

Title: Clinical Leadership and Critical Care Preceptor's Self-Efficacy

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Purpose and Rationale: The Preceptor Model is used to promote successful integration and transition of RNs into the workplace. Leadership behaviors and confidence in the role are critical attributes of RNs who serve as preceptors. The study purpose was to examine the relationship between the leadership behaviors of critical care preceptors and their self-efficacy practicing in this role.

Research Questions: Is there a relationship between critical care nurse preceptor's leadership behaviors and their self-efficacy practicing in this role?

Synthesis of Literature: Critical care (CC) workforce turnover creates an unstable environment. The provision of an effective orientation/transition of new nurses by well-prepared preceptors is key to minimizing turnover. Heightened self-efficacy of preceptors fosters leadership practices and influences the experience of the orientee. Self-efficacy is composed of four sources of information: Performance Accomplishments, Vicarious Experiences, Social Persuasion and Physiological/Emotional States.

Methods/Procedures: This study used a descriptive- correlational design with a convenience sample of 104 CC preceptors from 16 adult/pediatric CC areas of a large Magnet hospital. The study received human subjects' approval. Nurses accessed three study instruments via an on-line anonymous survey that included: The Critical Care Preceptor Information Form (CCPI) based on the four self-efficacy sources; Parsons' Preceptor Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (PSEQ) with scores ranging from 20 to 80 and higher scores indicate higher self-efficacy; and Patrick's Clinical Leadership Survey (CLS) with scores ranging from 15 to 75 and higher scores indicate higher leadership behaviors. Pearson correlation test was used to examine the relationship between the CLS and PSEQ.

Results: Most of the nurses were female (91.3%) with a mean age of 43.2 years.

Preceptors' Performance Accomplishments included serving as a preceptor in the last two years (90%), BSN/Master's prepared (75%), attended a leadership class (67.3%), attended preceptor program (49%), and certified (47.1%). On average, they had ≥ 10 years of experience as CC nurses (14.9 years) and preceptors (12.3 years).

With regard to Vicarious Experience, 86.5% of preceptors agreed that they had a strong clinical role model and 77% were satisfied with their preceptor experience during their orientation.

Most preceptors were selected by their managers (83.7%), whereas, 14.4% volunteered and 1.9% were encouraged by their peers to become preceptors, which constitutes Social Persuasion.

Most agreed being a preceptor gave them professional satisfaction (84.7%), felt it was mentally exhausting (57.7%), stressful (56.7%) and anxious (17.3%). These perceptions reflect the Physiological/Emotional States.

A significant correlation was found between the mean scores on the CLS (69.95) and the Preceptor's Self-efficacy Questionnaire (69.93) ($r = .37, p < .01$).

Discussion/Application to Practice:

This study was first of its kind to examine the relationship between clinical leadership and self-efficacy of CC nurse preceptors. A statistically significant relationship between preceptors' leadership behaviors and self-efficacy was found. These results support the notion that strong clinical leadership behaviors and strong self-efficacy of preceptors have relevance toward successful development of a new generation of CC nurses, but will require further study.