Identifying the Leadership Style of the Teaching Staff as Perceived by the Clinical Instructors of the Faculty of Nursing, Cairo University

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Abstract

Leadership has proved itself to be an interesting topic for researchers. Numerous investigators have studied leadership styles in different cultures, occupations, organizational settings. Nevertheless, it was rarely examined among teaching faculty members of higher education institutes and universities.

Aim of the Study: The current study seeks to determine the leadership style of teaching staff as perceived by clinical instructors.

Methods: Descriptive comparative design was utilized to attain the aim of the present study. The study sample composed of 70 clinical instructors. Data was collected through questionnaire developed by the researcher consist of two parts; first part was the socio-demographic data, the second was the perceived leadership style.

Results: The leadership behaviors of the teaching staff have five dimensions which are: Supportive, democratic, motivating, professional development oriented, and directive.

Recommendation: Teaching staff should be evaluated by the clinical instructors at periodical interval because this is important for continuous relationship development between both.

Key Words: Leadership style — Perceived leadership style — Clinical instructors — Teaching staff

Introduction

THE organization’s management and leadership style has a great effect on the working environment and the employees’ motivation. The development of an optimal leadership style and managerial skills that is the most appropriate to an organization is crucial, having a major effect on its life span [ii. Therefore, understanding and managing leader’s dominant style is the key to effective leadership. Even more critical is the ability to identify and harmonize with the leadership styles of others with whom we work [2].

Leadership theories have recognized the existence of leaders, followers, and relationship as elements within the leadership process, but little research attention has been directed to the understanding of followers within the leadership context [3]. Studying leadership behavior is important because it can help improve the effective utilization of human resources, it can help in preventing resistance to change, restriction of output, and labor disputes; and often, it can lead to a more efficient organization [4].

Leadership style can be fundamental to motivate subordinates to achieve stated visions and goals. So the key of success of any manager is to develop the appropriate and required management style. The evaluation of employees by their superiors is standard managerial practice but the value of the evaluation of superiors by their employees is much less recognized [5].

The ongoing nursing education reform requires educational leaders who can work in democratic and participative ways in order to build successful relationships to ensure effective delivery of quality education [6]. The characteristics of educational institutions are different from those of business organizations and therefore require different leadership skills. For this reason, it is important that researchers in higher education should study leadership issues using their own populations and their own specific problems in their own environment rather than relying on the results of studies conducted in business and industry [7].

Clinical instructors are an important input in nursing education thus teaching staff must ensure that the clinical instructors have the freedom to seek information through an open exchange of opinions and ideas. They also must create a stable and supportive environment which encourages
professional growth through effective role modeling. Teaching staff must recognize that their leadership style will be the main contributing factor in shaping the clinical instructor leadership style in the future. So from the study results teaching staff can gain valuable information about how clinical instructors perceive their leadership behaviors.

**Subjects and Methods**

**Research design:**
A descriptive design was utilized in this study.

**Setting:**
The study was conducted at all academic departments at the Faculty of nursing, Cairo University during 2012.

**Sampling:**
The study sample included all clinical instructors and assistant lecturers (n=70) who were in the active workforce during the time of data collection.

**Tools for data collection:**
Data was collected through questionnaire developed by the researcher consist of two parts: The first part was consisted of the Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, sex, and marital status etc.

The second part was consisted of 38 items that was used to identify the respondent’s perceptions of the leadership behaviors of their seniors. Respondents’ answers for each item were rated on a five-point scale ranging from "rarely" [1] to "always" [5].

**Statistical Design:**
The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to determine direction and strength of the relationship of selected variables. Significant level of all statistical analyses was at 0.05 (p-value). Factor analysis was done on the perceived leadership behaviors items to identify the leadership dimensions being measured by the instrument.

**Results**

**Results of the present study showed that:**
The majority of the study sample (94.28%) was females, and 71.4% of them are in the age group between 25-29 years old. Clinical instructors represented 78.6% of the study sample and only 21.4% were assistant lecturers. Regarding marital status 79.7% of the study sample was married. The mean years of experience of the total sample were 5.50±3.94 (Table 1).

