

2020

## Nursing Students' Perceptions About Membership in Professional Organizations

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Health Sciences

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Kimberly Seaman

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Nursing Students' Perceptions About Membership in Professional Organizations

by

Kimberly Seaman

MSN, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, 1991

BSN, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. 1985

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## Abstract

The importance of developing professionalism in the new nursing graduate has been discussed in the nursing literature and identified as a goal in the Future of Nursing competencies. However, the understanding of undergraduate nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations is unknown. This study was conducted to better understand nursing students' views of membership. Social identity theory was used to explain how membership in a professional organization promotes exposure and adaptation of preferred professional behaviors. Novice-to-expert theory was selected to explain the maturation process of professionalism in the new graduate. Twelve nursing students enrolled in an undergraduate nursing program participated in audiotaped, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. The collected data were analyzed using data analysis software. The two themes that emerged: Valuing membership in a professional organization and Hindering membership in a professional organization. The fear of failure as a hindrance to joining pre-professional organizations was an unexpected finding. Nursing education can use these themes to introduce the concept of professionalism in the undergraduate curriculum and to address barriers to membership. This study has implications for positive social change by promoting the development of professionalism in the new graduate. Future research could include repeating the data collection process over a broader geographical region. Additional investigation could include determining if a difference in joining a professional organization as a new graduate exists between various entry-level programs nursing programs.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Nursing organizations may be the foundation of professional development. Membership in professional organizations aligns with the American Nurses Association's (ANA) report, *Nursing scope and standards of practice* (2015). The standards outlined include professional development, career growth, networking, membership, service to the profession, and advocacy. According to Echevarria (2018), nursing organizations exist to further the profession. Membership can serve as a mechanism for the professional development of the nurse.

The Institute of Medicine *Future of nursing* report (2016) advised that professional nursing organizations embrace the task of developing nurse leaders. The document discussed that nurses are to be leaders in healthcare and that the role of leadership should include the new graduate. One strategy to refine the leadership skills of the nurse is to encourage membership in professional organizations (Matthews, 2012). Even with the acknowledgment of the need to include professionalism in nursing curricula and recognition of the benefits of participation in professional organizations, fewer than 10% of registered nurses belong to a professional organization (ANA, 2016; Black, 2014). A better understanding of the perceptions of nursing students about membership in professional organizations may help to promote the development of the value to join an organization upon entering the workforce.

There are no studies available that describe students' perceptions of belonging to a professional organization. This dissertation study is expected to fill that gap. The study may affect positive social change by identifying obstacles to participation in professional

organizations and developing strategies to decrease them. The purpose, problem statement, research questions, and conceptual frameworks selected are discussed. The scope and significance of understanding nursing students' perceptions are presented.

### **Background**

There is a gap in the literature on nursing students' perceptions about membership in professional nursing organizations. Most of the literature describes the benefits of belonging to a professional organization for the practicing nurse not the nursing student. Research by Morgan et al. (2014) provided an overall arching definition of professionalism, based on information provided by 27 nurse experts, which includes belonging to a professional organization. A positive outcome of membership is socialization into a new practice (Ares, 2013). The study by Ares (2013) focused on the new role for a master's prepared nurse entering the workforce. Ares wanted to understand better the factors that positively influenced well-socialized clinical nurse specialists (CNS). Various aspects of socialization were incorporated in the survey given to CNS students, which included membership in a professional organization. With membership, participants reported feeling more prepared to practice in the new CNS role.

The benefits of socializing the new graduate were explored by Feng and Tsai (2012), not in the context of membership in a professional organization but rather in a one-on-one setting. A qualitative, descriptive design was used to explore the socialization of the new graduate. Participants reported the socialization process into the nursing profession to be stressful. The findings of the study concluded that the new graduate felt more included if they could identify at least one individual as a resource.

The mentorship process in a one-on-one environment was also discussed by Ghadirian, Salsali, and Cheraghi (2014) as a benefit to membership in professional organizations.

Faculty and students identified membership in a professional organization as a behavior that is strongly associated with professionalism (Akhtar-Danesh et al., 2013). The article by Arreciado and Isla (2015) discussed the finding that nursing students were able to identify membership in a professional organization as a desired professional behavior but did not elicit a more in-depth explanation of the viewpoint. The dissertation study explored students' perceptions on a deeper level.

The concept of belonging to a professional organization that promotes professional development has been studied outside the discipline of nursing. The research findings generated suggest that membership in professional organizations is a behavior aligned with professionalism (Adam et al., 2013; Burford et al., 2014). These studies did not include students in the inquiry of what behaviors reflect professionalism.

Involvement in nursing student para-professional organizations has been reported to have a significant role in the development of leadership in the undergraduate learner (Lapidus-Graham, 2012). The investigator explored lived experiences of the nursing students' involvement in school-based nursing organizations, not viewpoints of membership in professional organizations. The dissertation study will focus on the viewpoints of the nursing student regarding membership in professional organizations.

### **Problem Statement**

Membership in professional organizations develops and sustains the growth of the individual and the advancement of the nursing profession. Goolsby and DuBois (2017)

credit membership in professional associations to encourage socialization, engagement, networking, mentorship, advocacy, policy, leadership development, research dissemination, professional development, and volunteerism. The competency of professionalism for the undergraduate is highlighted in several documents that include *the nurse of the future core competencies* (NOF, 2016) and *Essentials of baccalaureate education* (AACN, 2008). The benefits of membership in professional organizations include professional development, collaboration, and advancement of knowledge in the discipline (Michael et al., 2016). Esmaeili et al., (2013) explored factors influencing membership and non-membership of registered nurses in professional organizations and concluded that a reasonable cost of membership and perceived benefits to practice do contribute to participation in an organization.

Benefits of membership in professional organizations are documented in the literature, but less than ten percent of registered nurses report belonging to a professional organization (ANA, 2016). Nursing students identified membership in a professional organization as a desired professional behavior (Devine & Chin, 2018), and yet the statistic of less than ten percent demonstrating the behavior exists. A better understanding of students' perceptions of membership in organizations may promote the future investigation of strategies to encourage participation upon entering the workforce. The immediate and ongoing engagement of the new practitioner may encourage refinement in the skill of professionalism (Dinmohammadi et al., 2013). Further understanding of what nursing students believe and perceptions of membership in professional organizations may encourage nursing education to design curriculum

strategies that promote the new graduate in belonging to a professional organization. According to Benner's novice-to-expert theory (Benner,1982), competencies are developed as the learner experiences their practice. Knowing how to expose nursing students to future membership in a professional organization may increase their level of professionalism.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional nursing organizations. The study helped to inform about nursing students' views on benefits, challenges, and lived experiences regarding membership. A descriptive qualitative study approach was used to explore students' views of membership in professional organizations. The qualitative approach helped to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions and uncover possible strategies to increase membership in professional organizations upon entering the workforce. The inquiry into student perceptions of membership in professional organizations was justified in understanding better the challenges of engaging the student once they graduate. Understanding students' views on membership have the potential to develop strategies that encourage engagement in professional organizations. The participation of the new graduate in professional organizations may enhance professional behaviors during the transition to novice practitioners.

### **Research Question**

Research Question: What are the lived experiences of nursing students related to membership in a professional nursing organization?

### **Conceptual Framework for the Study**

Two conceptual frameworks were used to underpin the proposed study. The first framework is the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1974). The theory was developed by Henri Tajfel to help describe how a person views themselves is a result of the group to which they belong and that a group gives a sense of worth. Tajfel explained social identity as the portion of an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group. The identity connected with the group gives the individual ideas of expected behaviors and norms. One construct of Social Identity Theory is social identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The premise of social identification is that an individual strives to achieve a positive self-identity based on the beliefs, values, and norms of the group. The individual adopts the identity of the group and exhibits behaviors expected of the group. The use of Social Identity Theory may help to explain the benefits of membership in professional organizations as belonging to the group may promote expected professional behaviors.

The second framework under consideration was the Novice-to-Expert theory (Benner, 1982). The theory was developed by Patricia Benner in 1982 to provide a framework for assessing nurses' needs at different levels of professional growth. The focus of the theory is on how nurses acquire knowledge and skills with five levels of progression: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. Novice to expert theory explains how a nurse increases his or her level of practice by reflecting on experiences. Benner discussed that the novice nurse requires cues from others to guide their actions. According to Benner (2012), the feedback does not occur at the bedside.



Novice to expert theory helped to frame the need to promote membership in professional organizations to the undergraduate student to aid in their progress to expert as cues and feedback could occur with the interaction of more experienced practitioners.

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of the study was a basic qualitative research design. A qualitative approach was consistent with the purpose of better-understanding nursing student perceptions of membership in professional organizations (Thorne, 2016). Qualitative research studies describe views from the perspective of individuals and focus on their subjective experiences (Thorne, 2016). The study used a face-to-face interview technique for data collection. The research design aligned with the problem statement and research questions as the investigator will collect and analyze data through interviews to identify recurrent themes expressed by the participants.

### **Definitions**

*Professionalism* is defined as the specialized knowledge, skills, and behavior pattern displayed in a field (Charania et al., 2017). The term can also be used to describe values and attitudes toward patient care and leadership. Hutchinson (2017) discussed the components of professionalism being attitudes, ethical values, and a commitment to quality.

*Professional nursing organizations*, also referred to as *professional associations*, can be defined as a group of individuals that seek to promote a specific profession or its members (Echevarria, 2018). Professional organizations can also be described as

“vehicles to provide educational and leadership opportunities for the members” (Rosset al., 2014).

*Membership* is defined by Goolsby and DuBois (2017), as actively participating in the group and being engaged in the use of associated benefits. The authors go on to describe membership playing a role in establishing guidelines and norms for the individuals of the group. The definition of membership speaks to individuals actively participating in the organization.

