Narratives of Doctorally Prepared Nursing Faculty on Tenure Track: A Pilot Study

April Bice*, Kellie Griggs, Tamatha Arms

University of North Carolina Wilmington, United States of America

ABSTRACT

Background: The process of transitioning to academia as a new faculty on te-
nure-track is complex. During a global nursing shortage and the rising number of nursing faculty needed, careful attention must be given to the consideration of retaining nursing faculty. The purpose of this pilot study was to explore the experiences of DNP and PhD prepared faculty on tenure-track in academia through narrative stories.

Methods: A qualitative narrative design was used to explore doctorally prepared nursing faculty experiences with tenure-track. Viewed through the lens of post-modern feminism, 19 participants shared stories related to being a professional in academia striving for tenure status.

Results: Five themes of PhD and DNP faculty experiences on tenure-track were found: These themes existed under an umbrella storied pattern of *needfulness*. The interpreted themes included: (1) *the ability to develop meaningful partnerships*, (2) *a necessity to balance responsibilities*, (3) *Destructive criticism is real*, (4) *I have value in academia*, and (5) *multifaceted coaching to produce achievement*.

Conclusion: The needs among faculty on tenure-track in nursing are similar, despite the achievement of a DNP or PhD. This emphasizes the necessity of uniformity related to appreciation and utilization of faculty, regardless of terminal degree.

Introduction

The accomplishment of obtaining tenure and promotion in a nursing faculty role signifies an important apex of professional and academic achievement. Nurses transitioning from being an expert clinician to a novice academician on tenure-track face a multitude of challenges. Increased workload, long hours, and non-competitive compensation make recruiting and retaining qualified nurse faculty difficult (National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice: NACNEP, 2010). The constant demand for high quality research, teaching, and service is often overwhelming. Challenges faced by nurse educators in a tenure-track role revolve around the following: juggling family responsibilities, teaching workload obligations, scholarship requirements, professional practice, and service to the school, college, university, and community (Lewallen, Crane, Letvak, Jones, & Hu, 2003; Poronsky, Doering, Mkandawire-valhmu, & Rice, 2012). Managing these obstacles in academia contribute to experiences of role confusion, isolation, balancing day-to-day stressors, and uncertainty related to clinical expertise verses academic expertise (Schriner, 2007; Singh, Patrick, & Pilkington, 2016).

Traditionally, nurses with a research doctorate (Doctor of Philosophy-PhD) are hired on tenure-track. However, it is also becoming customary for some universities to hire nurses with a clinical doctorate (Doctor of Nursing Practice- DNP) on tenure-track. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2018), the number of DNP programs has increased nationally from under 50 programs in 2006 to over 300 in 2017 with at least one DNP program in each state. The number of national PhD nursing programs has remained stagnant in comparison for the same time period (AACN, 2018). Logically, numbers of DNP graduates have also significantly grown with an increase from 4855 to 6090 between 2016 and 2017 alone (AACN, 2018).

Background

There are various reasons why supporting nursing faculty on tenure-track is important. It is an institutional, national and international issue. First, our nation is currently facing a growing nurse faculty shortage that has a direct impact on the landscape of healthcare delivery related to educating future registered nurses. A recent survey conducted by the AACN (2017) on faculty vacancy rates revealed 1567 faculty positions available within the 821 nursing schools surveyed. This shortage is happening in tandem with the largest population of aging adults the world has ever seen. For the first time in history, 2020 will mark the year that adults aged 60 years and older will outnumber children under the age of five (World Health Organization, 2018). It is

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well-known that older adults utilize more health care services than their younger counterparts and "most deaths occur from chronic diseases" (Jacelon, 2018, p. 35). The nursing profession must have the work force available and trained to meet the needs of this growing population. For the numbers of trained nurses at the bedside to increase, more nurse educators on tenure-track must be retained by institutions of nursing education.

Second, the nursing shortage adds significantly to the growing need for experienced faculty to educate nurses globally. Nurse educators play a pivotal role in teaching future nurses. However, the trend toward decreasing numbers of nurse educators means programs are having to cap the number of students accepted, equating to fewer nurses at the bedside. The national nurse faculty shortage has a direct impact on patient care. A national study conducted in 2014 showed 67% of nurse faculty were scheduled to retire. In this study, 31% of participants aged 51–60 and 20% in younger age groups reported an intent to leave academia within 5 years (Yedidia, 2014). Salaries are higher in the clinical setting compared to the educational setting in the nursing profession. This is just one aspect that makes a career in academia less appealing. Decreased salary coupled with the stressors of being on tenure-track are reasons why many nurses shy away from full-time academic careers (AACN, 2012; NLN, 2010).