Table (1): Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (n=70).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical instructor</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant lecturer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age/years:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean±SD</td>
<td>29.09±3.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-4 years</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-20 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean±SD</td>
<td>5.50±3.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2) shows that Factor analysis for leadership dimensions revealed 5 leadership dimensions, the first factor which named supportive behaviors loaded 7 items with Eigen value 10.23 and explained 25.56% of the variance in the data. The second factor which named democratic behaviors loaded 6 items with Eigen value 6.03 and explained 15.08% of the variance in the data. The third factor which named motivating behaviors loaded 6 items with Eigen value 2.29 and explained 5.74% of the variance in the data. The fourth factor which named professional development oriented behaviors loaded 7 items with Eigen value 2.11 and explained 25.56% of the variance in the data. The fifth factor which named directive behaviors loaded 5 items with Eigen value 1.88 and explained 4.71% of the variance in the data.

Table (3) shows that the highest mean score of the perceived leadership dimensions of the respondents’ was related to seniors supportive behaviors, while the lowest mean score was related to the Professional development behaviors of the seniors.

Table (4) shows negative correlation between the respondents’ age and years of experience and their perceived directive leadership behaviors of their seniors.
Among the observed behaviors, maintaining a friendly working relationship with the teaching staff is very important. It helps in creating a positive working environment and encourages student interaction with their seniors. It is likely to contribute to the development of followership behaviors. This is consistent with previous studies that have shown the importance of a positive working relationship and the importance of maintaining a friendly environment to nurture the career development of junior faculty members.

The finding of the current study showed that the highest mean score was related to the supportive teaching staff behaviors; they help clinical instructors in solving work problems, maintain a friendly working relationship and solve conflict. So it could be concluded that the teaching staff to some extent working relationship and solve conflict. So it could be concluded that the teaching staff to some extent working relationship and solve conflict.
lowers and to more mature relationship leading to higher level of job satisfaction [9].

Regarding the perceived democratic behaviors of the seniors the respondents admitted that their seniors frequently seek their suggestions and new ideas before making decisions and listen receptively to their positive ideas and suggestions. It may means that teaching staff value and respect the opinion of the clinical instructors. This will make clinical instructors satisfied with their seniors’ decisions and motivated to follow it. This may also mean that the teaching staff understanding that participative leadership can improve the quality of the decisions through discussion and collaboration.

Employees need motivating acknowledgment, praise, encouragement, feedback, opportunities to take responsibility, consistency, and sincerity from their leaders and coworkers, and job security [iii. Clinical instructors admitted that their seniors assigning them appropriate tasks. This can help the seniors to finish more tasks, increase productivity, build trust relationship with clinical instructors, and increase communication skills.

Managers that provide ongoing development can help in building strong employee relationships. Development includes providing time and opportunities for cross training and personal development, and assist subordinates by providing realistic evaluation of both performance and potential [iii. The results showed that the lowest mean score was related to the professional development behaviors of the teaching staff. This may be because teaching staff may have no time for teaching and guiding the clinical instructors due to their teaching load and responsibilities or they are unaware that this activity is a component of their role.

The negative correlation that founded between the respondents’ age & years of experience and their perceived directive behaviors of their seniors may indicates that the teaching staff realize the need to be less directive in their relation with the clinical instructors.

Conclusion:

Based upon the study results, it is concluded that the leadership behaviors of the teaching staff have five dimensions: Supportive, democratic, motivating, directive and clinical instructors' professional development oriented. So we may conclude that the clinical instructors positively perceived their seniors leadership behaviors.

Recommendation:

From the previous conclusion, the following recommendations are suggested:
1- Professional development of the clinical instructors is very important. Teaching staff should increase these behaviors through mentoring, guidance, and assistance, being a role model, and encouraging professional growth through workshops and participation in research projects with clinical instructors.
2- Clinical instructors' participation in their seniors’ evaluation for continuous development is important for both.
3- Teaching staff may be able to change their own behavior after gaining insight on how their behaviors affect others. So future studies may examine how different leadership styles of seniors can influence clinical instructors' performance and job satisfaction.

References