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Generational Attributes that Influence Nursing Professionalism and Specialty Certification

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BACKGROUND

Professionalism is a belief system in which members have shared competency standards and ethical values and is an essential ingredient in achieving a healthy work environment. It involves a commitment to the values and behaviors specific to that career identity and incorporates attitudes representing identification and commitment to a profession (Kim-Godwin, Baek, & Wynd, 2010). Inherent in this is the commitment to life-long learning and a desire for continuous professional growth and development. This involves taking opportunities for continuing education, as well as continuing competency, such as specialty certification. Certification validates an individual's knowledge related to a certain area of practice and is based on established standards (Watts, 2010). Having a certified nursing workforce has been linked to positive patient, system, and nurse outcomes (Callicutt, 2011). Yet, overall rates of certified nurses are low. In addition, the current nursing workforce is comprised of three generations, each with their own value systems and perceptions of quality work life. What is not known is how these values may affect the clinical nurse's understanding of professionalism and view of specialty certification.

STUDY PURPOSE

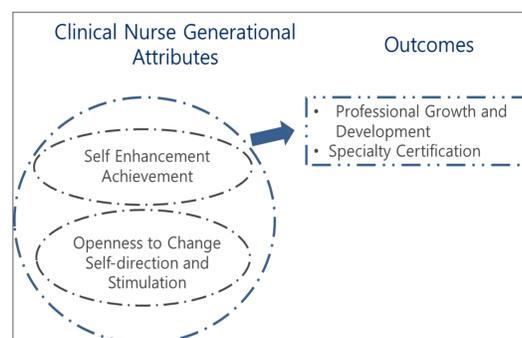
- To determine if there are any generational attributes that effect the clinical nurse's understanding related to specialty certification and nursing professionalism, and does education enhance clinical nurses' understanding of the relationship between specialty certification and professionalism.

METHODOLOGY

- Descriptive, study using a convenience sample of cardiac telemetry nurses
- Three groups are defined in this study: (a) Generation Y (born between 1977 and 1995), (b) Generation X (born between 1965 and 1976), and (c) Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964).
- A 30-minute education session was provided that focused on specialty certification and professionalism
- Prior to the start of each session, the attendees were asked to voluntarily complete a demographic tool and three validated tools: Nurses' Professional Value Scale-3 (NPVS-3) Tool, the Perceived Value of Certification Tool (PVCT), and the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16).
- At the end of the session, attendees completed a program evaluation

THEORETICAL MODEL

Nursing Generational Model



DATA ANALYSIS

Demographics (N = 91)

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Female	79	71.4
Generation		
Generation Y	29	52.7
Generation X	14	31.9
Baby Boomer		15.4
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	49	57.0
African American	9	9.3
Holds Specialty Certification	5	5.4
Educational Level		
BSN	21	23.6
ADN	31	4.8
Years of Experience		
< 3 yrs experience	23	25.0
3 - 10 yrs experience	41	28.3
> 10 yrs experience		43.5

Results of Generational Responses to the NPVS-3, PVCT, NPI, and Program Evaluation

Variable	p -value
Evaluation – Resources	0.051
Evaluation – Certification	0.072
Evaluation – Behavior	0.125
NPI	0.074
PVCT – internal	0.269
PVCT – external	0.254
PVCT	0.183
NPVS – 3	0.517

Resource Availability

VAR (overall p-val)	generation	n	mean	SD	comparison	p-val
resources (0.051)	Gen Y	4	1.67	0.91	Y to X	0.018
	Gen X	2	1.17	0.66	Y to boomers	0.331
	Boomers	1	1.36	0.50	X to boomers	0.288

DISCUSSION

- There is a paucity of data and science in the literature related to the influence of generational attributes on nursing professionalism and specialty certification.
- Results of this project indicate that in clinical nurses who work on a cardiac telemetry unit: Generational attributes do not influence the clinical nurse's understanding regarding professionalism or specialty certification.
- The non-significant results of the NPVS-3 and NPI-16 raise the question if other variables may influence understanding of professionalism (i.e., culture, upbringing, internal/external variables).
- The non-significant findings on the PVCT, both the internal and external scale response, would suggest that the interaction between the nurse and the constantly changing environment may influence the nurse's desire or need to seek certification.
- The results of the course evaluation suggest that organizations need to provide support and recognition to nurses wanting to achieve a specialty certification.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

- Results indicate that nurses, regardless of their generation, appreciate having resources identified and made available to them to assist in obtaining a specialty certification.
- No studies were found in opposition to the results of this current study and the results support that staff appreciated being provided with information on resource availability for obtaining certification

STUDY LIMITATIONS

- Nongeneralizable since the participants are a convenience sample limited to one area of practice within the organization.
- Possible survey fatigue. There was a total of 65 questions on the presurvey, which took participants 7-10 minutes to complete. This may have influenced responses on the program evaluation
- Lack of tools available to measure generational attributes, especially related to nursing professionalism.

CONCLUSION

- This study is the first to look at the generational attributes as they relate to nursing professionalism and specialty certification
- Organizations need to identify resources to assist the clinical nurse in obtaining certification.
- Further studies need to address questions raised by this project related to variables that may influence professionalism and generational attributes.

REFERENCES

- available upon request