Relationship between professional identity and clinical leadership in novice registered nurses
The Institute of Medicine (2010)

The current healthcare environment calls for nurses to be clinical leaders (Benner, Sutphen, Leonard, Day & Shulman, 2010)

Multiple pathways to becoming a registered nurse (Nelson, 2002; Institute of Medicine, 2010)

Questions persist on whether current curricula accurately prepares nurses for leadership roles in diverse practice settings or instills a strong sense of professional identity (Benner et al., 2010; Dwyer, 2011; Institute of Medicine, 2010).
The purpose of the study was to explore and compare the perceptions held by novice nurses who graduated from diploma, associate, baccalaureate, masters’ entry, and accelerated programs in a Midwestern state in order to assess the relationship between their self-perceived clinical leadership ability and their self-perceived sense of professional identity and what role, if any, academic preparation plays.
No consensus on attributes necessary for clinical leader

Clinical leadership – skills present in staff nurses providing patient care at the bedside

Quest to clearly define what clinical leadership is, who clinical leaders are, and how best to prepare nurses for the role of clinical leader

Development of clinical leaders is a professional responsibility

(Malby, 1998; Brown & Dewing, 2016; Chavez & Yoder, 2015; Cook & Leathard 2004)
LITERATURE REVIEW – PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

- Development of knowledge, skills, values, roles, and viewpoints essential for practice of a specific profession
- Perception of oneself as a member of a profession
- Active process that involves professional socialization
- Responsibilities to society, other professionals, patients and self

(Clarke, 1997; Crigger & Godfrey, 2011, 2014; Fagermoen, 1997)
There was overlap in the identified themes for clinical leadership and professional identity.

- Personal attributes
- Mentoring and being a role model
- Nursing curricula must address the development of both professional identity and clinical leadership ability

McNamara et al. 2011

- If there is a struggle to identify the core values and beliefs of the profession
- Difficult to communicate the profession’s contribution to patient care
- Issue with asserting themselves as clinical leaders
RESEARCH QUESTION #1

What relationship exists between self-perceived clinical leadership ability and self-perceived professional identity in novice nurses?
RESEARCH QUESTION #2

What difference exists in self-perceived clinical leadership ability among novice nurses based on academic degree?
RESEARCH QUESTION #3

What difference exists in the self-perceived professional identify among novice nurses based on academic degree?
RESEARCH DESIGN

- Mixed Methods
- Descriptive Research
DATA COLLECTION

- Electronic survey combining two established instruments*
  - Clinical Leadership Survey (CLS) developed by Patrick in 2010
    - Cronbach’s Alpha .86
  - Nurses Professional Values Scale – Revised (NPVS-R) developed by Weis and Schank in 2009
    - Cronbach’s Alpha .92
- Demographics
- Open ended questions**

*SPSS used for analyzing quantitative data

**NVivo used for analyzing qualitative data
DATA COLLECTION - PARTICIPANTS

- Convenience sample ($N=8,138$) nurses practicing in the Midwest for less than 3 years
  - Members of the National Student Nurses Association
  - Student nurses who signed up for free access to the American Nurses Association website
  - Two community colleges and two universities in the Midwest that offer a baccalaureate, RN to BSN, masters’ entry and accelerated program

- Participants ($n = 239$)
DEMOGRAPHICS

- Median Age – 30
- Age Range – 20 to 55
- 87.9% Female
- Length of Practice – 61.5% (18 months or less)
- 62.3% reported previous healthcare related employment
- 75.7% belonged to the student nurses association
- 41.4% currently belonged to a professional association
ANALYSIS – RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What relationship exists between self-perceived clinical leadership ability and self-perceived professional identity in novice nurses?

- Pearson’s correlation
- CLS and the NPVS-R
  - total scores
  - domain/factor scores
  - entire group
  - by educational preparation
- The open-ended question will be analyzed for common themes
  - Open-coding method
  - Thematic-coding method
ANALYSIS – RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What difference exists in self-perceived clinical leadership ability among novice nurses based on academic degree?

