Relationship between Critical Thinking Dispositions and Conflict Resolution Strategies among Head Nurses

Thesis

Submitted for Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

of the Master Degree in Nursing Sciences

(Nursing administration)

By

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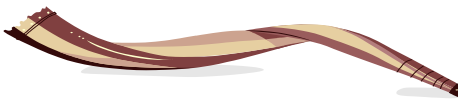

Asmaa Abdelkader Abdelhamid

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List of Abbreviation

CPP	Consulting Psychologist Press
CT	Critical Thinking
EI	Emotional Intelligence
NCECT	National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking

Abstract

Background: Critical thinking in nursing can help in effective workplace conflict management, and reduce its negative consequences. **Aim**: The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between critical thinking disposition and conflict resolution strategies among head nurses. **Methods**: Cross-sectional analytic design was conducted in all departments of the Compound of Hospitals at Matkhalaf affiliated to the Directorate of Health Affairs in Menoufyia governorate on 82 head and charge nurses. A self-administered questionnaire with California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) and Thomas-Kilmann Instrument (TKI) scales was used for data collection. The fieldwork was in February and March 2016. **Result**: Most head nurses were females (84.1%), and 84.1% had a bachelor degree. In total, 58.5% of the head nurses had high critical thinking disposition. The most commonly used conflict management strategies were accommodating (42.7%) and compromising (35.4%), whereas collaborating (2.4%) and competing (3.7%) were least used. **Conclusion**: A significant negative correlation was shown between head nurses' scores of avoiding strategy and their score of critical thinking disposition (r=-0.276). The deficient training in critical thinking and in conflict management strategies has a negative impact on critical thinking disposition. **Recommendation**: Training courses in critical thinking and conflict resolution strategies are urgently needed for all head and charge nurses, and this should be set as a prerequisite for promotion to higher managerial positions.

Keywords: Critical thinking, Conflict management, Disposition, Head nurses

Introduction

As healthcare system become more complex, it is important for nurses to develop critical thinking ***(Rogal and Young, 2008)***. Nursing is a profession that calls for complex behaviors. The responsibilities of nursing include physical, psychological, mental, and spiritual care for a variety of clients. In this modern healthcare environment, with its complex technology and patient interventions, nurses require critical thinking skills ***(Pai and Eng, 2013)***.

Critical thinking is a metacognitive process that, through purposeful, reflective judgment, increases the chances of producing a logical conclusion to an argument or solution to a problem. Instruction in critical thinking is becoming exceedingly important because it allows individuals to gain a more complex understanding of information they encounter and promotes good decision-making and problem-solving in real-world applications ***(Butler et al., 2012)***. The critical thinking process guides individuals to develop purposeful and reasoned judgments based on their beliefs ***(Profetto-McGrath et al., 2009)***.

Critical thinking is a metaphorical bridge between information and action. Critical thinking in nursing

involves habits of the mind and requires the implementation of cognitive skills ***(Scheffer and Rubenfeld, 2010)***. Critical thinking is an essential skill needed for the identification of client problems and the implementation of interventions to promote effective care outcomes ***(Bittencourt and Crossetti, 2012)***. It is a very important tool to manage conflict and turn it into opportunity. It is a compass, which gives direction to resolve conflicts in the best interest of the team and organization ***(Vora and Dasgupta, 2014)***.

Conflict is a dynamic process that can be positive or negative, healthy or dysfunctional, within work environment. Conflict is the consequences of experienced or perceived variations in common goals, values, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, or actions ***(Marquis and Huston, 2012)***. Conflict, as an inherent phenomenon in humans' life, arises as a daily challenge in healthcare organizations ***(Moisoglou et al., 2014)***.

Conflict is one of the issues that takes place in any organization especially hospitals where continuous human interactions occur. Nurses play different roles such as care provider, educator, and manager. These roles lead to various types of interactions among nurses and other

healthcare team members, which significantly increase the probability for conflict to arise in hospital settings among head nurses ***(Xu and Davidhizar, 2004)***. Conflict within the workplace has been defined as a situation when two or more individuals or groups in the work environment have differences of opinions, attitudes, or needs that are seemingly incompatible ***(Cloke and Goldsmith, 2011)***.

Unresolved conflicts are distracting to employees, who must spend valuable work time engaged in conflict ***(Consulting Psychologist Press [CPP], 2008; Römer et al., 2012)***. Conflict resolution is a process that is used to end a conflict between two people ***(Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010)***. The management of conflict is an important topic for many business owners, managers, and leaders ***(Consulting Psychologist Press [CPP], 2008; Dewa et al., 2012)***.

Failure to efficiently resolve conflicts, whether in one's personal life or the workplace, can result in enormous social and economic costs ***(Wile, 2014)***. These can include inefficient teamwork, lack of staff collaboration; insufficient communication processes; faulty product development; and employees quitting or being fired ***(Consulting Psychologist Press [CPP], 2008; Brusko, 2010; Cloke and Goldsmith, 2011; Shetach, 2012).***

Effective conflict management in the workplace can reduce the negative consequences of conflict. These negative outcomes can include low productivity, health-related stress, increased employee turnover, or litigation ***(Shapiro, 2014)***.

In this study the head nurse is defined as a first line manager who is responsible for managing the unit 24 hrs. This responsibilities include teaching, staff development, reporting, evaluating, and scheduling.

Meanwhile, the charge nurse defined as the one responsible for the unit as the head nurse is in an another shift of duty, her duties include delegating nursing assignment, preparing schedule, overseeing admission and discharges, monitoring and ordering medicines and supplies. In addition to this managerial tasks they may carry a patient load depending on where there work and their shift.

Significance of the study

Definitely, head nurses face different kinds of conflict in work field that can affect quality of health services, which may affect organizational achievements. Head nurses with critical thinking dispositions can transform the way people solve problems. They can "turning on" higher thinking skills during conflicts which "turn off" emotions