

East Carolina University

Men in Nursing Academia:
Recruitment and Retention Factors

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Abstract

Background: Currently there is a shortage of males holding faculty positions in schools of nursing. Minimal research has been conducted to address the shortage of male faculty

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify factors related to recruitment and retention of men in the faculty role.

Methods: In this multisite descriptive design, 242 male faculty completed the electronic Nurse Educator Recruitment and Retention Survey.

Results: Top strategies reported regarding attraction to the role were opportunity to work with students, help shape the nursing profession, and nurse faculty role modeling. Top recruitment strategies were increased salaries, employee benefits, having discussions with students, and flexibility in working hours. Retention strategies reported were positive work environment and support from administration.

Conclusion: The factors identified from this study are essential for the recruitment and retention of men in faculty roles.

Keywords: male nursing faculty, nursing faculty, recruitment, retention

Introduction

In the United States today there is a nursing shortage complicated by a shortage of faculty in schools of nursing.^{1,2} According to the *Special Survey on Vacant Faculty Positions* conducted in 2019 by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), nursing faculty vacancies on a national level were at a rate of 7.2%.³ This survey also identified a total of 1,637 faculty vacancies reported by 892 schools of nursing in the United States offering undergraduate and/or graduate nursing programs.³ An additional concern is a shortage of males holding faculty positions in nursing schools. The National League for Nursing (NLN) conducted in 2019 the *Faculty Census Survey of Schools of Nursing* that reported that males represent 7% of full-time nursing faculty.² To increase the diversity of the nursing workforce, a greater number of male nurse faculty are needed to provide mentorship and role modeling for male nursing students.⁴ Studies reported that male nursing students experience benefits from interactions with the male nursing faculty in their nursing schools.^{5,6} According to the AACN, lack of diversity may deter male students from considering nursing as a profession.³ Minimal research has been conducted to address the shortage of male faculty in schools of nursing. Examination of strategies used in the recruitment and retention of male faculty may reveal areas of improvement and inform new methods of recruitment and retention that can be used to ultimately alleviate the deficiency of male nursing faculty.

Literature Review

Studies conducted of nursing faculty have identified key factors influencing recruitment and retention. These factors include work schedule flexibility, job benefits, and salary.⁷⁻¹² Some studies point to flexibility in work schedule and benefits as being more important than salary, and some point to salary as more important, but these elements remain the most frequent answers in the

study populations of nursing faculty with regard to what attracted them to their role. Laurencelle et al⁷ and Evans⁸ ranked flexibility in work schedule as a top recruitment factor; Arian et al⁹ that referred to salary as one of the main factors that attracted nurses to the faculty role. Lo et al¹⁰ reported that a guaranteed salary or increased salary is a proven incentive for recruitment and retention in the educational sector.

Evans⁸ conducted a multi-site descriptive study of nurse faculty examining the factors that attracted them to nursing academia and the factors that were important for retention. This study used a survey that was developed by the researcher based on the current literature and Herzberg's hygiene theory of job satisfaction. A majority of the respondents were white and female with a small sample of male nurse faculty. The most important factors that attracted participants to the faculty role included the opportunity to work with students and to help shape the future of the profession. Another factor attracting nurses to the faculty role included role modeling, where participants were influenced by nurse faculty members to become nurse faculty themselves. Factors of retention that were largely reported by the participants included a positive work environment, flexible working hours, support from administration, and a work environment that fosters collegial relationships.^{3,7}

Palmer¹¹ employed a quantitative, non-experimental design with archival data from the AACN 2017 annual survey of *Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs* to examine disparities that may exist between male and female nurse educators within institutional types and geographic regions. Results revealed an association between the percentage of male nursing faculty and faculty education level, specifically in public institutions in the South and private secular schools in the West. This national study also demonstrated that men do not advance at the same rate as women who make up the majority of the nursing field. With already low rates of

advancement, a smaller percentage of men enter, persist, and advance in nursing academia.

Without positive attributes associated with the career, male nursing faculty rates will remain the same or decrease as time goes on.

