



The Lived Experience of Nurse Practitioners in Independent Practice

Annmarie V. Waite, Ph.D., ARNP
Eastern Florida State College
Nursing and Health Science Institute

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Disclosure

- ❖ Author attests that no relevant financial relationship exists between her and any commercial supporting entity which would present a conflict of interest or commercialize the presentation content.
- ❖ The lived experience of Nurse Practitioners in Independent Practice.
- Author: Annmarie Waite
- Employer: Eastern Florida State College
- Learning Activity Objectives
 - The learner will be able to identify the core themes that emerged from the lived experience of nurse practitioners in independent practice.
 - The learner will be able to understand the significance of this qualitative phenomenological study as it served to address a gap in the literature regarding the lived experience of nurse practitioners in independent practice.

Statement of the Problem

The role of the NP continues to evolve in response to changing societal and health care needs.

In most areas of the country, NPs are recognized and accepted as primary care providers, nonetheless, they continue to be underutilized across the health continuum.

Independent practice for NPs is not common, and those who accept the role are not publicizing what this NP role entails.

Literature Review

Less than 15% NPs in independent practice, Flanagan, (1998).

Minimal research studies conducted on the lived experience of Nurse Practitioners in independent practice.

Current Issues

Patient Protection Affordable Care Act (2010) created insurance for 32 million additional Americans. The growth in primary care physician supply will not be adequate to meet this demand.

Nurse practitioners are recognized as health care providers (HCP) who can deliver care based on their scope of practice.



Nurses, increase your salary & demand with an MSN! AdChoices 

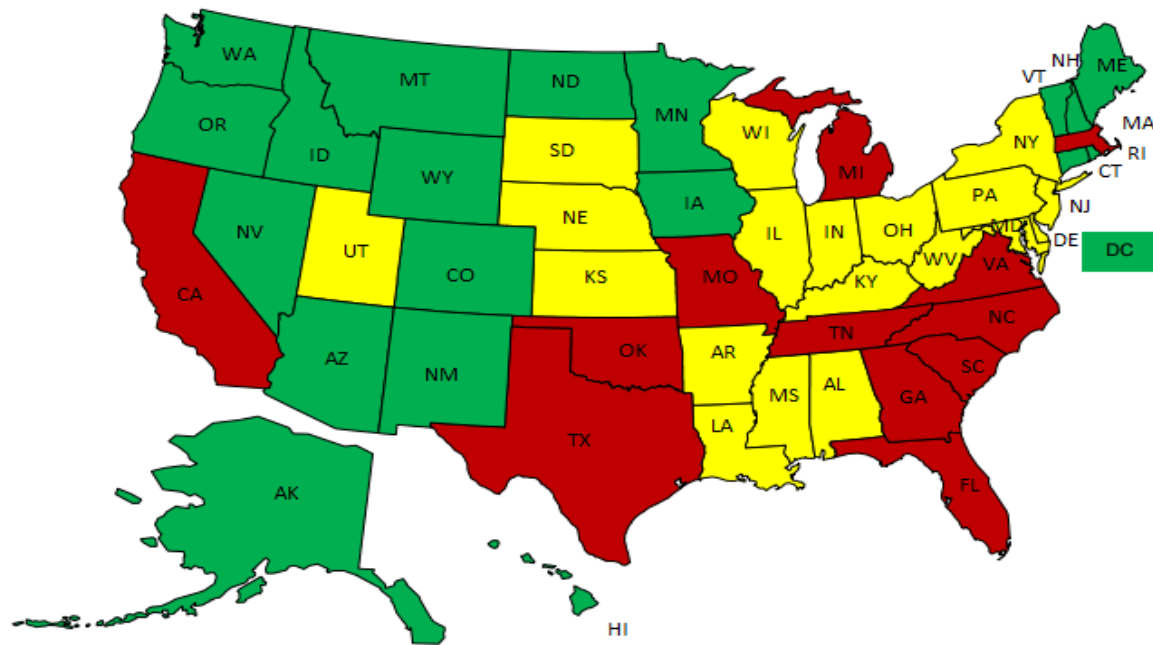
As they fill the gap in physician shortages, nurses with MSN degrees are reaching higher pay grades and greater demand. Get started on your MSN today!

Grand Canyon University Sponsored

Example of a nursing programs advertisement due to primary care physician (PCP) shortage.

