

Assertiveness and Leadership Styles among Head Nurses

Thesis

Submitted for Partial fulfillment of the Requirement of the Master
degree in (Nursing Administration)

By

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Dedication



*This work dedicated to individual
who give meaning to my life:*

*To my mother the cornerstone of my
success.*

*To my husband who was helpful for
me all the time.*

To my sisters and also my friends.

Thank you

Abeer Mohamed AbdElWah

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ABSTRACT

Background: Assertiveness is important for effective leadership and team building in nursing. **Aim:** to investigate the relationship between assertiveness and leadership styles among head nurses. **Design:** analytic cross-sectional. **Setting:** the study was carried out at Ain-Shams University Hospitals. **Sample:** It included all available (98) head nurses. **Tools:** A Self-administered questionnaire which included two different tools, assertiveness scale is one and other is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used for data collection. **Results:** The results showed that 77.6% of head nurses' had a high level of assertiveness, and high percentages were having transformational and transactional leadership, while less than two-fifth were using passive/avoidant leadership style. Significant positive correlations were revealed between the scores of assertiveness and of all domains of transformational leadership, and the contingent reward domain of the transactional style, and negative correlations with passive/ avoidant leadership. Significant positive correlations were shown between the scores of assertiveness and all types of leadership outcomes. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that head nurses in the study settings have a high level of assertiveness. They mostly use the transformational and transactional leadership styles. Meanwhile, the scores of the transformational leadership domains of idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), and inspirational motivation have positive effects on their assertiveness, while the laissez-faire leadership has a negative impact on it. **Recommendations:** The study recommends training courses for head nurses in certain areas of assertiveness and in situational leadership.

Key words: Assertiveness, Head Nurses and Leadership styles

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INTRODUCTION

Assertiveness is an interpersonal behavior that promotes quality of human relationships by assisting individuals gives expression to their rights, thoughts and feelings in a manner that neither denies or demeans but recognizes and respects those of others (*Cabe and Timmins, 2013*). It is a tool for expressing confidently and a way of saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ in an appropriate way (*Ellis and Love, 2010*). It means expressing personal rights and feelings. Lack of assertiveness can affect one's relationships and quality of life as one fails to communicate effectively and ends up not getting what one wants. It is a learnable skill and mode of communication. Increasing assertiveness can help both personally and professionally (*Deena, 2015*).

Moreover, assertiveness can be defined as the extent of forcefulness used by individuals to express themselves and to get things done in order to achieve the organizational objectives (*Memarian et al., 2008*). Furthermore, assertiveness is the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive. Assertiveness strives to maintain a balance between passive and aggressive response patterns with a focus on

equality and fairness in interpersonal interaction, which is a result of a positive sense of self-respect for others. Assertive behavior requires a high level of differentiation and solid self (*Chambers and Paraska, 2012*).

Assertiveness is important for effective team building in nursing. Being assertive in the right way, leaders can express their legitimate needs, wants, ideas and feelings. In this way, th same time enabling them to respond with their own needs, wants, ideas and feelings. Being assertive can help relationships to become more authentic. In addition, expressing feelings about other people's behavior gives them an accurate indicator of where they stand and enables them to modify their behavior. Assertive behavior can be one of the healthiest methods to maintain personal self-esteem and foster healthy relationships with others; it may not always be the best choice (*Hsin-Yi Cohen, 2012*).

Leadership is "the art of influencing people to accomplish the mission" (*Grimm, 2010*). Leadership is "a social process in which one individual influences the behavior of others without threats or violence". "It is not

merely a series of skills or tasks; rather, it is an attitude that informs behavior" (*Hinchliff et al., 2008*).

Leadership styles are often based upon behaviors that are used to influence change. There are different styles of leadership, namely autocratic, bureaucratic, and laissez-faire leadership. A better and fairer leadership style may be situational leadership, this style allows the leader to switch between all the above styles depending on the situation they are dealing with and the competence of the workforce he or she is working with at that time (*Ellis and Abbott, 2009*).

Good leadership is essential since the dynamics of the team will be subjected to constant change depending on everyday problems such as, staff shortages, absenteeism, and change of responsibilities. The role of the leader is to ensure that the problems would not have any effect on patient care. Leadership is rarely thrust upon the unsuspecting nurse; it is rather a set of knowledge, skill and attributes that develop over time (*Elmers, 2010*). The style of the nurse leader can be important for employees' acceptance of change and for motivating them to achieve a high quality of care (*Azaare and Gross, 2011*). Leaders may use more leadership styles to

varying degrees; however, they have a tendency to use characteristics of one style more than the other (*Marshall, 2011*).

Assertive leaders clearly describe behavior and its consequences in comparison to attributing motivation to others. They direct their feedback and observations to the appropriate person. They also take responsibility and understand that they must leverage every opportunity for sending consistent messages about what they expect from others in the workplace (*Memarian et al., 2008*). Nurse Manager's assertive leadership behavior has a strong impact on nurses' empowerment and organizational commitment as well as on team effectiveness and the quality of nursing care. On the other hand, nurse managers with strong assertive behavior may not be able to empower their employees if their span of control is wide (*Vesterinen et al., 2013*).

Significance of the Study

Leaders often suffer stress and need to be assertive to resist and to cope successfully. Assertiveness is a great tool that makes you a leader in any area of life. Assertiveness also means that the leader will speak out in a tone that lets people know leaders are serious about what they have to say. A true leader has interpersonal skills and an ability to trust self and the facts he or she presents. An interpersonal individual has the ability to assert self while interacting with people. Therefore, we see people skills are necessary to accomplish if you want quality leadership skills. Assertiveness is one of the factors affecting the nurse's leadership style. , it is important to understand the different leadership styles that are often found in the workplace, as well as its association with their assertive behavior.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the relationship between assertiveness and leadership styles among head nurses through:-

- 1- Assessing assertiveness of head nurses at Ain Shams University hospitals.
- 2- Assessing leadership styles used by head nurses at Ain Shams University hospitals.
- 3- Examining the relationship between assertiveness and Leadership Styles used by head nurses at Ain Shams University hospitals.

Research questions:

- 1- What is the level of assertiveness among head nurses at Ain shams university hospitals?
- 2- What are the leadership styles used by head nurses at Ain Shams University hospitals?
- 3- Is there a relationship between assertiveness and leadership styles used by head nurses at Ain Shams University hospitals?