

Moral nursing leadership

nurse student perceptions and concept clarification on identity forming

Introduction

Demand for nurses is high due to:

- an aging population
- nurses leaving their jobs

Moral leadership could be an important key to retain nurses. Knowledge of how these concepts relate and how students apprehend them ensure a better understanding which can benefit nursing curricula.

Aim

To explore the perceptions of bachelor students on the concepts of professional identity and moral nursing leadership and what this means for (bachelor) nursing education.

Method

Explorative qualitative study with nurse students during a workshop (8 pairs semi-structured in-depth interviews and 3 focusgroups).

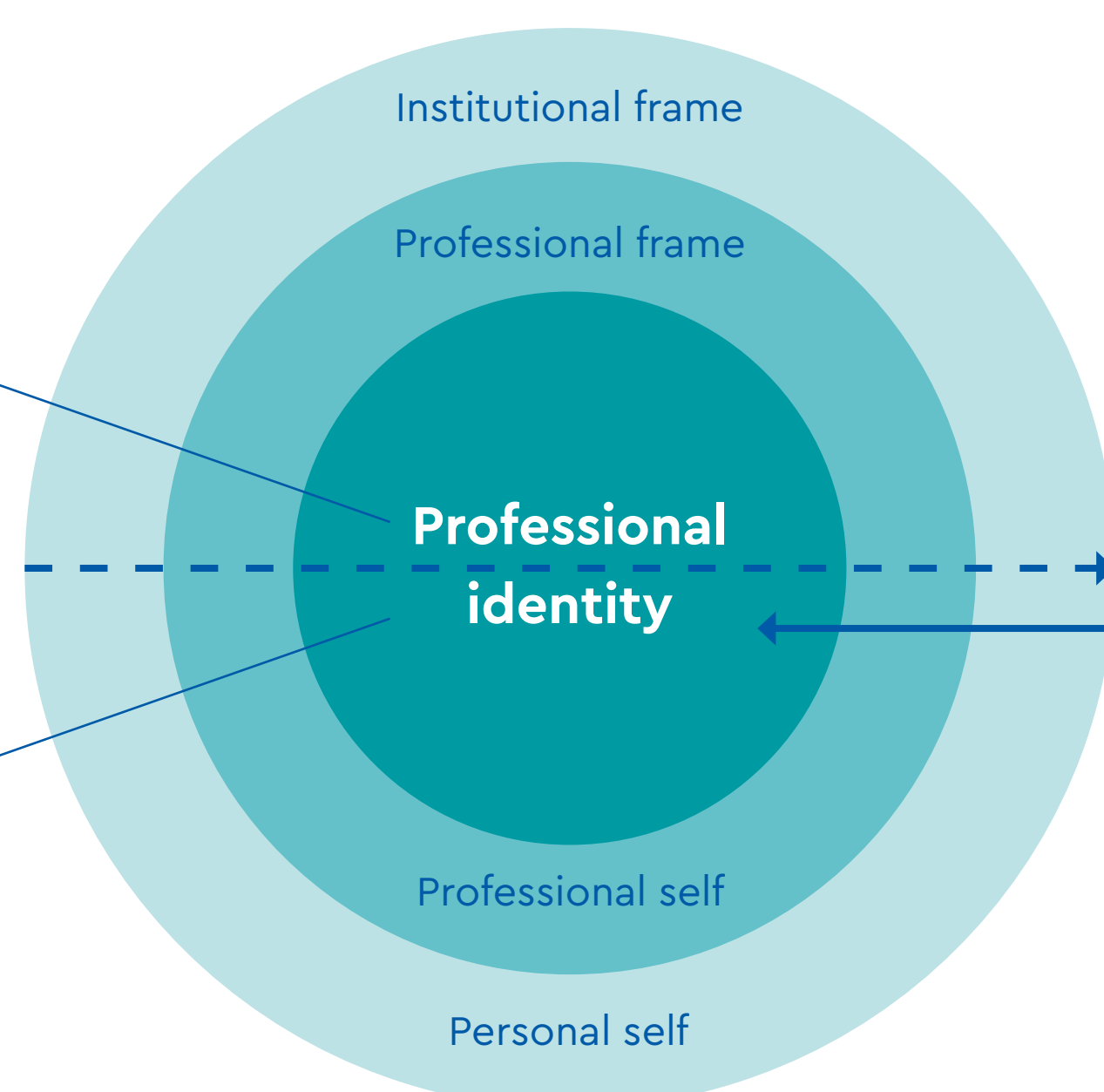
Results

- Professional identity and moral leadership are abstract concepts for students. Personal experiences were found supporting in understanding these concepts.
- Professional identity is seen as the underlying concept of moral leadership.
- Students find self awareness, self reflection and person centred care important professional values for both professional identity and moral leadership.
- Students mentioned only major ethical themes, like euthanasia and palliative care.
- The influence of the learning/work setting was mentioned several times;
 - Student coaching during internship inhibited or stimulated the development of professional identity and moral leadership.
 - Reflecting with peers helped to apprehend the concepts for students.