Laurencelle et al ⁷ conducted a qualitative study with a sample of 15 female nurse faculty to explore the meaning of how they became nurse faculty and what attracted them to the role. Common themes reported were the desire to teach, shaping the future of nursing, making a difference in the profession, and having a flexible work environment. Participants reported that these themes were more important to them than the salary.

Lee et al ¹² performed a retrospective study that analyzed secondary data from the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education survey. The sample consisted of 1352 participants with the majority of the sample being female. Only 5 % of the participants in this study were men. Job satisfaction and retention of nursing faculty in the United States were examined as to their correlation to a variety of professional and personal variables. The strongest relationship to retention of faculty was institutional leadership. Tenure track assistant professors reported a higher mean for intent to stay compared to faculty with non-tenure appointments. This result may be related to the beginning stages of their career development. For institutional type (baccalaureate, masters, research, doctoral), there were no differences in attitudes for job satisfaction and intent to stay.

Mott and Lee ⁶ conducted a qualitative descriptive study to understand what attracts men to the nursing academia role. A sample of 12 current male faculty with a variety of experience in nursing education participated in the study. Ten of the participants were attracted to the nursing faculty role because of the desire to teach and shape the future of nursing, the influence that their own faculty had on them while students, and their previous working with students in the clinical

setting. Participants also reported that it was important to serve as a role model for the recruitment and retention of men to nursing. As far as retention in the faculty role, the male nurse faculty reported a flexible work schedule and having benefits such as healthcare insurance, retirement benefits, and tuition reimbursement offered by their academic institution were inducements to retention.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify factors related to recruitment and retention of men in the nursing faculty role. While there are studies related to recruitment and retention of nursing faculty, there are limited studies on male nursing faculty in academic settings, specifically addressing what attracted them to the faculty role and what keeps them.

Methods

Design

The study used a multisite descriptive design. The study was reviewed by the authors' University Institutional Review Board and approved as an exempt study.

Setting and Sample

The sample included male nurse faculty either part-time or full-time from Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) programs in the United States. Publicly available websites of the National League for Nursing (NLN), Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and the American Association of Men in Nursing (AAMN) were used to obtain the names and emails of the deans/directors of nursing programs who distributed the surveys to their faculty. A total of 242 male nursing faculty members participated in the study. The population of male nursing faculty is unknown.

Instrument

Data were collected using the *Nurse Educator Recruitment and Retention Survey Questionnaire* developed by Evans et al., that examines factors for recruitment and retention of nursing faculty. Permission was granted to use this instrument. The 59-item questionnaire collected demographic data (13 items), factors that attracted faculty to becoming nurse educators (14 items), strategies to increase the number of male nurse educators (14 items), effective strategies in retaining male nurse educators (18 items), and three open ended questions about any strategies that were not listed in the survey that might have attracted males to becoming nurse educators. Participants rated their level of agreement with each strategy on a Likert scale from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Cronbach's alphas for attractor strategies/factors was .70, for recruitment factors was .80, and for retention factors, was .89.

Procedures

An email with the consent and electronic survey link was sent to the deans/directors inviting their male nurse faculty to participate in the study. Data were collected over a 4-week time frame.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic data and each of the three major factors using IBM SPSS version 27.0 software (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 27.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp). One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore differences in the factors by select demographics (i.e., age, race/ethnicity, highest degree, and highest level of students taught). To correct for study-wide Type 1 error rate, a Bonferroni adjustment was applied, and each ANOVA was evaluated at an alpha level of .001.

Results

A total of 275 survey responses were received. After removing 32 respondents identified as female and one respondent who did not identify gender, a final total of 242 male faculty participants were included in the study.

Demographic Data

The largest proportion of participants were in the 41 to 50-year age range ($n=72$, 30%). Most participants identified their race as White ($n= 209$, 86%) and indicated that they were not Hispanic ($n= 225$, 93%). Most participants were married ($n = 186$, 77%). The majority of participants had earned a doctoral degree ($n = 150$, 62%) and did not have an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) license ($n = 166$, 69%). Most participants taught full-time ($n = 193$, 80%), most commonly in BSN ($n = 77$, 32%) or doctoral programs (DNP, PhD) ($n = 76$, 31%).

