THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF EFFECTIVE NURSE MANAGERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON STAFF MORALE

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Abstract

This systematic review sought to analyze and consolidate the findings of studies that investigate the correlation between the leadership practices of nurse managers and the job engagement of staff nurses in hospital settings. The objective was to provide suggestions for enhancing these practices and suggest areas for further study. A comprehensive evaluation was undertaken to discover research that has been published and registered in well-known databases such as PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Embase, EMCare, and Eric. Three primary leadership style themes were found, and they exhibited statistically significant direct and indirect correlations with nurses' job engagement: relationally oriented, task-focused, and absence of leadership. The assessment of work engagement primarily focused on commitment, absorption, and vigor. The impact of different leadership styles on work engagement was discovered to be influenced by several factors. These factors include trust in the leader, environmental resources like structural empowerment, six work-life areas (workload, control, values, community, rewards, and fairness), person-job fit, organizational support, leader-member exchange, and personal resources such as self-efficacy and decision authority. This research identified a noteworthy association between a good leadership style shown by nurse managers and the level of job engagement displayed by registered nurses. The findings of this research indicate that the level of engagement among nurses may be enhanced by adopting relational leadership behaviors. The results of this research will be valuable for the development of suitable leadership styles for nurse leaders, enhancing their work conditions, and designing leadership training programs. When creating treatments for staff nurses, it is crucial to recognize the indirect impacts of nurse leaders' leadership styles and the elements that mediate their influence on job engagement.

Keywords: Nurses, leadership, nurse managers, staff morale, training programs.

1. Introduction

Nurses comprise 59% of the worldwide healthcare workforce, according to the World Health Organization [1]. Currently, there is a deficit of around six million nurses globally [1], which is having a substantial impact on the entire operation of healthcare systems worldwide [2]. The presence of a scarcity of nurses leads to an amplified workload and heightened stress for the nurses who continue to work, since they are required to work longer hours and face inadequate

patient-to-staff ratios [3–5]. The challenging work environment, especially over a prolonged duration, may cause nurses to have diminished feelings of belonging and personal satisfaction, leading to burnout and decreased morale [4–6]. Experiencing disinterest and a lack of control may also result in increased turnover among nursing personnel, which in turn is connected to worse patient outcomes and worsens current shortages [7]. Disengagement has been shown to be associated with negative patient outcomes, such as higher rates of nosocomial infections [8], rehospitalization, medication mistakes, and increased mortality [3, 9, 10].

2. Job engagement

Job engagement refers to a state of mind when a person has pleasant emotions and a sense of fulfillment in relation to their job. The phenomenon is often defined by the employee's enthusiasm, passion, and deep engagement in their job [11]. Vigour refers to the inclination and capability to invest effort into work, devotion signifies a strong commitment, and absorption indicates a high level of focus and obsession with work [11, 12]. Work involvement in nursing is positively associated with improved patient experiences, reduced absenteeism, enhanced performance, and greater patient satisfaction ratings [13, 14].

Healthcare organizations that foster good cultures and encourage personnel to feel connected with and care for their colleagues tend to have higher levels of job engagement [15]. Nurse supervisors have a crucial role in promoting satisfaction, enhancing performance among nursing staff, and establishing a conducive atmosphere for professional practice [16, 17]. Nurse managers have the responsibility of overseeing healthcare delivery to ensure that organizational objectives are achieved and that optimal results are achieved for both patients and staff [18].

3. Leadership

Leadership has a crucial role in influencing the overall work environment and individuals' perspectives on their job [19–21]. Leaders' individual leadership styles are determined by their own patterns of behavior in motivating others to achieve a shared objective [22, 23]. Efficient leadership styles may boost staff motivation by promoting autonomy, fostering connections, providing resources, and implementing techniques to advise, mentor, and coach staff.

While many leadership styles are acknowledged to have a role in job engagement, it remains uncertain which types are more efficacious in promoting engagement. This systematic review

seeks to consolidate current empirical data on the correlations between the leadership styles of nurse leaders and the work engagement of nurses.

