

New Graduate Nurse Perception of Competence Compared to Nurse Leadership

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Introduction

New Graduate Nurses (NGN’s) face stress and challenges as they progress through the rigors of orientation and acclimation during the initial 12 months of clinical nursing. Health care organizations and academic institutions have indispensable roles in preparing competent entry-level nurses. Communication at healthcare organizational and academic levels is paramount to ensure that clinical expectations are understood and entry-level competencies are met (Berkow, et. al., 2009).

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Objectives

Primary- The purpose of this pilot study is to examine NGN’s perception of competence in comparison to the Nurse Leadership’s (NL’s) perception of NGN competence.

Secondary- Data analysis will incorporate recommendations for healthcare organizations and academic institutions. These recommendations will focus on strategies for preceptor role modeling and training, as well as preparation for nursing students in clinical experiences for entry into practice.

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Hypothesis

Equal to or greater than 50% of nurse leaders will perceive NGN’s as satisfactory in 6 core nursing competencies.

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Methods

In the current study, an NGN is an entry-level registered nursing program graduate within 12 months of graduation. Nursing directors, nurse managers, nurse educators, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse preceptors comprise NL’s. Data collection occurred within a two-month period.

Inclusion criteria: NGN’s who were within 12 months of completing orientation. Mid-level NL’s with direct contact on nursing units, and preceptor nurses.

Exclusion criteria: Graduate nurses who had completed orientation more than 12 months ago, NL’s with no direct contact on nursing units, and nurses who were never NGN preceptors.

Data was collected via a 27 question, 10-15 minute web-based questionnaire using Survey Monkey. Participants consented to the study by completing the online anonymous survey through the Survey Monkey link provided via e-mail.

