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ATI Nurse Educator Summit 2023

Lived Experiences of Nurse Leaders

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Learning Objectives

Discover the lived experience of nurse leaders to inform and prepare other nurse leaders for the future.

1. Explore the experiences and perceptions of nurse leaders in the state of Arizona.
2. Interpret the descriptions, concepts, and common themes deemed important by nurse leader participants to better prepare nurse graduates.
3. Understand the significance of how this study affected three areas: the profession of nursing, the practice and public policy in health care, and the possibilities for social change.

Research Gap!

Known: National Academy of Medicine reports, research reflective of front-line nurses, successful work environments, and decreased turnover (see NAM, 2021)

Research Gap: Few researchers addressing the lived experiences of nurse leaders-influential experiences in success or failure

- **Secondary Gap:** Little evidence of transformational leadership

Purpose: Qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of 12 influential nurse leaders from the state of Arizona

In the pursuit of excellence, I sought to provide the profession with a clear and more concise way to leadership success.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational leadership theory provided the framework for the study.

- Expectations from the profession of nursing in the use of transformational leadership in the pursuit of excellence (Magnet Designation, see ANCC, 2021)
- Little evidence of the use of transformational leadership or that nurse leaders are prepared for leadership roles using transformational leadership

Research Questions

RQ1: How do nurse leaders in Arizona make meaning of their leadership experience?

RQ2: How do nurse leaders prepare themselves for leadership roles in nursing?

Results

Participant Summaries

Six Primary themes with subthemes emerged

Have and Use Your Voice

Take Leadership on the “Walk”

Invest in Yourself and Others

You Own the Culture

Development of Own Style

Mentoring, Teaching, and Coaching

RESULTS

RESULTS

Results



Have and Use Your Voice

Subthemes

Communication

Listen

Feedback

Results

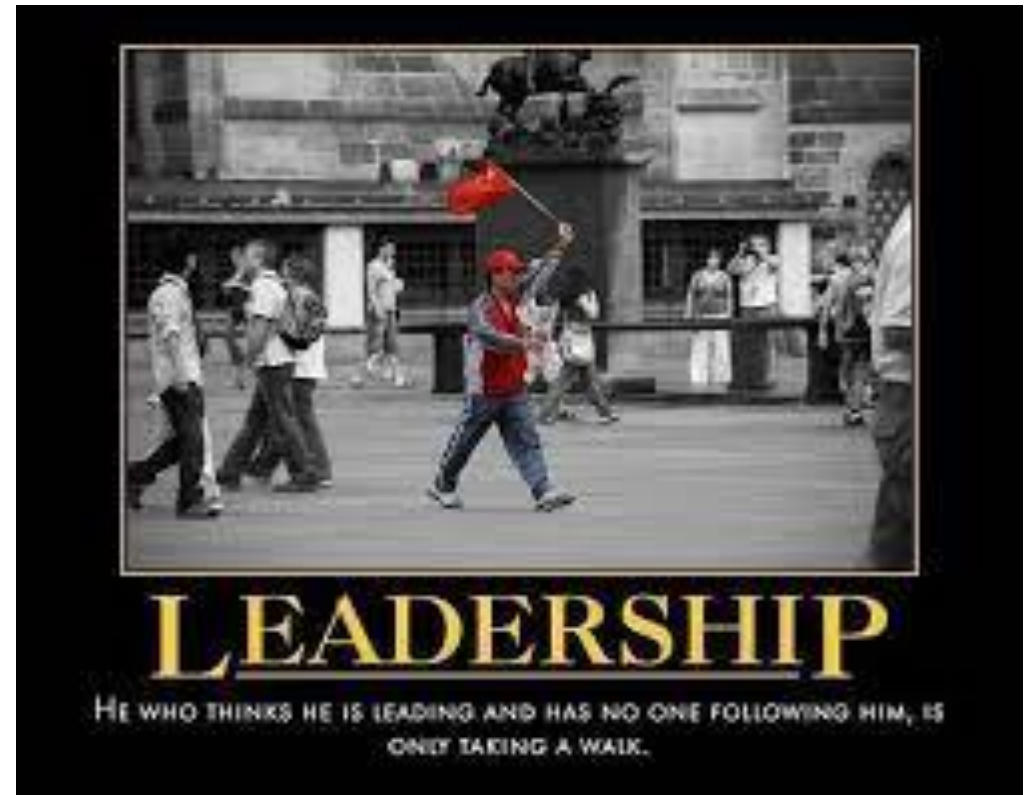
Take Leadership on the “Walk”

Subthemes

Live by your values

“Walk the walk”

Be politically astute



Results



Invest in Yourself and Others

Subthemes

Continuous learning

Formal versus Informal Education

Learn Business Skills

Results

You Own the Culture

Subthemes

Understand the culture

Building trust

Building people

Passion



Results

Development of Own Style

Subthemes

Preparation

Influence

Learning from mistakes

Changed themselves



Results

Mentoring, Teaching, and Coaching

Subthemes

Encouragement

Life lessons

Still in touch



Results

Reflection on their leadership journeys

Findings:

The findings were that the experiences of the nurse leaders were similar and indicated certain themes for success.