### **Assumptions**

One assumption was that nursing students would answer the questions truthfully and fully describe their experiences. A second assumption was that nursing students value belonging to a professional organization. The third assumption was that the participants had some exposure to the role of professional organizations through the nursing school curriculum and had personal interactions with the organizations. These assumptions were necessary to investigate further views held by nursing students on membership in professional organizations.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of the study was to understand better perceptions held by nursing students on membership in professional organizations. Professionalism is a concept threaded through nursing undergraduate curriculums, and yet less than ten percent of registered nurses belong to a professional organization (American Nurses Association, 2016; Black, 2014). If nursing schools are introducing entry-level students to the concept of professionalism and professional organizations, then why do so few nurses belong to

professional organizations? A better understanding of the undergraduate's perception of membership in professional organizations may provide insight on how to better expose the nursing student to the concept of professionalism and the importance of membership in professional organizations. The study included nursing students enrolled in a pre-licensure entry-level to practice program in the Northeastern section of the United States. Nursing students will be interviewed on their views of membership in professional organizations and their personal experiences of engagement in their nursing student organizations.

Participants were recruited from attendees at the state-wide nursing student convention. Potential participants were in various levels of their program and did not have to belong to a nursing student organization to be considered for the study. Volunteer candidates for the study were contacted within one week to be provided information on the purpose of the study. Follow up occurred one week later to obtain consent for participation. Participants excluded from participation in the proposed study was any individual enrolled in the pre-licensure program that the researcher is currently employed as a faculty member. A better understanding of nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations may promote strategies to recruit the graduate nurse into professional associations.

### **Limitations**

A limitation of the study related to the design was the inability to determine if the story being presented reflects the participant's experience. A second limitation was the participant's desire to please the investigator due to perceived benefits since the

researcher is a faculty member working on an advanced degree. A third limitation was the data collection methodology of obtaining information from only one state in the Northeast region of the United States. The inclusion of participants from only one geographical location may decrease the transferability of the findings.

### **Significance**

Involvement in a professional association promotes the development of professionalism in the novice practitioner and their ability to deliver high quality, safe patient care (Diesi, 2018). The study is original as it addresses the views of the entry-level students on membership in professional associations (Reyes & Brown, 2018). The findings of the research may support professional nursing practice in understanding student views about membership. They may help to inform further inquiry for educational strategies to promote and increase engagement in professional organizations as a student and upon entering the workforce. Potential findings may lead to positive social change by providing nurse educators with a better understanding of how to support the standard of professionalism in the novice practitioner. Increasing the level of professional engagement as a student may lead to the practice of being engaged as a registered nurse.

### **Summary**

Membership in professional organizations is the foundation for professional development (Farina, 2016). The profession of nursing has been challenged to develop nurse leaders and to include the new graduate in leadership roles (Yoder, 2017). Professional development of an individual can occur through membership in professional

organizations (McGinni et al., 2016). Benefits of engagement in a professional nurse organization also include networking, mentorship, and service to the profession (Echevarria, 2018). Despite the positive outcomes of membership noted in the literature, there is a disparity between the number of registered nurses in the United States and membership in professional nursing organizations. Examining nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations may provide information on how to better expose the undergraduate student to the concepts of professionalism and the importance of membership in professional organizations. A better understanding of nursing students' views on membership in professional organizations may increase the likelihood of a graduate nurse engaging in a professional nursing organization. Chapter 2 will summarize the current state of the literature on nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive study was to understand better the perceptions that nursing students have on membership in professional nursing organizations. The Bureau of Labor reported 3 million registered nurses in the United States (United States Department of Labor, 2017). Several sources to include the ANA (2016) and Black (2014), presented information that less than ten percent of the nation's nurses are members of any professional organization. A better understanding of nursing students' views on membership in professional organizations may promote the new graduate engaging in professional organizations upon entering the workforce.

Nursing literature has several articles that discussed influences on professionalism. Yoder (2017) examined the influence nursing organizations may have on the development of professionalism, specifically of the new graduate. A sense of belonging by new graduates was explored by Borrott, Day, Sedgwick, and Levett-Jones (2016). The authors determined that new graduates reported an increase in feeling part of their new professional if the new nurses were members of a professional organization. Also, literature exists on what is viewed as professionalism in nursing. Martin and Waxman (2017) discussed the findings of a multi-generational survey that identified membership in a professional organization to be a benefit to nurses. Participants in all categories of age and length of practice reported the cost of membership and time commitment for participations as hindrances to join an organization. However, a gap in the research occurs in perceptions nursing students have on belonging to a professional organization. A better understanding of the views nursing students have about belonging to a professional organization may help to promote their involvement upon entering the workforce. Chapter 2 will cover the literature search strategy, social identity theory as the theoretical framework and novice-to-expert as the conceptual framework. Chapter 2 will also provide a review of current literature and a summary with conclusions.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The literature search was conducted using the search engines of CINAHL, ProQuest, and EBSCOhost. The Walden University library served as the primary database. The key search terms included *membership*, *professional organizations*, *professionalism*, *professional values*, and *nursing students*. The initial search with the

terms *professional organizations* and *nursing students* yielded 156 articles from the years 2013-2019. The use of additional search terms of *membership*, *professionalism*, and *professional values* was added to narrow the scope of inquiry to yield 71 resources. Articles older than five years old were included if relevant to the inquiry of nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations.

Qualitative and quantitative research designs were located and included in the literature review. Research findings were not found that directly explored the perceptions nursing students have on membership in professional organizations, and the search was expanded to non-nursing literature. Interdisciplinary literature was explored to determine the impact professional organizations have on the development of new graduates and were included in the review. Psychology, business, and other health-related professional journals were included.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) was the theoretical foundation selected for the inquiry into nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations. Social identity theory (SIT) was introduced to explain a person's sense of whom they are based on their group membership. SIT examines how members of a group view themselves in the context of group norms. The origins of Social identity theory suggest that an organization can influence the members by having the members derive their self-identity from the organization (Hogg et al., 2017). Social identity theory

was selected to connect how nurses can develop and refine their professional skills by aligning with a nursing organization.

### **Major Constructs**

Social identity theory has three primary constructs. The constructs are social categorization, social identity, and social comparison. The construct of social identity was used for the study. This construct helped to explain the concept of self comes from the group to which the individual belongs. The member adopts the identity, norms, and actions of the group. Engagement in a professional organization would promote the incorporation of the group's values into the individual's professional development (Goolsby & DuBois, 2017).

### **Literature Analysis of Theory Application**

Several researchers have used the social identity theory to explore the impact of group membership on the individual. Pearce (2011) used to SIT to explain the influence a group can have on an individual's awareness of their actions. The author discussed that membership in an organization might positively affect the ethical and legal judgment of a manager in a business environment. Pearce suggested the need to explore further how to encourage organizations best to use SIT to promote job-related values for the members positively. Social identity theory can help explain the process of the new graduate, increasing their level of professionalism and the associated skill set. If the new nurse aligns themselves with a professional organization, the adoption of related professional values may be promoted (Morgan et al., 2014).



The second application of social identity theory was also located in the business research literature. Baird et al. (2018) used to SIT to explain critical drivers of success in a business setting. The authors discussed that motivated participation in an organization helped the individual collaborate, achieve a higher level of effectiveness, and form a strong sense of who they are as a professional. The authors suggested further research to include a qualitative exploration with in-depth interviews to understand better enablers and distractors for an individual to be engaged in an organization. The proposed study consisted of semi-structured interviews to better understand the perceptions of nursing students on membership in professional organizations.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework selected to discuss the phenomenon of professional development that can occur due to membership in professional organizations is novice-to-expert (Benner, 1982). Benner's original work related to the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (Dreyfus, 1980). The five stages reflect the change in the level of practice based on experiences and reflection on the experiences. The stages are novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. In the novice stage, the individual has no experience regarding the behaviors they are expected to demonstrate. Novices are taught skills and rules that help them perform. The advanced beginner demonstrates an acceptable performance and base actions on previous experience. Those in the competent stage can deliberately plan for effective outcomes. The individual in the proficient stage can discern nuances of a situation and alter actions based on interruptions of the nuances. The expert practitioner, according to Benner, can use intuition based on past experiences.

The central concept of the novice-to-expert model is the development of expertise from a novice status. Professionalism is a skill that may evolve from a novice level to that of an expert through collaboration between nurse educators, nurse administrators, practicing nurses, and nursing students (Benner, 2012). The experience of collaboration may occur as a member of a professional nursing organization.

McNiesh et al. (2011) used the novice-to-expert model to explain the role faculty has in coaching students to a better understanding of professional roles and responsibilities. Sun et al. (2016) discussed the process of new nurses developing their professional identity through the stages of a novice to expert. The authors also identified that a well-developed professional identity might decrease stress in the work environment. The article also suggested the need for further research to determine how to best transition to expert status.

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of the literature review was to cite work that relates to the topic of research and highlight the gap in knowledge on the subject. Conclusions of both qualitative and quantitative research are included to provide knowledge on the concept of professionalism, professional organizations, and membership. Cited works outside of the accepted five-year parameter of inclusion were reviewed due to the lack of more current inquiry. All literature was reviewed to understand the current state of knowledge on the concepts better, validate the selection of a qualitative approach, and justify how the proposed study will address a gap in the nursing research literature.

## **Professionalism**

Professionalism is a broad term that incorporates perceptions, values, and development of the individual. Morgan et al. (2014) conducted a Delphi study to explore the attitudes and behaviors associated with professionalism. The study aimed to understand better how professionalism is demonstrated through actions and attitudes by the nurse. The methodology used was to survey via email a panel of 25 nationally identified nursing leaders outside of the United States. Quantitative data analysis indicated the highest-scoring attitude demonstrated by the nurse that reflects professionalism was trustworthiness (52%). One qualitative theme that emerged was the commitment to the development of self and others. The participants identified that the duty of professional development promotes practice to be evidence-based and practitioners to be competent. The strengths of the study incorporate the use of a Likert scale to rank behaviors to include membership in professional organizations. Weaknesses of the inquiry, as it applies to the study, are the participants were nurses and midwives outside of the United States. The participant pool for the proposed study is undergraduate nursing students in the northeastern region of the United States. The researchers concluded that further qualitative investigation into the theme of professional development of self and others might provide a more in-depth understanding of how professionalism can be achieved. The proposed study would investigate views held by nursing students on membership in professional organizations. Findings from the inquiry may expand the understanding of how membership in professional organizations helps to promote professionalism in the nurse.