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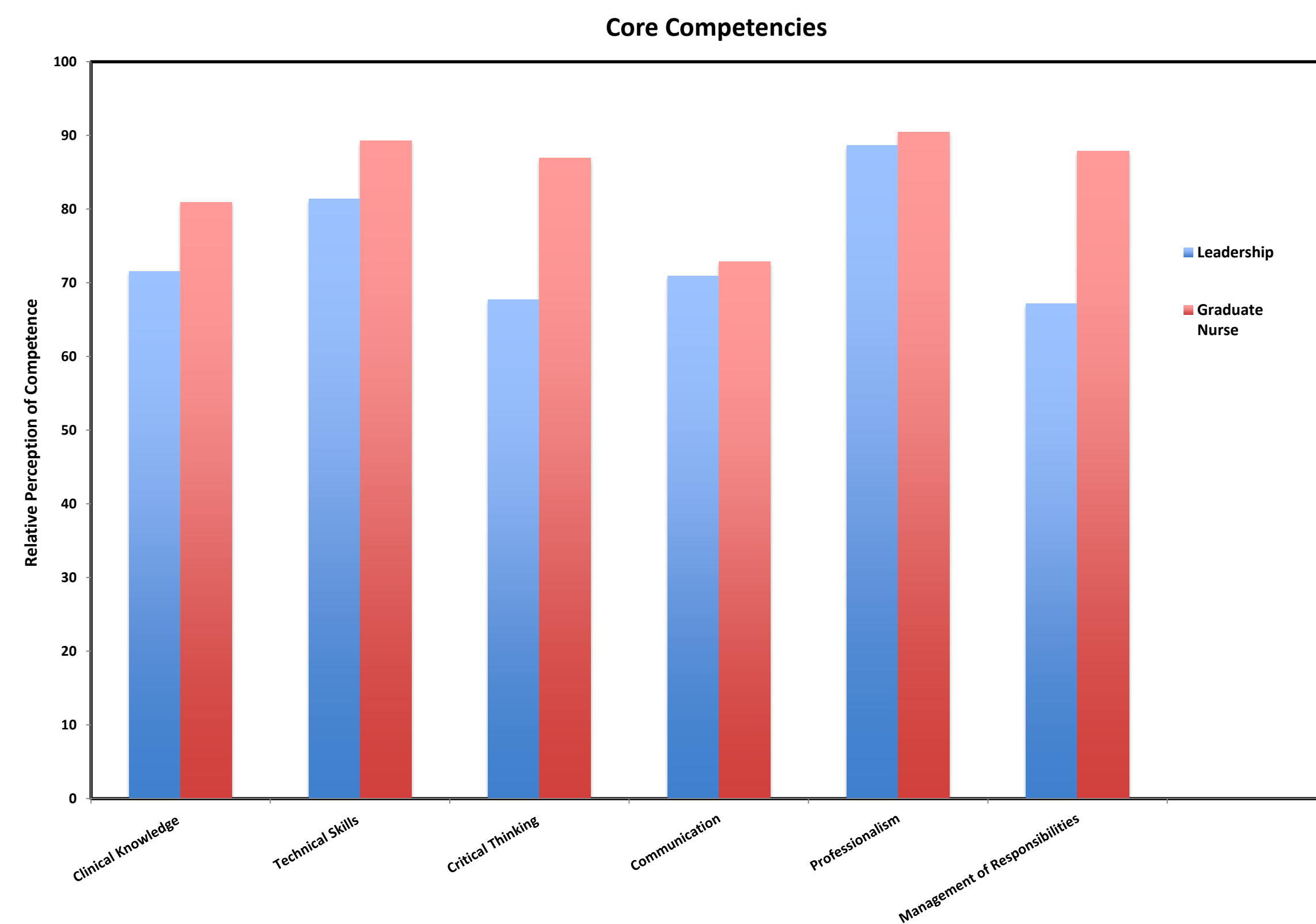
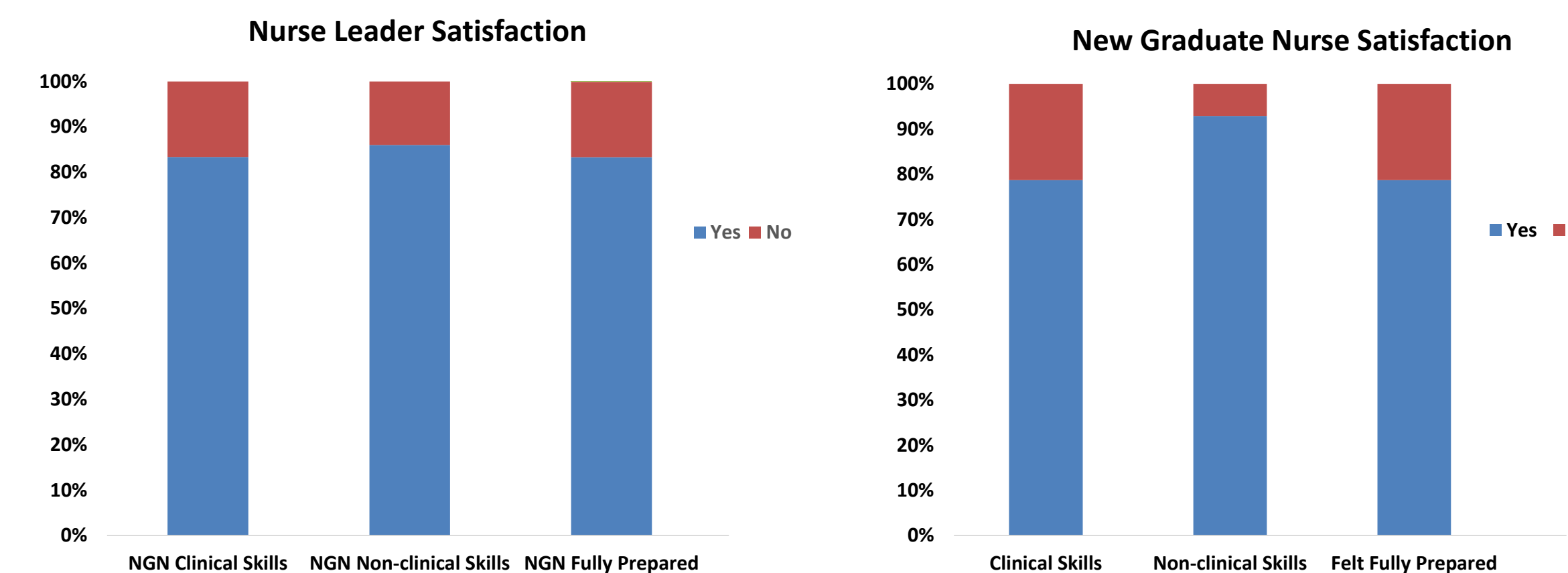
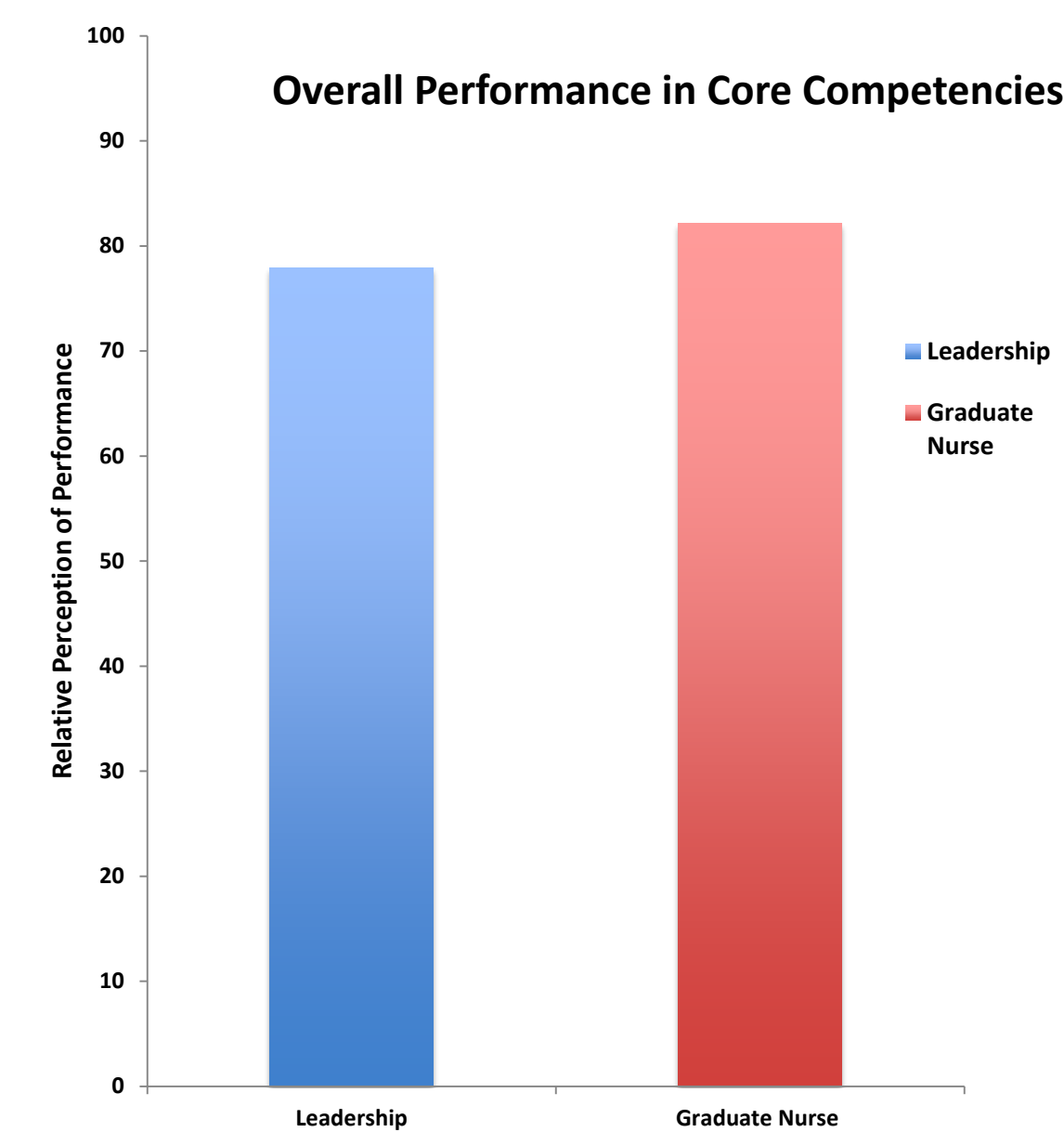
Results

