Perceptions of Certification Value by Nurses in an Orthopedic Hospital

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Background/Significance

- Musculoskeletal & mobility disorders are the most common chronic health disability affecting Americans today.¹
- Evidence-based care provided by qualified nurses is crucial to ensure superior patient outcomes.² ³
- Specialty certification is supported by the American Nurses Association (ANA).
- Certification has been shown to:
  - provide personal feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment, and validate specialized knowledge.
  - enhance perception of empowerment and outcomes of empowerment⁴ ⁵
- Rates of certification vary significantly across hospitals, units, education levels and years of experience.
- Strategies to increase certification attainment remains elusive.⁷ ⁸ ⁹
- No research regarding perception of the value of certification on the orthopedic nurse population has been conducted.

Purpose

To examine the perceived values of specialty certification and empowerment held among registered nurses at a major orthopedic teaching institution.

Method

- Cross-sectional survey study
  - Convenience sampling of 406 nurses
  - 107 responses received (26.3%)
- Responses analyzed based on nurses’ certification status and other demographic characteristics
- Fisher’s Exact Test, linear regression, and one-way ANOVA were used
- Alpha-level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance

Results (n=107)

Value Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | P-Value
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Certification demonstrates professional commitment and benefits to the nursing profession | 105 | 5.7 | 40.9 | 41.9 | 11.4
Certification validates specialized clinical knowledge | 107 | 11.6 | 64.1 | 23.3 | 1.0
Obtaining certification is one of the most challenging aspects of nursing | 107 | 1.9 | 32.7 | 54.8 | 10.6
Certified nurses have more professional autonomy | 103 | 11.6 | 64.1 | 23.3 | 1.0
Consumers are more confident in certified nurses | 105 | 5.7 | 40.9 | 41.9 | 11.4
Other medical professionals more likely to listen to certified nurses | 105 | 8.6 | 57.1 | 29.5 | 4.8
Certified nurses are given more professional recognition from peers | 105 | 8.6 | 57.1 | 29.5 | 4.8
Certified nurses generally make more money | 104 | 18.3 | 50 | 31.7 | 0
Employers tend to favor hiring certified nurses | 104 | 1.9 | 32.7 | 54.8 | 10.6
Certified nurses have more intrinsic value | 103 | 11.6 | 64.1 | 23.3 | 1.0
Nurses that have obtained certification feel a strong sense of accomplishment | 107 | 9.3 | 49.5 | 33.6 | 7.5
Certified nurses are more competent | 107 | 4.7 | 5.6 | 56.1 | 33.6
Certification validates specialized clinical knowledge | 107 | 4.7 | 5.6 | 56.1 | 33.6
Certified nurses have more self-esteem | 107 | 4.7 | 5.6 | 56.1 | 33.6
Certified nurses have more informal power | 105 | 0 | 7.5 | 62.3 | 30.2
Nurses holding higher educational degrees, current certification and self-identified as leadership (p=0.001) worked in a certified role (p=0.001) showed found to be statistically significant of intrinsic scores.

Theories

- Benner’s Novice to Expert Model
- Structural Empowerment Model

Tools

- The Perceived Values of Certification Tool – 12 (PVCT-12)
- Measures intrinsic (IV) and extrinsic values (EV)
- The Conditions for Work Effectiveness Questionnaire I and II (CWEQ-II)
- Measures the concept of structural empowerment (SE)

Outcomes

- Predominantly female (89%),
- 52 years of age or older (45%)
- Bachelor’s degree in nursing (64%)
- Age, experience, higher degree and working in certified role were all statistically significant when separated by certification status.
- PVCT-12: higher educational degree (p=0.035) current certification (p=0.001) working in a certified role (p=0.001) self-identified as leadership (p=0.02) showed statistically significant of intrinsic scores.
- CWEQ-II: higher educational degree (p=0.01) current certification (p=0.001) working in a certified role (p=0.006) self-identified as leadership (p=0.001) showed statistically significant informal power scores.

Conclusion/Implementation for Practice

- Certification demonstrates professional commitment and benefits institutions who employ certified nurses.
- Characteristics of nurses and how they perceive certification value were identified.
- Nurses holding higher educational degrees, current certification and working in certified role or identifying as leadership were more internally motivated and perceived to hold higher informal power.
- Higher experienced and empowered cohort of nurses are preparing to retire.
- Findings may assist institutions towards focusing resources on identified groups of nurses.

References upon request