

New Graduate Nurse Perception of Competence Compared to Nurse Leadership: A Pilot Study

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1 Introduction

New graduate nurses face stress and challenges as they progress through the rigors of orientation and acclimate to their first year as a professional nurse. Health care organizations and academic institutions have indispensable roles in preparing competent entry-level nurses. Communication at healthcare organizational and academic levels is paramount to ensure that clinical expectations are understood and entry-level competencies are met (Berkow, et al., 2009).

2 Objectives

Primary - The purpose of this study is to examine the new graduate nurses’ perception of competence in comparison to the nurse leadership’s perception of new graduate nurse competence.

Secondary - Data analysis will incorporate recommendations for healthcare organizations and academic institutions. These recommendations will focus on strategies for preceptor role modeling and training, as well as preparation for nursing students in clinical experiences for entry into practice.

3 Methods

For the purposes of this study, new graduate nurses were defined as nurses with less than 12 months of experience (Berkow, et al., 2009). Nurse leaders were classified as: nurse directors, nurse managers, nurse educators, clinical nurse specialists, nurse preceptors and staff nurses with greater than two years experience. Data collection occurred within a 3 month period from both groups.

Inclusion criteria: New graduate nurses within 12 months post-orientation mid-level nursing leaders with direct contact on nursing units, and nurse preceptors.

Exclusion criteria: Graduate nurses over 12 months post-orientation, nurse leaders with no direct contact on nursing units, and nurses who have never precepted new graduate nurses.

Data was collected via a 10-15 minute web-based questionnaire using Survey Monkey. Participants consented to the study by completing the online anonymous survey through the Survey Monkey link provided via e-mail.

4 Results

The study included a total of 82 participants: 68 frontline nursing leaders and 14 new graduate nurses. Figure 1 shows that new graduate nurses perceived themselves as being more prepared in each of the core competencies compared to nurse leadership. However, for the competency areas of communication and professionalism, there was only a 2% difference in perception between nurse leaders and new graduate nurses. In addition, there was less than an 8% difference in the perception of preparedness in technical skills and clinical knowledge. The greatest difference in perception (20%) between new graduate nurses and nurse leaders was in the competency areas of critical thinking and management of responsibilities.

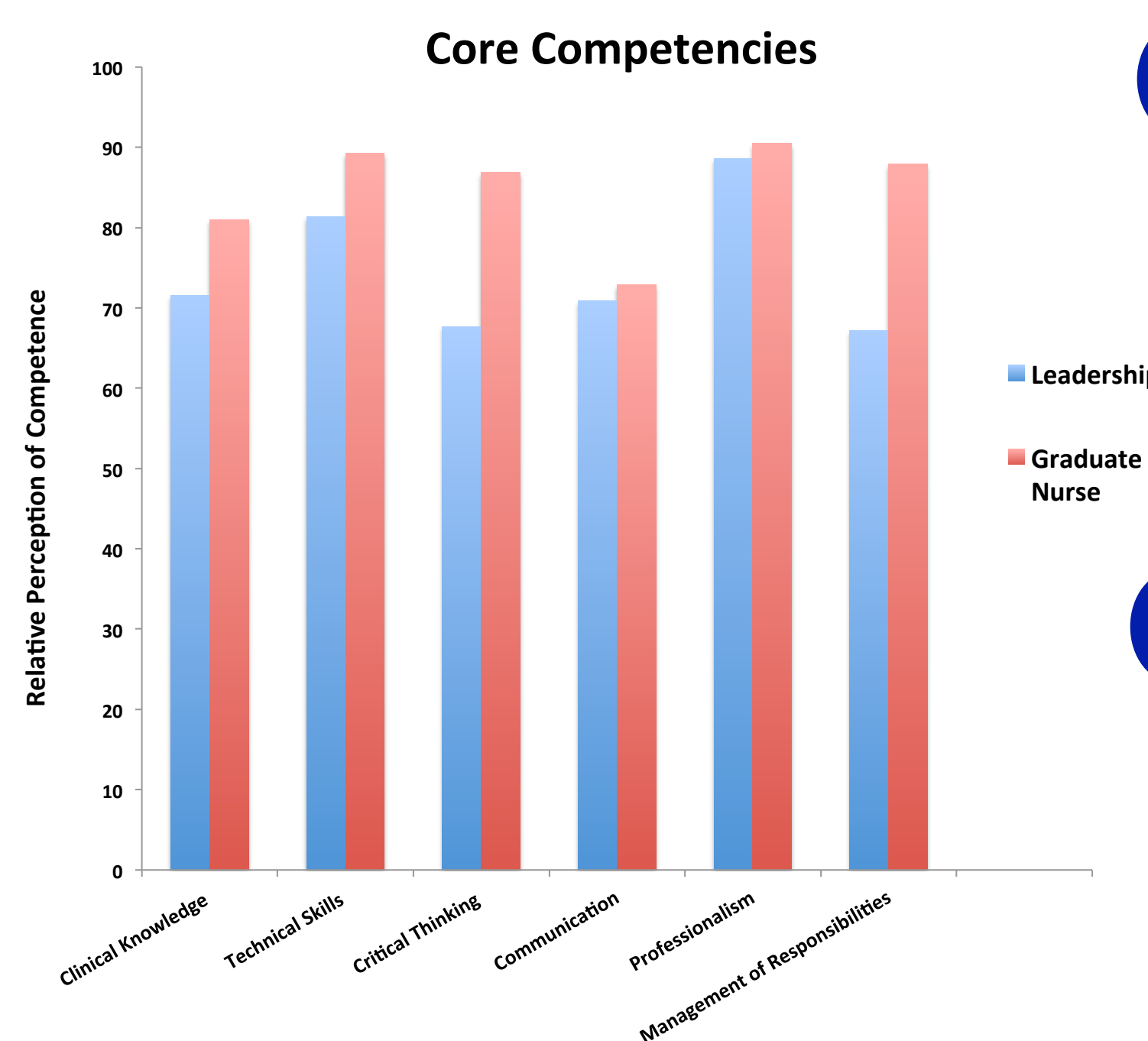


Figure 1. Perception of preparedness in six core competencies among nurse leadership and new graduate nurses.