Next, tenure-track positions for nurse faculty are demanding and stressful. The focus of a faculty member on tenure-track is not solely educating students, but also obtaining large scale federal grant funding to advance nursing science while making time for service to the community, department, university, and the profession. Additionally, for non-research focused institutions, the expectation and knowledge surrounding obtaining grant funding may require supplementary training for DNP prepared faculty. Since terminal degrees in nursing vary, eligibility of being a tenure-track faculty member depends on the type of institution. Because of this, it is difficult to know exact numbers of DNP prepared nurse faculty versus PhD prepared nurse faculty in tenure-track positions. More specifically, at this time, "it is not fully clear what the trajectory is for the DNP graduate in academia, perhaps because choice of career for DNP's is not the same across nurses, and because the degree is barely 10 years old" (Ketefian & Redman, 2015, p. 367). It is clear however that growth in DNP programs have outpaced growth in PhD programs and that many DNP's are employed in nursing education (Smeltzer et al., 2015).

Lastly, supporting nurse faculty on tenure-track is important to individuals and institutions. The researchers purposefully conducted the current study in order to understand experiences, but also to obtain more information on how to improve tenure-track in their own setting for PhD and DNP prepared faculty.

Literature review

Literature focused on faculty perspectives and attitudes about tenure-track demonstrates an array of findings. One phenomenology study conducted by Poronsky et al. (2012) showed transitioning into the role of nurse faculty was more difficult for those with young children at home. Authors found that new nurse faculty struggled with feeling pressures of being perfect in the areas of teaching, research resulting in publications with high impact journals, and securing external funding. Participants in this study reported feelings of "constant pressure to work, with the work being unrealistic and never ending" (Poronsky et al., 2012, p. 257). In an earlier study showing similar results but different methods, Kelly, Cronin, and Dunnick (2007) used a cross sectional approach to investigate perspectives of junior medical faculty in a large academic radiology department. Results indicated the main reasons for staying in academia were: opportunities to teach, working with expert colleagues, and pursuing research. Negative aspects reported by faculty included: inadequate financial compensation, large clinical workload, academia politics, and a lack of time for academic responsibilities (Kelly et al., 2007).

In a recent secondary-analysis study, researchers used data from the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey to analyze relationships with nurse faculty job satisfaction and intent to stay from data collected in the United States (Lee, Miller, Kippenbrock, Rosen, & Emory, 2017). In a sample of 1352 nurse faculty, the strongest relationship among variables examined was institutional leadership; found to be a determining factor for both intent to stay and job satisfaction. Additionally, tenure-track faculty with the Assistant Professor rank showed significantly higher intent to stay than tenured or non-tenure-track faculty. This is not surprising given the desire for many tenure-track faculty to stay where they are, academically, in hopes of attaining tenure.

A national study conducted with 65 deans of nursing, revealed research intensive universities were less likely to report having a formal mentoring program (Minnick, Norman, & Donaghey, 2017). The deans in this study reported: (a) mentorship, (b) time, and (c) having a research environment with clear infrastructure as the most important facilitators of success for faculty on tenure-track. However, only 40% of schools in this study reported an ability to support all three areas generously, with 37% being private institutions (Minnick et al., 2017).

Experiences in academia have also been investigated exclusively in African-American faculty. In a case study narrative analysis, Pittman (2012) found racial microaggressions were experienced by participants. A microaggression was described as subtle and instinctive insult of Black persons. An example of this is "a White individual clutching their belongings tighter as a Black individual walks near them" (p. 82). Pittman found these microaggressions existed as: *microinvalidations with White colleagues* and *microinsults with White students* in a sample of 14 African American men and women. The author concluded a need to improve campus atmosphere for African American faculty.

In one seminal study from the education literature, Verrier (1994) investigated early perspectives of junior faculty. In this exploratory narrative analysis, the researcher found several tenure-track life categories and themes revolving around perceptions and complexities of tenure-track reported by 18 faculty participants from a research-intensive university. Findings included concerns with demands of publishing, knowing who to trust, and the need to be competitive and defensive. Recommendations by the researcher included redefining and re-evaluating the criteria for tenure and taking a new look at the purpose of obtaining tenure for individuals in academia.

