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ZMATH 2011c.00230

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Attitudes toward statistics and their relationship with short- and long-term exam results.

J. Stat. Educ. 14, No. 3 (2006).

Summary: This study uses the Attitudes Toward Statistics (ATS) scale (Wise 1985) to investigate the attitudes toward statistics and the relationship of those attitudes with short- and long-term statistics exam results for university students taking statistics courses in a five year Educational Sciences curriculum. Compared to the findings from previous studies, the results indicate that the sample of undergraduate students have relatively negative attitudes toward the use of statistics in their field of study but relatively positive attitudes toward the course of statistics in which they are enrolled. Similar to other studies, we find a relationship between the attitudes toward the course and the results on the first year statistics exam. Additionally, we investigate the relationship between the attitudes and the long-term exam results. A positive relationship is found between students' attitudes toward the use of statistics in their field of study and the dissertation grade. This relationship does not differ systematically from the one between the first year statistics exam results and the dissertation grade in the fifth year. Thus, the affective and cognitive measures at the beginning of the curriculum are equally predictive for long-term exam results. Finally, this study reveals that the relationship between attitudes toward statistics and exam results is content-specific: We do not find a relationship between attitudes and general exam results, only between attitudes and results on statistics exams. (Contains 6 tables.) (ERIC)

Classification: C25 C75
Keywords: undergraduate students; relationship; student attitudes; statistics; course content; tests; scores