Less than half of the respondents taught clinical courses ($n=107$, 44%) scheduled days, evenings, and weekends. The largest proportion of participants had been faculty members for 2 to 5 years ($n = 68$, 28%) and were most commonly not on the tenure track ($n = 81$, 33%). Finally, participants rated their level of satisfaction on a Likert scale from 5 (very satisfied) to 1 (very dissatisfied), indicating that they were very satisfied or satisfied with their current position ($n= 201$, 83%).

Strategies/Factors that Attracted Male Nurses to Become Faculty

Participants were asked to rate 14 factors on the extent that each factor attracted them to becoming a faculty member . The top factors that participants said influenced them to the role of nurse educator were the opportunity to work with students ($M=4.60$, $SD=0.64$), the opportunity to help shape the nursing profession ($M= 4.53$, $SD= 0.68$), role modeling by nursing faculty ($M= 4.30$, $SD= 0.85$), flexibility to meet obligations in life ($M= 4.03$, $SD= 1.04$) and encouragement

by a nurse faculty member ($M= 4.01$, $SD= 1.190$) (See Table 1). There were no significant differences in these factors by age or level of students taught. However, there were significant differences based on race/ethnicity. Specifically, minority participants indicated a higher level of agreement with the following factors compared to White non-Hispanic participants: “exposure to the nursing educator track offered at their school of nursing,” $F(1, 157) = 16.56$, $p < .001$; “scholarships in nursing education,” $F(1, 175) = 13.19$, $p < .001$; “I was recruited to become a nurse faculty because I am a minority group member,” $F(1, 166) = 21.17$, $p < .001$, and “I was recruited to become a nurse faculty as a male” $F(1, 203) = 13.92$, $p < .001$. There were significant differences based on highest degree attained for the factor “I wanted to pursue research” $F(2, 229) = 8.91$, $p < .001$. Specifically, participants with doctoral degrees ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.39$) reported higher agreement with this item compared to participants with BSN ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.12$) and MSN degrees ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.21$).

Strategies for Recruitment of Male Faculty

Participants were asked to rate 14 strategies on the extent that each strategy would help recruit male nurse faculty. The top strategies that participants agreed or strongly agreed on were increased faculty salaries ($M=4.70$, $SD=0.68$), a variety of employee benefits ($M= 4.45$, $SD= 0.81$), having discussions in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs about becoming a nurse faculty ($M=4.44$, $SD= 0.67$) , offering grants and scholarships to prepare as a nurse faculty ($M=4.39$, $SD=0.74$) ; and flexibility in working hours ($M= 4.39$, $SD= 0.73$) (See Table 2).

Strategies for Retention of Male Faculty

Participants were asked to rate 18 strategies to retain male nurse faculty. The top strategies were positive work environment ($M= 4.74$, $SD= 0.49$), salaries ($M= 4.62$, $SD= 0.72$), employee benefits ($M= 4.60$, $SD= 0.65$), support from administration ($M= 4.59$, $SD= 0.61$) and

flexible work hours (M= 4.57, SD= 0.66) (See Table 3). To explore possible differences in these factors by select demographic variable , one-way ANOVAs were conducted. There were no significant differences in the factors for retaining nurse faculty by age, race/ethnicity, highest degree attained, or highest level of students taught.

Discussion

Findings from this study are important for the successful recruitment and retention of men as nurse faculty. The recruitment and retention factors that were reported by the men in this study were factors that were also reported by female faculty in previous studies.^{6,7,8,9,10,12}

Factors that attracted men to the nursing faculty role included the opportunity to work with students, helping to shape the nursing profession, and encouragement by nurse faculty consistent with other studies.^{6,7,8} Nurse faculty role modeling was a factor that was reported in this study as a top factor to what attracted them to the nursing faculty role. This same factor was reported as an important factor as to why they became faculty in studies by Mott & Lee⁶ and Laurencelle et al.⁷ Previous studies of nursing faculty noted that being encouraged or invited by a nursing faculty member to become a faculty member was an important factor.^{9,12} This same factor was reported by Evans⁸ and Mott & Lee⁶ in studies of men in faculty roles in schools of nursing.

