

LEADERSHIP STYLES OF NURSE MANAGERS AT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH HOSPITALS OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

This explorative descriptive study will examine the leadership styles of nurse managers employed within the Ministry of Health hospitals in Saudi Arabia. It also will investigate nursing staff levels of job satisfaction, effectiveness and willingness to exert extra effort at their workplace. There will be a two phase non experimental explorative descriptive design employing quantitative methodology. Both Managers and staff will be surveyed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Local and expatriate nurse managers will be invited to participate in the study. General nursing staff of wards whose manager elected to participate will then be invited to be surveyed. The total population of nurses in the participating hospitals is estimated at 954. This study builds on past research studies and adds to the growing body of knowledge on the transformational leadership theory and leadership outcomes which has been introduced by Burn (1978) and developed by Bass (1985). It adds to the body of knowledge in leadership research in the nursing profession and also contributes to better understanding of the way leadership is enacted in a sub-populate area like Saudi Arabia where nurses are from various and different cultures. This study will provide the nurse managers with the opportunity to examine their own leadership style and reflect on how they affect their own nursing staff.

Keywords: *Leadership Styles, Nursing leadership, job satisfaction, Transformational leadership, Nurse Manager*

Introduction

Leadership plays a very crucial role in the human affairs, and it has been a favorite subject for researchers. Marquis and Huston (2010) claimed that the work environment and the work performed by people in any organization are highly affected by the leadership style of its managers. Any profession requires a leadership, as it is

the case with all the health care sectors. Nurses are the key role in shaping the nursing professions; nurses who work

at the health division must have the required knowledge to provide appropriate health care and accept the responsibilities of professional management and leadership. They need to perform a supportive and coordinative role; ensuring the continuity of patient care and thereby making a difference in the process of healthcare service provision (Duygulu & Kublay, 2011).

Literature review

Leadership theories have evolved as time has progressed. Various scholars have described the evolution of

leadership theories: Bolden et al (2003) and Casida (2007). According to Casida (2007), the evolution of leadership

theories started with the great man theory (pre-1900s), and then followed by the trait theory between 1900 and 1948.

This was subsequently followed by the contingency theory between 1948 and 1980. This was consequently followed

by the transformational leadership theory which is presently being utilized. Casida also identifies other theories that

are being utilized presently as servant and multifaceted leadership theory.

There are many different types of leadership that nurse managers and leaders demonstrate to lead staff nurses in hospitals such as (autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, bureaucratic and situational) and contemporary leadership (charismatic, transactional, transformational, connective and shared leadership) (Huber, 2006). It is believed that in

hospital settings leadership style of head nurses might affect the job satisfaction (AL-Hussami, 2008). Bass and Avolio (1990) found that transformational (TF) leadership styles were preferred over transactional (TA) leadership

styles, and managers who exhibited transformational characteristics reported more satisfied staff nurses.

According to Albejaidi (2010), the Saudi Arabian government has taken the lead to improve the health care system and has been funding it over the years. As a result of this, Albejaidi noted that the World Health Organization's (WHO) ranked Saudi Arabia healthcare system the 26th in the world, outweighing other major economic countries like Canada, and the United States of America. Saudi Arabia is developing very fast in all disciplines, especially in nursing and health (Aldossary et al. 2008).

Nevertheless, the demand for labor in the health sector cannot be met by Saudi nationals alone because of the relatively small number of Saudi graduates from nursing schools (Abu-Zinadah, 2004). Consequently, most of the

healthcare providers are expatriate from different countries. For example, nurses come from over forty different countries, including the United Kingdom, Ireland and the USA (Aldossary et al. 2008). The nursing leaders in Saudi

Arabia faced several problems related to this mixed workforce such as recruitment and retention problems, high turnover rate, and cultural difference. Successful, motivated, and visionary leaders will be required in order to effectively manage Saudi Arabia's diverse nursing workforce. The current and future rapid developing health care

environment in Saudi Arabia demands skilled and competent leaders who are able to inspire their staff with a vision

of what can be accomplished no matter the challenges.

Proposed Methodology

There will be a two phase non experimental explorative descriptive design employing quantitative methodology.

The study aims to collect data from two groups: Phase one: Ward/Unit Nurse Manager and Phase two: Nursing

Staff. The participants are working in five of the Ministry of Health Hospitals in Saudi Arabia. A total population of

N= (954) nurses. The research instrument is Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X Short (MLQ). Leader and Rater form will be used in this Study.

The research questions guiding this study are:

- What leadership styles are practiced by nurse managers in the Saudi Ministry of Health hospitals?
- What are the relationship between nurse managers leadership styles and their effectiveness?
- Is there an association between the perceived leadership style of the nurse manager and the subordinates' willingness to exert extra effort and experience job satisfaction?
- Is there a difference between the nurse managers' perceptions of their own leadership style with how the manager's subordinates perceive the manager's leadership style?

Data Collection Approach

Numerical Codes will be utilised to identify each of the 5 hospitals participating in the survey ranging from (1 to 5). Each ward/unit managers will be allocated an alphabetical code for example hospital 1 ICU unit (1B). Once the

Nurse Manager elects to participate by returning their survey, their staff will be invited to participate using the hospital /ward code. These codes will be written in the space allocated for the 'Name of Leader' in the first section

of the MLQ form. This will help to match the nurse manager survey with his/her staff surveys. It is anticipated that a

total sample of 954 Nurse Managers and nursing staff will be invited to participate in the study.

Data Analysis

SPSS version 19 will be used for data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistic will be provided.

Conclusion

This paper draws attention to the nursing leadership styles practiced by nurse manager in the ministry of health hospitals in Saudi Arabia and how the transformational leadership is very essential for the achievements of the health care sectors. The expected study result will reflect the dominant leadership style practiced by the nurse manager and how it's affect the staff satisfaction and willingness to exert extra effort.

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