Transformational Leadership Skills among Nursing Managers

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Abstract: Background: Transformational leadership is an influential element in achieving the quality of nursing care. Transformational nursing leaders are a source of inspiration to nurses through their commitment for their healthcare organizations. Transformational nursing managers' insistence to a mission and willingness to take risks along with a strong desire to achieve and drives healthcare organizations to success. **Purpose:** To identify the level of nursing managers' transformational leadership skills. **Methods:** A descriptive research design was used. The study was conducted in Menoufia University Hospitals. A convenience sample of sixty two nursing managers constituted the study sample. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 6S was used to identify the transformational leadership skills among nursing managers. **Results:** Nursing managers in the hospital setting showed low level (27.7 ±3.1) of transformational leadership skills. The highest mean score was for individual consideration dimension whereas the lowest mean score was for Laissez-faire leadership dimension **Conclusion:** In-service training program about transformational leadership skills for nursing managers is needed to improve Laissez-faire leadership that increase their insistence to hospitals' mission and desire for success.
Keywords: Nursing managers, transformational leadership, skills.

Introduction

Nursing by nature is an emotionally demanding and a highly stressful profession as nurses has to deal with different people in various situations at different times of the day. During their everyday work, nurses have to cope with extremely emotionally charged and rapidly changing circumstances. These stressful situations resulting in harm to both nurses and patients. High levels of stress cause physiological and psychological illnesses, poor occupational performance, low job satisfaction, high burnout and turnover, reducing quality of care and patient's satisfaction (Bakker & De Vries, 2021).

Also, nursing managers' role have been expanded to be responsible for creating and maintaining a professional work environment for nurses and a safe environment for patients. This expanding role of nursing managers have contributed significantly to the stress experiences among nursing managers. Moreover, nursing managers have to deal with several personalities both in the upper and lower levels of management in the organization or unit with different perspectives and competing values. So, nursing managers experience occupational stress and burnout from various stressors such as role conflict, work and time pressure, job overload, role ambiguity, inadequate social support, inadequate leadership, and organizational constraints (Berger et al., 2019).

So, nursing administration must take into consideration that nursing managers are not created when they

graduate from any level of nursing education programs. Nursing Managers need to grow in the organization and additionally be mentored in their specific roles to be effective for the unit and overall healthcare organization. Therefore, this study is a vital step in identifying the level of nursing managers' transformational leadership skills that increase their insistence to hospitals' mission and desire for success among nursing managers (Labrague et al., 2018).

In addition, the role of the nurse leader becomes critical in creating supportive and positive work environment to help nurses cope with stress of managing their own and other' emotions concurrently. Effective nursing leadership in organizations requires numerous talents, skills, competencies, types of knowledge, effective communication, self and social awareness (Noquez, 2019).

Transformational leadership style should be used by nursing managers to improve leadership skills. Transformational leadership is an influential element in achieving the quality of nursing services (Lan et al., 2019). In addition, transformational nursing leaders are a source of inspiration to others through their commitment for those who work for them. Their perseverance to a mission and willingness to take risks, along with a strong desire to achieve, drives organizational success (Akkaya, 2020).

Transformational leadership, one of the most popular forms of leadership, has been the focus by many researchers in recent years (Buila, Martínezb, & Matutec, 2019). Transformational leadership can be defined as, an approach in which nursing leader inspires and motivates team of nurses to create positive changes within healthcare organization. This leadership style can increase nurses'

morale, lead to rapid innovation, improve conflict resolution, decrease turnover and foster a sense of ownership among nurses. So, it is transforming nursing work environments that lead to high level work performance for staff nurses (Jensen et al., 2019).

Also, Transformational leadership is characterized by four behaviors. These specific behaviors of this leader are classified into four dimensions are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulus, and individualized consideration (Spies et al., 2018). The1st dimension "idealized influence" is based on the nurses' belief in the leader's ability to influence and is an attribution characteristic that indicates whether nurse managers hold nurses' trust, maintain their faith and respect, show dedication to them, appeal to their hopes and dreams, and act as their role model. The 2nd dimension "inspirational motivation" involves encouraging others to achieve the goals and aspirations of the organization while also achieving their own aims (Kroes, 2017).

