Objective

- Examine the employability of community college BSN graduates
Introduction

- Three entry levels into nursing practice
- NCLEX pass rates
- BSN nurses are in high demand (Spetz & Bates, 2013)

- WHY?
Reasons for BSN Demand

- Institute of Medicine recommended that by 2020, 80% of the nurses nationally should have a BSN (IOM, 2011)
- Magnet organizational overview #7 – “An action plan that includes a target and demonstrates evidence of progress toward 80% of registered nurses obtaining a baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing by 2020.” (2014 Magnet Application Manual, 2014)
Why?
Reasons for BSN Demand

- Aiken et al. (2014) completed a study in nine European countries and found a 10% increase of BSN nurses in a hospital resulted in a 7% decrease of patient mortality within 30 days of hospital admission.

- Kutney-Lee, Sloane, and Aiken (2013) found with a 10% increase of BSN nurses in the hospitals, a significant decrease in surgical patients deaths occurred “averaging 2.12 deaths for every 1,000 patients” (p. 582).
Reasons for BSN Demand

- Aiken, Cimiotti, Sloane, Smith, Flynn, and Neff (2011) found a 10% increase of BSN nurses in the hospital decreased patient mortality and failure-to-rescue rates by 5%. Therefore, 3.6 fewer deaths per 1,000 patients would occur with a 10% increase in staffing with BSN nurses.

- Lower nosocomial pressure ulcer rates, failure-to-rescue rates, deep vein thrombosis and emboli, and shorter length of hospital stays were determined with a 10% increase in BSN nurses (Blegen, Goode, Park, Vaughn, & Spetz, 2013).

- A 10% increase of BSN nurses had a 5% lower patient mortality rate than diploma or AD nurses when caring for surgical patients (Aiken, Clarke, Cheung, Sloane, & Silber, 2003).

- Each 10% additional proportion of BSN nurses had a 3% lower odds of a pneumonia readmission (McHugh & Ma, 2013).
Reasons for BSN Demand

- BSN nurses were more empowered, assertive, had more expansive thinking skills, used research, more leadership and critical thinking skills, and provided better nursing care (Delaney & Piscopo, 2007).
- BSN nurses had higher professional values (Kubsch, Hansen, & Huysier-Eatell, 2008).
Current Hospital Demand

- Research by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing in 2012 with 501 nursing schools found that nationally 39.1% of health care organizations are requiring a BSN for employment, and 77.4% have a preference for hires with a BSN degree (Editorial, 2012).

- In 2013 about 29.9% of health care organizations required the bachelor degree or certification for employment compared to 22.9% in 2011 (Pittman, Bass, Hargraves, Herrera, & Thompson, 2015).
Community College Response

- Community colleges which grant two-year degrees are attempting to provide BSN nurses by developing curricula to provide BSN programs and receive state approval (Hendricks et al., 2012).
- Community colleges have several pathways to provide BSN education including articulation or transfer agreements with four-year colleges, having four-year colleges provide onsite courses at the community college, or the community college receiving approval to provide the four-year degree (Russell, 2010).
Current community college initiatives

- New Mexico developed a state-wide initiative in which universities and community colleges have partnered to provide a common curriculum, shared resources, and increased accessibility for students to obtain the BSN (Giddens, Keller, & Liesveld, 2015).
- Currently only ten states have approved community colleges offering the four-year BSN degree (Russell, 2010). These states include Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Utah, and Washington. The states are large with rural areas that make geographic accessibility for students difficult.
Community College Baccalaureate Outcomes

- Effectiveness and quality of community college baccalaureate students are questioned since they have lower academic credentials, a 44% drop-out rate, and only 26% finish the bachelor degree in nine years (Long & Kurlaender, 2009).
NJ Senate Bill, No. 1165

- NJ Senate bill, No. 1165 sponsored by Senator Joseph Vitale and Senator M. Teresa Ruiz was introduced in 2014 and reintroduced in 2016 as S1288 to approve county colleges to offer BSN programs. S1288 was referred to the Senate Higher Education Committee.

- Purpose – the four year university programs do not have the capacity to meet the critical need for BSN nurses
Approval Process

The college Board of Trustees will submit a proposal to the New Jersey President’s Council to establish a BSN program including:

- Description of the program and unmet need
- Facilities, equipment, library and academic resources
- Cost analysis
- Admission requirements, academic content, curriculum, faculty credentials and accreditation plan
- Enrollment projections and funding requirements
Approval Process

- New Jersey President’s Council approval
- Secretary of Higher Education approval
- Accreditation by the New Jersey Board of Nursing
Definition of Terms

- **Community college BSN program.** Community colleges that usually provide technical training in a two-year program will expand the educational program as permitted by law to confer bachelor degrees in nursing (Floyd, 2006).