A Q-methodology was used by Akhtar-Danesh et al. (2013) to identify viewpoints of professionalism held by faculty and nursing students. Nursing faculty and students were invited via email to participate. A total of 54 individuals (24 faculty and 30 nursing students) agreed to share their views on professionalism. The researchers used by-person factor analysis, and four factors were identified. The four viewpoints that emerged about professionalism were *humanists*, *portrayers*, *facilitators*, and *regulators*. *Facilitators* view professionalism includes not only standards of practice but also integrated a personal belief system and values. The aspect of values incorporated professional development and life-long learning.

The findings of the study discussed how both nursing faculty and nursing students prioritize their viewpoints on professionalism. Within the *facilitator* group, both faculty and students viewed involvement in a professional organization to be valuable in encouraging the professionalism of the individual. Additional research by the authors was suggested to include an inquiry to understand perceptions of professionalism better. The research design did not have the participants describe or explain their perceptions of how membership in nursing organizations encourage professional development. The research design for the proposed study is qualitative. The data collection will be conducted through the use of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews that will encourage the participant to describe and explain their world-view on membership in professional organizations.

In the quantitative study, “Professional Values and Career Choice of Nursing Students” (Alkaya et al., 2018), nursing students from the United States and Turkey completed the Nurses Professional Values Scale-Revise for analysis. Professional values were incorporated into undergraduate programs of both participant pools. American students scored slightly higher (109 out of a possible 130) than the Turkish students (101 out of a possible 130) on valuing participation in activities of professional nursing organizations. Based on the data, the authors suggested further research to determine more effective methods of delivering professional values education in nursing school curricula. The strengths of the study include having nursing students in two universities identify and rank values connected to nursing. A weakness of the study was that the nursing students who participated in the United States were only from one university. The proposed study will be open to participants from various entry-level programs. The proposed study will allow the participants to expand on their viewpoints regarding the value of participation in activities of the professional organization instead of just ranking the behaviors of membership and engagement in a nursing organization. Ayla et al., (2018), in their quantitative study, also used the Nurse Professional Values Survey to investigate the professional values of nursing students and the factors that affect these values. Participants consisted of first-year and fourth-year nursing students. Ayala et al. found a significant relationship between the level of the student in the nursing program and their value of participation in a professional organization. The fourth-year students indicated a higher value in the sub-scale of professionalism than the novice learner. The authors suggested the importance of engagement in professional organizations should be

introduced early in the nursing curriculum in order to cultivate the value of behaviors that promote professionalism. The researchers determined the need for an additional inquiry to determine what other factors affect professional values. The proposed study will explore the views of students on membership in professional organizations from a participant pool to reflect all levels of progression in a nursing program that may add to the knowledge base of understanding on the topic. The proposed study will be qualitative and encourage the participants to describe their viewpoints fully.

In a study conducted by Burford et al., (2014), the authors considered how students, educators, and practitioners view professionalism across three different health care professions. The three health care professions included in the study were occupational therapy, podiatry, and paramedics. Although not inclusive of nursing, the authors sought to answer the question of “What is professionalism?” (p. 370). Burford et al. used focus groups with a maximum of 10 participants in each session. One emergent code for defining professionalism was the need for ongoing development to refine the standard. When discussing factors that influence professionalism, a recurrent code noted was organizational involvement. Analytical themes highlighted from the data analysis included the concept that achieving professionalism is fluid, and what determines professionalism is contingent on organizational norms. The authors concluded that professionalism can be viewed as appropriate behaviors and that future research may focus on identifying organizational activities to support the development of the individual. The strengths of the study include identifying professionalism as being developed early in the participants’ practice. Weaknesses of the study consisted of the

participant pool, including non-nursing health care practitioners. Although the proposed study is qualitative in design, in-depth, face-to-face interviews will be used instead of focus groups. The proposed study will only include nursing students who were not part of the work by Burford et al.

### **Professional Organizations**

It is acknowledged that the nurse educator role has the responsibility for helping students develop as nurses and to learn to integrate expected values and behaviors. The National League for Nursing (NLN) in their *Scope and practice for academic nurse educators 2012 revision*, presented one of the core competencies for the nurse educator is to facilitate learner development and socialization (National League for Nursing, 2012). The review of literature produced several articles on the impact professional organizations may have on the individual member to include socializing the new nurse into the profession and helping the member develop a sense of professional identity.

**Socialization.** A concept analysis of professional socialization in nursing (Dinmohammadi et al., 2013) focused on how people learn the norms and behaviors necessary to participate in a new role. The study aimed to identify factors that may promote the process of professional socialization. The authors used the critical search words, *professional socialization*, *socialization*, and *nursing* to produce 47 articles, and four books for analysis. The authors acknowledged the complex process of professional socialization and delineated four attributes upon completion of the concept analysis. The four critical attributes were: professional socialization is a learning process, professional

socialization is an interactive process, professional socialization is a developmental process, and professional socialization is an adaptive process.

Under the attribute of a learning process for professional socialization, the authors recognized that skills and behaviors are learned from others. Dinmohammadi et al. (2013) concluded that the opportunity to learn norms and to become socialized into a new role is achieved through involvement in professional organizations. The authors offered the idea that the most favorable outcomes of socialization include creating a professional identity and improving the quality of care delivered. Dimohammadi et al. acknowledge that their research does not exhaust the inquiry on the process of socialization or the outcomes of socialization. The strengths of the study included the exploration of the process of professional socialization. The findings suggested the need for nursing education to provide experiences that promote the attribute of professionalism. One weakness of the study includes the inclusion period for the article review. Although published in 2013, the time frame used was 1995-2009. The proposed study will add more up to date information to the nursing body of knowledge of perceptions nursing students have on membership in professional organizations. The proposed research study may help to more fully inform positive and negative antecedents surrounding the engagement of the new practitioner in professional organizations.

Guerrero et al. (2017) examined the factors that increase new graduate nurses' commitment. A three-wave longitudinal design was done as nurses who entered the workforce and then twice after they started working. One aspect of professional



commitment was defined as a tie to the profession. The authors referred to work by Myer and Allen (1991) to further described the professional commitment as identification with and involvement in the profession. Guerrero et al. acknowledged that a strong professional commitment would most likely result in the development of a positive professional identity and increase the longevity of a new nurse in the profession (Chênevert et al., 2016). The authors examined what behaviors and attitudes might positively influence professional commitment. Guerrero et al. used a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) to measure work characteristics and attributes necessary for the successful socialization of the new nurse. Data analysis showed that membership in professional organizations and the perception of progressive socialization had a positive impact on a professional commitment by the new nurse. A high professional commitment was interpreted to be instrumental in nurse retention. Implications for further research were suggested to be focused on how employers can better encourage professional development. The strengths of the study include examining factors to increase new graduate nurses' professional commitment. Weaknesses consist of the participant pool being new graduates and not nursing students. Another weakness as it applies to the proposed study is the focus on how to promote professionalism in the new graduate to increase work retention rates. Although the study by Guerrero et al. has implications for employers, the proposed study could inform on viewpoints held by the entering workforce regarding engagement in professional organizations for both nurse educators and healthcare agencies.

**Professional Identity.** In 2015, Arreciado and Isla, in a qualitative ethnographic study, examined professional identity concerning a reference group of professionals. The investigators acknowledged that the process of designing a professional identity is dynamic and occurs over time. The investigator's reference work by Johnson et al. (2012) to discuss socialization aims to develop a professional identity. Arreciado and Isla used published work on the socialization of the new nurse to explore perceptions held by nursing students of influences on the process of constructing their professional identity.

The study population consisted of third-year nursing students. Participant observation was used to gather the information that was explored during focus groups. Results included the recurrent theme of a clinical mentor as a crucial figure in the socialization/development of a professional identity process. The individual was vital to the students' learning, which included values and attitudes and served as a role model. Those clinical mentors that were more engaged in professional organizations were perceived to be more credible in shaping the students' identities. The suggested further inquiry included an investigation into distinct teaching-learning strategies that could promote socialization and professional identity development of the nursing student. The proposed study will also include pre-licensure students but will not be limited to a certain level of achievement within a program. Data may be more transferable due to a broader representation of the participant pool. Although the focus of the proposed study does not address the suggested area for future research, findings may inform a better understanding of where the additional emphasis of professionalism and the importance of engagement in professional organizations should occur in the nursing curriculum.

## **Membership**

A sense of belonging may positively influence workplace satisfaction (Borrott et al., 2016). In their quantitative study, Borrott et al. explored views held by first-semester nursing students on their sense of belonging to the health care team in their assigned clinical placement. The participants reported a higher satisfaction of career choice if the learner felt part of the group and included. The proposed study will include participants across levels of entry-level nursing programs, thus may provide data that is more reflective of students since it will not just be limited to one level of progression. Borrott et al. concluded the need for future research to include inquiry of entry-level practitioners' sense of belongingness to the profession as a possible indicator of retention. A better understanding of student views on membership in professional organizations may help to encourage engagement in the organizations and promote a sense of belonging in the new nurse.

**Advancing the role of nursing.** In the qualitative study by Lapidus-Graham (2012), explored the lived experiences of practicing nurses who participated in student nurses associations during their pre-licensure program. The goal of the study was to identify themes that might influence nurses as they enter the profession. During individual interviews, the emerging themes were leadership, mentoring, empowerment, professionalism, sense of teamwork, and accountability.