Advanced practice nurses with unrestricted scope of practice acts have embrace the entire role to practice independently in health care settings including primary care.

Figure 2. State nurse practice acts map (Waite, 2015, adapted from AANP, 2014).



Purpose of the Study



To explore the lived experience of Nurse Practitioners in Independent Practice and to gain understanding of the essence of being an independent practitioner.

Research Question

"What is the lived experience of Nurse practitioners in Independent Practice?"

Literature Review

- No one is willing to speculate about the growth of independent nursing practices. Currently, less than 15 percent of all nurse practitioners operate such practices (Flanagan, 1998, p. 34).
- The first descriptive study to suggest widespread acceptance of NPs as independent practitioners. Compared to a 1985 study of Seattle residents, consumers are far more likely to know about NPs. Consumer studies such as this one identify the characteristics and interests of consumers and assist NPs in establishing a grounded marketing plan for developing distinctly nursing-based health centers (Brown, 2007).
- ...Subordination of nurses to the medical profession, overloads, burnout, shift work, lack of appreciation by superiors and colleagues, lower wages, short staffing and poor working conditions have contributed towards a reduction of nursing professionals in USA and an increase in opportunities for nurse entrepreneurs (Journal of Advanced Practice Nursing, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

- Qualitative
- Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Max van Manen
Six Research Activities

Setting

Nurse practitioners in independent practice in the 19 unrestricted states and the District of Columbia

Sample Size

- Purposive, NP list, & snow-ball sampling
- A sample size of 17 participants were interviewed

Figure 3. Phenomenological approach to the lived experience of nurse practitioners in independent practice (Waite, 2015, adapted from van Manen, 1990).



ACCESS AND RECRUITMENT

1. Mailing list – AANP
2. Mailing lists – State Boards of Nursing in the 19 unrestricted states
3. Dedicated website:
www.advancenurseentrepreneur.com
4. Advertisement: Journal for Nurse Practitioners
5. Social media: LinkedIn®

ACCESS AND RECRUITMENT CON'T.

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The lived Experience of Nurse Practitioners in Independent Practice

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Are You An Independent NP?
You are invited to partake in a study titled: The lived experience of nurse practitioners in independent practice. The purpose of the study is to understand the essence of the lived experience of NPs in independent practice.

Inclusion Criteria
The key criterion in the selection of participants will be confirmation that the nurse practitioner is involved in an independent practice, has English fluency and the willingness to speak openly about their experience.

**Nurse Practitioners
You are invited to join a study**

About The Researcher



Alexandra Weber is a nurse practitioner (NP) with a specialty in women's health. She received her BSN and MSN from the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, and is currently a doctoral student in the College of Health Sciences at Barry University. Her thesis will investigate the experiences of nurse practitioners who have transitioned into private practice. Her interest in this topic has evolved due to a realization that NPs will be a integral resource to offset the projected shortage of primary health care providers. In order for this to happen, NPs will need to move into private practice at a greater level of autonomy than is currently allowed. This phenomenological study will explore the lived experience of nurse practitioners who have made the transition to independent practice.

State Regulatory Map
(Click on a state to view the regulatory map for that state.)



Green
States represent full practice allowed. Nurse practitioners can evaluate, diagnose, order and interpret diagnostic tests, initiate and manage treatments (includes prescribing medications) under the exclusive licensure authority of the state board of nursing.

Yellow
States represent reduced practice licensure laws. NP required to have collaborative agreement with an outside health discipline.

Red
States represent restricted practice laws. Supervision or delegated team-management required by an outside health discipline to provide patient care.

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**Nurse Practitioners
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RESEARCHER:
Alexandra Weber, MSN, APRN-D, Doctoral Student
Phone: (321) 517-0594
Email: AlexandraWeber@barry.edu

UNIVERSITY FACULTY SPONSOR:
Elizabeth Coker, PhD, APRN
Phone: (321) 517-0594
Email: ElizabethCoker@barry.edu

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD:
Barbara Cook
Phone: (321) 517-0594
Email: BarbaraCook@barry.edu



NO RISK OFFER
THIS RESEARCH PROJECT DOES NOT INVOLVE ANY RISK TO YOUR HEALTH OR SAFETY. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE RESEARCHER OR THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD.

