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# An Examination of Leadership Readiness and Empowerment Among Full-Time Nursing Faculty

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AN EXAMINATION OF LEADERSHIP READINESS AND EMPOWERMENT  
AMONG FULL-TIME NURSING FACULTY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Leadership skills in faculty and administrators are vital given the complex challenges faced in higher education, yet little is known about how best to prepare for a leadership role. According to the literature in other disciplines, empowerment can be identified as a primary antecedent to leadership readiness. Empowerment has been studied related to job satisfaction and burnout among faculty members and results indicate that it plays a significant role. However, there are no published research studies related to empowerment as a measure of leadership readiness among nurse educators. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between empowerment and leadership readiness and explore select demographical variables and their influence on leadership readiness in nursing education. A descriptive correlational design was used to examine the relationship between empowerment and leadership readiness among full-time nursing faculty. Additionally, an open-ended response was used to elicit data related to reasons why participants did not rate themselves as ready to assume a leadership role within nursing education. A national sample ( $N = 125$ ) of full-time nursing faculty and administrators from 32 states participated. Full-time faculty and administrators reported a moderate level of both structural and psychological empowerment as measured by the CWEQ-II and the PEI. Leadership readiness was measured using two researcher

developed tools. Results indicate that there is a moderate, positive correlation between leadership readiness and empowerment. Years of experience in nursing education, previous experience holding a formal leadership position within nursing education, and psychological empowerment were identified as significant predictors of leadership readiness. Nurse educators often assume leadership roles, not by choice but by default, without sufficient preparation and with a lack of support for development. Nurses who are ready to assume the role, may be capable of transforming the academic environment to one where open communication is encouraged, more opportunities exist, and there is empowerment, autonomy, and shared decision-making. Findings of the study provide data on which to base recommendations to address the shortage of leaders within nursing education, to fill the predicted void as current leaders retire, and to guide future research.