The author suggested further inquiry using a different participant pool. It was suggested that findings of the research conducted might contribute to the professional

development of new nurses and assist faculty in understanding better the impact engagement in student nursing associations have on the development and socialization of the new practitioner. The dissertation study had a participant pool of undergraduate students, not licensed personnel. This study encouraged the students to describe their viewpoints of membership but not limited to only student nurses' associations.

Donmez and Ozsoy (2016) examined how nursing students develop professional values. The cross-sectional study included 416 students in a baccalaureate program that completed the Nurse Professional Values Scale-Revised (NPVS-R). Students who were members of professional organizations scored higher on the NPVS-R and were found to have stronger professional values. The authors concluded that understanding baccalaureate nursing students' attitudes about how professional values are developed would be the next step in creating teaching strategies on how to introduce and thread the concept of professionalism throughout nursing curricula. The proposed study will create a qualitative database of perceptions held by nursing students on membership in professional organizations. The proposed study will be more representative of nursing students as it will not be limited to baccalaureate enrolled participants.

**Professional behaviors.** The influence of professional organizations on the development of the new practitioner is not limited to nursing research literature. Although limited articles were found in the literature review process, Adam et al. (2013) examined how occupational therapists and physical therapists acquired new skills and attributes needed for a successful transition from student to practice through a systematic

review. The authors identified professional behaviors of reflection and evaluation as being essential for the student to demonstrate in the process of developing their practice. Adam et al. highlighted the need for the individual entering their chosen career to be engaged in professional activities to include membership in discipline related associations. The strengths of the study include examining professional attributes and behaviors for success to include membership in professional organizations. Weaknesses include the participant pool being new graduates from a non-nursing discipline. The authors suggested more research to include exploring how those entering the workforce could increase the effectiveness of their practice. The proposed study may provide insight into how membership in professional organizations assists the nursing student in their transition to practice.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

There is a significant amount of research in the nursing literature on professionalism, the benefits of membership in professional nursing organizations, and the need to socialize new nurses into the profession. Professional organizations are attributed to positively influence several aspects of professional development to include socialization, engagement, networking, mentorship, advocacy, policy, leadership development, research dissemination, and volunteerism (Goolsby & DuBois, 2017). However, no literature exists on how nursing students view membership in professional

organizations. Based on the review of the literature, the gap in the knowledge is that nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations have not been studied. The next chapter will discuss the research method and design. In chapter three, the role of the researcher, the interview tool, and participant recruitment will be considered. The rationale will be provided for the selection of qualitative research design.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of the proposed study was to gain an understanding of nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional nursing organizations. A qualitative approach was used to explore students' views of membership in professional organizations. Interpretation of data from face-to-face interviews was used to gain an understanding of students' views of membership in a professional organization. The inquiry into student perceptions of membership in professional organizations is justified in understanding better the challenges of engaging the student once they graduate.

Understanding students' views on membership have the potential to develop strategies that encourage engagement in professional organizations. The participation of the new graduate in professional organizations may enhance professional behaviors during the transition to novice practitioners.

In this section, the research questions are stated, and the rationale for using the qualitative research design approach discussed. The role of the researcher was addressed, and the methodology and issues of trustworthiness reviewed. Recruiting strategies, data collection details, and the plan for data analysis was and justified.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The research questions for the proposed study were as follows:

**Research Question:** What are the perceptions of nursing students about membership in professional organizations?

**Sub-Research Question:** What are the students' experiences with student para-professional organizations?

The central concepts of the study are professionalism, membership, and professional organizations. The first concept of professionalism can be defined as the competencies or skills expected of a professional (Yoder, 2017). Membership, as the second central concept of the proposed study, can be described as a sense of belonging that may positively influence workplace satisfaction (Borrott et al., 2016). The third concept, professional organizations, promotes socialization and development of professional identity (Guerrero et al., 2017). The focus of the study is to understand better the perceptions that nursing students hold regarding membership in professional

organizations. Increased understanding of nursing students' views may help to promote the participation of the new graduate in professional organizations as they transition into the novice practitioner.

The research tradition selected for the proposed study is a phenomenological qualitative approach. Phenomenological research provides the investigator with information on the lived experiences of the participants by allowing the individuals to explain and report their perceptions of an event or an experience (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Data was collected from the participants enrolled in an entry-level undergraduate program and through the process of analysis, gain a better understanding of their reported experiences. The qualitative research approach records data to reflect feelings, opinions, and experiences. A phenomenological qualitative design provides a framework to produce data to explore the viewpoints of the participants (Thorne, 2016). Quantitative methods were inappropriate for this study because of the need to better understand the perceptions of the nursing students, not cause and effect relationships.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher in the proposed study served as the interviewer of the participants. The qualitative design used the investigator as the instrument for data collection rather than the use of numbers (Holloway & Galvin, 2017). The role will be observer/participant as the researcher will be involved in collecting data through one-on-one interviews. The semi-structured interviews occurred at mutually agreed-upon locations. The researcher had no previous relationship with the participants or any supervisory or instructional power over the sample.



The participants were recruited from attendees at a yearly educational forum designed for nursing students. Students currently enrolled in the entry-level baccalaureate program in which the researcher is a full-time faculty member was not included in the available sampling pool. The omission of students enrolled in the same entry-level undergraduate program that the investigator is a faculty member minimized the possibility that the participants provided answers to please the interviewer. The exclusion criteria of participants known to the researcher helped to maintain a neutral balance of power between the investigator and participant. Attendees represented various entry levels into practice nursing programs.

### **Accounting for Bias**

To account for any researcher bias, the investigator kept a reflective journal on the process. Journaling promoted the researcher to identify any preconceived thoughts on data outcomes and highlight possible prejudices and biases (Sutton & Zubin, 2015). Reflective journaling was also used as a tool to explore the possible impact of the researcher's thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Beglinger et al. (2014) discussed the process of journaling as a means to ensure credibility and creating transparency in the research process.

### **Ethical Issues**

Students enrolled in the baccalaureate program in which the researcher is a faculty member were excluded to prevent any possible issues related to the researcher-participant relationship. The participants were assured confidentiality by assigning a number to each interview instead of names. The participants had an opportunity to review the interview

before being analyzed for data interpretation once the audiotaped interview is transcribed to text to ensure their reported experiences are recorded correctly. Confidentiality was maintained by having the participants' interviews and data analysis stored on a flash drive and backed up to a secure one drive that is only accessible by the investigator with the computer being located in a locked office.

An Interview Script will inform the participants how the information will be used (Appendix B). The script reminded the participants of the purpose of the study, what they were expected to do, that information collected was kept confidential, no actual names were used, and that the individual had the option not to participate in the interview. The possible participants will be reminded that they will not be penalized if they opt not to be part of the study. The participants were given time to ask questions and receive answers before the consent was distributed.

Informed consent was obtained by providing the participants the informed consent to read and sign. The consent form identified the purpose of the study as being a better understanding of nursing students' views on membership in a professional organization. The consent form included expectations of the participants, rights as a research participant, and the benefits of the study. The consent form clearly stated all necessary contact information and the benefits of the study. The consent form indicated that all participants could decide at any point not to continue with the study without penalty.

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection Logic**

The population for the study was students enrolled in a pre-licensure nursing program in the Northeastern region of the United States. Participants were selected from those students attending a regional nursing student conference. The purposive sampling approach was a nonprobability sampling technique used to choose participants from a population (Etikan et al., 2016). The purposive sampling design was chosen for the study because the approach focuses on the selection of individuals with specific characteristics in a targeted group of interest (Palinka et al., 2015). The sampling design was focused on the characteristics of the target group being undergraduate nursing students in the Northeast region of the United States. A nonprobability sampling technique can be used when the population is too large, and if the researcher has limited time and resources (Etikan et al., 2016). The criterion for selection was for the participants to be currently enrolled in an entry-level to practice nursing program. The undergraduate programs represented schools in the Northeast region of the United States. Demographic data was collected on the type of nursing program the participant was enrolled in and the level of progression in the nursing curriculum. The exclusion criteria were a student enrolled in the nursing program in which the investigator is a faculty member. The students meeting the exclusion criteria were identified based on their response to screening questions during the initial telephone or email contact.

The estimated number of participants was between 12-15 entry-level nursing students. The actual number of participants projected for the study was determined when

saturation was reached (Saunders et al., 2018). In a homogenous group, saturation can occur with approximately 12 participants (Carter et al., 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015). To ensure data saturation, the investigator interviewed 1-2 additional participants to confirm that no new information was identified relative to the phenomenon. The relationship between saturation and the sample size guides the investigator to maintain rigor in the data collection process (Saunders et al., 2018).

Participants were contacted via an informational/recruitment flyer that was provided as part of the registration literature at a regional nursing student nursing conference. Permission was obtained from the conference organizers to include the flyer with information regarding the proposed study in the conference bags before the students arrive. Various flyers and promotional items were in bags the students receive upon checking in the morning of the conference. The flyer included information on how to contact the investigator via a secure email if interested in learning more about the study. Individuals contacting the researcher to inquire about the study received a follow-up email or telephone call within one week to provide information on the purpose of the study, answer any questions, and screened to determine if they meet the criteria for participating in the study. Individuals who met the criteria and agreed to participate in the study were sent a demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaires were sent via email addresses provided by the participants or postal services if the student preferred that route. Individuals who responded to the demographic questionnaire were contacted by email to schedule a date for the interview. They were informed that the interview location must offer privacy so that the conversation would not be overheard.

## **Instrumentation**

The Interview Guide was developed with consideration of the gap identified in the literature as a lack of understanding of nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations. The Interview Guide included open-ended questions, thus prompting the participant to share their experiences (Appendix C) (Holloway & Galvin, 2017). The semi-structured interview aimed to elicit thoughtful responses to the question about nursing student perceptions of membership in professional organizations. The interview was audiotaped with participant consent.