DATA COLLECTION

APPENDIX H

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What made you go into independent practice?
2. Were there any risks surrounding the transition?
3. What has been the reception from your colleagues? The community? Physicians?
4. Tell me about who influenced your actions and how they influenced you.
5. Please explain one experience that challenged you during the time when you decided to go into independent practice.
6. Were there any unimagined successes?
7. Describe at least 2 positive experiences before, during, or after the decision to become an independent practitioner. Were there any negative experiences?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to share so that others may gain a better understand of the life of a nurse practitioner in independent practice?

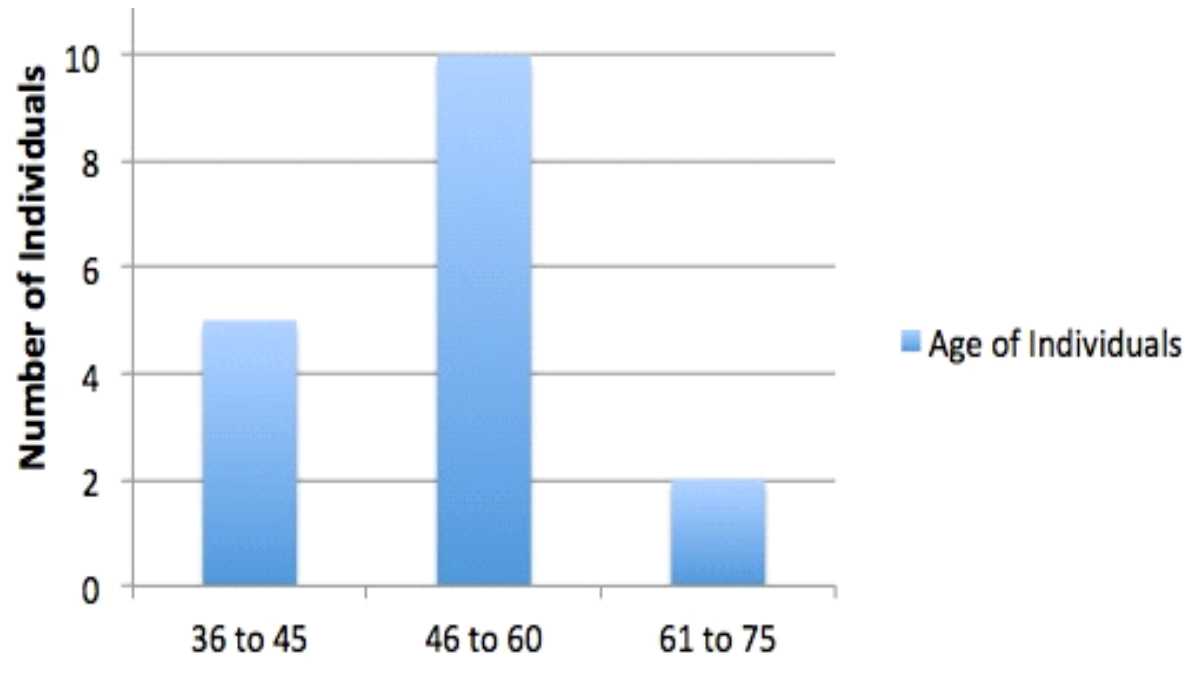
APPENDIX I REFLECTIVE PROMPTS

1. Describe at least three new discoveries that you learned about yourself during this experience.
2. Describe experiences (two positive and two negative) that you believe would help other Nurse Practitioners who may decide to set up independent practices.
3. Describe the feelings of owning your own practice. Include some of the challenges and successes that you experienced.
4. Is there a poem or song that you associate with your experience? Explain how you have applied your new personal discoveries to your career.
5. Explain how you have applied your new personal discoveries to your career.
6. Describe how you see the future of Nurse Practitioners and nursing as a discipline as it relates to independent practice.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2. Participants' Demographics (Waite, 2015).

