

## **Title Slide**

Hi. My name is Megan Johnson and I am a Doctoral Candidate within the School Psychology Doctoral Program. Dr. Panahon and Dr. Petersen-Brown are my research mentors and we have collaborated to look at descriptive data about accredited school psychology programs. I would also like to thank Kennedi Alstead, Nico Campa and Eva Dela-Paz for helping with data collection. Thank you for choosing to listen to our research presentation for the 2018 Graduate Online Symposium at MNSU, Mankato. We are grateful for this opportunity to share research with you all. Feel free to pause the presentation at any time as there will often be more information on the slides that I will not cover due to time constraints.

## **Accreditation of School Psychology Programs**

The American Psychological Association (APA) accredits various doctoral programs throughout the field of psychology. The APA accreditation system, recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, certifies that doctoral programs have met standard that ensure high-quality education. One sub-section of APA is school psychology. When the APA accredits these programs, it ensures that the programs are producing highly qualified and competent trainers and practitioners by equipping graduates with the necessary skills to succeed once completing the program. As of October 2017 there were 68 APA accredited school psychology programs.

The National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) approves both masters and doctoral degrees within school psychology. This is also an indicator of quality graduate education in school psychology. All approved programs follow a strict guideline and standard from NASP that has been approved by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Graduates of a NASP approved program can become a nationally certified school psychologist, a prestigious standing. Over 150 programs approved by NASP.

## **Shortage of Trainers and Practitioners**

Despite having over 300 highly qualified masters and doctoral level approved programs, there is still a shortage of school psychologists trainers and practitioners. The shortage of trainers in school psychology is something that is well documented. The nation's school psychology programs have struggled to employ trainers for their graduate programs (Dittmann, 2002). Clopton and Hasselhuhn (2009) surveyed school psychology program training directors concerning the faculty needs for their programs. One hundred and thirty-six openings were reported by the 94 program directors who responded to the survey and 79% of them indicated that there had been one or more openings in their program within the last three years. For the 94 programs who responded to the survey, unfilled positions and the age of the current faculty suggest that at least 36 new trainers will need to be hired per year. There will also be an increase in number of openings in the next decade due to faculty retirements (Clopton & Haselhuhn, 2009). These researchers also identified that graduates of school psychology programs are not filling faculty positions at the rate that currently

faculty are leaving, with only a small percentage of doctoral-level interns seeking positions within academia. This suggests that the shortage of school psychologists in academic positions is not a new phenomenon and that this shortage will only worsen in the future.

Graduates may have misconceptions about what experiences and credentials are common for faculty. Some misconceptions are high levels of stress, inadequate preparation, and low salary (Nagel, Suldo, Christenson, & Hansen, 2004). These fallacies may lead to early career professionals away from seeking a career in academia.

Lastly, the average age for practitioners and trainers are increasing at a rate which would increase the amount of vacancies needed to be filled for both trainers of school psychologists and practitioners. This is also exacerbated because the field is expected to grow 14% until 2026.

### **Purpose of Research**

Therefore, it is important to examine program and faculty characteristics of NASP approved programs. By doing so, we are hoping to understand what is needed to become a trainer and the outlook for future school psychology trainers.

These findings could help recruit prospective students and inform them about similarities and differences between programs. A research focused school may be reflected in the schools producing more faculty members. Areas of specialization of the faculty that match prospective students. Number of faculty at a program to understand the potential supports available for students

### **Methodology**

A list of all NASP approved and APA accredited programs were retrieved from their respective websites. The list was divided into three parts and each part was assigned to a data collector. Researchers gathered information pertaining to each program by visiting the graduate program's website, faculty CVs, and program handbooks. Researchers gathered information pertaining to the department that the program was housed in, the college that it was affiliated with, and the type of degree offered by the program. In addition, data were gathered about the characteristics of the core faculty members of the program. That is, information about the faculty member's gender, faculty rank, degree earned, the university that conferred the degree, and the year they graduated were obtained. Data were analyzed descriptively.

Interscorer agreement (ISA) is still being collected for 25% of the NASP approved programs, however, the ISA for 25% of the APA accredited programs is 94%. This was calculated by a fourth data collector, myself, look at the data to confirm what the previous data collectors found. ISA was calculated on an agreement for each bit of information about the professors and programs.