Rigorous research is research that applies the appropriate tools to explore the purpose of the investigation (MacPhail, 2014). The interview questions were reviewed by published qualitative researchers that are known to the investigator. The individuals involved in the peer review process are employed at a research-one state university who work primarily with Ph.D. students in the nursing science division. They responded to questions related to the validity and clarity of the questions. Comments and suggestions were integrated into the revisions. Two pilot interviews were conducted to allow for participant feedback and to promote the researcher's skill set of collecting data. When an interview is selected for data collection, a pilot interview may help to highlight unclear questions, estimate the time for the interview, determine if all required questions are being asked, and increase the researcher's ability to conduct the interview (Dikko, 2016).

## **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment began after approval from Walden University IRB. Participants were included in the study once verbal and written permission was obtained from the individual. The recruitment flyer invited individuals attending a regional nursing student educational event to participate. The recruitment flyer helped to inform the potential participants about the purpose of the study, notify the compensation of a \$5 coffee gift card, and gave contact information. The first encounter consisted of contacting individuals who indicated an interest in the study. These individuals were screened via email to determine if the participation criteria were met. Individuals who do not meet the criteria for inclusion were thanked for their interest in the study. Persons meeting inclusion criteria were offered information on the purpose of the study, what they were expected to do, their time commitment, the voluntary nature of the study, their rights as a research participant, and that confidentiality would be maintained.

### **Participation**

Those interested individuals that met inclusion criteria and agreed to participate in the study consented to the study. After receiving the signed consent (Appendix E), the investigator arranged to meet the participants at a place and time that provided privacy for the face-to-face interview.

### **Data Collection**

The format of a face to face encounter, semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to ask the questions determined to be of importance for the topic but also gave

the freedom to explore any topics or themes the participant may present during the interview (Creswell, 2018). Oltmann (2016) discussed that face-to-face interviewing might be appropriate where the depth of meaning is essential, and the research is primarily focused on gaining insight and understanding. The audiotaped interview had an average time of 30-50 minutes. The debriefing process included asking if the participant had any additional information they would like to share. The transcribed interview was made available for the participant to review for accuracy.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

#### **Connection of Data to Research Questions**

The interview questions were designed to address the research questions. The research questions explore nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations. Interview questions included inquiry of the participants and their lived experiences of membership in a professional nursing organization.

In addition to the transcribed interview that was both hand-coded and analyzed with software, other data sources included memo notes taken during the interview sessions and the audiotaped interview. Both the memo notes and audiotape were used as a resource to ensure that all applicable data was reviewed. Transcribed audiotapes were available to the participant for review to ensure accuracy that the investigator captured the content of the message.

#### **Coding and Analysis Software**

The interview was audiotaped and transcribed via a text transcription application on a cell phone called, Temi. The data software program Temi is a speech to text

transcription product. The researcher must have a password to access the software. Once the audio is transcribed into text, the document is sent via email to the researcher. Temi does not store or save either the audio data or text transcription. After reviewing the transcribed data and comparing the text to the audiotape for accuracy, the transcribed discussion was provided to each participant to ensure that the transcribed text of the conversation was reflected accurately.

Data was organized from the participants into categories, and the categories were created as the researcher recognizes recurrent themes. Themes were induced by the data (Nowell et al., 2017). Data was coded and clustered into the appropriate category. Classifying data allowed the investigator to summarize and synthesize what occurred in the data (Saldana, 2016). Once categories were established, data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The Excel spreadsheet provided a visual to the investigator on how the clusters compare one to another for frequency. The data analysis software program, QDA MinerLite, was used after completing the Excel spreadsheet. The analysis program allowed for data to be imported from an Excel spreadsheet, provided a tree structure for categories, had a section for the investigator to add notes and searched data using Boolean phrases/words. Tables and charts were generated to aid in the interpretation of the data.

Qualitative data analysis software assists in transcription analysis, coding, and text interpretation (Creswell, 2018). Data analysis software can help the researcher to identify themes, create categories, recognize patterns, and manage the data (Bazeley, 2018). The researcher can color code categories to aid in clustering data and add memo



notes on the side of the transcribed audio interview. Hand coding and the use of software to classify data are two approaches in the organization of information collected in qualitative research. Monitoring occurred for the frequency of discrepant cases. Interview questions that are not well-designed may result in discrepant cases (Jamshed, 2014). Discrepant cases were included but may have increased the need for a higher number of participant interviews to reach saturation as it may have taken more data to ensure enough information was gathered to answer the research question (Lowe et al., 2018).

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

#### **Creditability**

Credibility refers to the truth of the data. The participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher is also a component of credibility (Cope, 2014). Creditability in qualitative research involves an assessment of the data to determine if the results represent an accurate and believable interpretation of the data (Cypress, 2017). The dimensions of trustworthiness were considered in the development of the study. Field notes were taken, interviews were audiotaped, and the participants were observed during the interview process. All perspectives of the participants were conveyed in the data analysis, including discrepant data. Triangulation added to the validity of the research (Johnson et al., 2017). The strategy of triangulation helped promote internal validity (Carter et al., 2014).

## **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Houghton et al., 2015).

Transferability was established by providing evidence that the findings of the study can be applied to other populations (Konradsen et al., 2017). Transferability was promoted by describing the participants so that comparisons can be made with other groups, identifying possible barriers of the sampling technique, and proposing future studies from the findings (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). The demographic questions will help to describe the participant's entry to practice program, participant's current semester in their program, and financial support, if any, given to the participant by the nursing school for membership in a professional organization. Upon completion of the study, potential future research is discussed in Chapter 5.

## **Dependability and Confirmability**

Ivey (2017) discussed that dependability relates to the primary challenge that research needs to be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques. The interview process was refined by practicing the delivery of the interview questions to increase the likelihood of dependability. Dependability was demonstrated by having the identified themes and categories reviewed for any missed content by a published qualitative nurse researcher known to the investigator. Confirmability has the purpose of verifying that participants shape the findings instead of the researcher (Thorne, 2016). The plan for the study to achieve confirmability was to create an audit trail. The audit trail technique is used to establish confirmability because of the usefulness when writing

up the results of the study. The purpose of the audit trail is to provide a transparent description of the research from beginning to conclusion (Holloway & Galvin, 2017). The investigator records what topics were recurrent during the data collection, codes are assigned, and themes identified.

Reflexivity is another technique that was implemented to provide confirmability to the study. Reflexivity is an attitude that a qualitative researcher adopts when collecting and analyzing the data. Reflexivity is vital for reflecting on biases and preconceptions so that the research does not make a biased interpretation of data (Holcomb, 2015). The process of bracketing was used to set aside personal experiences and biases regarding the topic of interest. The process of bracketing occurred by having a bracketing journal during the research process. The bracketing journal helped the researcher to monitor for the influence of preconceived ideas, bias, and previous knowledge on the research subject (Dodgson, 2019). The bracketing journal was shredded up completion of the dissertation research study. A qualitative researcher must review their personal bias to see how these influence the research process (Palinkas et al., 2015).

### **Ethical Procedures**

Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, and Cheraghi (2014) reviewed ethical considerations that may need to be addressed in qualitative research studies. The issues include the researcher-participant relationship, anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. To promote transparency of the research, the invitation flyer that introduces the study had simple and straightforward information about the study. The informational flyer was distributed with the conference material of attendees at a regional nursing

student educational forum after Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The study used a clear and consistent interview protocol that was shared with each participant (Appendix A). Ethical concerns over participant involvement were addressed by following the IRB guidelines. Participants were assured no negative consequences would occur due to early withdrawal, refusing to complete an interview, or declining to be part of the study. The reassurance was given verbally and stated in the consent signed by each participant.

Data was kept confidential by keeping all hard copy access to only the researcher. Electronic data obtained, generated software data, and transcribed audiotapes were placed on a flash drive. The researcher secured the flash drive in a locked file cabinet in a locked office that is accessible only by the researcher. Participant's interviews did not include their names. In place of the names, random numbers were assigned to each participant at the beginning of the interview. The numbers on the tape and the transcripts of the interview replaced the names to ensure confidentiality. The participants were instructed not to identify the names of individuals or facilities during the interview. Interview sessions were stored electronically and not shared with anyone but the qualitative nurse research reviewing for dependability and the Walden University doctoral research committee members.

## Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive study is to understand better nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional organizations. A face-to-face, semi-structured interview technique was used to obtain data that is rich and reflective of the participants' world views. A piloted seven-question interview tool was used to conduct the interviews. The data were coded and grouped in categories so that recurrent themes were identified. Participant confidentiality is paramount and will be ensured by not assigning personal markers and keeping data secure with the investigator. The researcher reviewed the transferability, dependability, and credibility of the study. Institutional Review Board guidelines were implemented and completed to include the appropriate treatment of the participants.

In Chapter 4, the research setting is described, and the demographics of the participants are given. Data collection and data analysis regarding emerging themes and coding are also reviewed. Evidence of trustworthiness is provided, and results summarized.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of nursing students' perceptions of membership in professional nursing organizations. The study was conducted to help to inform about nursing students' views on benefits, challenges, and lived experiences about membership. The research questions for the study were as follows:

**Research Question:** What are the perceptions of nursing students about membership in professional organizations?

**Sub-Research Question:** What are the students' experiences with student para-professional organizations?

In this chapter, the details of the research setting and specific demographics of participants are discussed. Data collection and analysis are presented with the consideration of trustworthiness to include creditability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The results of the study will conclude this chapter.

### **Research Setting**

Each of the twelve individuals who agreed to participate in the study was an undergraduate nursing student currently enrolled in an entry-level program. The students were contacted via email after receiving the research recruitment flyer at a regional educational seminar, and the students contacted the researcher to indicate an interest to participate ( $n=8$ ). When potential candidates expressed an interest, a screening questionnaire was sent via email to ensure the individual met the inclusion criteria. In some cases, snowball sampling was used, where a student informed another student of

the study. The same screening questionnaire was sent via email to those participants ( $n=4$ ) included as a result of snowball sampling.