4. Nurse managers

Nurse managers who demonstrate leadership via the establishment of a shared vision, confidence in their team, inspiration, and advocacy are considered more successful than those who prioritize tasks. Additionally, a lack of clear leadership has a detrimental influence on nurse job engagement. These results further enhance our knowledge that relational-oriented leadership, which prioritizes the cultivation of professional connections with staff and the establishment of extensive contact and trust, has a favorable impact on nursing practice outcomes. These results, such as the intention to remain and job satisfaction [21, 24, 25], eventually enhance the quality of treatment by increasing patients' experiences and overall satisfaction with healthcare services [26].

Effective leadership, characterized by a compelling and uplifting vision, encourages people to remain dedicated to a valuable objective even in the face of a demanding workload [11]. On the other hand, when management lacks competent leadership, meaning they are not accountable and have a negative attitude, it has a negative impact on the professional development of nurses. This leads to unproductive work practices and creates an environment that encourages workplace bullying. Ultimately, this negatively affects patient satisfaction.

Although successful leadership techniques may have been labeled and structured differently, they consistently shared some key elements. These included demonstrating ethical awareness, advocating for good conduct, fostering equality, and cultivating healthy connections with employees. This discovery aligns with current research that demonstrates a significant convergence across leadership models and frameworks [27, 28-31]. The abundance of conceptions may hinder the development of organizational theory [32]. Additional study is required to comprehensively comprehend the effects, not only to label models, but to assess if the leaders demonstrate ethical concerns, good conduct, and equality.

Supportive working conditions bolster the correlation between the leadership style of nurse managers and the level of job engagement. Relational leadership plays a crucial role in establishing a workplace that is both supportive and empowering. When nurses are able to

effectively access information and resources and have the necessary support and autonomy to execute their professional jobs exceptionally well, staff members feel appreciated and more emotionally and physically engaged in their work [33]. This discovery expands upon the knowledge that a flourishing and empowering work environment is crucial for optimizing professional nursing practice and reducing staff turnover [3, 34-37]. Positive surroundings have been shown to be linked to a decrease in adverse event reports and an increase in nurse-assessed quality levels. This, in turn, increases the chances of retaining personnel [3, 38-42]. Insufficient work resources, inadequate communication, abusive behavior, lack of respect, and absence of vision or leadership lead to unfavorable consequences, such as burnout and job discontent [43]. This underscores the need of comprehending the work environment while contemplating both implemented leadership styles and job involvement.

This assessment failed to take into account variables such as workplace culture or the specific characteristics of the work environment in which leadership was shown. When studying nursing leadership, it is important to take into account the cultural, social, and institutional contexts [19, 44, 45]. Failing to examine crucial aspects of the workplace context where patients are situated and nursing work is carried out can hinder the understanding and analysis of leadership within the nursing profession [46]. A recent realist analysis of healthcare leadership has shown that collaborative and transformational leadership techniques are often seen more favorably than transactional leadership practices. It is important to note that the effectiveness of various practices and attributes varies depending on the particular situations in which they are used [47]. Moreover, the suitable conduct of leaders is contingent upon the specific circumstances and surrounding conditions.

Successful leaders are characterized by their skill in adapting their leadership techniques to diverse circumstances, both in a supporting and direct manner [48]. In order to enhance nurse leadership, healthcare organizations should analyze the impact of context on leadership practices and vice versa [19]. Additionally, it is crucial to include personal viewpoints, experience, and knowledge within the given situation. Further investigation should go into these settings with more thoroughness. An advantageous aspect of the research included in this review is that most of them used samples from numerous locations, hence enhancing the reliability and applicability of the results. Design, sampling, and poor response rates were identified as weaknesses. Out of

the 11 investigations, only three reported a response rate that above 60%. This limitation in representativeness and potential bias was observed. Additional study using nonprobability sampling and qualitative/mixed-method techniques is necessary to enhance the overall quality of research in this sector.

5. Conclusion

A strong association exists between the leadership styles of positive managers and the level of engagement among registered nurses. Effective leadership styles exhibit shared behavioral features that align with the criteria of a positive leadership framework, including ethical concerns, good behaviors, promotion of equality, and fostering healthy connections with employees. The review's results may guide the creation of educational and training programs focused on leadership styles for nursing leaders. When developing treatments for staff nurses, it is crucial to recognize the indirect impacts of nurse managers' leadership styles and the characteristics that mediate these effects.

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