudes, or interests.<sup>6</sup> The questions developed by this researcher are similar to questions used by other researchers to measure opinions and attitudes of other populations with regard to the same topic.<sup>7 8 9</sup> The questionnaire used in this survey included questions pertinent to

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<sup>6</sup>Fox, p. 171.

<sup>7</sup>Ralph M. Crowley and Robert W. Laidlaw, "Psychiatric Opinion Regarding Abortion: Preliminary Report of Survey," Reprint from American Journal of Psychiatry, October, 1967.

<sup>8</sup>Alice S. Rossi, "Abortion Laws and Their Victims," Reprint from Trans-action, September/October, 1966.

<sup>9</sup>Robert E. Hall, "New York Abortion Law Survey," American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Vol. 93, No. 8, (December 15, 1965), pp. 1182-83.

the present Texas abortion law and the proposed law, the assignment of responsibility for making the decision of an induced termination of pregnancy, the school of nursing in which the instructor taught, the type of program, the type of financial support, and if the school was Catholic or non-Catholic.

#### Data Collection

A questionnaire was mailed in August, 1969, to each nursing instructor whose name appeared on the list supplied by the dean, with a letter of introduction and instructions (see Appendix B and C). The cutoff date was established at September 20, 1969, but was extended to October 1, 1969 in order for all the respondents to be included in this sample.

The classification of the three types of programs represented in this sample was determined by the respondents answer on the questionnaire and the code of the researcher. The type of financial support and the religious affiliation of the school was determined by the response of the respondent.

If a question was not answered, it was not included in the sample. The number of respondents represent the number of questionnaires returned; however, some respondents did not answer all the questions. Comments were made in some cases to explain the omission of an answer, but the researcher did not include the question unless it was marked as "yes" or "no."

### Method of Analysis

A value of chi square was calculated for each null-hypothesis formulated. In situations in which the observed and theoretical frequencies were to be compared, the distribution of chi square was of considerable theoretical and practical importance.

Further illustrations of observed frequencies will be given by the use of raw numbers and percentages.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>George A. Ferguson, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 191.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

TABLE 1  
SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION\*

	Number of		Financial Support			Religious Affiliation		
	Schools	Individuals	Religious	Private	Tax	Private & Religious	Catholic	Non-Catholic
Baccalaureate Degree	8	128	2		3	3	2	6
Associate Degree	15	83			15			15
Hospital Diploma	16	107	7	3	4	2	3	13
TOTAL	39	318	9	3	22	5	5	34

\*For the purpose of this survey, the religious affiliation is only shown as Catholic or non-Catholic.

**TABLE 2**  
**SAMPLE RESONSES IN PERCENTAGES\***

	Question 1		Question 2		Question 3		Question 4	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total Sample	15	85	84	16	81	19	8	92
Baccalaureate Degree	16	84	79	21	83	17	9	91
Associate Degree	14	86	88	12	77	23	11	89
Hospital Diploma	13	87	86	14	79	21	4	96
Tax Supported Schools	11	89	88	12	84	16	8	92
Privately Supported Schools	19	81	77	23	75	25	5	95
Catholic Schools	36	64	54	46	68	32	5	95
Non-Catholic Schools	12	88	88	12	82	18	8	92

\*These numbers represent the approximate percentages of responses made by each group on each question. The privately supported schools represent those schools that did not indicate tax support as the main type of financial support. It includes the schools shown in Table 1, which indicated religious, private, or religious and private.

TABLE 3

Null-Hypothesis No. 1

There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward the existing abortion law and the proposed law presented in the 1968 Texas Legislature.

A value of chi square was calculated for Questions 1 and 2.

Significance level .05  
 Degree of freedom 1  
 Critical value required for significance 3.84

	Yes	No	
Question No. 1	45	268	313
Question No. 2	260	60	310
	305	318	623

$$X_1^2 = 300.05$$

$H_0$  rejected

Obtained  $X^2$  value was greater than the critical value required for significance, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. It may be stated the difference between the observed and expected frequencies were significant and could not reasonably be explained by sampling fluctuation.

There was a difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward the present abortion law and the proposed law. The above data showed the relationship between the present law and the proposed law (see Appendix B for questionnaire).

TABLE 4

Null-Hypothesis No. 2

There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward the person or persons responsible for making the decision of an induced termination of pregnancy.

A value of chi square was calculated for Questions 3 and 4.

Significance level .05  
 Degree of freedom 1  
 Critical value required for significance 3.84

	Yes	No	
Question No. 3	247	61	308
Question No. 4	24	287	311
	271	348	619

$$X_1^2 = 331.57$$

$H_0$  rejected

Obtained  $X^2$  value was greater than the critical value required for significance, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. It may be stated the difference between the observed and expected frequencies were significant and could not reasonably be explained by sampling fluctuation.

There was a difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward the person or persons responsible for making the decision of an induced termination of pregnancy. The above data showed the relationship between the decision being made by the pregnant woman, her closest relatives and her attending physician, and a judicial body which governs all people in all circumstances (See Appendix B).