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|--|----|
| Demographic Survey | |
| n = 17 | |
| Gender | |
| Female | 14 |
| Male | 3 |
| Age Range (years) | |
| 25-35 | 0 |
| 36-45 | 5 |
| 46-60 | 10 |
| 61-75 | 2 |
| Ethnicity | |
| African American | 1 |
| Caucasian | 16 |
| Marital Status | |
| Single | 3 |
| Married | 9 |
| Divorced | 4 |
| Widowed | 1 |
| Years of NP Experience | |
| 0-5 | 10 |
| 6-10 | 4 |
| 11-15 | 7 |
| 16-20 | 4 |
| 21-25 | 2 |
| 26-30 | 1 |
| 31-35 | 2 |



DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE OF PARTICIPANTS

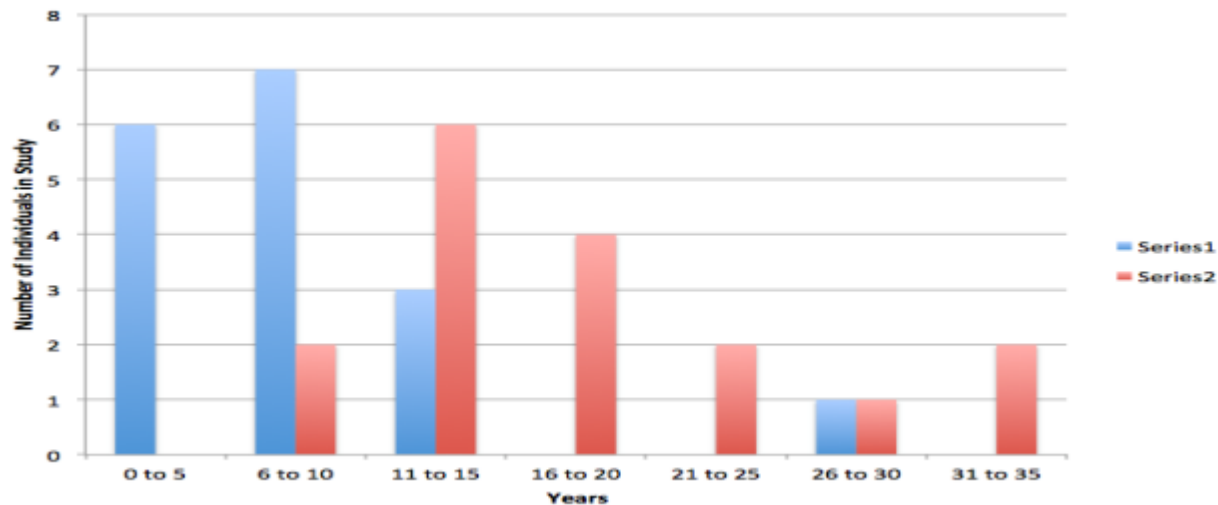
Table 4. (Waite, 2015) Independent Nurse Practitioner Age Distribution.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure 5. (Waite, 2015) Participants' years of NP experience and years in independent practice.

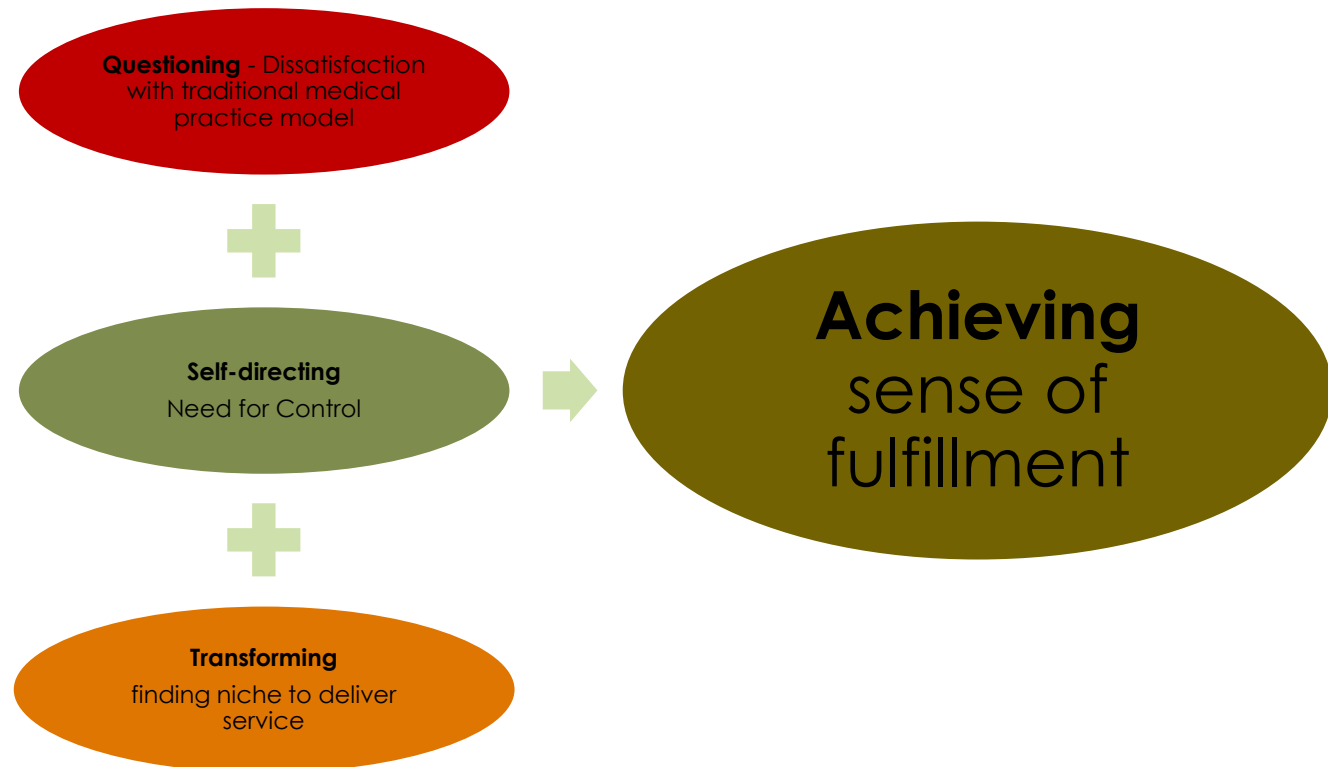
Series 1 = Number of Years in Independent Practice