Beginning evidence shows difficulties with tenure-track may be different for DNP prepared faculty due to differences in educational preparation. Sebach and Chunta (2018) interviewed DNP prepared nurse faculty who decided to return for their PhDs and found participants did not feel their DNP degree adequately prepared them in the role of educator or researcher. One participant stated, "I didn't feel that I had the research underpinnings … that's why I decided to go back and pursue the PhD" (Sebach & Chunta, 2018, p. 303).

Literature review summary

Findings from the current review of the literature show that faculty on tenure-track feel pressure to publish, the need to be competitive, and they fear who to trust. Providing support for tenure-track faculty members with a safe and trusting environment will assist with faculty success and retention. This support should be focused on intentional mentorship, strategic leadership, and supportive infrastructures. It is also clear that African American faculty experience microaggressions in academia by their Caucasian colleagues. Both African American nurse faculty and male faculty are under-represented in research in nursing. What is not addressed in the literature are the combined narratives of PhD and DNP faculty on tenure-track and their unique experiences related to academia and degree preparation. Our study will assist in filling this gap.

Methods

Theoretical framework

This study was viewed through the lens of postmodern feminism. Common themes in critical theories include race, class, gender, power, oppression, and truth. Feminism shows that an epistemically privileged standpoint exists (Risjord, 2010)- a perspective that supports advocating for any group in need, especially those susceptible to physical or emotional harm (Hall, 2011). Feminists seek to become integrally connected to the struggles of oppression; they assume there is an existing identity understood through the category of women (Butler, 1990).

Further, "postmodern feminist narratives allow for a 'passionately interested' methodological approach to inquiry and allow vulnerable populations to openly respond to personal disparities and diversity (Aranda, 2006, p. 135). In this study, the researchers held the assumption that participants are vulnerable due to their position on tenure-track. True, the majority of nurses are women, who are historically oppressed and under-researched. However, a feminist lens was most appropriate for this inductive study because faculty who are not yet tenured are in a position where their tenured peers have hierarchical power and class superiority, thereby increasing risk for emotional trauma. Moreover, Kelly, McCann, and Porter (2018) argue that a disproportional gendered culture is evident as "women on tenure-track encounter a double bind (two-sided problem) of being expected to nurture and care while meeting the expectations of teaching, service, and mentoring based on their gender" (p. 535).

Design

The purpose of this narrative qualitative pilot study was to explore the experiences of DNP and PhD prepared faculty on tenure-track in academia through narrative stories. As previously addressed, the researchers in this study also aimed to learn more about the experiences of faculty in order to improve their own institutional outcomes. The term narrative in research is often referred to as linked sentences that form a story; often centered on events that affect occurrence of ends (Polkinghorne, 2010). Narrative was appropriate for this exploration as the authors aimed to understand stories related to a particular life phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Spoken and written narratives are a way for individuals to express narrative thinking in story form (Polkinghorne, 2010). As Riessman (2008) eloquently puts it: "when participants engage in the practice of storytelling, they do so because narrating has effects in social interaction that other modes of communication do not" (p. 8).

Sample and setting

This study was initiated within a state university system in the South-East region of the United States. Purposive sampling was used for recruitment. Participants were purposefully selected for participation if they were doctorally prepared nurses on tenure-track. The university system is comprised of 17 schools across the state. Of these, 11 schools agreed to accept the originating university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Out of the 11 nursing schools/colleges, seven deans/directors agreed to participate by sending the survey link to nurse faculty. Of these seven universities, four have a clinical-track and tenure-track option. These four schools only allow DNP prepared faculty to be on the clinical-track. The remaining 3 universities only have a tenure-track line and DNP prepared nurse faculty are able to be on tenure-track. Once IRB approval was obtained, participating nursing deans/directors in the university system distributed a recruitment email to tenure-track nursing faculty. This email included an open-ended narrative survey. The survey remained open for 60 days. In that time 22 surveys were received. Two surveys were not filled out in any section.

One survey was received from a DNP faculty not on tenure-track; this narrative information was excluded from analysis but will be addressed in the findings as a special circumstance. Nineteen total surveys were analyzed (*n* = 19).

