

Refining Key Attributes of Academic Nurse Educators: An Integrated Review



Christy Raymond RN PhD, Dean and Professor
MacEwan University | Edmonton, AB CANADA



Introduction and Method

- Academic nurse educators are integral to the development of future nurses. Faculty shortages are necessitating more focus on key qualities^{1,2} and workplace factors linked with recruitment / retention.
- **What does research and anecdotal literature reveal about job satisfaction, burnout, leadership, recruitment, retention and the work environment of academic nurse educators from 2002-2022?**
- An integrative review, aligned with Whittemore and Knaff³ was used to search applicable databases for available English articles. From **1057** articles, **52** duplicates, **885** unrelated abstracts, and **112** ineligible full text articles were removed, leaving **58 included** articles. Double screening with consensus was used at the full article review phase.

JOB SATISFACTION

(12 articles: 9 research; 3 literature reviews)

- Overall there is **moderate to high job satisfaction** in nurse educator samples reported consistently in the research and literature articles included in this review.
- Various **contextual differences** and **organizational variations** impact job satisfaction of academic nurse educators (e.g. position types, mentoring opportunities, workloads).
- **Personal factors** (e.g. age, experience, education) **vary in each study**, making comparisons difficult.
- **Many positive and negative factors** related to job satisfaction are evident, as well as varied correlational relationships between factors.

BURNOUT

(4 articles: 3 research; 1 theoretical)

- There is **limited written about burnout in nurse educators**. The Maslach Burnout Inventory has been used in academic nurse educator populations.
- **Higher levels** of reported burn out are associated with dissatisfaction with **workload, decreased work-life balance** and higher **intent to leave** academia.
- Those who are **older**, have **more education**, and have multiple **negative factors** (e.g., dissatisfaction with workloads, poor health, more administrative duties) are more likely to experience **emotional exhaustion**.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

(8 articles: 6 research; 2 theoretical)

- There is no clear **definition of work environment** in nursing education. There are **various measurement tools** for associated concepts but no specific measure for work environment.
- Faculty shortage, high workload, transition from practice to academia, and incivility are **negative elements** of work environment.
- Effective communication, culture of celebration, recognition, opportunities for engagement, sensible structures, mentoring, and supportive leadership are common **positive aspects** of work environment.

LEADERSHIP

(9 articles: 7 research; 2 theoretical)

- Nurse educators are expected to function as leaders and change agents given their position and role in facilitating student learning⁴.
- Concepts associated with leadership in nurse educators include **personal leadership qualities** (e.g., ethicality, morality, authenticity, integrity); **relational skills and abilities**; **critical thinking** and inquiry specific elements; as well as **change processes** (e.g., risk-taking, creativity, innovation) relevant to leadership in nursing educators.

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

(25 articles: 16 research; 9 theoretical)

- Recruitment and retention is **connected with intent to stay, job satisfaction, work environment, and leadership**.
- **Numerous types of positions** (e.g., adjunct, tenure track, sessional, contract) and titles exist. Nurse educator workforce spans different generations.
- Recruitment and retention is critical to address **ongoing nursing shortages** seen in academia and practice.
- Understanding personal and contextual incentives is important to recruit and retain nurse educators.
- **Mentoring and supportive leadership** are frequently mentioned factors in recruitment and retention literature related to nurse educators.

Discussion & Recommendations

- Literature **spans many countries** but research is mainly from the USA (~64% of research articles).
- Mostly **descriptive research** has been completed in this area. More complex research needed to establish context-specific relationships between variables.
- Recruitment and retention **relies on a variety of factors** which are interwoven yet specific to different contexts.



Context Matters



Acknowledgments / References

Thank you to M. Asirifi, A. Mevawala, & A. Thomson for their work on initial stages of this review, as trainees.

¹Bownes, N.A., & Freeman, M.A. (2020). Clinical nurse instructor competencies: An exploratory study of role requirements. *Quality Advancement in Nursing Education*, 6(3). Article 5. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17483/2368-6669.1226>

²World Health Organization(WHO). Nurse educator competencies (2016). Geneva, Switzerland. WHO. *Nursing*, 52(5), 546-553.

³Whittemore, R., & Knaff, K. (2005). The integrative review: Updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 52(5), 546-553.

⁴McAllister, M., & Flynn, T. (2016). The capabilities of nurse educators (CONE) questionnaire: Development and evaluation. *Nurse Education Today*, 39(2016), 122-127. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2016.01.022>

**Full reference list of articles included in the review is available on request.*

raymondc@macewan.ca