The research setting was a mutually agreed upon location that offered privacy. Locations for the face to face interviews included public library conference rooms, a university study room, and a coffee shop. The researcher reserved public library conference rooms. The nine participants interviewed agreed to the location of the public library and the time of the interview. The conference rooms were located away from distractions and were private. The university study room location was used for two interviews. The university was not one that the participants attended so that the location would be a neutral setting for the students. The coffee shop was a location requested by one participant for convenience. A table located away from other patrons was used to provide a private setting for the interview. The participants verbally agreed to the location of the interview before the interview process started. No personal or organizational conditions were identified to influence participants or their experience at the time of study that would influence the interpretation of the study results.

### **Demographics**

A total of 31 undergraduate nursing students responded to the recruitment flyer with interest to participate in the study for a response rate of 24.8% for the 125 flyers distributed. All respondents were emailed a screening survey for inclusion. Fourteen candidates were removed due to not meeting the inclusion criteria. One student was not currently enrolled in an entry-level nursing program, ten respondents were previously known to the researcher, and three were presently enrolled in a course taught by the

researcher. Fifteen of the 17 students meeting the inclusion criteria responded to emails inquiring about possible locations for the face to face interview. If the first email received no response by the student, one additional email was sent to request the interview. The sample size was concluded at twelve participants due to data saturation being reached. After the tenth interview, no new information was provided by the participants. Two additional interviews were completed to ensure that no new viewpoints or themes were to be identified (Lowe et al., 2018), leaving a sample size of twelve.

The twelve participants were enrolled in various entry-level programs and were at different levels of progression in their plan of study. Six students were enrolled in a baccalaureate entry to practice nursing program. The six participants in a baccalaureate program represented two sophomore-level students, three junior level, and one senior-level student. The participants enrolled in a baccalaureate program were from various university settings. Four of the participants attended two different public universities, and two were enrolled in a private university's baccalaureate level to entry practice nursing program. The six remaining participants were evenly divided between associate degree and entry-level diploma programs. The students in the associate degree entry-level program were all senior students. The three participants were from the same community college. The three participants enrolled in a diploma program were in their last year of the program and were enrolled in the same entry-level nursing program.



## Data Collection

Recruitment flyers were distributed at a regional nursing student seminar after obtaining Institutional Review Board approval (number 10-14-19-0664633). Potential candidates were instructed to call the researcher's cell phone or contact via the email address that was provided on the recruitment flyer. After assessing the candidate's ability to meet the inclusion criteria, a mutually agreed upon location, time, and date were determined to conduct the interview. Data collection started on November 5, 2019, and concluded on December 17, 2019. Twelve nursing students were interviewed. The interviews were held in various private, quiet places where audiotaping could occur. Nine interviews were held in a public library setting ( $n=9$ ), two in the study room ( $n=2$ ), and one in a coffee shop ( $n=1$ ). Each participant was interviewed one time for a total period of 45-60 minutes. The initial interview script was read to each participant to introduce the study. Consents were given to each participant to read. Time was given to clarify any questions asked by the participant. The interviews were audiotaped via an app on the researcher's cell phone after each student read, agreed to, and signed the consent to participate. The app, Temi, was later used to transcribe the audio recording to text for the participant to review for accuracy. The participant was not identified by name during the audiotaping to provide anonymity.

Field notes were written on a legal pad to help the researcher remember any behaviors or statements by the participants that needed further exploration during the interview process. Each page of the field notes was labeled with the participant's pseudo name for data organization. After the interview, the exit script was read to the

participant. The participants were informed that a transcription of the audiotape would be sent to them to review for accuracy. Input from the participants could be given to clarify any content. Information was supplied at the end of each interview that the researcher would send the results of the completed study. Each student was given a \$5.00 coffee gift card for participating in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Each audiotaped interview was recorded using the app, Temi, on the researcher's cell phone. The audiotapes were sent to the transcription services of Temi and returned to the researcher via email. The transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy by the researcher listening to the audiotapes while reading the text sent by Temi. The transcriptions were edited to indicate responses from the participants and questions from the researcher. Edits were also made to correct spelling or to delete any additional noise/words that were unnecessarily transcribed. All edits were made to clarify and improve the interpretation of the information provided by the participant.

The twelve transcribed interviews were uploaded to the qualitative software, QDA Miner Lite version 2.0.5. The organization of data in the Microsoft Word document helped to analyze each interview question with the twelve responses for similarity and repeating themes. Coding was completed while reviewing participants' responses and highlighting similar concepts in the same color. During the coding process, audiotapes were reviewed again to ensure the intent of the conversation aligned with concepts being identified. A review of the interviews occurred three times using the analysis software to safeguard against the elimination of applicable data. The

dimming feature in the software program allowed for previously coded text to be greyed out and text that was not coded to remain bold. The data were analyzed as individual interviews and as an overall aggregate. Similarities in participants' responses became the emerging themes. The recurrent themes were added to the QDA Miner Lite software. Two major themes were identified:

1. The value of belonging to a professional organization, which describes the participants' views on the description of professional organizations, description of membership, benefits of membership, the relationship between membership and practice, and experiences with pre-professional organizations.

2. Factors that hinder joining an organization, which describes the participants' views on barriers to membership, exposure to pre-professional organizations, and experiences joining organizations.

The categories and codes used to organize the data are:

1. Interview question 1-Description of a professional organization  
Code: Description of organizations
2. Interview question 2-Description of membership  
Code: Description of membership
3. Interview question 3-Benefits of membership  
Codes: Professionalism/Leadership, Networking, Socialization, Scholarships
4. Interview question 3-Barriers to membership  
Codes: Lack of knowledge, Time, Financial burden
5. Interview question 4-Relationship between membership and practice

Code: Relationship

6. Interview question 5-Exposure to pre-professional organizations

Code: Exposure

7. Interview question 6-Experiences joining pre-professional organizations

Code: Experiences

8. Interview question 7-Examples of interactions with pre-professional organizations

Code: Examples

One interview was identified as a discrepant case as the participant was unable to answer all the interview questions because of the student's level of progression in their program. The student was in the second semester in a diploma program and had minimal exposure to the concept of membership in professional organizations and no experiences with a pre-professional organization. The data collected from the discrepant case was included in the data analysis. Two additional interviews were conducted once saturation was reached to ensure the inclusion of the discrepant case did not negatively influence the collection of new information.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Creditability**

The design of the research study included the use of field notes, audiotaped interviews, and observation of the participants during the interview process. The completed study included all three data sources. The focus was on the delivery of the interview questions, listening to the participant, and observation of the individual.

Adjustments were made by reflecting on each interview after the participant left, and field notes were added.

Interview questions were asked in order for the consistency of each encounter. If a participant provided information that would be requested in a later question, the interview question was still asked to ensure the individual had the same opportunity to provide their viewpoint. Most of the participants answered the questions with personal anecdotal incidents or experiences. Field notes helped to track needed additional inquiry.

### **Transferability**

The demographic questions identified the participant's entry to practice program, participant's current semester in their program, financial support given to the participant by the nursing school for membership in a professional organization, and if the nursing program requires membership. There was no need to make any adjustments as the process was consistent with the proposed design. All participants were enrolled in an undergraduate entry-level to practice. The participant pool included students in a baccalaureate ( $n=6$ ), associate degree ( $n=3$ ), and diploma ( $n=3$ ) nursing programs in the Northeast region of the United States. The transferability of findings may be increased with the replication of the study to include other regions in the United States for participant selection (Anney, 2015).

### **Dependability**

As outlined in chapter three, the interview process was refined by practicing the delivery of the interview questions to increase the likelihood of dependability. The interviews were similar in length and did become more fluid with the increased

experience of the researcher. The participants did not require any clarification of the interview questions. Participants were given as much time as needed to consider the question and their response before answering. Each question asked received a response from the participant. To adjust for inconsistencies, interviews were reviewed on three separate occasions. At least a three-day interval occurred between each evaluation. The researcher also reflected on the interview process for every participant.

The identified themes were reviewed by a published nurse qualitative researcher as planned. A variation in the implementation that occurred was that the qualitative nurse researcher only reviewed themes and not categories or codes. The researcher felt confident that categories and codes were sufficiently reviewed. Initially, the data analysis of data occurred by identifying the clustering of information to determine the participants' story. Qualitative software and Microsoft Word categorization tables were used to cluster the data objectively. The nurse researcher confirmed that the process of assigning codes, categories, and themes were appropriate.

### **Confirmability**

To verify that findings were shaped by the participants instead of the researcher, the plan was to achieve confirmability by creating an audit trail. The audit trail was credited with the creation of demographics, codes, categories, and themes with the use of qualitative software. The qualitative software is a transparent description of the analysis of data to include timestamps when items were created and revised. Reflexivity was another technique included in the study design to provide confirmability in the study. As discussed in chapter three, the process of bracketing was used to set aside personal bias

and prejudice. The researcher kept a bracketing reflective journal during the process of data collection and analysis. The journaling allowed the researcher to recognize personal disappointment with some of the participants' responses. The self-reflection promoted a neutral approach to the participants during the interview and encouraged an impartial review of the information provided.

### **Study Results**

The research questions were as follows:

**Research Question:** What are the perceptions of nursing students about membership in professional organizations?

**Sub-Research Question:** What are the students' experiences with student para-professional organizations?

Two themes and several subthemes emerged as the nursing students reflected on their experiences with professional organizations and their perceptions of membership in organizations. The two themes recognized were valuing membership in professional organizations and hindering membership in professional organizations. The first theme had several subthemes to include facilitating professionalism, opportunities for collaboration, socialization of the new graduate, scholarship, professional development, and networking. The second theme of hindrances had four subthemes. These categories included lack of knowledge, lack of time, lack of finances, and fear of failure. The study results to follow were organized according to themes and subthemes.