Ethical considerations

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained from the originating university. All other participating universities in the same university system agreed to accept this approval. Investigators who took part in the study signed a confidentiality agreement. Appropriate consent language was used in the electronic survey prior to survey access. All survey data were stored on a password protected computer and software program. Additionally, data were managed and shared only through a secure, password protected university-supported system. Pseudonyms (numbers) were created for each participant. No real names or personally identifiable data were collected or recorded anywhere in the course of the study. Risks of the study were relatively low and included: (a) timely response burden, and (b) potential psychological burden associated with recalling the story of being on tenure-track.

Data collection

Potential participants from seven different institutions of nursing across the state were sent an electronic link via email to access the open-ended narrative survey. The authors chose to use an electronic survey as opposed to face-to-face interviews for further anonymity of participants related to a sensitive topic. This open-ended survey was sent via a university supported system: Qualtrics. The narrative question asked to all participants was the following: "Reflecting on your time in academia as a tenure-track member in the school of nursing, please tell your story of personal experiences related to: successes, facilitators, empowerment, barriers, and intraprofessional collaboration between DNP and PhD faculty."

Narrative data analysis

As stated earlier, data were analyzed in this study through a postmodern feminist lens and with the assumption that the participants on tenure-track are a vulnerable group in academia in comparison to their tenured colleagues. All researchers participated in data analysis and all themes and categories were interpreted as a group with the use of team consensus. The researchers used inductive logic to interpret ideas in the stories presented and data were analyzed using a narrative qualitative analysis framework recommended by Polkinghorne (2010), Riessman (2008), and Creswell (2013). "Narrative inquiries produce a storied description of a practice process carried out in a concrete life space" (Polkinghorne, 2010, p. 396). The concrete life space analyzed in this study was nursing academia; carried out by the practice process of tenure-track faculty member participants. Narrative research analysis involves more than just one approach; it includes a multitude of possible analyses depending on the "what," or "how" that is being investigated (Hall, 2011, p. 5; Riessman, 2008). A complete and total account of events in a life event (such as academia) cannot ever be translated into one narrative (Hall, 2011); however, a glimpse aimed at understanding patterns over time, can occur (Czarniawska, 2004; Riessman, 2008).

NVivo for Mac (version 11) qualitative software was used to assist in analysis and management of data (QSR International, 2015). Hand written notes were frequently taken in the reading and re-reading of transcripts. Analysis in this study began as soon as narratives were received. Each participant transcript was read line-by-line at least three times before any coding began in order to focus individually on participant stories and patterns of events. The researchers reviewed and analyzed data under the consideration of important feminism concepts

Table 1
Word query rank by percentage of narrative.

Word	Percent of narrative
Faculty	2.74%
Teaching	1.8%
Time	1.6%
Need	1.42%
DNP	1.42%
Tenure	1.42%
Collaboration	1.32%
Mentoring	1.23%
Help	1.04%
PhD	1.04%
Research	1.04%
Learn	0.95%
Many	0.95%
Scholarship	0.95%
Nursing	0.95%

Table 2
Participant demographic data.

Demographic	Results			
Age (years)	35–44 (42.1%)	45–54 (15.8%)	55–64 (36.8%)	Unreported (5.3%)
	$n = 8$	$n = 3$	$n = 7$	$n = 1$
Gender	Female (89.5%)	Male (0%)	Unreported (10.5%) $n = 2$	
	$n = 17$			
Race	Caucasian (79.0%)	Asian (10.5%)	Unreported (10.5%) $n = 2$	
	$n = 15$	$n = 2$		
Terminal degree	DNP (36.8%)	PhD (63.2%)		
	$n = 7$	$n = 12$		
National certification status	Certified (84.2%)	Not certified (15.8%) $n = 3$		
	$n = 16$			
Years on tenure-track	< 1 (21%)	1–2 (47.5%)	2–3 (21%)	4–6 (10.5%)
	$n = 4$	$n = 9$	$n = 2$	
		$n = 4$		

such as empowerment and advocacy and the reduction of oppression. Patterns are particularly important in narrative analysis, so repetition and text arrangement were looked at carefully when interpreting categories and themes. A word query was done in NVivo accounting for every word in each transcript. The top 15 words (19.9% of total text) were further analyzed (see Table 1) for like words and meanings with three different thesauruses. Each transcript was reviewed again and coded (highlighting words, phrases, or text pieces in the narrative). Each individual code was then reviewed and analyzed and placed into categories based upon recurrent ideas and meanings. Categories were further examined and placed into more abstract themes. Finally, an umbrella narrative pattern was identified. Data saturation was noted in this study as perspectives, events, processes, and ideas were found to be recurring by approximately the 16th transcript analyzed. At this time, no new ideas were found in the remaining participant stories told.

