

Nursing Education Research Conference 2020

A Comparison of Competence of DNP- and PhD-Prepared Nursing Faculty in Academic Teaching Roles

Mona Williams-Gregory, PhD

School of Nursing, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Newark, NJ, USA

Purpose:

A strong, positive correlation between educator competence and academic performance has been established (Gulistan, Hussain, & Mushtaq, 2017). Nurse educators who firmly understand pedagogical principles and incorporate them into the learning environment foster learners' problem-solving skills and improve student outcomes (Lucernario, Yangco, Punzalan, & Espinosa, 2016). Increasingly, nurse educators who hold the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) are being hired into faculty roles (Oermann, Lynn, & Agger, 2015). Competence of DNP-prepared nurse educators has been scrutinized because the practice-based curriculum is void of the pedagogical principles that underpin traditional research-based doctorates (Agger, Lynn, & Oermann, 2017). Although nurse educator competencies are prevalent, they have been universally applied to educators regardless of academic preparation. The assumption that DNP-prepared nurse educators are competent in teaching roles should not be made. This research compares competence of DNP- and PhD-prepared nursing faculty in academic teaching roles.

Methods:

A descriptive, cross-sectional design was utilized to examine the construct of competence among DNP- and PhD-prepared educators at a large, public, research university. The final sample consisted of 34 participants, of which 19 were DNP-prepared and 14 were PhD-prepared. Participants were asked to rate their ability to perform the behaviors associated with the NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators (NLN, 2012) using a 5-point Likert scale aligned with Dreyfus' Five-Stage Model of Adult Skills Acquisition (2004), where 1 = Novice, 2 = Advanced Beginner, 3 = Competent, 4 = Proficient and 5 = Expert. The independent samples t-test was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between DNP- and PhD-prepared participants' self-reported level of ability to complete the tasks associated with the NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators (NLN, 2012).

Results:

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances supported the assumption that variances were equal across both groups. The mean Dreyfus' Five-Stage Model of Adult Skills Acquisition (2004) score for the NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators (NLN, 2012) ($M= 3.54$, $SD= 0.58$) among DNP-prepared participants was 3.54. The mean Dreyfus' Five-Stage Model of Adult Skills Acquisition (2004) score for the NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators (NLN, 2012) ($M= 4.00$, $SD= 0.70$) among PhD-prepared participants was 4.00.

Conclusion:

This study found that DNP-prepared participants felt somewhere between competent and proficient in their ability to perform behaviors associated with the NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators (NLN, 2012). PhD-prepared participants felt proficient in their ability to perform behaviors associated with the NLN Core

Competencies for Nurse Educators (NLN, 2012). Results of this study demonstrated that DNP-prepared participants reported lower levels of skill acquisition scores in their academic teaching roles than PhD-prepared participants.

Identifying specific nurse educator competencies that DNP-prepared faculty feel less able to perform may facilitate the development of policies and pedagogical resources to support recruitment, mentoring and retention initiatives for DNP-prepared nurse educators. Illuminating the concept of competence among DNP-prepared nursing faculty provides an opportunity for educational practice and policy to target pedagogical resources to support skill acquisition among DNP-prepared nurse educators.

Title:

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Keywords:

Competence, DNP-prepared and Educators

Abstract Summary:

This study examined the construct of competence among DNP-prepared nurse educators. Participants rated their ability to perform the behaviors associated with the NLN Core Competencies for Nurse Educators (NLN, 2012) using a 5-point Likert scale that aligned with Dreyfus' Five-Stage Model of Adult Skills Acquisition (2004).

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First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Mona Williams-Gregory, PhD
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
School of Nursing
Assistant Professor
Newark NJ
USA

Author Summary: Mona Williams-Gregory is a DNP-prepared educator who had been teaching for over a decade when she decided to pursue a PhD in Nursing Education. As a DNP-prepared educator, she strove to stay abreast of the pedagogical principles that were not provided in the DNP curriculum. As she completed the PhD in Nursing Education, she was driven to explore perceptions of competence among DNP-prepared educators.