Motivation is an important element of healthcare, as motivation affects performance and quality of patient care. So, transformational nursing managers should have the ability to inspire and motivate their nursing staff. Inspirational motivation empowers nurses to complete the task; it focuses on the good characteristics in them and avoids over-rotating towards focusing on the bad characteristics. Also, transformational leaders provide a vision, use appropriate symbols and images to help others focus on their work, and try to make others feel their work is significant. The 3rd dimension "Individualized Consideration" within individualized consideration, nursing managers support and encourage individuals to reach higher levels of

achievement and assisting them to achieve full actualization (Schieltz, 2017).

Transformational nursing managers demonstrate important concern for the needs and feelings of their nurses which brings out the best efforts from each individual in achieving daily work activity that is serving in achieving organizational goals. Individual consideration is related to how the transformational nursing manager treats each nurse as an individual, acknowledges their needs, and it includes the recognition of strengths as well as provides demonstration of both care and compassion toward their nurses, nurses development, coaching, and mentoring (David, Armanu & Afnan, 2017).

The 4th dimension "Intellectual Stimulation" intellectual stimulation encourages staff innovation and challenging their nurses to be creative towards the purpose of fulfilling their tasks and assigned responsibilities. Transformational nursing managers also encourage creative thinking in their staff nurses, challenges nurses' assumptions and create an environment that is tolerant of seemingly extreme positions, and nurture staff to question their own values and beliefs of those of the organization (Suratno, Ariyanti, & Kadar, 2018).

Transformational leadership has a positive impact on the organization's performance. When transformational leaders create a strong entrepreneurial culture, initiative taking, group learning and innovative approaches to problem solving are all enhanced, which in turn informs action in dealing with patient safety issues. A strong emphasis on hierarchy, rules, policies and control, they argue, potentially inhibits a positive climate for safety due to fear of negative outcomes and blame for reporting safety-related problems (Brouer, Chiu, & Wang, 2016).

The key influence on culture is the transformational leadership of an organization. Transformational leadership and organizational culture hold the key to understand organizational effectiveness. In addition to decisions taken by a manager are very important as they affect a large number of people. Thus, the leadership skills of the manager have to be very powerful in achieving organizational goals, higher levels of productivity and enhance quality of health care services (Ishii, Takemura, & Ichikawa, 2021).

Purpose

To identify the level of transformational leadership skills among nursing managers in Menoufia University Hospital.

Research Question:

What is the level of transformational leadership skills among nursing managers in Menoufia University Hospital?

Methods

Research Design:

A descriptive research design was used to fulfill the purpose of this study.

Setting:

This study was conducted at all units and departments in Menoufia University Hospital. All medical, surgical, general or specialized departments and critical care units were included in the study. This hospital constitutes four buildings; General Hospital, Emergency Hospital, Specialized Hospital, and Oncology hospital. The bed capacity of the hospital is 1200 beds. The study was conducted in different general wards and acute care units.

Sample:

A convenience sample technique was used to select study's sample. The Total number of nursing managers is 92 only sixty two (67.4%) of nursing managers who returned the questionnaire and accepted to take part in this study constituted the study's sample.

Instrument:

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 6S was used to identify the transformational leadership skills among nursing managers. This instrument is the most frequent, well validated leadership instrument, and it is applied to a wide range of organizational settings as well as with leaders in different cultures. It is used to assess transformational leadership style systematically. MLQ consists of 21 items which assess nursing managers' leadership on seven factors related to transformational leadership. Each factor was composed of three items. Idealized influence indicates whether nursing managers hold subordinates' trust, maintain their faith and respect, show dedication to them, appeal to their hopes and dreams, and act as their role model (Kroes, 2017).

Inspirational motivation assesses the degree to which nursing managers provide a vision, use appropriate symbols and images to help others focus on their work, and try to make others feel their work is significant. Intellectual stimulation shows the degree to which nursing managers encourage others to be creative in looking at old problems in new ways, create an environment that is tolerant of seemingly extreme positions, and nurture people to question their own values and beliefs of those of the organization (Schieltz, 2017).

Individual consideration indicates the degree to which nursing managers show interest in others' wellbeing, assign projects individually, and pay attention to those who seem less involved in the group. Contingent reward shows the degree to which nursing managers tell others what to do in order to be rewarded, emphasize what leader expect from them, and recognize their accomplishments. Management by exception assesses whether nursing managers tell others the job requirements, are constant with standards performance, and are a believer in "if it isn't broke, don't fix it". Laissez faire leadership assesses whether nursing managers require little of others, are content to let things ride, and let others do their own things (Suratno, Ariyanti, & Kadar, 2018).