- one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
  - Clinical Leadership Score
  - Domains - Challenging the process, Inspiring a shared vision, Enabling others to act, Modeling the way, Encouraging the heart
- Post hoc testing done using Tukey’s Honestly Significant Differences Test
- Hochberg’s corrections were applied to account for familywise errors
- Factorial ANOVAs – years of practice, previous health-related work, service on a volunteer board/committee, charge nurse experience, experience precepting new nurses or new hires, length of orientation
- The open-ended question will be analyzed for common themes
  - Open-coding and Thematic-coding method
What difference exists in self-perceived professional identity among novice nurses based on academic degree?

- One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
  - Nurses Professional Values Scale - Revised
  - Factors – Caring, Activism, Trust, Professionalism, Justice
- Post hoc testing done using Tukey’s Honestly Significant Differences Test
- The open-ended question will be analyzed for common themes
  - Open-coding and Thematic-coding method
### FINDINGS – QUESTION 1

What relationship exists between self-perceived clinical leadership ability and self-perceived professional identity in novice nurses?

#### Pearson’s Correlation between Clinical Leadership Ability and Professional Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All educational preparations</td>
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<td>&lt; .001*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
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<td>Baccalaureate</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&lt; .001*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s Entry</td>
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<td>&lt; .001*</td>
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*Note. *p < .05*
### One-Way ANOVA – Educational Preparation - CLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Associates (n = 71)</th>
<th>Baccalaureate (n = 112)</th>
<th>RN to BSN (n = 25)</th>
<th>Masters’ Entry (n = 24)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Leadership Survey Score</strong></td>
<td>66.63 (SD: 5.43)</td>
<td>65.38 (SD: 5.93)</td>
<td>68.60 (SD: 4.77)</td>
<td>63.67 (SD: 6.03)</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.011*</td>
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<td>Challenging the Process</td>
<td>12.39 (SD: 2.32)</td>
<td>12.38 (SD: 1.54)</td>
<td>13.68 (SD: 1.65)</td>
<td>12.13 (SD: 1.62)</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.008*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring a Shared Vision</td>
<td>13.54 (SD: 1.43)</td>
<td>13.09 (SD: 1.63)</td>
<td>13.72 (SD: 1.21)</td>
<td>12.71 (SD: 1.57)</td>
<td>3.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enabling Others to Act</td>
<td>13.97 (SD: 1.11)</td>
<td>13.62 (SD: 1.30)</td>
<td>14.20 (SD: .96)</td>
<td>13.67 (SD: 1.47)</td>
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<td>Modeling the Way</td>
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<td>13.85 (SD: 1.20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging Others to Act</td>
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<td>12.45 (SD: 2.21)</td>
<td>12.72 (SD: 1.65)</td>
<td>11.58 (SD: 2.69)</td>
<td>1.60</td>
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</table>

*Note. Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc test conducted. *p < .05
### FINDINGS – QUESTION 2

What difference exists in self-perceived clinical leadership ability among novice nurses based on academic degree?

#### ANOVA Comparisons of CLS Scores - Educational Preparations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Tukey’s Honestly Significant Difference Comparisons</th>
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<td>BSN</td>
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<td>RN to BSN</td>
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<td>68.60</td>
<td>4.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters Entry</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63.67</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### ANOVA Comparisons of Challenging the Process Scores - Educational Preparations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
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<th>SD</th>
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<td>13.68</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Entry</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.13</td>
<td>1.62</td>
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*Note. *p < .05*
FINDINGS – QUESTION 2

What difference exists in self-perceived clinical leadership ability among novice nurses based on academic degree?

Factorial ANOVA – Clinical Leadership Scale

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<td>Years of Practice</td>
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<td>Previous health-related work</td>
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<td>Service on a volunteer board/committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charge nurse experience</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience precepting new nurses or new hires</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.390</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of orientation</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.051</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05

Factorial ANOVA – Challenging the Process

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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous health-related work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charge nurse experience</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience precepting new nurses or new hires</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of orientation</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.039*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05
How could your nursing program have been changed to better prepare you to become an RN and assume leadership roles in the practice setting?

- Formal leadership courses identified
- Need additional time and experience – hands on or skills labs
- Real life nursing
  - Additional opportunities for interprofessional communication
- Misunderstanding of the concept of clinical leadership
“Increase the amount of positive and constructive criticism. Teach how to find information rather than fact and process memorization.”

