The nursing faculty shortage in the United States is clearly documented (AACN, 2015). This critical shortage is far-reaching, with the lack of qualified nurse educators impacting the number of students that schools of nursing can admit. Doctorally-prepared nurses can help address this shortage, but these educators may need support in the faculty role because their education is not have prepared them for the expectations of academia, depending on the content of the program they attended. The purpose of this research study is to explore doctorally-prepared nurse educators’ perception of their confidence in their preparedness for the faculty role. The researchers are seeking to identify challenges in the academic role faced by doctorally-prepared faculty members. The research questions are: Do faculty with a doctoral degree feel prepared to teach in a School of Nursing? What challenges do doctorally-prepared faculty face in the faculty role?

Preparation for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) role focuses on application and practice. The Doctoral of Philosophy (PhD) degree prepares nurse scientists to conduct research and discover new knowledge in nursing (AACN, 2010; Melnyk, 2013). Both degrees do not necessarily prepare nurses to teach nursing, since nursing education courses are not typically included in nursing degrees unless the program has an emphasis on nursing education (Dreifuerst et al., 2016). In preparing DNP graduates for roles in practice and application of research findings, DNP programs do not focus heavily on developing and conducting research. Instead, the focus is on translating existing research into practice. The result is that DNP-prepared graduates moving into faculty roles may have less experience in conducting original research, which is an expectation in most academic settings (Nicholes & Dyer, 2012; Smeltzer et al., 2015). DNP faculty are necessary to teach DNP students and to guide their future practice; however, the question of scholarship expectations continues to be a barrier to successful assumption of the faculty role. Some schools are divided on whether DNP-prepared faculty are prepared to teach nursing, but most agree that they are not prepared for the research expectations in academia, particularly in universities and Carnegie Level I Research institutions (Agger, Oermann & Lynn, 2014; Oermann, Lynn & Agger, 2016). The literature demonstrates that much is still unknown about the perception of doctorally-prepared faculty members on their confidence in teaching and the challenges they face. The current study builds upon the limited research into this topic by asking doctorally-prepared faculty members to reflect on their career in academia and the impact of their doctoral degree program on their preparation for the faculty role.

A link to a researcher-developed questionnaire will be sent to nursing faculty in CCNE-accredited schools of nursing in seven states in the southern U.S. Data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from the study should be completed by early Spring 2018.

Title:
Perceptions of DNP-Prepared Nurse Educators on Their Preparation for the Faculty Role

Keywords:
DNP prepared faculty, academic role and nurse faculty

References:


Abstract Summary:

The purpose of this study is to identify challenges in the academic role faced by DNP-prepared faculty members. Doctor of Nursing-prepared nurses can help address the faculty shortage, but these educators may need support in the faculty role for some of the expectations of academia.

Content Outline:

I. Introduction

a. Faculty shortage present

b. DNP prepared nurses are hired to fill vacant faculty positions

II. Body

a. Educational preparation

i. DNP programs typically do not require education courses
ii. PhD programs typically do not require education courses

b. Research experience
   i. DNP programs teach students to translate research into practice
   ii. Focus is not on original research
   iii. Can result in challenges in meeting research requirements of academic role

3. Conclusion
   a. Limited research on DNP prepared nurses as faculty
   b. Study will provide more data related to DNP prepared faculty’s challenges in the academic role

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