Maintenance of rigor

If the narrative is to be presented as a trustworthy and valuable contribution to science, then it must have certain criteria considered (Loh, 2013). Dependability, confirmability, and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were carried out through various steps in the research process. First, researchers engaged in reflexive journaling in order to recognize individual views and potential biases. These views and biases were discussed among the researchers prior to data analysis. Next, the researchers aimed for the collection of rich descriptions via narrative using an open-ended format and anonymity through electronic data collection. Lastly, peer-debriefing among study researchers in addition to an external audit with a doctorally prepared nurse not involved in the study was conducted to ensure trustworthiness of findings.

Findings

Demographic characteristics

Nineteen participants ($n = 19$) across a state university system were recruited for this qualitative narrative study. Data were collected on participant age, race, terminal degree, national certification, and years on tenure-track (see Table 2 for a demographic summary). The sample was 89.5% female (two participants unreported gender) and predominantly Caucasian (79%). One participant did not report race, age, or gender. Another participant did not report race or gender. Two different terminal degree types were reported in this study: PhD and DNP. The sample included a higher percentage of PhD prepared faculty (63.2%). All participants did report national certification status; the sample was primarily nationally certified (84.2%).

Narrative story findings

As expected, and in line with a post-modern feminist lens, participants in this study shared storied evidence of marginalization and desires setting them apart from their tenured peers. Analysis of participant narratives revealed an overarching pattern of what was named tenure-track faculty "*needfulness.*" Merriam-Webster (2018) defines the word needfulness as a necessity or requisite. The Oxford English Dictionary (2018) defines needfulness as something that is formally necessary. In this study, needfulness was illustrated in stories by participants as a fundamental yearning or desire for important personal and professional factors; factors that were either present or missing in the culture of academia while on the tenure-track line. More specifically, participants used stories to explain the need for persistence (the continued presence of something) or the need for fulfillment (providing what is lacking) while in academia. Hence, a spectrum of needfulness was noted in the analysis. Beneath the umbrella of needfulness researchers found singular (uni-directional) and binary (bi-directional) themes demonstrating the needs of participants.

Five themes and 12 categories (see Table 3) were interpreted within the pattern of needfulness related to faculty experiences on tenure-track: (1) *the ability to develop meaningful partnerships*, (2) *a necessity to balance responsibilities*, (3) *destructive criticism is real*, (4) *I have value in academia, and* (5) *multifaceted coaching to produce achievement*. As previously stated, these themes were found to be either uni-directional or bi-directional in meaning which is explained further in each section. A table of narrative evidence (quotes) is presented in Table 4.

Table 3
Themes and their corresponding categories.

Theme	Corresponding categories
The ability to develop meaningful partnerships	• Synergistic team work • Working in isolation
A necessity to balance responsibilities	• Having time • Equality • Learning
Destructive criticism is real	• Degree shaming • Hostile treatment
I have value in academia	• Self-advocacy • Productivity • Being Appreciated
Multifaceted coaching to produce achievement	• Resources and Faculty Development • Mentorship and Support

Table 4
Qualitative narrative evidence.