Professional identity: values and beliefs that guide thinking, actions and interactions

'Your personal identity, it is beautifully, like intertwined with your professional identity.'

'As an intern I just had to do the same as the supervisor without asking questions. Forming own values was therefore hard'



Moral leadership: exerting influence on doing the right thing

'Consciously standing up for your patient, wanting the best for the individual patient.'

'Providing care in an empathic and connecting way.'

'By discussing this I'm now aware of my responsibility in moral leadership.'

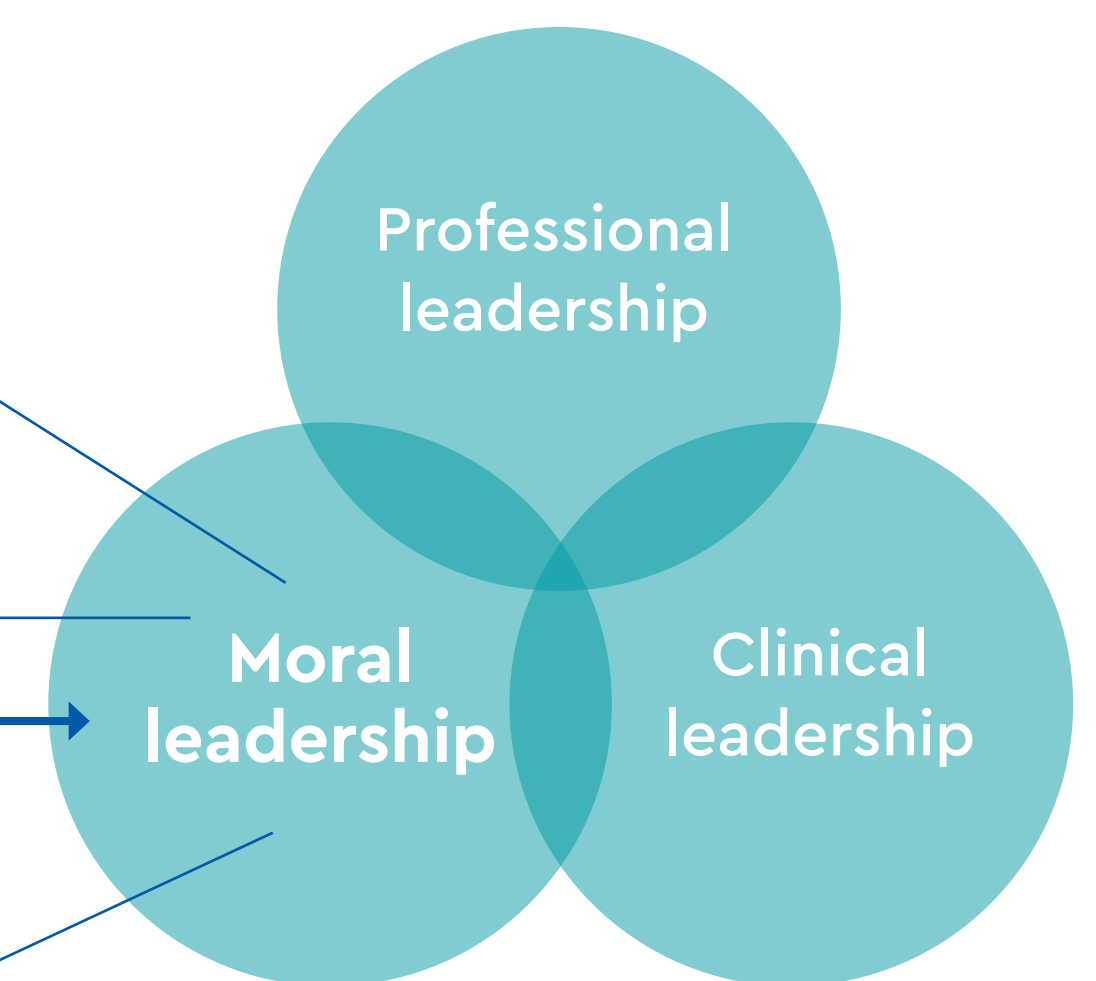


Figure. Professional identity model – M. Ruijters (2019), Leadership – Crigger, N. & Godfrey (2014)

References

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Conclusion and implications for practice

Professional values, such as self awareness, self reflection and person centred care are important drivers in developing nurses' professional identity and subsequently moral leadership.

Implication for education to form professional identity and moral leadership

- Use personal experiences to strengthen the comprehension
- Reflect in peer groups is essential to internalize professional values
- Focus on a safe and supportive learning environment
- Emphasize moral leadership in daily care



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