Leaders of Innovation in Nursing: Key Characteristics

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Objectives

1. Describe the 5 themes of the unique characteristics of leaders of innovation in nursing.

2. Identify several of the 26 innovation competencies in this study.

3. Discuss several practice implications as a result of the findings from this study.
Background

- Healthcare organizations are faced with tumultuous challenges including healthcare reform that will be repealed and replaced with an unknown entity, increasing patient complexity, emerging technology and the need to simultaneously manage quality and cost.
- Innovation is essential in creating new approaches to care delivery models, transitions of care, staff engagement etc.
There is no lack of innovators and recommendations for real innovation in healthcare. The real need is leaders who can lead innovation, individuals who understand the need to create a sustainable contemporary context for innovation and who can drive the structuring, operation, context, process, and dynamics of innovation in a constantly changing organizational frame.” Porter-O’Grady, T., & Malloch, K. 2009 (p.245-248).
Need for innovation leadership in today’s healthcare environment was identified in many sources.

Emphasis on the development of competencies to lead the introduction of innovation with skill and knowledge.

The American Organization of Nurse Executives has identified innovation in leadership as a research priority.

AONE, 2016
The purpose of the study was to identify the characteristics of leaders of innovation in nursing in order to develop competencies for nurse leader practice.

A panel of 38 US Nursing experts in the areas of leadership and innovation were identified for the study. Twenty-four actually participated (63% participatory rate).

Using literature from nursing, healthcare and business, 139 leadership descriptors were identified by us as researchers.
Overview Cont’d

- Delhi method using a 3 round online survey was used for data collection.
- In the first round study participants were asked to rate which behaviors were innovation leadership behaviors.
- In the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} round, participants were asked to differentiate between innovation and general leadership behaviors.
Results: Competencies

- Twenty-nine innovation leader behaviors were identified.
- Five themes were determined by the research team:
  - disruptive change
  - innovation and creativity,
  - design thinking,
  - risk taking
  - translating innovation into operations
Disruptive Change

- Positive open attitude towards change.
- Empowers others to be as creative as they can be.
- Uses knowledge and experience in process of innovation.
- Creates conditions/context for innovation to occur.
Innovation and Creativity

- Creates culture of innovation.
- Communicates the value of innovation.
- Holds high regard and value of innovation.
- Has optimism about the future and the unknown.
Design Thinking

- Simultaneous thinking in multiple domains.
- Utilizes design thinking.
- Emphasizes big picture thinking to stimulate ideas.
- Recognizes new patterns and insights.
- Engages in deep dive experiences to foster creativity.
- Able to think differently about work.
- Synthesizes ideas from different fields.
- Utilizes boundary spanning thinking.
- Uses experimentation.
- Does idea testing.
Risk Taking

- Positive deviance behaviors for innovation
- Asks the best questions
- Breaks open entrenched and intractable problems
- Able to embrace failure as opportunity to learn
- Able to make risky decisions
Translating Innovation to Operations

- Ensures the availability of financial resources for innovation work.
- Competent in translating innovation to operations.
- Implements new roles to address the new world order.
The Delphi method was a successful means to solicit input from experts in innovation in nursing and to reach consensus on competencies.

Experts indicated that this study was important to begin to define the competencies needed for leaders of innovation in nursing.
Practice Implications

- **Study findings:**
  - Enabled the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes/behaviors to guide curriculum development to educate nurse leaders in the area of innovation leadership in academic and practice settings.
  - Will assist current and future nurse leaders to embed innovation into the workplace across a variety of settings.
Practice implications

- Innovation leader competencies build upon a core of leadership competencies and experiences.
- Innovativeness index scores in CNOs is significantly related to the completion of more leadership courses (both continuing education and/or advanced education) and experiences implementing innovation.  
  
  Clement-O’Brien, Polit and Fitzpatrick, 2011
Further Implications

- Need to educate current nurse leaders to embed innovation into their settings.

- Use KSAs to develop an innovation curriculum to facilitate this education by first developing a scale and then testing for psychometric properties.

- Explore additional research about the impact that these behaviors have on clinical practice environments.

- Explore barriers to innovation among nurse leaders.
Disruptive Change: Example of KSA

Creates conditions for innovation to occur.

- **K** - Understands role that nursing leadership has in clarifying the meaning of innovation to the organization.
- **K** - Describes how strategic partnerships can facilitate innovation.
- **S** - Models a spirit of inquiry.
- **S** - Encourages challenges to existing practice.
- **S** - Creates an environment for creativity.
- **S** - Assesses readiness for innovation in the organization.
- **S** - Mentors others in the processes that promote innovation.
- **A** - Values conditions for innovation to occur.
Positive deviance behaviors for innovation.

- K - Understands that positive deviance behavior enables one to find more innovative solutions to an issue.
- K - Discerns that positive deviance behavior is facilitated by practicing the behavioral change rather than knowing about it.
- S - Reinforces the importance of practicing the innovative strategy rather than just knowing about it.
- S - Motivates others to adopt the positive deviance behaviors.
- S - Evaluates the scalability of the behavior to large numbers of people simultaneously.
- A - Values positive deviance thinking as a contribution to change.
- A - Appreciates that an uncommon behavior can be adopted because it is already practiced by a few within a certain context.
Next steps:

- We have completed Knowledge, Skill, Attitude statements (KSAs) for competency development and assessment tool for educational outcomes.
- Send out for expert review of KSAs.
- Contemplate the development of an instrument to measure these competencies and then test for psychometric properties.
- Dissemination (publications/presentations).
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