The study included a total of 83 participants, 39 frontline nursing leaders and 44 NGN’s.

Overall performance looked at the percentages of the six core competencies combined. Results showed similar means in perception of overall performance between NL’s (77.9%) and NGN’s (82.1%)

Results for level of satisfaction in NGN performance for categories of clinical skills, non-clinical skills and preparation for responsibilities of the job was high for both NL’s (>83%) and NGN’s (>78%) in all areas.

NGN’s perceived themselves as being more prepared in each of the six core competencies compared to NL’s, although there was less than 2% difference in results for Communication and Professionalism and less than 8% difference in Technical Skills and Clinical Knowledge. Critical Thinking and Management of Responsibilities each had the greatest difference between NGN’s and NL’s of about 20%.



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Conclusions

Looking at specific behaviors from the 6 categories and overall performance, there were similar results between NL’s and NGN’s. Both shared perceived areas of readiness at greater than 50% in the core competencies, as well as acknowledgement of unpreparedness. Results lend insight regarding NGN’s transition from the classroom to the professional nurse role.

Limitations included small sample size, one hospital surveyed, questions skipped, NGN respondents didn’t identify with the defined role of “New Graduate Nurse”, and choice for years worked if close to the one year marked may have chosen the category 1-3 years, as opposed to less than 12 months.

In moving forward, lessons learned will be utilized to strengthen the study and recommend strategies for clinical preparation of NGN’s entering the workforce.

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