Interpretation

RQ1: How do nurse leaders in Arizona make meaning of their leadership experience?

Six interview questions led to the development of these concepts and themes to address RQ1:

- Move to different leadership roles
- How to take on challenging roles intentionally to grow
- How to use their voice for change
 - Advocacy for the staff
 - Development of other leaders
- Confirmed the demand and urgency for graduate education for aspiring nurse leaders.
 - Invest in yourself

Interpretation

RQ2: How do nurse leaders prepare themselves for leadership roles in nursing?

Seven interview questions led to the development of these concepts and themes to address RQ2 :

- Continuous learning because most participants did not feel prepared for their first role
 - The desire for a mentor to model the way
- Acknowledged the need to invest in themselves by returning to school for advanced degrees, business skills, and enhanced credentials to develop their leadership style

Interpretation

Concepts and themes, continued:

- Changed their leadership preparation
- Use of leadership theories
- Developed or changed their styles
- Investing in yourself and others-continuous learning to improve; constantly keeping up with changing clinical knowledge, technology, and health care policy and politics
- Importance of leading and “owning” the work environment culture



Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships involves intentional collaboration across professions and with care team members, patients, families, communities, and other stakeholders to optimize care, enhance the healthcare experience, and strengthen outcomes.

Domain 7: Systems-Based Practice prepares nurses to lead within complex systems of health care. Nurses must effectively coordinate resources to provide safe, quality, equitable care to diverse populations.

Domain 9: Professionalism involves cultivating a sustainable professional nursing identity, perspective, accountability, and comportment that reflects nursing's characteristics and values.

Domain 10: Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development includes activities and self-reflection that foster personal health, resilience, and well-being, lifelong learning, and support the acquisition of nursing expertise and assertion of leadership

Significance

Understand the significance of how this study affected three areas: the profession of nursing, the practice and public policy in health care, and the possibilities for social change.

Confirmations from the literature

- **Mentorship, leadership competencies**, some kind of training, and transition to the role (Burke & Erickson, 2020; Nghe et al., 2020; Pilat & Merriam, 2019).
- Even in the best work environments with well-designed leadership programs, the new nurse leader may feel **that role mastery, confidence, and satisfaction may suffer** (Pilat & Merriam, 2019).
- Nurse leaders **do not have** the business acumen, understanding of health care systems, and human resource management skills needed to be successful (see AONL, 2021; Morse & Warshawsky, 2021; Munari et al., 2019; Nghe et al., 2020; Pilat & Merriam, 2019; Sherman & Saifman, 2018).

Confirmations from the literature

- Fennimore and Warshawsky (2019) suggested that graduate education should be the **minimum** standard for nurse managers.
- Prepare the future leaders **more intentionally** (Bognar et al., 2021; Burke & Erickson, 2020).
- **Transformational leadership:** patient outcomes, staff satisfaction and retention, the Magnet model, staff empowerment, followership, and healthy work environments (see ANCC, 2021; Clavelle et al., 2012; Diggins, 2016; Kelly et al. 2014; Pearson, 2020; Prado-Inzerillo et al., 2018; Robbins & Davidhizar, 2020; Shaughnessy et al., 2018).

Confirmations from the literature

- The nursing workforce should **demand transformational leadership** (Lewis, 2015).
- The transformational leader is **key to the empowerment** of nursing staff (ANCC, 2021; Clavelle et al., 2012; Diggins, 2016; Kelly et al. 2014; Pearson, 2020; Prado-Inzerillo et al., 2018; Robbins & Davidhizar, 2020; Shaughnessy et al., 2018).
- Enhances a **healthy environment** for the entire health care organization and thus **the patients** (Pearson, 2020; Robbins & Davidhizar, 2020).



Theoretical Inferences

Transformational Leadership

- The probing question around leadership theory use and development allowed for the participants' exploration into their own style and how they believed they intentionally used a theoretical framework or not.
- Conclusions:
 - Each participant was familiar with leadership theories and took principles from one or more in their leadership styles.
 - None found one theory to be complete and encompassing all that is needed in leading people.

One participant even suggested that transformational leadership was more of an organizational leadership theory and was not comprehensive to lead people in all work environments.

Recommendations of the study

- **Continue the research** into the lived experiences of the nurse leaders to add and clarify the theme construction
- **Leadership competencies:** developed for undergraduate nursing programs, leadership trainings for transition to leadership roles, and focus on the development of the graduate leadership degrees.
- **Continued belief** in the principles of **transformational leadership**, which can be embodied into the leadership competencies

Recommendations for Nursing Education

- Theory interweaved into the undergraduate nursing courses
- Unfolding case studies
- Multi-patient simulations
- Delegation and prioritization-experiential learning activities
- Special focus in leadership and management courses.



Conclusions

- * Adds to the research of lived experiences of nurse leaders
- * Will assist in the development of improved and futuristic leadership competencies and skills.
- * Continues to demonstrate that the importance of continuous learning, developing, and improving leadership success is imperative to the health of the United States and beyond.
- * Advance knowledge in public health care policy by demonstrating that the development of nurse leaders in all areas of health care can lead to better positive patient outcomes.
- * Contributes to the transformation of the healthy work environments- healthy work environments produce better patient outcomes.



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References available upon request