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

Jeannie Couper PhD, RN-BC, CNE
Assistant Professor
couperj@fdu.edu

2016 STTI-NLN Nursing Education Research Conference
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)

RS

(r = .822, p = .000)

FS

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

POS

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

R² = .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!
References


References


References


References