The instrument uses five-point Likert scale (0= Not at all, 1= Once in a while, 2= Sometimes, 3= fairly often, 4=frequently, if not always). Score for each factor is determined by summing three specified items on the questionnaire. For example, to determine score for factor 1, Idealized influence, sum responses for items 1, 8, and 15. Score categorizes as: low (0-4), moderate (5- 8) and high (9 – 12). The grand total score for all the seven factors ranged between 0 -84. The total score of each nursing manager was categorized into "Low level of TL" ranging from (0 – 28), (>28 – 56) was considered as "Moderate level of TL", and (>5٦ – 84) was considered as "High level of TL" (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Cronbach alpha was used to test reliability for the overall Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 6S was α = 0.92 (Brandt & Laiho, 2013). For the current study Cronbach alpha was estimated (α = 0.90). All the dimensions of the MLQ also have high internal consistency with idealized influence was α = 0. 82, for inspirational motivation was α = 0.80, intellectual stimulation was α = 0.83, individual consideration was α

=0.82, contingent reward was α =0.79, management by exception was α = 0.83, and laissez-fair leadership was α =0.78.

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted before starting the actual data collection for all instruments. The aim of the pilot study was to test the clarity, relevance, applicability of the study instruments and to determine obstacles that may be encountered during data collection. It also helped to estimate the time required to fill in the questionnaire. The pilot study was conducted on 7 nursing managers who represented 10% of subjects' number, pilot study's sample were excluded from study sample. Based on the results of the pilot study, there were no modifications needed. Participants needed 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Data collection procedure

A letter was submitted from the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing to the director of Menoufia University Hospital, to identify the level of transformational leadership skills among nursing managers and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 6S was used to collect data. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire. Questionnaire was distributed, completed, and collected from the hospital departments and units. The purpose of the current study and the instructions to fill in the questionnaire were provided to all participants in a form of cover page to all questionnaires. Participants completed the questionnaires during working hours. Data collection lasted for six months from the beginning of March 2020 till the end of August 2020.

Ethical Consideration:

Ethical approval was obtained from Ethical and Research Committee of the Faculty of Nursing that affiliates to the selected University. An agreement was obtained from the selected hospital for data collection. Return of filled questionnaire was considered as an acceptance from participants who met the inclusion criteria to be part of the current study. The data was collected by the investigator after describing the study aim to all participants. Confidentiality of participants' information was totally assured. Voluntary participation in the study was assured to all participants as well.

Statistical analysis

Data was coded and transformed into specially designed form to be suitable for computer entry process. Data was entered and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) version 22. Quantitative data were presented by mean ($\overline{x}$) and standard deviation (SD). Qualitative data were presented in the form of frequency distribution tables, number, and percentage.

Results

The demographic characteristics of the study sample concluded that: All nursing managers participating in the study were females. The highest percentage of study sample (62.9%) have age between 40-<50 years old with mean age 43.5±5.1, more than half (56.4%) of the study sample had experience between 10 - <20 years with mean experience 19.9±5.4, and most of study sample (96.8%) did not have any in-service training about leadership.

Table 1: reveal distribution of nursing managers regarding their transformational leadership dimensions and items. The table indicated that, the total transformational leadership mean

score was 27.7±3.1, which implies low level of transformational leadership skills among nursing managers. The table also indicate that the highest mean score for items of transformational leadership skills included: Let others continue working in the same ways always, and tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work (1.56±0.6, & 1.56±0.7) respectively.

Table 2: shows mean and standard deviation of transformational leadership dimensions among nursing managers. The table indicated that nursing managers have low level (27.7±3.1) of transformational leadership skills. The highest mean score was for individual consideration while the lowest mean score was for Laissez-faire leadership (4.4±1.1 & 3.6±0.9) respectively.

Table (1): Mean and standard deviation of nursing managers' transformational leadership items (N=62).

