Span of Control Indicators and Leadership Styles among Head Nurses

Thesis

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By

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List of Abbreviations

Abb.	Full term
IC	Individualized Consideration
II	Idealized Influence
IM	Inspirational Motivation
IS	Intellectual Stimulation
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

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Span of Control Indicators and Leadership Styles among Head Nurses

Abstract

Background: Span of control plays an important role in health organizations and has implications for organizational structure. In addition leadership styles are sets or clusters of behaviors used in the process of effecting leadership. Aim: This study aimed to assess span of control indicators and leadership styles among head nurses. **Design:** A descriptive correlation design was used. **Settings:** The study conducted at Ain-Shams University Hospitals where the study subjects worked. Subjects included (98) head nurses and (210) staff nurses. Tools of data collection: Data were collected by using two tools Span of Control Indicators Questionnaire and Multifactor Leadership Ouestionnaire. **Results:** 99% of head nurses uses individual consideration dimension of transformational leadership style while, 93.0% of staff nurses asserted that head nurses uses management by exception (active) dimension of transactional leadership style. Conclusion: There was statistically significant relation between head nurses' span of control and the item of the extra effort outcomes of leadership. Recommendations: providing continuing education through attending conferences and workshops should provide to head nurses about leadership and span of control and how to deal with problems according to organizational hierarchy and conducting further study to discuss the factors that affecting leadership styles and span of control.

Key words: Span of control - leadership styles- head nurses.

Introduction

Organizations irrespective of their type cannot exist in a vacuum. They are made up of people and these people exist as management and subordinates working together to fulfill both organizational and individual goals (Wikebedia, 2014). To achieve the mission and goals of the organization, hierarchies and structures are put in place in order for managers to exercise authority and control over subordinates in their duties and tasks or in their area of administrative jurisdiction. Interestingly, the level of managerial authority exercised as well as the effectiveness and efficiency achieved is a direct result of the manager's ability command, direct, control, and delegate to responsibilities to a number of subordinates under him or her. The number of subordinates a manager can guide to perform at optimum best is referred to as span of control (www.businessdictionary.com, 2014).

Span of control: Number of people supervised by one person/position. Span of control answers the question of how many staff report to one manager. This is a critical concern in the classical theory of organizations which emphasizes that there are limits to the number of staff a supervisor can effectively direct issues that affect the

number of staff are (a) similarity and complexity of the jobs and functions, (b) geographic factors, (c) amount of direction and coordination required, (d) amount of planning and time required to provide management. More efficient organizations usually have a shorter span of control for their managers. Span of control indicators tool is designed to assist in weighing of the span of control (**Finkelman**, 2012).

Leadership plays an important role in improving organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, innovation, and organizational loyalty. Tsai and Su, (2011); Yammario (2013) and Gentry and Sparks (2012) agreed that leadership stimulates the motivation of cohorts to implement change toward an organization's desired future. The success of any organization in any domain or field depends on the effectiveness of the leader of that organization (Parris and Peachey, 2013).

Leadership is an interpersonal skill applied by a leader in the style which is best suited to the situation and ensures the attainment of desired goals by effective and continuous communication. Leadership is the process of impacting people through continuous and useful communication between leader and follower to achieve the goal. Leadership is a challenge to the behavior of subordinates through the communication process and toward the attainment of goal or goals. Leadership is about vision, ideas, direction and has most important inspiring people to bring the trust between them and a team effort to work together to attain the goal (**John**, **2015**).

A leader is someone who has commanding authority influence over individuals or an organization of individuals whereas; leadership describes the ability to lead a group or organization toward a goal. An effective leader must demonstrate character and build that character among the public or within the organization to be led (**Forman, 2011**).

Leadership style is the manner and approach of motivating people, providing direction and achieving goals (Amirul and Daud, 2012). Style can either encourage or discourage employees which can in turn lead to increasing or decreasing performance levels (Beloni, 2012). There are several leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, participative, situational, transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership. They all influence employee's commitment (Javaid and Mirza, 2012).

Introduction &

Transactional leadership, the leader views the leader-follower relationship as a process of exchange. They tend to gain compliance by offering rewards for performance and compliance or by offering threatening punishment for non performance and non compliance. In transformational leadership, in contrast, the leaders are more visionary and inspirational in approach. They tend to communicate a clear and acceptable vision and goals, with which employees can identify and tend to engender intense emotion in their followers. Rather than exchanging rewards for performance, transformational leader attempt to build ownership on the part of group member, by involving the group in the decision process (Vati, 2013).

Head nurses are responsible for supervising the work of non managerial personnel and the day to day activities of specific work unit. Head nurses are responsible for clinical nursing practice, patient care delivery, utilization of human, fiscal and other resources, personnel development, compliance with regulatory and professional standards, fostering interdisciplinary, collaborative relationships and strategic planning (Rashed et al., 2015).

Significance of the study

Changes to health service management structures have created an urgent need to increase the knowledge of effective leadership in healthcare. It plays an important role in nursing and it is essential element for quality of professional practice environment where, nurses can provide high quality of nursing care. In addition, nursing requires practical, realistic and knowledgeable leaders who are visible, inspired others and supported professional nursing practice. On the other hand, the span of control is an important concept to achieve care and it should be kept in mind when interacting with others. Moreover, when faced with the need to tighten budgets, hospitals have eliminated managerial positions despite little knowledge of the impact of organizational factors, such as span of control, particularly to determine its effect on leadership styles of the head nurses. So, this study has contributed to the growing body of research on antecedents to leadership styles and span of control by examining the important leadership styles and its impact on the span of control. It is believed that this study would have added value to the literatures on supervisors' leadership styles, especially in the Ain Shams University Hospitals since there were limited literatures done on similar setting.