Development of Psychological Empowerment Over Time and With Experience

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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. Empowered individuals gain mastery over their lives and have higher perceptions of personal control (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 is a dynamic variable that can change over time; people may become more empowered over time and after varied life experiences (Zimmerman, 1995).

In relation to leadership, 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).

Aims:

This presentation will be focused on the relationship between experience/age and the development of PE, in addition to the importance of continued leadership development to strengthen leader PE.

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. These cognitions reflect an active orientation to work where the person feels able to shape their work. This scale has been used in more than 50 studies and has been demonstrated to have good reliability and validity. A literature review was also done to determine the impact of leadership development education on PE.

Results:

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). 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 (Dahinten et al, 2014).
Conclusion:

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). PE has been positively correlated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ouyang, Zhou, & Qu, 2015), and is thus important for focus in leadership development programs.

Title:

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Keywords:

age/experience, nursing leaders and psychological empowerment

References:


**Abstract Summary:**

This presentation will outline results of a cross-sectional descriptive study focused on the relationship between experience/age and psychological empowerment (PE). The importance of continued leadership development to strengthen leader PE also will be discussed. Continual efforts to foster PE is critically important to enable leaders to be successful.

**Content Outline:**

**POSTER (detail as outlined in abstract)**

Introduction: Why psychological empowerment (PE) is important

Literature Review/Background: Definition and study findings that demonstrate the value of PE

Aim/Purpose: Relationship between experience/age and the development of PE, in addition to the importance of continued leadership development to strengthen leader PE

Methodology: 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 and a 12 item PE instrument (Spreitzer, 1995); literature review was also done to determine the impact of leadership development education on PE

Results, including table; Age was positively associated with PE. Education focused on empowerment leads to increased self-reported use of empowering behaviors and the employment of empowering behaviors when working with others--both which have positive organizational impacts.

Limitations

Conclusions/Implications for Practice: Continual efforts to foster PE of today’s nurse leaders is critically important to enable them to be successful in today’s challenging healthcare landscape.

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