- **Employability.** Employability is described as “a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupation” (Culkin & Mallick, 2010, p. 350).
Conceptual Framework

- Expectancy theory suggested expectations can influence the perceived outcome (Renko, Kroeck, & Bullough, 2012).
- The answers of CNOs were related to expectancy theory to predict community college BSN graduate work performance.
- Expectancy theory (the expectation that a goal will be attained as a result of behavior) is used. The theory was called the VIE theory for the three variables of valence, instrumentality, and expectancy.
Problem and Significance

The problem addressed in the study was the lack of awareness of expectancies of NJ CNO stakeholders on the employability of community college BSN graduates compared to university BSN graduates.

The timing was important before the bill is approved in NJ to provide input to legislators, to help community colleges decide if they desire to pursue developing a community college BSN program, and to guide community colleges in developing curricula to meet the expectations of future employers.
Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to explore the expectancies of eight CNOs in NJ hospitals with interviews on the employability of community college BSN graduates compared to university BSN graduates based on work performance attributes.
Research Questions

Q1. When evaluating the employability of community college baccalaureate nurses, how do CNOs describe how the community college BSN nurse would perform on the following work attributes compared to the traditional university BSN graduate:

- Breaking down elements of a patient assessment and monitoring to plan care appropriately?
- Utilizing research and evidence-based practice?
- Working safely?
- Thinking critically about patients’ conditions and taking subsequent action?
- Identifying areas for change or improvement?
- Communicating appropriately and effectively to physicians and coworkers?
- Demonstrating attention to detail and thoroughness?

Q2. What are CNO’s overall perceptions of community college baccalaureate nursing preparation and employability?
Literature Review – Benefits of the BSN

- A 10% increase of BSN nurses
  - decreased the mortality rate and failure-to-rescue rate by 4% (Aiken et al., 2011)
  - resulted in a 7% decrease in patient mortality in nine European countries (Aiken et al., 2014)
  - decreased heart failure mortality, hospital acquired pressure ulcers, and surgical failure-to-rescue rates (Blegen, Goode, Park, Vaughn, & Spetz, 2013)
  - significantly decreased pneumonia readmissions (McHugh & Ma, 2013).

- BSN nurses had more critical thinking skills, leadership skills, utilization of research, assertiveness, and a general knowledge base (Delaney & Piscopo, 2007).
Literature Review - Employability

- Employers determine employability through belief systems, processing information such as academic credentials, values, social factors and legislative factors (Cai, 2013).
- Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011) identified four categories of employability skills including performance in the organization, working in a team environment, individual qualities and abilities, and performance in the work role.
Vroom’s theory consists of the interaction of three variables: valence (value of the goal), instrumentality (comparing outcomes or the probability), and expectancy (the expectation that the goal will be attained).
Long and Kurlaender (2009) found community college students have lower academic credentials, a 44% drop-out rate, and only 26% finish the bachelor degree in nine years.

Monaghan and Attewell (2014) concluded almost 17% less of the community college beginning students completed a bachelor degree versus four-year university students, withdrew from courses 4.3% more, and were more likely to work.
Research Method

- **Design** – qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study

- **Procedure** – NCU IRB approval, recruitment by randomly calling every fourth hospital’s CNO from the New Jersey Hospital Association Membership Directory, and obtaining consent. All CNOs chose a 20-30 minute phone interview. Interview was taped and later transcribed. The transcription was validated by the subject for triangulation.

- **Population** – CNOs who are the highest nursing leader in the organization responsible for hiring and overseeing patient care.

- **Sample** – Purposeful sample; eight New Jersey CNOs

- **Instrument** – The open-ended interview questions were derived from Hinchliffe and Jolly’s (2011) employer expectancies segment on “Performance in the Work Role” related to Delaney and Piscopo’s (2007) identified traits of BSN nurses
Research Method

- Data Collection/Processing/Analysis
  - Yin’s process of coding, pattern matching, and identifying themes with cross-case synthesis
- Triangulation
  - Subjects verified the transcripts
  - Another experienced PhD nurse researcher independently coded and identified themes with congruence of outcomes to improve trustworthiness.
Findings

- The two main themes were community college BSNs would perform lower than the university BSN graduate, or the community college BSN would perform equally as well as the university BSN graduate.
- Employability was determined.
- Subthemes were identified as variables that may affect the community college BSN graduate outcomes.
Findings

“Breaking down elements of a patient assessment and monitoring to plan care appropriately?”

- Three CNOs said the community college BSN would perform lower due to less critical thinking skills.

- Four CNOs said the performance would be equal, and one said the performance would depend on the curriculum and caliber of the program.
Findings

“Utilizing research and evidence-based practice?”