PhD participant quotes	DNP participant quotes
The ability to develop meaningful partnerships	
• Narrative #13 (<u>Working in isolation</u>): *"I have met several DNP and PhD prepared faculty members at meetings and I hope to collaborate with them more in the near future. It seems like everyone has their agenda and there [their] established group and it is difficult to include myself."* • Narrative #19 (<u>Synergistic team work</u>): *"I have had the opportunity to work in research with all degree levels in nursing… BSN, MSN, DNP, and PhD."*	• Narrative #17 (<u>Synergistic team work</u>): *"I have found PhD and DNP peers who enjoy collaborating and build each other up. I think our collaborations could serve as a model to others."* • Narrative # 7 (Working in Isolation): *"Getting that 1st one (collaborative project) started and going can be challenging!"*
A necessity to balance responsibilities	
• Narrative 11 (<u>Having time</u>): *"There were, and still are many times that 'life' can conflict with academic and work priorities…"* • Narrative 13- (<u>Learning</u>): *"I need to learn a way to find time to write. In addition to learn how to find an appropriate journal to publish in."*	• Narrative # 7 (<u>Learning</u>): *"I did not know how to write a syllabus, design a course in [the learning management system], write test questions, write student learning outcomes… this was truly a sink or swim atmosphere."* • Narrative # 17 (<u>Equality</u>): *"Some are teaching across programs, taking on clinical groups… teaching in the classroom, and online, while others are only teaching one class in one program…"*
Destructive criticism is real	
• Narrative #19 (<u>Hostile treatment</u>): *"Another barrier is the missing basic kindness from some senior faculty and those further along in tenure-track… they are closed minded and entitled…"* • Narrative #5 (<u>Hostile treatment</u>): *"Senior faculty were subversive and mean."*	• Narrative #9 (<u>Degree shaming</u>): *"There have been times I have sought out senior faculty for professional advice and they have criticized or talked about my lack of knowledge to other faculty members…"* • Narrative # 2 (<u>Degree shaming</u>): *"There seems to be a distain for the DNP degree…. I have been told that my terminal degree was easy, cheap, and worth nothing."*
I have value in academia	
• Narrative # 11 (<u>Being appreciated</u>): *"They (DNP's) have much to offer our students, often from a slightly different practice viewpoint, and are valuable members of our intraprofessional academic faculty team."* • Narrative #19 (<u>Self-advocacy</u>): *"I will advocate for myself and others at any minute in the academic setting."*	• Narrative #9 (<u>Being appreciated</u>): *"My PhD peers value my input and we seem to learn from each other."* • Narrative #17 (<u>Productivity</u>): *"I have been nationally recognized for improving practice and by my students for exceptional teaching."*
Multifaceted coaching to produce achievement	
• Narrative #8 (<u>Resources and faculty development</u>): *"I have found that the resources for research are lacking."* • Narrative #5 (<u>Mentorship and Support</u>): *"No mentor or orientation when I took on this role. Minimal support to find my way."*	• Narrative #15 (<u>Mentorship and support</u>): *"I have been met with positivity and encouragement."* • Narrative #18 (<u>Mentorship and support</u>): *"I have enjoyed the mentorship sessions at our university. However, they are short…"*

Themes are bolded and categories are underlined.

The ability to develop meaningful partnerships

The ability to develop meaningful partnerships was one of the bi-directional themes found in this study- the need for the ability to develop meaningful partnerships or the need to continue meaningful partnerships. The narrative process in this theme was associated with two categories- (1) synergistic team work, and (2) working in isolation. Interprofessional and intraprofessional collaboration were frequently addressed from a perspective of working with academic team members in service, teaching, and scholarship. Some faculty reported limited opportunity and or limited involvement in meaningful partnerships while others reported ample opportunity to work with others professionally. It is clear that not every faculty member on tenure-track has the same experience working with others on a team or in isolation in academia. Some faculty need more inclusion in these meaningful partnerships while others perceive their team work as a "model" for academia.

A necessity to balance responsibilities

A necessity to balance responsibilities was a uni-directional theme (one direction of needing balance) that included a narrative process focused on the participant longing for stability among tenure-track responsibilities in academia. Three categories were interpreted within this theme: (1) having time, (2) equality, and (3) learning. This included reports of issues with time management, learning technology, managing administrative demands, finding a way to meet research and

publication expectations, starting projects, "playing catch-up," and faculty feeling as though some things on tenure-track lack equality or have equality. Faculty described figuratively drowning, the demands of scholarship, slow help from ancillary or secretarial staff, and meeting the needs of a "rapidly growing healthcare field." Additionally important is the finding that the need to balance responsibilities was apparent in various faculty ages.

Destructive criticism is real

Another one of the uni-directional themes found in this study was *destructive criticism is real* (one direction of needing destructive criticism to end). This theme included two categories: (1) "degree shaming" and (2) hostile treatment. References to belittlements related to lack of knowledge, bias, faculty "distain" toward the DNP degree, unprofessionalism, "speaking down" to faculty, "inappropriate" behavior by co-workers, the feeling of not being able to say no to others for "fear of not getting tenure," "degree shaming on a weekly basis," and lack of confidence were described. The category of degree shaming was only referred to by DNP faculty. However, hostile treatment was described by both PhD and DNP prepared faculty participants.