## **APA Results**

There was a plethora of descriptive data that was gathered. Three hundred and fifty-seven faculty members were identified working across the 68 APA accredited programs. The average number of faculty per program was 5.25 with a range of two to nine faculty members. Of the 357 faculty members, there were 207 females (58%) and 150 males. Of the different types of doctoral degrees held by the faculty, 338 (95%) earned a Ph.D., 12 (3%) were awarded a Psy.D., and 7 (2%) had an Ed.D. Approximately 75% of the faculty earned their doctoral degrees in Education Psychology or School Psychology. Most of the programs were housed within an educational focused college rather than an arts and science focused college. 17% of doctoral degrees were conferred prior to 1990, which suggests a greying of the field as many of these professors are now becoming of retirement age. Also, rank of professorship status indicates that 39% of trainers hold the status of a “Full” professor, which indicates a longer career and potentially older professorship.

The top faculty producing programs were University of Texas at Austin, University of Wisconsin Madison and Michigan State University.

## **NASP Results**

Again, there is a plethora of descriptive data that was gathered. There are more female trainers than males, however, this does not reflect the male to female ratio within the field. This is possibly due to perceived gender roles as reported by Nagel et al., (2004) about career demands. Professor is the most common rank with about 20% of the faculty earned their degrees prior to the 1990's. The range of faculty for all of the NASP approved programs were 1-14, with the median number of professors being 4.

The most degrees that are offered within these programs are master's degrees, with 58% of graduates earning this degree. Also, most of the faculty across these programs only have their master's degree, 67%. New York (10%), California (7%) and Texas (7%) are the top states with NASP approved programs, which aligns with current population density estimates.

## **Discussion**

When comparing the data between the two accreditation sources many similarities and differences can be seen. The data is more diverse for NASP approved programs. This could be due to the fact that NASP approved programs accredited not only doctoral programs but masters programs as well while APA accredited programs only approve doctoral programs.

Percentages of male and female faculty positions are identical with slightly more females holding faculty positions than males. However, this number is discrepant from current practitioner numbers where female practitioners outnumber males 7 to 1.

When looking at the degrees earned, the most awarded degree was a Ph.D. This makes sense because more than 90% of doctoral degrees earned are Ph.D. Faculty at NASP

approved programs were awarded more Ed.D. than Psy.D., where within APA accredited programs the opposite was true. Although this difference is relatively minute in its real-world effect, it can lead to differences within consuming research and understanding practitioner concepts.

Top APA faculty producing programs are: University of Texas at Austin, University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Michigan State University. Top NASP faculty producing programs are University of Wisconsin, Madison, University of Minnesota, Indiana University and Texas A&M. It is interesting that the University of Minnesota is not on the APA top producing list as it is accredited by both associations.

Academic rank for both association shows a greying of the field, with 1/3 of the faculty population at a full professorship status and about 20% of the field earned their doctoral degrees prior to 1990. This means that there will be increased vacancies within academia and the need for data to recruit potential professors to programs and potential graduate students is needed.

### **Future Research**

Future research needs to minimize the limitations of this study. Previous research that has looked at publication rates for school psychology faculty has called each faculty member to ensure that they have the correct demographic information about the faculty. We did not call, but thought it was valid because most graduate students looking for programs only utilize the internet as a source to gather information. This reiterates the importance for universities to keep their program data up to date and to make information available online.

Many programs that were APA accredited were also NASP approved, which lead to a high degree of overlap among data. This makes it harder to truly differentiate programs.

Future research can also look at non-approved school psychology graduate programs to ensure a comprehensive review of all school psychology graduate programs.

### **Questions? Comments? Concerns?**

Thank you for listening to our presentation. If you have any questions, please email me at [megan.johnson-5@mnsu.edu](mailto:megan.johnson-5@mnsu.edu) We would love to hear your input on how to improve our research. A reference list is also available upon request.

### **Referenes**

Clopton, K. L., & Haselhuhn, C. W. (2009). School psychology trainer shortage in the USA: Current status and projections for the future. *School Psychology Review*, 30, 24-42.

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