TABLE 5

Null-Hypothesis No. 3

There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward legal abortion in the baccalaureate degree programs, the associate degree programs, and the hospital diploma programs.

A value of chi square was calculated for each program on each question.

Significance level .05  
 Degrees of freedom 2  
 Critical value required for significance 5.99

## Question No. 1

	Yes	No	
B.S. Degree	20	105	125
Assoc. Degree	11	70	81
Hosp. Diploma	14	93	107
	45	268	313

$$X_2^2 = .406$$

## Question No. 3

	Yes	No	
B.S. Degree	104	21	125
Asso. Degree	62	18	80
Hosp. Diploma	81	22	103
	247	61	308

$$X_2^2 = .201$$

## Question No. 2

	Yes	No	
	99	26	125
	72	9	81
	89	15	104
	260	50	

$$X_2^2 = .224$$

## Question No. 4

	Yes	No	
	11	115	126
	9	73	82
	4	99	103
	24	287	311

$$X_2^2 = .337$$

Obtained  $X^2$  value was not greater than the critical value required for significance.

TABLE 6

Null-Hypothesis No. 4

There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward legal abortion in the tax supported and privately supported schools.

A value of chi square was calculated for the tax supported schools and privately supported schools on each question.

Significance level .05  
 Degree of freedom 1  
 Critical value required for significance 3.84

## Question No. 1

	Yes	No	
Tax Supported	21	167	188
Privately Supported	24	101	125
	45	268	313

$$X_1^2 = 3.93$$

## Question No. 2

	Yes	No	
Tax Supported	165	23	188
Privately Supported	95	27	122
	260	50	310

$$X_1^2 = 5.24$$

## Question No. 3

	Yes	No	
Tax Supported	155	30	185
Privately Supported	92	31	123
	247	61	308

$$X_1^2 = 19.7$$

## Question No. 4

	Yes	No	
Tax Supported	14	171	185
Privately Supported	10	116	126
	24	287	311

$$X_1^2 = .09$$

Obtained  $X^2$  value on questions one, two, and three was as great or greater than the critical value required for significance, therefore, the null-hypothesis was rejected. Obtained  $X^2$  value on question four was not greater than the critical value required for significance, therefore, the null-hypothesis failed to be rejected.

It may be stated there was a significant difference of nursing attitudes and opinions toward legal abortion on questions one, two, and three, but there was not a significant difference on question four.

TABLE 7

Null-Hypothesis No. 5

There will be no significant difference in the attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors toward legal abortion in the Catholic and non-Catholic schools.

A value of chi square was calculated for the Catholic and non-Catholic schools on each question.

Significance level .05

Degree of freedom 1

Critical value required for significance 3.84

Question No. 1

	Yes	No	
Catholic	13	23	36
Non-Catholic	32	245	277
	45	268	313

$$X_1^2 = 15.1$$

Question No. 2

	Yes	No	
Catholic	20	17	37
Non-Catholic	240	33	273
	260	50	310

$$X_1^2 = 27.3$$

Question No. 3

	Yes	No	
Catholic	26	12	38
Non-Catholic	221	49	270
	247	61	308

$$X_1^2 = 3.95$$

Question No. 4

	Yes	No	
Catholic	2	38	40
Non-Catholic	22	249	271
	24	287	311

$$X_1^2 = 2.85$$

Obtained  $X^2$  value on questions one, two, and three was as great or greater than the critical value required for significance, therefore, the null-hypothesis was rejected. Obtained  $X^2$  value on question four

was less than the critical value required for significance, therefore, the null-hypothesis was not rejected.

It may be stated there was a significant difference of nursing attitudes and opinions of nursing instructors in the Catholic schools and non-Catholic schools toward legal abortion on questions one, two, and three, but there was no significant difference on question four.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

In recent years there has been widespread interest shown toward abortions, the laws which govern abortions, the individual desiring a termination of pregnancy, and those people involved in rendering the service. Not since the middle of the nineteenth century has there been so much public discussion of this moral and medical problem.

Nursing instructors, because of their own medical and ethical backgrounds, must be aware of their attitudes and opinions as influencing factors in their teaching role. Recognition of induced abortion as a major health problem necessitates a revolution of nurses' responsibilities in caring for and teaching others to care for the patients involved in this sensitive position.

This survey was conducted by this researcher in September, 1969, of Texas nursing instructors' attitudes and opinions toward legal abortions. A four-question questionnaire was sent to Texas nursing instructors requesting their individual responses of "yes" and "no" as to their preference to the present Texas abortion law, or their preference to the proposed law presented to the 1968 Texas Legislature. The other two questions requested their "yes" or "no" preference to the pregnant woman, her closest relatives and her attending physician being responsible for making the decision of an induced termination of pregnancy, or the decision of termination of pregnancy being made by

a judicial body who governs all people in all circumstances.