I have value in academia

Despite reports from participants about criticism experienced on tenure-track, many faculty also shared narratives about perceived worth. The theme *I have value in academia* was another uni-directional

theme (one direction of needing to be valued in academia). Three categories were noted in this theme: (1) self-advocacy, (2) productivity, and (3) being appreciated. Value was demonstrated in stories with comments related to: being "hungry for success," feeling "valued by my peers," being "proud" to be a DNP, knowing "value" in "teaching," advocating for self and others, and "self-driven empowerment." Faculty advocated for their hard work, abilities, and they spoke about various examples of productivity on tenure-track. This value was not only self-perceived but also perceived by others about his/her peers.

Multifaceted coaching to produce achievement

The theme with the most frequently coded narrative was *multifaceted coaching to produce achievement*. Various forms of coaching (multifaceted) were shared by participants as a necessary source of help with tenure-track achievement. This theme included two categories: (1) resources and faculty development, and (2) mentorship and support. The word "mentor" and stemmed words (e.g. mentoring, mentorship, mentors) was in the top ten texts found in all of the narratives. This theme was bi-directional. It demonstrated a spectrum of needing coaching and achievement when there was none or needing persistent coaching to help produce achievement. Story comments in this theme included references to: "no mentorship when I took this role," "mixed messages about reappointment," a "lack of preparedness for serious researchers," a "lack of onsite mentorship," and "minimal support to find my way." This theme also included story events related to: "excellent mentorship opportunities," experiencing "group mentorship" with other faculty, "opportunities to learn, grow, and engage," having "helpful and inclusive" peers, "wonderful administration," and having a "supportive culture."

Findings summary

Stories of tenure-track faculty in this pilot study varied across terminal degree obtained. Nevertheless, an essential likeness exists among all participants: *needfulness*. The overarching pattern of needfulness passes through every story. The five aforementioned themes: (1) *the ability to develop meaningful partnerships*, (2) *a necessity to balance responsibilities*, (3) *destructive criticism is real*, (4) *I have value in academia*, and (5) *multifaceted coaching to produce achievement* indicate the type of need faculty experience in academia. These themes demonstrate either a uni-directional or bi-directional representation of addressing faculty desires.

A special circumstance

Although not included in data analysis due to not meeting inclusion criteria, one faculty responded to the survey simply to inform the researchers that "DNP faculty cannot apply for tenure-track" positions at their institution. This is pertinent to the state of the science as acceptance on tenure-track varies based on terminal degree in nursing.

Limitations

Limitations were noted in this pilot study. This data was collected from one public university system in the Southeastern United States. While data may be transferable to the state or region collected, it may not be as transferable to different regions or states in the country. Additionally, the data were collected from schools and colleges with varying degrees of research intensiveness. This means, essentially, that expectations of workload are different from one university or college to the next which may reflect different perspectives of experience for participants. Another limitation noted revolves around tenure-track entry-level permissions from one school or college of nursing to another. Some institutions permit all doctorally prepared nurses (PhD, EdD, DNP, DNS, etc.) to be hired on tenure-track while others only hire nurses with a research-focused or education-focused doctorate (PhD or EdD). This variability in the sample affects the distribution of terminal

degrees in nurses explored in this study; thereby affecting individual experiences shared and process of events in the life space of academia. Lastly, this qualitative study was conducted via the use of electronic survey. Hence, the ability to probe or prompt for greater exploration of what participants said was not possible. However, the use of anonymous surveys was important in this study as the researchers wanted faculty to feel their stories and identity were confidential. Additionally, the added anonymity likely increased the sharing of sensitive descriptions that faculty would otherwise not share.

Discussion

In this study the authors piloted exploration of DNP and PhD prepared faculty experiences on tenure-track in academia. This study adds to the state of the science as there is rising number of DNP graduates (not only the traditional PhD colleague) in nursing academia on tenure-track. Exploring the experiences of both clinical and research-focused doctorally prepared nurses contributes a combined but novel perspective. These narratives provide evidence to support faculty with: staying in academia, becoming new investigators, engaging in various levels of service, becoming strong educators, and fostering collaborative relationships between PhD and DNP prepared nurses. Findings from this study additionally support the NACNEP (2010) recommendation to address issues undermining effectiveness in the work environment.