Transformational Leadership	Mean ±SD	Min.	Max.
Idealized influence			
1. I make others feel good to be around me.	1.34±0.6	0	4
2. Others have complete faith in me	1.34±0.7	0	4
3. Others are proud to be associated with me	1.1±0.7	0	4
Inspirational motivation			
4. I express with a few simple words what we could and should do.	1.39±0.7	0	3
5. I provide appealing images about what we can do.	1.21±0.8	0	2
6. I help others find meaning in their work.	1.21±0.8	0	3
Intellectual stimulation			
7. I enable others to think about old problems in new ways	1.23±0.8	0	3
8. I am content to let others continue working in the same ways always.	1.56±0.6	0	3
9. I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before.	1.47±0.7	0	3
Individual consideration			
10.I help others develop themselves.	1.24±0.8	0	3
11.I let others know how I think they are doing	1.39±0.7	0	3
12.I give personal attention to others who seem rejected.	1.32±0.7	0	3
Contingent reward			
13.I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work	1.56±07	0	3
14.I provide recognition/rewards when others reach their goals.	1.24±0.6	0	2
15.I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish	1.3±0.7	0	2
Management-by-exception			
16.I am satisfied when others meet agreed upon standards	1.24±0.8	0	2
17.As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything.	1.39±0.7	0	4
18.I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work.	1.32±0.7	0	4
Laissez-faire leadership			
19.I am content to let others continue working in the same ways always	1.23±0.7	0	2
20.Whatever others want to do is OK with me	1.29±0.6	0	2
21.I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential.	1.23±0.6	0	3

Table (2): Mean and standard deviation of transformational leadership dimensions among nursing managers (N=62).

Transformational Leadership dimensions	Mean± SD	Range
Idealized influence	3.9±1.2	1-2
Inspirational motivation	3.8±1.2	1-7
Intellectual stimulation	4.3± 1.2	1-6
Individual consideration	4.4±1.1	2-7
Contingent reward	3.9±1.5	0-9
Management-by-exception	3.7±1.2	1-6
Laissez-faire leadership	3.6±0.9	1-7
Grand total Transformational Leadership Scale	**27.7±3.1**	**20-36**

Discussion

Healthcare systems are under facing pressure to achieve fiscal sustainability as well as social sustainability challenges. Specifically, nursing managers are confronted with increasingly pressurized work environments, due to their multi-facetted roles and responsibilities, lack of work-life balance, job stress, negative organizational culture, competing priorities, and staffing challenges. These stressors remain particularly urgent due to the current COVID-19 pandemic (Moyo et al., 2022). While almost all spectrums of society have been severely disadvantaged, perhaps no profession has been hit harder than health care staff, who are on the front-line of the pandemic response (Caldas et al., 2020).

The result of current study revealed that nursing managers had low level of transformational leadership skills, with highest mean score was for individual consideration while the lowest mean score was for Laissez-faire leadership.

The primary reason for this that nursing managers are not prepared to be successful in the current demanding healthcare environment may be the lack of formal leadership training.

The results of this study was in harmony with Abd-Elrhaman, & Abd-Allah (2018) who studied the transformational leadership educational program for nursing managers and its effect on nurses' job performance. This study demonstrated that the total mean score of nursing managers' transformational leadership skills was (23.23±3.10), which implies low level of transformational leadership skills among nursing managers, with highest mean score for idealized behavior and individual consideration while the lowest mean score was for Laissez-faire leadership.

Furthermore, this result was parallel with Ali, Elmolla, & Aref (2016) who conduct study about "impact of transformational leadership training program on nurse's unit manager behavior change ". It was reported that total levels of nursing managers' knowledge and all items related to transformational leadership skills were low.

Moreover, the result of Moon, Dam & Kitsos (2019) who conducted a study about measuring transformational

leadership in establishing nursing care excellence, revealed that nursing mangers leadership styles had a low level of transformational leadership. Meanwhile, this study reported that the individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation were higher mean score than idealized influence and inspirational motivation among nursing managers.

In the other hand, findings of the present study were contrasted with by Moussa, Aboshaiqah, & Alotaibi (2016), who carried out a study on "effect of nursing supervisor's leadership style on nurse's job satisfaction". They stated that the supervisors/heads of departments perceived that they used transformational leadership as a whole and initiated that nursing managers considered themselves to be more transformational. In addition to, this result showed that nursing managers valued idealized influence more highly.

On the contrary, the result of Tessema (2015) who assessed the relationships between transformational leadership and employees' engagement, indicated that the majority of the nursing managers had high level of transformational leadership, Moreover, this study reported that the laissez-faire leadership and intellectual stimulation had higher mean score than idealized influence and individualized consideration among nursing managers.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to identify the level of transformational leadership skills among nursing managers. The study emphasized that nursing managers in the selected University hospital had low level of transformational leadership. The higher mean score was for individual consideration whereas, the lowest mean score was for laissez-faire leadership.

Therefore, the study recommended that in-service training program about transformational leadership is essential for nursing managers. Transformational nursing managers' insistence to a mission and willingness to take risks along with a strong desire to achieve drives healthcare organizations to success. For further research studies, correlational and quasi experimental research designs are required to explore factors that enhance transformational leadership skill and cultivate it among nursing managers.

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