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Featured Article

Exploration of a Racially Diverse Sample of Nursing Students' Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy, and Perceptions of Simulation Using Racially Diverse Manikins: A Mixed Methods Pilot Study

Crystal L. Graham, PhD, RN, CHSE^{a,*}, Teresa Atz, PhD, RN, CHSE^b,
Shannon Phillips, PhD, RN, Alumnus CCRN^b, Susan Newman, PhD, RN, CRRN^b,
Cynthia Foronda, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF^c

^aCollege of Nursing, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, USA

^bCollege of Nursing, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC 29425, USA

^cSchool of Nursing and Health Studies, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL 33146, USA

KEYWORDS

diversity;
simulation;
nursing students;
race;
nursing education

Abstract

Background: This study examined a racially diverse sample of nursing students' participation in simulation using racially diverse manikins.

Method: This mixed-methods pilot study utilized pre-post self-efficacy and post satisfaction measures of 16 black and 16 white students. Following completion of the simulation experience, the students participated in single-race focus groups.

Results: There was a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$).

Conclusion: Results provide baseline evidence that race of both students and manikins may be a demographic characteristic variable that influences outcomes in simulation. Further research is needed to determine if race is a variable that can be added to the NLN/Jeffries simulation theory.

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According to the National League for Nursing (NLN), "underrepresented racial/ethnic populations are sorely missing in academia" (NLN, 2016, p. 5). Educators are

encouraged to create inclusive academic environments where minority nursing students can flourish and contribute to the nursing profession (NLN, 2016). Although the pedagogy of simulation is increasingly being used in nursing education, the simulation laboratory may be an unpleasant place of extra pressure and exclusion for the racial/ethnic

* Corresponding author: cgraham3@mailbox.sc.edu (C. L. Graham).

minority student (Graham & Atz, 2015). Little is known about best practices in simulation pedagogy of students who identify as a racial minority. To date, minority participants appear to be missing or underrepresented in simulation research but the reasons remain unknown.

Key Points

- It is unclear if a relationship exists between manikin or student race and outcomes in simulation.
- Race emerged as a sub-theme for both Black and White students.
- Black students expressed being nervous and singled out in simulation.
- Black students expressed comfort or connection with the black manikin.
- Having a minority facilitator “offered a sense of comfort” and “made them feel represented.”

The landmark National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) study was the largest, most comprehensive study conducted on simulation and included the largest sample of minority nursing students in any simulation study (Hayden, Smiley, Alexander, Kardong-Edgren, & Jeffries, 2014). Of the 847 students who consented to participate, 226 identified as minority. Although a secondary analysis was not performed and the quality of the NCSBN study is undisputed, the authors reported that more students in the 50% substitution-with-simulation group dropped compared with the other groups of the 25% substitution-with-simulation group and traditional clinical group

(Hayden et al., 2014). The authors also identified that those who participated in the 50% group were older, male, and members of a minority population (Hayden et al., 2014). Although students were randomly assigned to their simulation groups, the largest number of minority students in this study participated in the group with the most simulation, the 50% substitution-with-simulation group. These findings warrant further exploration because the authors identify that minority students in the 50% substitution-with-simulation group withdrew from the study with the nonspecific reason that they no longer wanted to participate and dropped out of their nursing programs at an overall higher rate while enrolled in this study (Hayden et al., 2014).

At this point, it is unclear if minority student withdrawal from the NCSBN study is directly related to participation in simulation; however, a subsequently published systematic review indicated that student motivation, enthusiasm, and personal feelings about simulation affect simulation outcomes by influencing willingness to participate (Adamson, 2015). In addition, simulation researchers reported the effect of participant demographic attributes such as age and gender on the simulation learning experience (Adamson, 2015; Jeffries, Rodgers, & Adamson, 2015), but do not address if race is an attribute that can also affect the teaching–learning simulation experience.

Background

To date, few studies exist that focus on race in simulation. Therefore, it remains unknown if a relationship exists between race, of students and manikins, and outcomes in simulation. The landmark doll study by Clark and Clark (1939, 1947) was conducted to test children’s racial perceptions using both black and white dolls. They identified that overall, both Black and White children chose the white doll most often and felt this doll exhibited more positive attributes than the black doll. Results identified the presence of perceived stereotype threats and how such threats created a feeling of inferiority in Black children damaging their self-esteem and overall performance. Similar studies in the context of simulation in nursing education did not emerge until recently.

A 2016 study evaluating the presence of racial diversity in simulation advertisements discovered that the majority (90%) of manikins and (96%) of body parts displayed at an international conference were White (Foronda, Baptiste, & Ockimey, 2016). The authors suggested that the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning (INACSL) Simulation StandardsSM be modified to include a diversity component (INACSL, 2016). Prior to 2015, few studies were located that examined minority nursing student perceptions of simulation. Although not generalizable, results from a qualitative study that explored baccalaureate minority nursing students’ perceptions of simulation suggested that students in this study perceived isolation and discrimination from faculty and peers and lacked a sense of belonging (Graham & Atz, 2015). In addition, students in this study viewed participation in simulation as void of opportunities to have experiences with diverse patients, due to the predominant use of White manikins (Graham & Atz, 2015). Subsequently, a qualitative study conducted by Fuselier, Baldwin, and Townsend-Chambers (2016) identified that African American students felt that the manikins of color used in the simulation laboratory fostered a sense of inclusivity. In the context of student race, Mayo Wood (2014) used a multisite, descriptive, correlational design to examine simulation learning outcomes in African American nursing students enrolled at a historically black college. Results demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in confidence levels after the African American students participated in simulation.

At this point, it is unclear if participation in simulation is a barrier for minority nursing students (Graham & Atz, 2015). Although these findings were derived from a small qualitative study and transferability is limited, student perceptions of isolation and discrimination with the predominant use of White manikins in simulation laboratories and reports of inclusiveness with the use of manikins and faculty of color highlight the need for further research in this area. Information about the effects of student and manikin race on nursing student outcomes was lacking. This knowledge was necessary to inform best practices in simulation for minority students as well as all nursing students.

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