Overall performance looked at the percentages of the six core competencies combined. Figure 2 shows similar perceptions of overall performance between nurse leadership (77.9%) and new graduate nurses (82.1%).

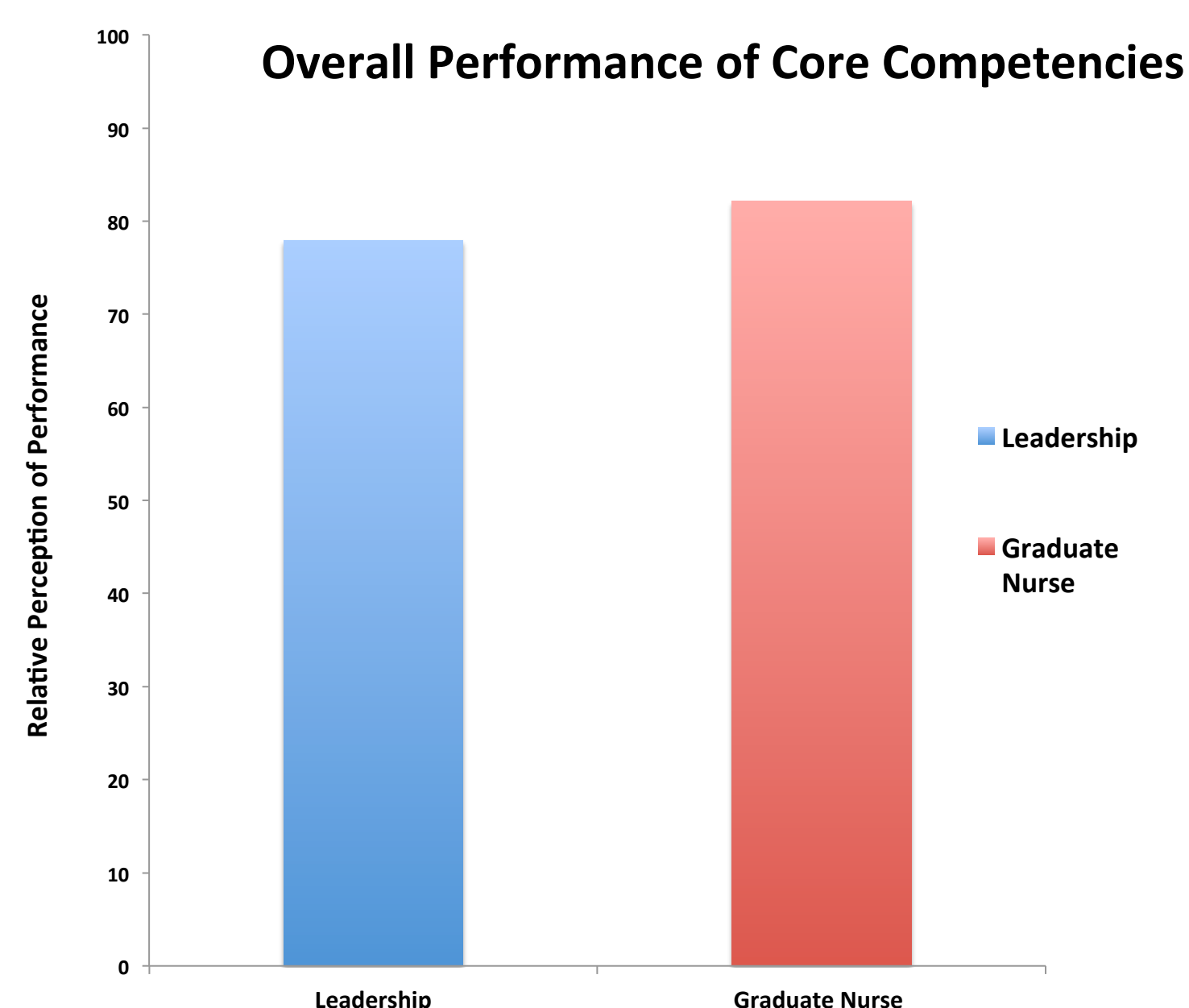


Figure 2. Perception of overall performance in core competencies between nurse leadership and new graduate nurses.

5 Conclusions

When looking at the six core competencies and the overall performance, there were similar perceptions among nurse leaders and new graduate nurses. Results showed perceived areas of readiness and unpreparedness, which lends insight regarding implementation to improve new graduate nurse orientation programs and preceptor training.

Limitations included small sample size, one hospital focus, and survey questions unanswered. In addition, new graduate nurses failed to identify with the defined role of “New Graduate Nurse” and instead chose “Staff Nurse” as their primary role.

6 Future Directions

1. Recommend strategies for nursing student clinical preparation for entry into practice at academic institutional level.
2. Recommend strategies for training preceptors at healthcare organization level for mentoring new graduate nurses in clinical experiences.

7 References

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Funding Source:

The Helene Fuld Leadership Program for the Advancement of Patient Care Quality and Safety



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