

Role Strain, Faculty Stress, and Organizational Support for Clinical Nurse Faculty Assigning a Failing Grade

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OBJECTIVES

- Identify the stressors encountered by CNF contributing to role strain and faculty stress.
- Describe the relationships between role strain, faculty stress, and perceived organizational support for CNF.
- Identify target areas where teaching practices changed.
- Discuss ways to support CNF role.
- No conflict of interest to disclose.
- Currently an Assistant Professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University. This research represents my unfunded doctoral research.



WHAT IS KNOWN?

- *Failure to fail*: significant issue in nursing education
(Duffy, 2003; Hawe, 2003; Larocque & Luhanga, 2013; Sprinks, 2014)
- Uphold safe clinical practice
(Killam et al., 2011; Rosenkoetter & Milstead, 2010)
- Determine if clinical course objectives met
(Amicucci, 2012; Glasgow, Dreher, & Oxholm, 2012; Stokes & Kost, 2005)
- Stressors contributing to RS and FS:
 - Subjective nature of clinical evaluation
(Glasgow et al., 2012; Oermann, 1998; Oermann et al., 2009)
 - Fear of litigation
(Johnson, 2009; Scanlan & Care, 2004, 2008; Skingley et al., 2007)
 - Evaluation tools lack of reliability (Luhanga et al., 2008)
 - Research requirements, role overload and time constraints
(Clark, 2013; Cranford, 2013; Whalen, 2009)
 - Expectation to maintain clinical practice



WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

- Paucity of literature addressing the issue
- Relationship between RS and POS was suggested but not quantified (Clark, 2013; Cranford, 2013)
- Graduate faculty have been excluded
- Unclear how FS contributes to role strain and the struggle to assign a failing grade



PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- To explore the relationships between and among the variables: role strain (RS), faculty stress (FS), and perceived organizational support (POS) for CNF faced with the decision to assign a failing grade and attempt to quantify the struggle to assign a failing grade.
- Provide evidence to support policy change intended to assist faculty with this serious issue.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the relationships between and among role strain, faculty stress, and perceived organizational support for CNF faced with a decision to assign a failing grade to a clinical nursing student?
- What change(s) occurred in CNF teaching practices after the deliberation to assign a failing clinical grade?



RESEARCH DESIGN

- Descriptive correlational design
 - 3 instruments, demographic questionnaire, 1 open-ended response (total of 107 items)
 - Online survey
 - National sample of undergraduate and graduate CNF; recruited via social media and direct email solicitation.
 - Neuman's system model served as the theoretical framework.



SAMPLE POPULATION

- 614 CNF accessed survey
- 92 failed to meet inclusion criteria
- 132 were disqualified
- Final sample of 390 CNF represented all regions of the United States



SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- FT Assistant Professors and Instructors with MS
- Engaged in 1 or more activities preparing for role
- Taught in BSN programs and/or graduate programs
- Experienced nurses, average of 8.85 years experience as faculty and an average tenure time at the institution of 6.18 years.
- Responsible for both didactic and clinical
- Clinical group size: 8-9



SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- 25% enrolled in doctoral program
- 48% employed in 2nd job involving a direct patient care role
- Support from colleagues and Chairperson
- Failing students identified at all levels
- 82.6% of CNF assigned the failing grade
- 47% reported changes in teaching practices following the deliberation
- 46% (179) responded to open-ended question



METHODS

- Instruments: Role Strain Scale, Faculty Stress Index, Survey of Perceived Organizational Support, demographic survey
- Quantitative analyses included descriptive statistics, *t*-tests, Pearson *r* correlations and regression analysis
- Qualitative data from open-ended question analyzed via conventional content analysis

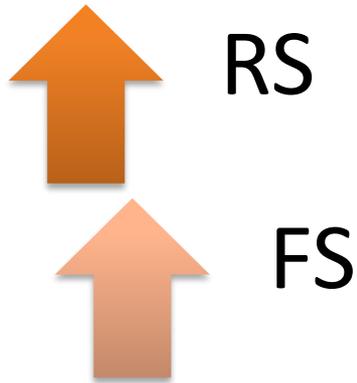


RELATIONSHIPS between RS, FS, POS

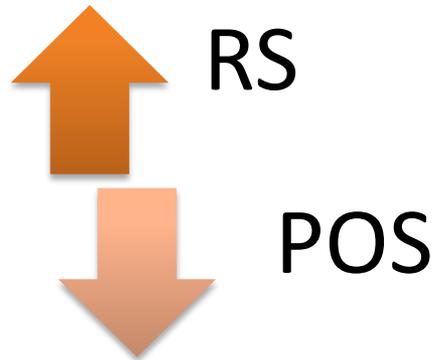
- Role Strain (RS)
(M=2.96, SD .67)

- Perceived Organizational Support (POS)
(M=1.86, SD .95)

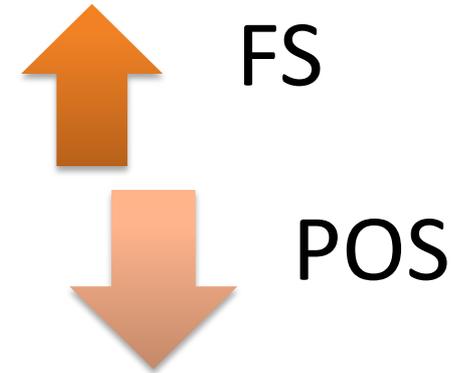
- Faculty Stress (PFS)
(M=4.36, SD 1.52)



($r = .822, p = .000$)



($r = -.601, p = .000$)



($r = -.613, p = .000$)

$R^2 = .692$



RS & CHARACTERISTICS

- Higher degrees of PRS were reported by CNF:
($M > 3$)
 - Engaged in making changes to teaching practices
 - Teaching FT in both classroom and clinical spheres
 - Enrolled in a doctoral program
- Other characteristics failed to show a statistically significant relationship
 - Age, gender, race, rank, experience as educator or nurse, institutional tenure, highest degree, kind of program, CNE status, secondary employment, or level of the student.



OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES (n= 179)

Changes in teaching practices targeted:

- Communication
- Evaluation process
- Documentation practices
- Absence of administrative support
- Remediation concerns
- Course revisions
- External pressure and stress
- Revision of evaluation instruments
- Unsafe students
- *Professional growth*



CONCLUSIONS

- Assigning a failing grade is distressing for CNF.
- POS is foundational to the process and a critical factor influencing both undergraduate or graduate CNF's role strain and faculty stress.
- Ten areas were identified where change in teaching practices were necessary.



CLINICAL RELEVANCE

- Raise awareness of the issues surrounding the struggle to assign a failing grade
- Focus efforts towards
 - Provision of adequate organizational support for CNF
 - Development of explicit reliable evaluation instruments
 - Develop processes to ensure graduates are competent and safe to practice.



Questions or comments?

Thank you!



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