Series 2 = Number of years as a Nurse Practitioner.



CORE THEMES

Figure 7. Waite's (2015) conceptual representation of the lived experience of nurse practitioners in independent practice



SUB-THEMES

- Discovering entrepreneurial skills
- Enjoying being the boss
- Creating work/life balance
- Believing (confidence) in nursing education.

Themes: Questioning ← dissatisfaction with traditional medical practice model

Questioning: inductive reasoning without any universal definition.

Betty: “I was working for another doctor and quite unsatisfied with the limitations that that doctor placed on my practice, and when she retired I took that opportunity to buy her charts and start my own practice”.

Victor: “I felt that I had more than what the current system had to offer patients. I think it was best for the patient if I could have a relationship with them that wasn't dictated by somebody else's set of values or protocols”.

Beth: “Part of why I chose to do that is that I didn't want to go back to a practice where I would be seeing 25 – 30 patients a day.

Themes: Self-directing → need for control

Self-directing: an act out of choice rather than obligation or coercion. This choice is based on awareness of one's needs and a flexible interpretation of external events (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Anita: "I wanted to have control of my practice in the sense that I could provide the type of care I wanted to provide. I was tired of the burned out schedule and I just wanted to spend the time with my clients."

Audrey: "One has the opportunity to not be under someone else and to make the practice in their own style. I don't see 28 people a day. Now I see probably a maximum of 20 and more like 14 to 15 partly because I can do that with all the procedures that I do and still survive."
“

Blanche: "I like that I am able to set up a clinic the way I would like it to be run, from the clinical perspective to patient care, and also from the business perspective."

Themes: Transforming → Finding niche

Finding a niche: any position specifically adapted to its occupant.

Anastasia: "I definitely feel that I have a niche in breast feeding medicine and it's been the key to my success."

Audrey: "Dermatology has just been the perfect storm kind of thing for me. I came to Derm when there was a need for Dermatology and I worked for people in Dermatology and I got a good reputation so that when I went out on my own that reputation carried me. And the opportunity that is here for nurse practitioners is huge."

Alice: "I grew up in the rural part of the United States, and I've been working as a nurse practitioner in rural New Mexico for 27 years, and so, I'm a rural healthcare specialist, and what's happening is that so much of our practice, and evidence based medicine is based on urban living, and people who live in the rural areas can't always solve their health care problems based on urban living, you know, Rural health is a specialty all in itself, and so, lots of times, when nobody else will solve it, they will refer those patients to me and say go talk to Alice, she'll probably be able to figure it out."

Themes: Achieving fulfillment → sense of achievement

Achievement: satisfaction gained through hard work

Adella: “I’m financially viable; I am getting referrals, connecting with colleagues. I’m very pleased with the way the practice is going.”