## **Theme One: Validating Membership in a Professional Organization**

**Facilitating professionalism.** Five responses identified professionalism/leadership opportunities were a benefit of membership in professional organizations. Participants discussed the opportunity to develop professional and leadership skills by being involved in a professional organization

*I'm happy to be a part of my pre-professional organization, and it has definitely led me to various leadership opportunities.*

Participants also commented on the importance of professional organizations.

*I would describe a professional organization is made up of nurses who want to make a difference.*

*I would say professional organizations are a top priority for nurses.*

**Professional development.** One participant identified professional development as a benefit of membership. Another participant identified that membership provided opportunities to acquire continuing education and advance knowledge in all topics of nursing. This participant also named events such a nursing conferences that are available to members of a professional organization as a benefit

*Conferences or different events are available to members that can enhance your knowledge of nursing topics to included specialty topics. The nursing conferences have the latest updates on research and provide contact hours to renew your nursing license.*

**Scholarship.** Participants provided five responses naming scholarship opportunities as a benefit of membership in professional organizations. None of the participants stated knowledge of scholarships available by the organization to individuals



that were not members. Participants discussed the benefit of scholarship in terms of completing their baccalaureate degree or advance practice degrees.

*Scholarships would be helpful to me as I continue on in school. I would like to get my bachelor's then go on to be a nurse practitioner.*

*Scholarship opportunities that were available and to receive the scholarship opportunities you have to become a member.*

*Membership includes scholarship opportunities.*

*I know that some organizations provide money for school if you are a member.*

*Scholarships would be helpful to me as I continue on in school. I would like to get my bachelor's then go on to be a nurse practitioner.*

**Opportunities for collaboration with colleagues.** Participants provided the context of membership in terms of what belonging to a professional organization could provide the member. The participants discussed the prospect of collaboration. The participants identified that the opportunity to be exposed to nurses in practice would positively impact employment and career advancement.

*Nursing organizations help with networking.*

*I would get to know some nursing leaders. They would be able to give me some advice on employment and career choices.*

*Membership in an organization provides opportunities to become more involved with a team to make things happen.*

*Being a member allows you to be active in the group.*

**Networking.** Nine responses indicated that a benefit to membership in a professional organization included networking. The participants identified that the opportunity to be exposed to nurses in practice would positively impact employment and career advancement.

*Nursing organizations help with networking.*

*I would get to know some nursing leaders. They would be able to give me some advice on employment and career choices.*

*Membership would help me know about career opportunities.*

*A benefit would be to get to know more seasoned nurses to help me find a job or learn about advanced practice roles.*

**Promoting socialization of the new graduate.** All participants reported valuing membership in a professional organization. Socialization develops a sense of self as members of a profession, internalize the values of their profession, and exhibit these values through desired behaviors (Zarshenas et al., 2015). Seven responses reflected a benefit of membership in a professional organization is socialization

*Membership in a professional organization lets you socialize with others in your profession.*

*Membership would be a benefit because I would get to meet others in the profession.*

*A good thing about membership is that I would get to know more nurses that have been in the profession longer than me.*

**Theme Two: Hindering Membership in a Professional Organization**

**Lack of knowledge.** All but one participant identified of not being informed of membership benefits as a barrier to belonging to a professional organization. Eleven students discussed their perceptions of professional organizations were influenced by what they learned in their nursing program. Participants disclosed a viewpoint that students are not fully informed of the benefits of membership by faculty, and therefore, students do not join. Six of the participants discussed the lack of information provided in their nursing program on which organizations exist and the importance of membership in a professional organization. Participant two described the opinion that the lack of information and understanding about professional organizations would prevent students from membership.

*I think that students are not informed enough to understand they should join.*

*Not even knowing that the organization exists keeps you from joining. If you don't know about the organization or how being a member can help you, then why would you join?*

**Lack of time.** Seven of the twelve participants named time as a barrier to membership in professional organizations. The rigors of nursing schools require time management skills for success. Respondents reported concerns of being able to time manage their nursing school program and were hesitant about membership due to the perceived time demand of organizations. Fifty percent of the participants were concerned about the time required to be a member of a professional organization.

*I just don't have the time to be involved with all the reading and studying I have to do.*

*If I join, I won't have time to participate. I am in school, and I work.*

**Lack of finances.** Fifty percent of the participants also classified cost as a barrier to membership in professional organizations. The participants stated not having the money or wanting to spend money on membership as a barrier to membership. None of the students reported knowledge on reduced membership fees offered by many organizations.

*A lot of students may worry about the financial aspect of joining.*

*Students may be concerned about spending the money.*

**Fear of failure.** Six participants (50%) reported fear of failing as a barrier to membership. The students were concerned about not being successful in their nursing program. One participant discussed wanting to wait until advancing to a higher level in the program to ensure completion before joining the pre-professional organization for students. Four students expressed feelings of embarrassment and failure if they were unsuccessful in school but belonged to an organization. One participant did not want to spend the money on joining if the nursing program was not completed.

*I never had any negative experiences. I value my membership in the student organization.*

*I would be embarrassed to be part of the group if I failed out. Everyone would know, and it would just make it worse.*

### **Summary**

The students provided perceptions of membership in professional organizations. The viewpoints given included information about the value and hindrances of membership. The participants also discussed their personal experiences with pre-professional student organizations. The students reported that their primary source of information on professional organizations was faculty that were engaged in organizations. The participants described a desire to have learned about the importance of membership in professional organizations earlier in their nursing curriculum. Chapter five will include findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to describe the experiences of nursing students with professional organizations. A descriptive qualitative study approach was implemented to explore students' views of membership in professional organizations. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in a mutually agreed upon setting conducive for participate privacy. The study was conducted over two months with nursing students from diverse entry to practice levels in the Northeastern United States. The findings from this study revealed viewpoints held by nursing students of professional organizations. Additional data included student perceptions of factors that helped or hindered joining a pre-professional nursing student organization and professional nursing organizations.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

As discussed in Chapter 2, nursing literature and other disciplines have several articles that examined membership in professional organizations. However, the current research did not address perceptions of nursing students on belonging to a professional organization. Each participant in this study discussed personal experiences with membership in professional organizations. This study upholds prior literature findings that belonging to a professional organization is viewed as having a positive influence on the development of professional behaviors. Yoder (2017) discussed the results that nursing organizations may have a positive impact on the development of professionalism, specifically in the new graduate. In another study by Morgen et al. (2014), the findings reported were membership in professional organizations helped to promote professionalism in the nurse. Nursing students in this study confirmed these conclusions

by stating a positive outcome of membership in professional organizations was the opportunity to refine their skill of professionalism.

Findings from this study confirmed that membership in a professional organization is viewed to be a benefit for the practice of nursing. The participants identified positive outcomes of membership to include socialization, networking, and collaboration. All participants reported valuing membership in a professional organization. Participants also commented on the importance of professional organizations. Zarshenas et al. (2015) discussed how socialization developed a sense of self, helped members to internalize professional values that would later be demonstrated in desired behaviors. Participants reported socialization as the opportunity to be exposed to nurses in practice would positively impact employment and career advancement.

This study confirmed what previous research writings suggested regarding factors that influence joining a professional organization. Participants of this study confirmed the findings by Martin and Waxman (2017), where individuals from various age groups and length of practice reported the cost of membership and time commitment for participation as hindrances to join an organization. Participants of this study shared views that the cost of membership and lack of personal time to commit were considerations when deciding whether to join an organization.

### **Theoretical Findings**

The findings of this study support Tajfel's social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974). The participants' descriptions of experiences align with one of three primary constructs

of SIT; the construct of social identity. The construct consists of members adopting group norms as a result of membership. Over 58% of the participants in this study reported socialization as a benefit to membership in a professional organization. In agreement with Zarshenas et al. (2015), the nursing students in the study described the viewpoint that membership would promote their professional development due to developing a sense of belonging as a member of the profession.

### **Conceptual Framework Findings**

The findings of this study parallel Benner's conceptual framework to explain the phenomenon of professional development; novice-to-expert (Benner, 1982). The predominant concept of the framework is the development of expertise from a novice status. Forty-two percent of the participants in the study discussed the positive impact that membership in a professional organization can have on their careers, specifically in regards to professional development. All participants that were members of a pre-professional organization reported the beneficial outcome of membership as being more confident in their leadership skills. Benner explained that professionalism was a skill that may progress from a novice to an expert level with collaboration with others that are more experienced. Sun et al. (2016) also discussed the process of developing a professional identity as a process that advances from the novice stage to expert.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The following limitations were recognized in Chapter 1, which could potentially impact the study outcomes. The barriers to trustworthiness that arose from the execution



of the study included truthful information being offered by the participant, the participant's desire to please the researcher, and the inclusion of participants from only one geographical region of the United States. The first limitation of truthfulness is an issue for qualitative studies. The researcher is reliant on the participant offering genuine personal viewpoints and experiences. This limitation cannot be controlled. The second limitation to trustworthiness, a desire to please the researcher, is connected to the first issue of honesty. With the researcher being a faculty member in a large state university entry to baccalaureate practice program, the participants may be aware of whom the researcher is without having an academic connection. Participants were excluded if they acknowledged knowing the researcher from any educational, professional, or personal setting. The last limitation of geographic location could be addressed by expanding the study to other states. The participation of individuals from a larger geographical location may expand the information obtained from this study. Other areas of the country may have required membership in pre-professional organizations, incorporate the thread of professionalism differently in the nursing curriculum, or expose nursing students to professional organizations using a varied process.

### **Recommendations**

The study reflects in alignment with previous studies (Morgan et al., 2014; Akhtak-Danesh et al., 2013; Ayla et al., 2018) that nursing student participants identified membership in a professional organization as a positive behavior. The participants of this study also indicated having an interest in membership in organizations. Although all participants reported valuing membership in a professional organization, five of the six

students enrolled in a baccalaureate program reported current participation in their pre-professional organization. One participant from an associate degree program and none from a diploma entry program stated being involved in a pre-professional organization. One recommendation for future inquiry is to explore if a difference in participation in pre-professional organizations exists between the various entry to practice nursing programs. If a difference does exist, then exploring what might be influencing the variation could be an area for future research.