Findings from this study expand on pre-existing findings in the literature and add new evidence to the state of the science. The importance of supporting faculty transitioning into a tenure-track role has been found to be imperative for retention, advancing the profession of nursing, and developing future nurses (Glenn, 2001; Poronsky et al., 2012). Similar to Kelly et al. (2007) who found faculty did not appreciate large workloads but valued working with expert colleagues, researchers in this study show that establishing meaningful partnerships and balancing responsibilities remain important for tenure-track faculty in nursing. Also, parallel to previous research is the focus on needs from leadership. Lee et al. (2017) found institutional leadership to be the most significant determining factor for job satisfaction and intent to stay. Similarly, in this study multifaceted coaching such as mentorship and support from administration and senior faculty were also essential needs. These findings directly relate to the discoveries by Minnick et al. (2017) suggesting that deans and directors of nursing feel mentorship, time, and research infrastructure are essential to facilitating tenure-track faculty success. New important findings were also noted in this study. Regardless of terminal degree type (PhD or DNP), faculty in this study reported similar feelings related to *need*. At the deepest level, faculty on tenure-track have the same needfulness. This suggests that a focus on terminal degree type in nursing academia, as opposed to unique nursing ability, is a superficial approach devoid of considering individual giftedness.

Implications

Findings from this study have numerous implications: (a) application to nursing administration, (b) relevance to organizational policy related to managing, revising, and creating tenure guidelines, and (c) significance to nursing theory: this study was inductive (theory-building) and is the first step necessary for development of a theory supported by concepts related to tenure-track faculty experiences and connected by propositions (statements of truth).

Findings from this study also have implications for nursing education. Tenure-track is stressful and this stress is compounded for nurse educators who have family obligations, especially young children at home, and those whose educational preparation was not focused on the academic role. It is important for administrators and those who mentor faculty on tenure-track to create an atmosphere of equality, respect, and zero tolerance for destructive criticism. Deans and directors of nursing must be aware of the needs of their tenure-faculty. National

organizations offer leadership training for nurse faculty such as Sigma, the John Hartford foundation, the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, and more (Macy, 2015; National Hartford Center for Gerontological Nursing Excellence, 2019; Sigma, 2019). Facilitating and fostering success should be of priority. Modeling behavior expected from all faculty is essential (Kouzes & Posner, 2019). Comprehensive orientation and both formal and informal mentorship are needed to create an environment where new nurse faculty can flourish. Mentorship does not come naturally to everyone and formal mentors should be trained to be effective in this role (National League of Nursing, 2019). New or existing faculty who find themselves in an unfamiliar or overwhelming position need to be willing to recognize this and reach out to formal and informal mentors as well as administration when necessary. Peer and family support is essential to faculty on tenure-track and should be valued and present when possible. In fact, following data analysis, the researchers in this study developed and implemented a peer-support program for faculty on tenure-track at their own institution. This peer-support group is growing, thriving, is currently under investigation, and has been transferred to another nurse-faculty group (non-tenure-track) in nursing.

Gaps are still present that warrant future research. This study included only Caucasian and Asian participants and no reported males. One important area of research still needing investigation is the experiences of African American faculty on tenure-track in nursing. This is especially accurate considering previous research suggests African American faculty experience microaggressive tendencies from White faculty and White students (Pittman, 2012). Additionally, in a predominantly female profession, men are the minority. The stories of male PhD, DNP and other doctorally prepared faculty on tenure-track in nursing academia is missing.

Conclusion

Researchers in this study utilized a narrative design viewed through the lens of postmodern feminism with a focus on advocating for a vulnerable population in academia. It is evident that faculty on tenure-track have unique "person" desires and *needfulness* in order to thrive in academia. To meet global demands of educating new nurses in a world suffering from a growing nursing shortage, the needs of tenure-track faculty in nursing must be met quickly and efficiently. Based on the evidence, this should be accomplished with an approach focused on promoting the development of meaningful partnerships in academia, the balance of responsibilities, zero tolerance for destructive criticism, the encouragement of self-value, and offering multifaceted coaching sources; regardless of the terminal degree faculty have attained.

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