Abigail: “My doors are open, and I can pay my employees, and we are busy, and we don't advertise, and we have a word-of-mouth clientele that allows me to support myself and 14 employees. And a big definition of success for me is that we do still accept 50% Medicaid clientele. So we are still able to provide care to women who are at a low socioeconomic status. We are also providing midwifery care, which is different than physician based obstetric care. So we have maintained a lot of the ideals of midwifery and we have been able to provide them successfully to a large group of women for a long period of time now.”

Achieving fulfillment cont.

Wilbur: "It's been liberating and nauseating at times from anxiety. Every month has been so successful, it's been so consistent, that now we are confident enough that all the stakeholders are there and all the right pieces are there that we are actually implementing expansions to other states. And so this has expended to other states with the potentially of becoming a national company and this is beyond my wildest belief."

Amelia: "Owning my practice is the best. It's fantastic. I can't think of a downside, I really can't."

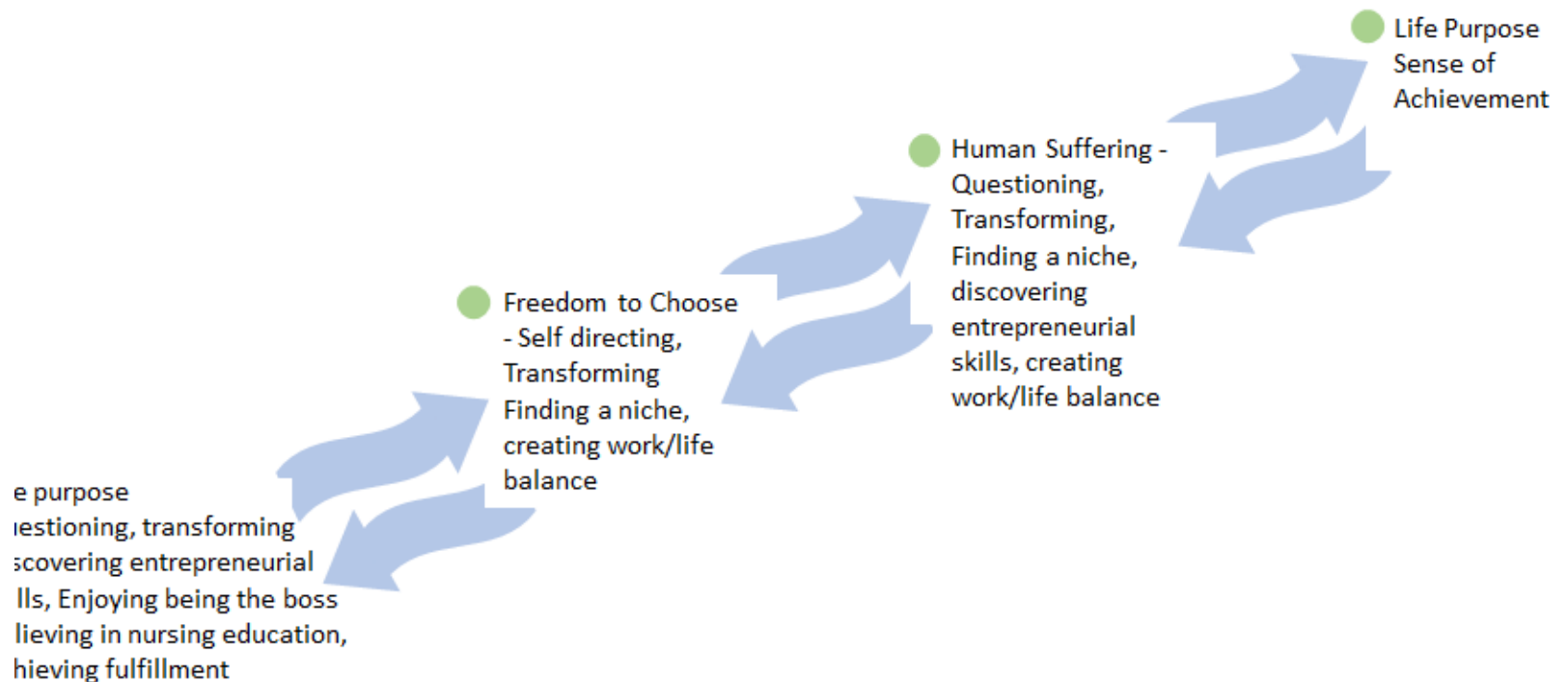
Ariel: "It's definitely a good solid pride that I feel. There is peacefulness. No day is ever boring. It's a comfort thing, there's peace and there's pride and there's the satisfaction that it's just real. I just feel happy and blessed. My practice is successful on many levels. First off, the obvious one is that I'm so busy I have had to close to new patients so that tells me I'm successful. Last year, 2013, I won the State Award for Clinical Excellence for the State of Idaho. So, that was another little feather in my cap, so to speak. And then this year, I was nominated in the category of best doctor, even though I'm not a doctor. And I won. This is the first time a nurse practitioner has ever won that in this area, so, you know there's a lot of success."