“Being able to communicate with physicians and observe how they put orders in and what are their expectations of the nursing care.”
“There is no training on disciplining and/or firing people. If one has never had the experience, the process can be daunting without any guidance. If this was done in school in a role playing activity, it would have been very helpful!”

(online survey response, question 24, December 15, 2016)
What three activities or courses in your nursing program assisted you in developing clinical leadership skills?

- Clinical courses – 48.7%
  - Clinical courses with more independence or oversight of a team
- Leadership course or project
  - Self assessment opportunities
  - Management topics
  - Professional issue discussions
  - Group projects where a leadership role is assigned
## FINDINGS – QUESTION 3

What difference exists in self-perceived professional identify among novice nurses based on academic degree?

### One-Way ANOVA – Educational Preparation – NPVS-R

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Associates</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>RN to BSN</th>
<th>Masters’ Entry</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( n = 71 )</td>
<td>( n = 112 )</td>
<td>( n = 25 )</td>
<td>( n = 24 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nurses Professional Values Score – Revised</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>104.3</td>
<td>103.31</td>
<td>110.2</td>
<td>102.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>14.01</td>
<td>14.16</td>
<td>12.64</td>
<td>10.83</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>21.79</td>
<td>21.29</td>
<td>22.64</td>
<td>21.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.28</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Justice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>12.37</td>
<td>12.17</td>
<td>13.12</td>
<td>12.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>2.22</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activism</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>17.01</td>
<td>17.03</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>16.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.82</td>
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<td><strong>Professionalism</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>14.68</td>
<td>15.11</td>
<td>15.24</td>
<td>15.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.36</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Caring</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>38.45</td>
<td>37.71</td>
<td>40.20</td>
<td>37.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>p</strong></td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.272</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc test conducted. *\( p < .05 \)*
What three activities or courses in your nursing program assisted you in developing your professional identity?

- **Clinical courses – 56.9%**
  - witness nurses in action
  - witness firsthand what it means to be a nurse

- **Leadership course or project**
  - Self assessment opportunities
  - Management topics
  - Professional issue discussions
  - Group projects where a leadership role is assigned
“Activities that placed us in the community where we had to represent our organization.”

(online survey response, question 26, November 7, 2017)

“Small class size which allowed many one-on-one opportunities to be mentored by my instructors, have meaningful discussions, etc.”

(online survey response, question 26, November 7, 2016)
CONCLUSIONS

- Stronger a novice nurse’s professional identity, the more likely he or she will perceive him/herself to be a clinical leader.
- RN to BSN graduates are more likely to consider themselves clinical leaders than masters’ entry graduates.
- RN to BSN graduates perceive themselves better prepared to Challenge the Process than graduates from associate degree, baccalaureate, or masters’ entry programs.
- Years of practice influenced the Clinical Leadership Score.
- Years of practice, service on a volunteer board/committee, & length of orientation influenced the Challenging the Process factor score.
- Educational preparation played no role in the novice nurse’s sense of professional identity.
LIMITATIONS

- Concepts of professional identity and clinical leadership are multidimensional.
- Inadequate numbers of diploma and accelerated program graduate participants limited ability to fully explore the impact of all educational preparations.
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS MUST SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN STUDENTS

- Opportunities that embed professional values and ethics.
- Role of clinical faculty essential.
- Organize content – focus on clinical leadership knowledge, skills and behaviors.

FOSTER UNDERSTANDING OF CLINICAL LEADERSHIP VERSUS FORMAL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- Clinical exemplars, role models, staff nurse mentor.
- Use of debriefing sessions to reflect and add context to clinical experiences.

USE OF SIMULATION TO FULFIL STUDENTS DESIRE FOR ADDITIONAL AND MORE VARIED CLINICAL EXPERIENCES.
FUTURE RESEARCH

- Research to determine if there is a causal link between professional identity development and clinical leadership ability
- Replication of the study with larger, more geographically diverse sample
- Determine best methods for developing professional identity and values
- Identification of additional clinical and didactic opportunities
  - professional identity development
  - understanding of the RN’s role as a clinical leader
  - clinical exemplars, role models, staff nurse mentor
  - use of debriefing sessions to reflect and add context to clinical experiences
- Explore the interaction effect of years of practice, service on volunteer boards/committees and length of orientation
- Explore the concept of Challenging the Process


REFERENCES