Approximately 85% of the 318 respondents indicated the proposed law was more appropriate than the present law for the needs of the child-bearing-age woman. Approximately 81% of the respondents indicated the pregnant woman, her closest relatives and her attending physician should make the decision of an induced termination of a pregnancy. Approximately 92% of the respondents did not favor a judicial decision. There was no significant difference in the percentage of "yes" and "no" responses in the baccalaureate degree, associate degree, and hospital diploma programs.

The tax supported schools and the privately supported schools did show a significant difference in their responses to questions one, two, and three, but there was no significant difference in their attitudes and opinions on question four. The Catholic schools did not show preferences as strongly as any of the other groups or the total population. The Catholic preferences were in the 54-68% range rather than the 77-88% range of the others, except in the judicial decision area. All schools showed no preference for the judicial decision in the 91-96% range.

### Conclusions

Based on the data collected and analysed, the following conclusions appeared to be evident in this survey:

1. The majority of nursing instructors in Texas schools preparing registered nurses do not feel the present abortion law adequately meets the needs of the child-bearing-age woman.

2. The majority of nursing instructors in Texas schools of nursing favor the proposed abortion law.

3. The majority of nursing instructors in Texas schools of nursing favor the individual being responsible for making the decision of an induced termination of a pregnancy.

4. The majority of nursing instructors in Texas schools of nursing do not feel a judicial body which governs all people in all circumstances should make the decision of an induced termination of a pregnancy.

5. Texas nursing instructors in Texas schools which prepare registered nurses are forced by law to teach ethical and medical principles which are not compatible with their own philosophy of life and health.

#### Recommendations for Future Studies

Based on this study, the investigator recommends the following:

1. A study which would compare nursing instructor's attitudes and opinions toward legal abortion during a time of relatively low public discussion and high publicity of this question.

2. A study which would compare this study with a group which has taught in a state with more liberal abortion laws.

3. An active participation of nurses in legislative matters.

4. A need for nursing instructors to examine their own philosophy of life and education.

5. A need for nursing instructors to examine their attitudes and opinions toward individual rights and responsibilities.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO DEAN OR DIRECTOR

## TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

College of Nursing

1521 Mims  
Fort Worth, Texas 76112

Dear Dean or Director:

As part of my graduate work at Texas Woman's University, I am conducting an opinion and attitude survey of Texas nursing instructors toward legalized abortions.

I want to include the faculty of all Texas nursing programs which prepare registered nurses.

In order to contact each instructor I need the help of each director of education.

I would like your permission to include your faculty in this survey. If you would like to be included, will you please send me, in the enclosed envelope, a list of names and addresses of your faculty members.

When the survey is completed I will be happy to send you a summary of the results.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Blessing

Dear Dean or Director:

I have approved this research study and I would appreciate your cooperation in assisting Mrs. Dorothy Blessing to obtain her data. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Opal H. White  
Professor and Director  
Graduate Programs  
Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing  
Texas Woman's University  
Dallas Center

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate your answer by a check ( ) in the appropriate column.

1. The present Texas law governing therapeutic abortion permits induced termination of pregnancy only to save or preserve the life of the mother.

Do you feel this law is adequate for the needs of the child-bearing-age woman?

2. The proposed Texas law governing therapeutic abortion would permit induced termination of pregnancy, when pregnancy threatens a mother's mental or physical health, results from rape or incest, or is likely to produce a child with severe physical or mental defects.

Do you feel this law is more appropriate for the needs of the child-bearing-age woman?

3. Do you feel the decision of an induced termination of pregnancy should be made by the pregnant woman, her closest relatives and her attending physician?
4. Do you feel the decision of an induced termination of pregnancy should be made by a judicial body which governs all people in all circumstances?

School of Nursing \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF PROGRAM:

BS ( )      AD ( )      HOSP. DIPLOMA ( )

Predominately TAX supported ( )

Predominately RELIGIOUS supported ( )

Predominately PRIVATELY supported ( )

Catholic ( )      Non-Catholic ( )

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO NURSING INSTRUCTOR

1521 Mims  
Fort Worth, Texas 76112  
August 20, 1969

Dear Nursing Instructor:

As part of my graduate work at Texas Woman's University, I am conducting an opinion and attitude survey of Texas nursing instructors toward legalized abortions.

I want to include the faculty of all Texas nursing programs which prepare registered nurses, therefore, I would appreciate your help very much.

Your dean has given permission for me to contact you about this survey and furnished your name and address, however, both she and I want you to know your participation is optional.

Please complete the questionnaire and personal data and return to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope as soon as possible, but not later than September 20, 1969.

Your cooperation in this survey will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy Blessing

APPENDIX D

FORMULA USED FOR STATISTICAL COMPUTATION

## FORMULA USED FOR STATISTICAL COMPUTATION

Chi square, or  $X^2$ 

$$X^2 = \frac{N (AD - BC)^2}{(A + B) (C + D) (A + C) (B + D)}$$

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<sup>1</sup>George A. Ferguson, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 191.