Develop Nursing Research Leaders: A Clinical Nurse Profile and Motivating Factors

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Background
Engaging in nursing research is one area of professional practice that nurses need to develop throughout their careers. Nursing research informs clinical practice and is essential to generate the scientific foundation for the nursing profession (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2006). Additionally, nurses have an ethical obligation to participate in scholarly inquiry as mandated in the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses (ANA, 2015). While there is a plethora of evidence detailing the numerous barriers to clinical nurse engagement in nursing research, little exists about what motivates nurses to be interested and/or engaged in research.

Purpose
There were three study purposes: to gain an understanding of what motivates clinical nurses to be interested and/or engaged in research, to describe the motivators of clinical nurses who are interested and/or engaged in research, and to identify the common characteristics of clinical nurses who are interested and/or engaged in research.

Theoretical Framework
Vroom’s Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) guided the study. The framework offers a process model for describing differences in the motivation of individuals and includes three variables which form a multiplicative equation explaining an individual’s motivational force: expectancy (the belief that higher performance leads to better outcomes); instrumentality (or the individual's belief in their ability to perform well enough in order to receive a desired reward); and valence (which refers to the importance, attractiveness, desirability or anticipated satisfaction with achieving outcomes or the performance of the individual) (Purvis, Zagencyzyk, & McCray, 2015).

Methods
Design: Interpretive, descriptive qualitative.
Participants: Purposive and network sampling of nurses (\(N = 34\)) who self-identified as engaged or interested in nursing research activities. The majority were Caucasian, female, employed full-time, and held a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. Participants' ages ranged from 22-61 years and they worked clinically in a variety of settings (e.g., medicine, oncology, emergency, and critical care).

Setting: Three academic hospitals, three community hospitals, and one home health facility.

Data Collection: Individual interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide and transcribed verbatim. Data were saturated.

Analytical Approach: Qualitative content and thematic analysis.

Results
Analysis of the data revealed four themes. Nurses who engage in research activities are motivated by solving problems, feeling empowered, legitimizing the profession, and extending their practice beyond the bedside to its fullest potential. A profile emerged of clinical nurses who are interested and/or engaged in nursing research. The following characteristics constitute the profile: curious, inquisitive, systematic, analytic/data driven, nerdy/geeky, lifelong learner, problem solver; eager to learn and teach others; innovative and collaborative; takes initiative and likely to say "yes"; passionate about improving healthcare processes of care; and personally thrives with intellectual stimulation.

Conclusions & Implications
Organizations need to identify and actively support nurses who fit the inquiry profile rendered by the participants. Nurse leaders are in a prime position to facilitate clinical nurses' engagement in nursing research by using this information to offer opportunities and design instruction to help nurses process theories, acquire knowledge, new behaviors, and perform new skills. Engaging nurses in more analytical and evaluative thought in problem solving may generate additional scholarly inquiry as well as the perception that the consequences of their work is rewarding.

Clinical nurses who engage in or are interested in nursing research should be encouraged, supported, and provided with opportunities that are of interest to them and that contribute to patient outcomes and the professional growth of the nurse and discipline. Additionally, through research engagement, nurses are able to have a voice and contribute equally at the intradisciplinary table thus adding to healthcare through the nursing lens. Leaders are in positions to assist clinical nurses to ignite their passion for and engage in nursing research activities.

Title:
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Keywords:
nursing leadership, nursing research and organizational issues

References:


**Abstract Summary:**
This educational activity reports on the results from an interpretive descriptive study. Data illustrate what motivates a clinical nurse to be interested and/or engaged in research. Findings include a clinical nurse profile that nursing leaders can use to develop future leaders in nursing research.
Content Outline:

I. Background
   1. The presenter will introduce nursing research as an area of professional practice, highlighting the ethical obligation outlined by the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses.
   2. The presenter will cover the challenges and barriers related to developing nursing leaders with respect to research related activities.

II. Purpose and Theoretical Framework
   1. The presenter will introduce the three purposes of the qualitative research study.
   2. The presenter will review Vroom’s Expectancy Theory as the framework for this research project.
      1) The presenter will share the semi-structured interview guide which was developed using the theoretical framework.

III. Methods
   1. The presenter will describe the study methods.
      1) The study design and recruitment strategies will be reviewed.
      2) The study sample and data collection methods will be discussed.
   B. The presenter will review the data analysis procedures.
      1) The descriptive statistics of the sample will be shown.
      2) Trustworthiness and rigor of the qualitative interviews will be discussed.

IV. Results and Conclusion
   1. The presenter will discuss the study findings as they relate to the three study aims.
      1) The four themes of the how and why behind clinical nurses’ interest and/or engagement in nursing research will be reviewed.
      2) A table of motivators with participant quotes will be shown to describe elements that motivated a clinical nurse to be interest and/or engaged in research.
      3) The clinical nurse profile will be reviewed. This profile is one that nursing leaders can use to identify clinical nurses who may be ideal candidates for the development of future leaders within the field of nursing research.
   B. The presenter will cover the limitations of the study.
      1) The limitations that will be pointed out relate to the limited geographical region of the research and the self-identified nature of the participant recruitment.
   C. The presenter will close with a discussion about implications for nurse leaders.
      1) Nurse leaders are pivotal in presenting research opportunities to clinical staff. Institutions must create and support infrastructure that increases professional development and provides research opportunities.
      2) A finding in their data revealed that if a nurse considered a continuing professional development activity as “important” then they were highly likely to pursue it. This would support nurse leaders allowing clinical nurses to select topics of interest for potential projects as long as they aligned with health system strategic priorities, organizational goals, and patient care outcomes.
      3) Having clinical nurses involved in nursing research early in their careers may provide a foundation for succession planning. Nursing leadership may also consider using the annual assessment of the clinical nurse’s professional goals and career trajectory to
provide relevant research opportunities to interested nurses across the continuum of care.

4) Participants shared that they enjoyed the social interaction and learning that occurred during scholarly projects and research related activities. Linking nurses who are motivated by an interest in research with others, both inter- and intradisciplinary, may enhance professional outcomes.

5) Organizations need to identify and actively support nurses who fit the inquiry profile rendered by the participants. Nurse leaders are in a prime position to facilitate clinical nurses’ engagement in nursing research by using this information to offer opportunities and design instruction to help nurses process theories, acquire knowledge, new behaviors, and perform new skills.

First Primary Presenting Author

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**Author Summary:** As the Research Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Scala MSN/MBA, RN, HNB-BC supports and mentors clinical nurses in the three forms of scholarly inquiry. Additionally, she has developed, conducted and published research of her own. A Johns Hopkins prepared nurse, Elizabeth is here today to discuss motivators for nursing research and a professional profile for potential nurses interested in and/or engaged in research.

Second Author

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**Author Summary:** Rowena Milburn has a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree in Pediatric Acute Care. Dr. Milburn serves as a leader, mentor, educator and staff nurse at Sibley Memorial Hospital/Johns Hopkins Medicine. She is also an adjunct clinical nursing faculty at Georgetown University. She is passionate about the delivery of clinical excellence and compassionate care. She consistently strives to inspire nursing students, new and seasoned nurses to become engaged in nursing research and clinical scholarly work.

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**Author Summary:** Sr. Director, Transitions and Patient Experience, Johns Hopkins Home Care Group; Dr. Hohl has served in this role for over ten years. As a member of the executive team, she oversees care coordination for homebased services. Included in her responsibilities are patient satisfaction data reporting, lead customer service initiatives and liaison on home based service and safety/transition initiatives.

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