A second recommendation is to use a larger population with participation from other geographic regions to improve generalizability. A larger group of participants may generate data that both confirm the results of this study and offer new perspectives on the topic of nursing students' experiences with membership in professional organizations. Previous nursing research studies included the ranking of professional values by students in the United States and Turkey (Alkaya et al., 2018). However, no research exists on viewpoints nursing students hold on membership in professional organizations from various regions in the United States.

A third recommendation is to explore where in the nursing curriculum, the concept of membership in professional organizations is introduced and how that concept is integrated throughout various programs. Eleven of the twelve participants reported to the researcher that their perceptions of professional organizations were influenced by what they learned in their nursing program. Over half of the nursing student participants discussed the lack of information on professional organizations that existed formally in their nursing school curriculum. Goolsby & DuBois (2017) found that professional

development is promoted with membership in professional organizations. How to introduce the concept of membership and how to encourage participation in pre-professional organizations best may generate best practice guidelines for nurse educators.

### **Implications**

#### **Positive Social Change**

Positive social change may result in an improvement that benefits individuals, organizations, or society. The change can be driven by implications from data to address real-world challenges. Positive social change implies a new approach or action that produces positive outcomes. The results of this study have implications for positive social change for the individual nursing student, nursing schools and undergraduate curriculum, and the nursing profession.

**Individual Implications.** A better understanding of perceptions and views on membership in professional organizations held by nursing students may aid in promoting students to engage in these organizations. Current research indicates that membership in professional organizations promotes professionalism through socialization, collaboration, and mentoring (Buford et al., 2014; Dinmohammadi et al., 2013).

**Organizational Implications.** One organizational implication is the effect the results of this study could have on nursing education. This study's findings connect the knowledge nursing students have regarding membership with the inclusion of the topic of professional organizations in the program curriculum. Participants reported knowing about professional nursing organizations because of their nursing faculty. Undergraduate nursing programs that intentionally and purposefully expose the nursing student to the

positive effect membership in professional organizations could promote not only individual professional development but also provide a mechanism to increase the professionalism of the entry-level workforce (Adam et al., 2013).

A second organizational implication as a result of this study is the application of the results to the retention of new graduate nurses in the workforce. Guerro et al. (2017) examined factors that influence the longevity of new nurses in the profession of nursing. They concluded that a distinct professional identity could produce the longevity of the new nurse in the profession. Integrating the concept of membership in professional organizations can assist the student in valuing the need to join a professional organization upon graduation. The professional development that can occur may help to strengthen the novice practitioner's commitment to the profession. Retention of the new graduate would benefit the health care system by decreasing the cost of onboarding and orientation.

**Societal Implications.** The nursing profession has been challenged to develop leaders and to include the new graduate in that process (Farina, 2016). Skills developed due to socialization and mentorship as a result of membership in a professional organization can support leadership roles necessary for nursing to embrace. Nurses in leadership positions can influence the health of local and global communities, effectively manage resources to promote positive outcomes, and give back to the profession by involvement in professional organizations.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, membership in nursing organizations can be the basis of professional development for the new graduate transitioning into practice. Nursing students would benefit from membership in their pre-professional organizations by initiating the process of developing leadership skills and acquiring behaviors they can transfer to a professional organization when entering the workforce. Professional nursing organizations are called to address the duty of developing nurse leaders. The essential element of facilitating the professional development of the new graduate is their membership in a professional organization. Reviewing the program curriculum by using this study's themes may positively impact the nursing student to join a professional nursing organization when entering the workforce.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The interview protocol that follows will be considered for the qualitative narrative analysis study.

Institution: Walden University

Participants: Undergraduate nursing students attending a northeast regional nursing student convention

Interviewer: Kimberly Seaman

Supplies: electronic recording device (iPad), pens, self-addressed stamped envelopes and inserts for the participants to fill out and send their email address if they wish to have results of the study emailed to them, notebook for field notes, \$5 Starbucks gift cards, several consent forms, bottled water

### START WITH THE PARTICIPANTS HERE

#### Introductory Statement

Hello (address participant by name),

My name is Kimberly Seaman, and I want to thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview and to share some of your experiences and viewpoints on nursing students and membership in professional organizations. I am going to spend a few minutes explaining the process of the interview and allow some time for you to ask any questions.

You have been asked to participate in the interview because of your experience as a nursing student. I am interested in learning more about your personal experiences and views on membership in professional organizations. There are no right or wrong



answers, and all the information you provide will help me to understand student views better. Please feel free to share as much detail as you feel comfortable.

If it is okay with you, I am going to audio record our interview so that I am to make sure I remember all of the valuable information you provide. After I transcribe the interview, I can provide you with a transcript so that you are sure I understood the meaning of what you shared. I want to ensure you that all information you provide will be kept anonymous and only used for research purposes. I will now give you time to read carefully read the consent form to sign after you read and understand the document.

My contact information, phone number, and email address are on the forms you will sign as your consent to participate, and you may contact me at any time for more information or questions.

Collect Consent from the Participants:

Give the interviewee a copy of the consent form to keep.

Take out the interview question page.

Test the electronic device to be sure it is working.

Audiotape record and interview each participant.

Write field notes.

Post Interview Observations and Notes:

Closing Statement

To conclude the interview, the following question will be asked to allow the participant to disclose any additional information. The last question will promote an optimal understanding of the meaning the participant attempted to describe to the

investigator. The interview will end with the questions:

1. How do you feel after participating in the interview and sharing your views on membership in professional organizations?
2. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

This concludes the interview session. Thank you again for participating. Would you like to receive information about the results of the study?

If they say yes—fill in this card with your email address. Send it back to me in this self-addressed, stamped envelope. I will only use your email address to send you the results of the study.

If they say no—Ok, thank you for your time.

For all: Here is your gift card for participating.

Have a great day! Thanks again.

END WITH THE PARTICIPANTS HERE

Post Interview Process:

Read over my field notes for readability. Make any additional notes that I need to add.

Download the interview on my computer. Rearrange the supplies for the next interview.

## Appendix B: Interview Script

### **Introductory Statement**

Hello (address participant by name),

My name is Kimberly Seaman, and I want to thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview and to share some of your experiences and viewpoints on nursing students and membership in professional organizations. I am going to spend a few minutes explaining the process of the interview and allow some time for you to ask any questions.

You have been asked to participate in the interview because of your experience as a nursing student. I am interested in learning more about your personal experiences and views on membership in professional organizations. There are no right or wrong answers, and all the information you provide will help me to understand student views better. Please feel free to share as much detail as you feel comfortable.

If it is okay with you, I am going to audio record our interview so that I can make sure I remember all of the valuable information you provide. After I transcribe the interview, I can provide you with a transcript so that you are sure I understood the meaning of what you shared. I want to ensure you that all information you provide will be kept anonymous and only used for research purposes. I will now give you time to read carefully read the consent form to sign after you read and understand the document.

**Closing Statement**

To conclude the interview, the following question will be asked to allow the participant to disclose any additional information. The last question will promote an optimal understanding of the meaning the participant attempted to describe to the investigator. The interview will end with the questions:

1. How do you feel after participating in the interview and sharing your views on membership in professional organizations?
2. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

## Appendix C: Interview Guide

### **Pre-Interview Questions**

1. What semester are you currently in your nursing program?
2. What type of program do you attend? BSN? ADN? Diploma?
3. Does your school/program require students to join their pre-professional organization?
4. Is any financial help given by your school/program to join your organization?

### **Interview Questions Based on Research Question 1**

1. How would you describe a professional nursing organization?
2. How would you describe membership in a professional nursing organization?
3. How would you explain your experience with any professional organization(s)?
4. How would you describe the relationship between professional organizations and nursing practice?

### **Interview Questions Based on Research Sub-Question**

5. Can you share the process of students learning about their pre-professional organizations at your school?
6. Can you share your experiences when students want to join professional organizations?
7. Can you describe a specific example when a student joined a professional organization?

## TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK!

If you are a nursing student enrolled in an entry-level nursing program you may be eligible to participate in a research study

### Share your experiences and thoughts on membership in professional nursing organizations

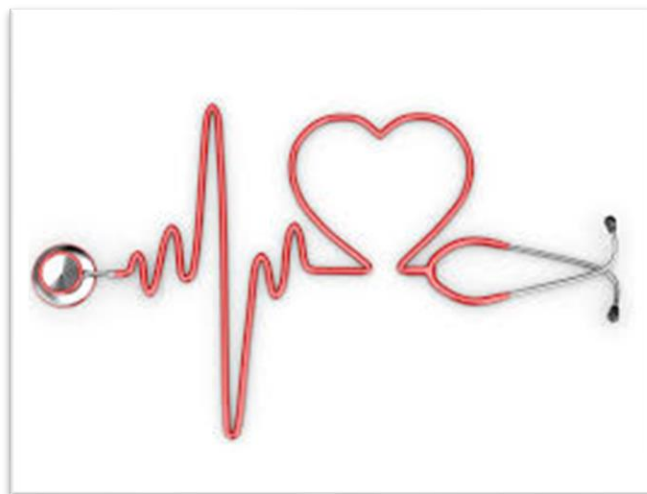
The purpose of the study is to better understand what nursing students think about belonging to a professional nursing organization.

Participants will receive:

- \$5 gift card for coffee
- Light refreshments

#### Location

- A face to face 60-minute interview will occur at an agreed upon location



If you are interested in participating in the study, call or email me at:

Kimberly Seaman MSN, RN-BC, CNE  
PhD student  
Walden University  
Kimberly.seaman@waldenu.edu  
908-472-2590