EXPLORATION OF MEANING

- Nurse Practitioners in independent practice was in search for meaning or hope in creating an environment that they could control.
- Expressed that they felt as if they were off the path of their destiny, out of alignment with their professional training, and off course in their purpose.
- Guided by a desire for change, professional confidence, and a strong belief in the vital role of the NP, they were compelled to move forward with their lives to competently fulfill these expectations.
- They took the chance to create an independent practice and built it the way they wanted it to be.

- PERSISTENT NATURE OF HUMANS TO INTERPRET LIFE'S MEANING
- LIFE MEANING BECOMES SIGNIFICANT WHEN FACED WITH CHALLENGES THAT THREATEN ONE'S PURPOSE.
- THEMES ILLUSTRATED NP'S DESIRE TO FORGE SENSE OF LIFE (AS SEEN, HEARD & EXPERIENCED)
- RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF NP'S IN INDEPENDENT PRACTICE RELATED TO STARCK'S (1985) THEORY OF MEANING

Figure 10. (Waite, 2015) Conceptualization of themes for Nurse Practitioners in Independent Practice



SIGNIFICANCE & IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Education Increase knowledge about nursing entrepreneurial approaches to health care. Curriculum and learning outcomes specific to independent practice in NP education is needed.

Practice Competencies in independent practice have not been identified.

Research Opportunity to explore the nurse practitioners role within a self-employed practice setting. Expansion of knowledge needed to guide nursing practice to study this phenomenon that remains elusive in nursing science.

Health/Public Policy To promote public well-being and health, credible, evidence-based information needed to institute policy changes to scope of practice acts to allow NPs to practice to the full extent of their education and expertise.

Significance to Nursing



Nurse Practitioners:
205,000
solutions to strengthening
health care for America

Nurse Practitioners (NPs) are leading the charge, providing quality health care to millions of Americans. In fact, an overwhelming 64 percent of patients have seen an NP for their health care needs.



| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| ADVANCED DEGREES NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION | PRIMARY, ACUTE & SPECIALTY CARE PROVIDERS | ORDER, PERFORM & INTERPRET DIAGNOSTIC TESTS | PRESCRIBE MEDICATIONS & OTHER TREATMENTS |
|--|--|--|---|

AANP American Association of
NURSE PRACTITIONERS™

NPs: Patient-centered, accessible, high-quality health care
To locate an NP in your area, visit NPFinder.com
www.aanp.org

STRENGTHS

- ❑ Explored nurse practitioner's perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes regarding their experiences in independent practice.
- ❑ Rich descriptive narratives that gives meaning to the experience of NPs in independent practice
- ❑ Wide range of experience in years and practice settings
- ❑ Themes contribute to body of nursing knowledge
- ❑ First phenomenological study related to nurse practitioners in independent practice

LIMITATIONS

- Research boundaries within inclusion criteria : English speaking NPs only.
- Majority of participants are female and (90%) Caucasian (10%)
- Does not include voice of unsuccessful independent NPs
- Participants limited to nurse practitioners who practice within Washington, DC and the 19 unrestricted states that allow NPs to practice autonomously.
- Skype® was not utilized in data collection
- Novice researcher

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH



- Replication of this research with larger demographic distribution
- ↑ Ethically diverse population
- Role orientations in specific areas of specialties related to independent practice
- International and local independent NP practices of Social Enterprises

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

- Personal interest: unveil significance of this phenomenon of interest.
- Intent: explore the lived experience of NPs in independent practice.
- Not the intent to predict what others would experience in independent practice, but to determine the intrinsic components of the experience for a selected group of participants.
- A gap in the literature has been filled.

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QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

