Purpose

To depict the relationship between experience/age and psychological empowerment and to illustrate the importance of continued leadership development to strengthen leader PE.

Background

Psychological empowerment (PE) fosters a proactive approach to life, knowledge about how to achieve goals, and an understanding of how to cope in the sociopolitical environment. (Zimmerman, 1995).

A PE person “believes that he or she has the capability to influence a given context (interpersonal component), understands how the system works in that context (interactional component), and engages in behaviors to exert control in the context (behavioral component)” (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 590).

PE can be considered a motivational construct reflecting an active orientation toward one’s work that included four aspects: meaning, competence, self-determination (autonomy) and impact (Meng, Jin, & Guo, 2016; Spreitzer, 1995). Meaning refers to the association between work goals, beliefs, and values. Competence relates to beliefs about work effectiveness based on acquired skills. Autonomy or self-determination refers to perceived control, and impact relates to the influence one thinks they have over work situations or decisions (Spreitzer, 1995).

Methods

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design using an online survey.

- PE was measured using two scales, a ten item PE instrument (Hampton, 1996) that consisted of two dimensions (Cronbach’s alpha .91 for this study) and a 12 item PE instrument (Spreitzer, 1995). The 12 item PE in the workplace scale measures a motivation construct composed of four sub-dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact.
- A literature review was done to determine the impact of leadership development education on PE.

Results

- Participants for this study included 170 nurses (95% female and 5% male) that were either Executive Nsg Leaders (n=62, 37%), Directors (n=65, 38%), or Nurse Managers (n=43; 25%).
- Average age of participants was 53.5 years (SD = 8.8), and the range was from 27 to 76 years.
- Nearly all participants were White/Caucasian (92%) or Black/African American (5%); the remaining 3% of nurse leaders were either Asian, Hispanic, or indicated more than one race.
- Age was positively associated with PE. The correlation between age and PE, as measured by the Spreitzer PE scale was as follows: overall PE (r = .27, p = .0004); competence (r = .29, p < .0001); meaning (r = .24, p < .001); self-determination (r = .16, p = .04); and impact (r = .22, p = .004). The correlation between age and PE as measured by the Hampton PE scale was .15 (p = .05).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables (n=170)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scale Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PE, Spreitzer</td>
<td>70.59</td>
<td>9.54</td>
<td>12-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>18.05</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>3-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-determination</td>
<td>17.22</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>16.81</td>
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<td>3-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE, Hampton</td>
<td>59.03</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>10-70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion & Implications for Practice

- PE is an evolving leader strength that can change over time.
- Continual efforts to foster PE of today’s nurse leaders is critically important to enable them to be successful in the challenging healthcare landscape (Spencer & McLaren, 2016).
- Education focused on empowerment leads to increased self-reported use of empowering behaviors, the employment of empowering behaviors when working with others (MacPhee et al, 2014; MacPhee, Shelton-Green, Bouthillette, & Suryaprakash, 2012), and a more committed workforce (Dahinden et al, 2014).

References