- Four CNOs suggested the community college BSN graduate would perform lower than the university graduate due to less research skills and knowledge.

- Three CNOs felt there would be no difference. One CNO reserved her opinion until she would know how the research program was designed.
Findings

“Working safely?”

- Seven CNOs denoted the performance would be the same.

- Only one CNO felt the performance of the community college BSN graduate would be inferior due to less training on high reliability work organizations and team-based training.
Findings

“Thinking critically about patients’ conditions and taking subsequent action?”

- Five CNOs thought the performance would be equal.

- Three CNOs indicated the community college BSN graduate would perform lower due to less critical thinking exposure.
Findings

“Identifying areas for change or improvement?”

- Five CNOs thought the performance would be equal.
- Two CNOs thought the performance of the community college BSN would be below the university BSN because of less skill in understanding the change process, escalation and improvement.
- One CNO would not commit to a decision because she would want to evaluate the students’ change management skills.
Findings

“Communicating appropriately and effectively to physicians and coworkers?”

- Four CNOs thought the community college BSN graduate would perform below the university BSN graduate because of the differing learning culture that is within a university setting with team-training on team-based skills and interaction with other members of the health care team.
- Four thought the performance would be equal.
Findings

“Demonstrating attention to detail and thoroughness?”

- Five CNOs thought there would be no difference in performance.

- Two CNOs indicated the performance of the university graduate would be better due to universities spending more time on the critical thought process.

- One CNO thought thoroughness and attention to detail was more related to the individual’s behavioral pattern.
Findings

“What are CNO’s overall perceptions of community college baccalaureate nursing preparation and employability?”

- Five CNOs described the community college BSN graduate as performing below the university graduate because the university setting gives the nurses a broader perspective.

- Three CNOs thought the performance would be equivalent.

- Seven out of eight CNOs indicated a willingness to hire the community college BSN graduates.
Findings-Sub-themes/Variables

- Community colleges in underserved areas could increase community college BSN employability.
- Universities provided a broader perspective.
- Concerns about equivalent curricula between the community colleges and the university programs.
Findings-Sub-themes/Variables

- The impact of socioeconomic factors on the type of students entering the community college programs.

- Critical thinking skills were felt to be essential.

- The community college BSN program needed to be marketed to gain the trust of the stakeholders.
Findings-Sub-themes/Variables

- Baccalaureate programs may create a political issue for universities due to potential loss of students and tuition.
- The availability of learning resources in the community college was questioned, and the learning culture and high reliability were more evident in university programs.
- Concerns were expressed about the faculty credentials. Professors are predominately doctorally prepared in universities and masters prepared in community colleges.
Findings-Sub-themes/Variables

- The work role of attention to detail and thoroughness was more of an individual trait and not impacted by the educational program.
- CNOs expressed the desire and importance to hire more BSN graduates.
Evaluation of Findings

- Seven out of eight CNOs would be willing to employ community college BSN graduates.

- Hiring BSN graduates are a priority and the valence component of expectancy theory weighed heavily on decisions.
Limitations

- Small sample size of eight CNOs (transferability)
- The study was completed only in NJ (transferability)
- The responses were based on expectations of the work performance attributes for employability
Practical Implications

- Since seven out eight CNOs demonstrated a willingness to hire the community college BSN graduate, a demand exists for more BSN nurses of any educational preparation.

- Supports exist for Senate bill, No. 1165.

- Community colleges need to assure consistency of the curriculum (research and critical thinking skills), faculty preparation, and resources equivalent to university programs.

- CNOs need to monitor the future work performance skills of community college BSN graduates.
Recommendations for Future Research

- If the Senate bill is passed, quantitative research is needed to evaluate community college BSN graduate outcomes.
- Quantitative research could be performed in the 10 states which currently permit community colleges to offer BSN degrees to evaluate community college BSN graduate outcomes such as work role performance, licensing pass rate, competency, drop-out rate, and time-to-graduation.
What is your position on BSN community college graduate employability?
Update

- Union and Passaic community colleges asked the New Jersey President’s Council for permission to provide BSN programs citing the need for more BSN nurses and the high cost of a university education.
- The council split the vote with the university institutions outvoting the community colleges by one vote to reject the colleges offering the BSN citing exceeding the school mission.
- The issue now goes to the Secretary of Higher Education for an approval (Nurin, T. January 26, 2016. njspotlight)
References


References


McHugh, M. D., & Ma, C. (2013). Hospital nursing and 30-day readmissions among Medicare patients with heart failure, acute myocardial infarction, and pneumonia. *Medical Care, 51*(1), 52-59. doi:10.1097/MLR.0b013e3182763284