In the current study, male nursing faculty reported that increased salaries, employee benefits, and flexibility in work hours were strategies that would help to recruit male nursing faculty to the faculty role. These are the same strategies identified in prior studies.^{6,8,10} Having discussions in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs about becoming a faculty member and offering grants and scholarships for faculty were important in this study. However in earlier

studies by Arian et al ⁹ and Lee et al ¹² neither of these strategies were discussed regarding recruitment of faculty .

For retention, participants indicated that schools needed to have a positive work environment, employee benefits , and flexible work hours. These three strategies were also important in previous studies of nursing faculty ^{6,7,8} Having support from administration and flexible work hours were also important for retention by Evans ⁸ and Lee et al. ¹² However in the current study these factors were the least important for retention.

Implications

This research could assist administrators in schools of nursing to utilize the strategies to assist with recruiting male nurses to the faculty role and retaining current faculty. Having discussions with undergraduate and graduate male nursing students was noted in this study as an important strategy to recruit males into the faculty role. Many of the participants also expressed the importance of having more male role models to help with the recruitment of males to the faculty role. Mentoring programs in both the clinical and academia setting also could be effective to recruit male nurses to academic positions. Establishing assistance programs for clinical nursing staff such as tuition payment or reimbursement of educational costs could make the faculty role more attractive to both male and female nurses. Interviewing current male faculty may assist with understanding the unique needs of why men enter nursing academia and what keeps them in nursing academia.

Limitations

This study utilized an electronic survey that was sent to the deans/directors to be forwarded to their male nursing faculty. The survey may not have been forwarded to male nurse faculty and also may have been sent but not opened. The email list of deans/directors was

limited to the NLN, AACN, and the AAMN. Accreditation agencies such as Commission for Nursing education Accreditation (CNEA) and Accrediting Commission for education in Nursing (ACEN) members were not utilized in this study. The option for participants to identify if they were from a Diploma or LPN program was not available on the survey. The number of male nursing faculty in the United States is unknown.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify factors and strategies that attracted men into nursing faculty positions and could be used for recruitment and retention of male nurse faculty. Understanding what factors and strategies are important to male nurses who are in the role as faculty can assist with increasing the number of male nurses who may be interested in the faculty role. Understanding how male faculty experience nursing academia and how these strategies attracted them to nursing education can assist with the creation of effective strategies to recruit and retain qualified nurse faculty.

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Tables

Table 1. Top 5 Factors for Becoming a Male Nurse Educator

Item	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (SD)
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	
The opportunity to work with students	73 (30)	160 (66)	4.60 (0.64)
I believed I could help shape the nursing profession	82 (34)	147 (61)	4.53 (0.68)
Nurse faculty/instructors' role modeling	97 (40)	112 (46)	4.30 (0.85)
I believed the role offered the flexibility I needed to meet the other obligations of my life	100 (41)	89 (37)	4.03 (1.04)
A nurse faculty member invited or encouraged me to become a nursing educator	77 (32)	99 (41)	4.01 (1.19)

Note: No responses were neutral, disagree, or strongly disagreed

Table 2. Top 5 Strategies for Recruitment of Male Nurse Faculty

Item	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (SD)
	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>n</i> (%)	
Increased faculty salaries	43 (18)	187 (77)	4.70 (0.68)
A wide variety of employee benefits	76 (31)	142 (59)	4.45 (0.81)
Discussions, in undergraduate and graduate school programs, about becoming nursing educators	103 (43)	125 (52)	4.44 (0.67)
Grants and scholarships	103 (43)	118 (49)	4.39 (0.74)
Flexibility in working hours	103 (43)	119 (49)	4.39 (0.73)

Note: No responses were neutral, disagree, or strongly disagreed

Table 3. Top 5 Strategies for Retaining Male Nurse Faculty

Item	Agree	Strongly	Mean SD
	<i>n</i> (%)	Agree <i>n</i> (%)	
Positive work environment	56 (23)	184 (76)	4.74 (0.49)
Salaries	51 (21)	168 (69)	4.62 (0.72)
Benefits	67 (28)	161 (67)	4.60 (0.65)
Support from administration	73 (30)	156 (65)	4.59 (0.61)
Flexible working hours	73 (30)	156 (65)	4.57 (0.66)

Note: No responses were neutral, disagree, or strongly disagreed